

# BREWER'S Quick Start Guide TO LABELING



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# Find the right label for your beer

Packaging should communicate the essence of your brand and the story of the product behind the label. This is true for all consumer products, including beer, whether the container is a bottle or can. Your label is the best opportunity to get your message across- to persuade a potential customer to purchase your beverage over everything else on same shelf. It has often been said but is worth repeating: your label is the only advertisement for your beer that 100% of your customers will see.

## Discover best practices & solutions for your labels

The importance of communicating your unique message and drawing in customers puts intense pressure on the design of a successful label. Working with a labeling expert is the best first step to take towards ensuring a visually appealing design. A design that is consistent with the quality of your product and competitive on a crowded retail shelf.





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# When designing a beer label, what needs to be considered?

At a minimum, alcohol labels must be compliant with government regulations. But beyond tedious rules, beer labels should persuade people to make a purchase. Through eye-catching, attention-grabbing designs that promote branding, packaging is the primary tool brand owners have to entice consumers at the point of purchase.

## Costs

Before you start designing a label incorporating every possible combination of additional design elements, determine a labeling budget. Exotic materials and special finishes incur costs that need to be taken into account before decisions are made. Working with a labeling expert can guide the project to best-value materials accented with high impact aesthetics. It is our job to make your label cost effective while maximizing quality and shelf presence.

## Materials

Whether it's printed cans, label papers or films, using the right material for your application is part of the label design equation. Within each material choice there are a variety of styles to decide between, such as shrink sleeves, Brew Wrap and pressure-sensitive labels. From design aspects and durability to costs and feasibility, working with a label expert is the best way to navigate through your options.



## Regulations

As listed later in Section IV, there are regulations that are required to appear on the label. These mandatory regulations need to be considered in the design phase—not only for compliance, but to maximize potential branding for the rest of the label. Knowing how much branding real estate is available while following legibility and type size requirements will contribute to a more successful design. For exact information on regulations, be sure to contact the Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB). They review labels and provide approvals once the design is compliant. With an inexperienced label designer, the approval process can take a significant amount of time going back and forth. Once the TTB has provided approval, we take over, printing the label and bringing your label to life.

## Bonus for bottles: neck hangers

Tickets and hang tags can be slipped over bottle necks to display additional information, promotions, coupons, and other offers. By increasing label space and branding impact with the label, bottle neck hangers are an effective way to make your bottled beer stand out on the shelf.



# What are the labeling options for bottles and cans?

The first packaging decision for breweries is between bottle or cans. Each has its benefits with few detractors. Often, the decision is a factor of cost, shipping weight, breakage, bottling and labeling equipment, quantity, and quality. An important aspect to consider is each container's labeling needs. Examining all aspects of the label options for bottles and cans can be an important factor in determining which container is best for your brand.


## Getting it right

Whether your beer will be shipped in bottles or cans, work with us to make your label packaging effective and durable. Our label experts have years of experience in balancing beauty with budget for any labeling option. By involving us from the beginning of the design phase, we can make suggestions that will help you avoid common mistakes and pitfalls along the way.



## Bottles

Bottles remain a popular option for many craft brewers and a majority of consumers. An effective beer bottle label will tell the brand story and convey the quality of the beer. Most often, beer bottle labels fall under two categories: Cut and stack labels, which are applied with glue, and pressure-sensitive labels, which are self contained decals.

 **Pressure-Sensitive Labels** – Providing nearly limitless design options, pressure-sensitive labels are pre-applied with an adhesive, eliminating some of the headaches in dealing with the glue required for cut and stack labels. Whether it's through digital or flexographic label printing, a pressure-sensitive label is an ideal solution for any size operation.



## Cans


More and more craft brewers are using cans, increasing the need for effective beer can labels. Cans reduce shipping and storage costs in addition to taking up less space in shipping containers. Additional advantages include resistance to UV light, which can be harmful to the beer.

For large production facilities, pre-printed cans are a cost-effective and efficient option since they arrive ready to be filled and shipped out for sale. Due to the high minimum order required with pre-printed cans (150,000 cans is typical), craft breweries overwhelmingly use bottles and labels. There are new and interesting solutions that allow smaller operations to take advantage of the benefits of aluminum cans: Shrink sleeves, and our “Brew Wrap” pressure sensitive label solution.

 **Shrink Sleeve** - Shrink sleeves are a film label which is slipped over a container. Once exposed to heat, the film shrinks into a form-fitting label that seamlessly matches the contours of the can. This packaging style is great for maximizing label space for branding and compliance purposes. Shrink sleeves have opened the door for craft and micro breweries to start using cans effectively.





 **Brew Wrap** - Cost-effective and versatile, Brew Wrap pressure-sensitive labels are a great label solution for canned beer and our preferred labeling solution for craft brewers. This innovative beer label can improve design and reduce costs while streamlining logistics.

Brew Wrap labels are composed of a super thin film which mimics the appearance of a pre-printed can by providing a 'no-label' look. They are cost-effective and available to order in any quantity. Brew Wrap labels can add contrast to your can design through the use of vibrant colors, premium finishing options, and tactile effects. This labeling option is applied to filled cans, enabling a brewer to order the exact amount needed, as opposed to estimating how many cans will be filled. There is also less downtime in the labeling and filling process compared to shrink sleeve or pre-printed cans.

There are advantages on the filling line, too. When using Brew Wrap labels on blank cans, the only thing that needs to be changed when switching over to another beer is the roll of labels. With pre-printed and shrink sleeve labeled cans, switching beers requires all the cans be removed and replaced with the appropriate cans for the brew they will be filled with.



# What labeling applicator options do brewers have?

Depending on the scale of the operation, in-house label applicators may be a good investment. They give the brewery control over the labeling process, ensuring the exact number of cans or bottles get labeled as opposed to estimating how many the operation may need. There are several label applicators available to breweries, but balancing needs, operation size and budget should help you make the right choice.

