



Standard Guide for Sensory Evaluation of Beverages Containing Alcohol¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide provides guidelines specific to the sensory evaluation of beverages containing alcohol, including beer, wine, coolers, cocktails, liqueurs, and distilled spirits.

1.2 This guide addresses safety, legal, panel selection, sample preparation, and test procedures specific to beverages containing alcohol.

1.3 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

1.4 This guide does not recommend a specific test method.

2. Significance and Use

2.1 The procedures recommended in this guide can be used for the sensory evaluation of beverages containing alcohol.

2.2 This guide provides practical suggestions to maximize panelist safety and to minimize the risks and liabilities of the person or corporation responsible for administering the sensory evaluation of beverages containing alcohol.

2.3 This guide also provides practical suggestions when dealing with various government agencies that are involved in distributing beverage alcohol test products.

3. Safety

NOTE 1—See also Fig. 1 and STP 913 (1).²

3.1 *Medical Condition*—Potential panelists must be in good medical condition with no serious health problems. Inform them that they should not participate on panels if they are taking prescription or over-the-counter medications, which are contraindicated when combined with alcohol.

3.2 Home-Use Testing:

3.2.1 Home use tests with beverages containing alcohol are often used to determine how products are consumed. Transportation and storage of high proof spirits are very important. In addition to an informed consent form (see 5.2.1), it is recommended that the following statements accompany products used in home-use testing:

3.2.1.1 The sponsor of this study is a well-known major manufacturer who considers the health and safety of research participants and the public to be of the utmost importance.

3.2.1.2 Specific guidelines that must be followed while participating in this product test are listed as follows. Compliance with these guidelines is necessary to ensure that the beverage alcohol product you are given is consumed in a responsible manner. Please read and follow these guidelines carefully.

(1) Do not open test product(s) until you arrive home.

(2) If you are driving, you must transport the test product to your home in the trunk of your car.

(3) Do not drive or operate heavy machinery after sampling test product(s).

(4) Do not leave the test product(s) in a place where it is accessible to individuals under the legal drinking age.

(5) If there is a need to return used beverage containers, you must empty the container completely because it is illegal to transport open containers of beverage alcohol.

3.3 Central Location or Intercept Testing:

3.3.1 Safety is most critical in situations where consumers evaluate beverage alcohol products at a central location. There are several steps that can be taken to ensure respondent safety:

3.3.1.1 Provide transportation to and from the test location.

3.3.1.2 Have a certified bartender or highly trained professional provide each respondent with the test products. Instruct the bartender or professional not to serve respondents whom exhibit any signs of intoxication. The Hotel, Tavern, and Restaurant Association in each state offers techniques in alcohol management courses. It is recommended that all servers complete this course.

3.3.1.3 Limit the sample volume for evaluation to an amount which will ensure the respondent will not have a blood alcohol level greater than a legal limit (see 8.3.1.3).

3.4 Employee Panels:

3.4.1 When employees evaluate product(s) at their workplace, the sensory professional has additional control.

¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E18 on Sensory Evaluation and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E18.06 on Food and Beverage Evaluation.

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² The boldface numbers in parentheses refer to the list of references at the end of this standard.