



Thailand Introduces Standardised Intoxication Checks for Alcohol Sales

Thailand has introduced new regulatory measures under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act, empowering alcohol sellers to assess customer intoxication using standardised criteria and practical testing methods. The notification issued by the Department of Disease Control aims to provide clear, enforceable guidelines for determining when a person should be refused alcohol service. This marks a shift toward more structured compliance obligations for vendors, particularly in managing risks associated with overconsumption and public safety.

Under the new framework, a person may be deemed intoxicated based on observable physical and behavioural indicators following alcohol consumption. These include impaired balance, unsteady movement, slurred speech, and conduct that may endanger the individual or others. Additional indicators—such as bloodshot eyes, poor motor coordination, aggression, confusion, or inappropriate behaviour—further support a finding of intoxication. The regulation establishes a practical evidentiary threshold, allowing sellers to rely on visible symptoms rather than subjective judgment alone.

To operationalise these standards, the regulation introduces three recognised field sobriety-style tests that sellers may apply: the finger-to-nose test, the walk-and-turn test, and the one-leg stand with counting test. Each test includes specific failure criteria, such as inability to maintain balance, deviation from instructed movement, or visible tremors. A finding of intoxication may be made where the individual fails the applicable test based on prescribed indicators, thereby providing sellers with a defensible basis for refusing service in compliance with the law.

From a legal and regulatory perspective, these measures significantly enhance clarity and enforceability within Thailand's alcohol control regime. Businesses will need to ensure that staff are adequately trained to apply the prescribed tests and document observations where necessary, particularly in the event of disputes. More broadly, the regulation reflects Thailand's increasing emphasis on preventive public health enforcement and risk management, strengthening the legal framework governing alcohol sales while promoting safer public environments.