## Bottle and can applicators

Choosing the ideal label applicator requires a look at your investment budget, chosen label type, and overall production needs. Shrink sleeves require a heat tunnel to mold the label onto the container. Pressure-sensitive labels can be applied to a bottle or can by hand, or by using a machine applicator for greater speed and accuracy.

**Our experts can help your business find an applicator best suited for your production needs and budget.**

# What regulations are required for a compliant label?

TTB has set regulations for labeling alcoholic beverages in the United States. The regulations detail what must be listed on the label and how it is to be listed- such as type size requirements. We've put together a general outline of the requirements as a resource to get started, but breweries must consult with the [TTB](#) to achieve full label compliance. More detailed regulations can be found on the [Brewers Association](#) website at [brewersassociation.org](http://brewersassociation.org).

## Working with the Brewers Association and the TTB

While this general overview will get you started, working with the Brewers Association and the TTB directly will give you a full understanding of beer label regulations and ensure a fully compliant beer label. Both sources have extensive information and documentation detailing the dos and don'ts for receiving a Certificate of Label Approval, or COLA. Once the label has been approved, printing can begin.



## Beer label type size and legibility

The mandatory contents of a beer label have specific type size and legibility requirements. These requirements ensure consistency in location on the label and an understanding of the necessary information **across all** malted beverage products.

### Type size

The TTB requirement for mandatory information- contents, class and designation type, name and address, & brand name (excluding the alcohol content and government health warning statement) is as follows:

- Minimum of 2 mm for containers larger than half a pint
- Minimum of 1 mm for containers half a pint or less

The alcohol content statement, unless otherwise stated under your state's law, must be:

- Minimum of 2 mm for containers larger than half a pint
- Minimum of 1 mm for containers half a pint or less
- Maximum of 3 mm for containers 40 oz. or less
- Maximum of 4 mm for containers larger than 40 oz.
- The government health warning statement must be:
- Minimum 3 mm for containers more than 3 liters
- Minimum 2 mm for containers from 237 ml to 3 liters
- Minimum 1 mm for containers less than 237 ml

Additionally:

- Aspartame disclosures are required to be in all capitals
- There are no type size requirements for country of origin

## Legibility requirements for mandatory information

TTB requirements state that mandatory information must be:

- Readily legible
- Appear on a contrasting background
- Appear separate and apart from or substantially more conspicuous than descriptive or explanatory information
- All portions of the alcohol statement must be of the same font, lettering size, and equally conspicuous coloring
- For the government health warning statement, the font must be legible under ordinary conditions and appear on a contrasting background
- If the type size is 1mm, no more than 40 characters may appear per inch
- If the type size is 2 or 3 mm, no more than 25 and 12 characters per inch, respectively
- The beer class and designation

**GOVERNMENT WARNING:** (1) ACCORDING TO THE SURGEON GENERAL, WOMEN SHOULD NOT DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES DURING PREGNANCY BECAUSE OF THE RISK OF BIRTH DEFECTS. (2) CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IMPAIRS YOUR ABILITY TO DRIVE A CAR OR OPERATE MACHINERY, AND MAY CAUSE HEALTH PROBLEMS.

| Contents of container                    | Net contents must be shown in...                        | Examples       |  |
|--|---|----------------|--|
|  |   | Container size | Label net contents statement must be...  |
| Less than 1 pint                         | Fluid ounces or fractions of a pint                     | 8 ounces       | 8 fluid ounces (fl. oz) <b>or</b> 1/2 pint (pt) <b>or</b> .5 pint (pt.)  |
| 1 pint                                   | Pints   | 16 ounces      | 1 pint (pt.)   |
| More than 1 pint but less than 1 quart   | Pints and fluid ounces or fractions of a quart          | 20 ounces      | 1pint (pt.), 4 fluid ounces (fl. oz.) <b>or</b> 5/8 quart (qt.) <b>or</b> 1.63 quart (qt.)                       |
| 1 quart                                  | Quarts  | 32 ounces      | 1 quart (qt.)  |
| More than 1 quart but less than 1 gallon | quarts, pints and fluid ounces or fractions of a gallon | 60 ounces      | 1 quart (qt), 1 pint (pt.), 12 fluid ounces (fl. oz.) <b>or</b> 15/32 gallon (gal.) <b>or</b> 0.47 gallon (gal.) |
| 1 gallon                                 | Gallons   | 128 ounces     | 1 gallon (gal.)  |
| More than 1 gallon                       | gallons and fractions of gallons                        | 166 ounces     | 1 1/4 gallons (gals.) <b>or</b> 1.25 gallons (gals.)   |

## Beer net contents

The contents or volume of each container must be clearly labeled using a combination of ounces, pints, quarts and gallons for measurements.

The brand name is the given name in which a beer is marketed under. If there is no brand name, the name of the bottler, packer or importer becomes the brand name.

The TTB prohibits any misleading brand names. A misleading brand name may inaccurately describe the age, origin, identity or other characteristics of the beer.

## Solutions specifically for you

We understand the many challenges brand owners face and we are here to help you create effective, eye-catching, and compliant labels. In this guide, we've provided an overview of brewery label design, material, and application choices, as well as regulatory basics. For a more specific analysis of how working with Resource Label Group can benefit your brand, request a consultation online or call us at 1-800-253-9599.

### More about Resource Label Group

At Resource Label Group we're constantly tracking the latest in label technologies, materials, trends, designs, and regulations. It's just part of how we serve you, part of our commitment to you — to find the best label solutions for your product, brand, and budget. We're here to guide you through the label design and printing process from start to finish and solve every order complexity — so you get a great label that meets your needs.



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