

Home Delivery and USPS Talking Points

Disclaimer: *This document was created as a guide to help you form your own talking points. We encourage you to make it your own, and include personal details and stories to make the information shared below more impactful.*

Background

By law, the US Postal Service is prohibited from shipping alcohol under [U.S. Legal Code 18 § 1716](#). But a new bill in Congress, the United States Postal Service Shipping Equity Act ([H.R. 3287/S. 1663](#)), could change that. Proponents cite potential financial benefits to the struggling postal service but fail to highlight that this change would risk increasing alcohol-related harms through increased access and consumption while undermining state regulatory safeguards and jeopardizing essential alcohol tax collection intended to defray the societal costs of alcohol's harms. For these reasons, the integrity of U.S. Legal Code 18 § 1716 which prevents USPS from carrying and delivering alcohol must be maintained.

Talking Points

Opening

- Thank you for taking the time to consider the potential harms associated with allowing the U.S. Postal Service to deliver alcohol to homes and communities.

Undermines Regulatory Safeguards

- Expanding home delivery of alcohol disrupts the three-tier system (retailer, distributor/wholesaler, supplier/producer) which the U.S. relies upon to deliver alcohol safely, collect taxes, and enforce laws related to alcohol safety, including preventing minors from accessing alcohol.
- Since the end of federal Prohibition, the 21st Amendment has granted the power to the states to set their laws for alcohol sales, distribution. Allowing alcohol shipping by the USPS, a federal agency strictly prohibited from transporting alcohol by law, would introduce a federal delivery mechanism that could undermine important safeguards and increase alcohol access at a time when alcohol-related deaths are on the rise.



**ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND
OTHER DRUGS SECTION**



Compliance and Legal Questions

- States are already struggling to maintain enforcement procedures for alcohol delivery requirements, such as ID checking, it is unclear how violations would be resolved if USPS carriers fail to comply with the state-enforced requirements.
- Home delivery by the USPS may contribute to increases in underage drinking. A 2012 study found that when alcohol was purchased online by minors the required age verification at delivery was inconsistently conducted by carriers and, when attempted, failed nearly half of the time.¹
- States have also lost tax revenues as a result of unlicensed producers/shippers directly shipping into a state without paying the required taxes. Home delivery by the USPS may exacerbate this issue.
- While it is possible that alcohol delivery may offer an additional revenue stream, it is unclear if that revenue would be sufficient to cover the added staff training, procedural changes to meet each states' regulatory requirements, or the legal costs associated with federal participation in delivery.

Consumption Trends on the Rise

- Research suggests that alcohol-related deaths have been increasing since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with overall consumption.² Deaths involving alcohol increased 25% in 2020 relative to 2019, and the largest increase in fatalities was seen in those aged 25-45. It is not in the best interest of the population's health to increase home delivery using a federal agency. The CDC estimates that alcohol leads to approximately 140,000 deaths each year in the U.S., more than 380 deaths per day.³

The Ask

- **The integrity of U.S. Legal Code 18 § 1716 which prevents USPS from carrying and delivering alcohol, must be maintained.**
- We appreciate your time, and hope that you consider the harmful effects allowing the USPS to deliver alcohol, expanding home delivery of alcohol exponentially.

1. Williams RS. Internet Alcohol Sales to Minors. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2012;166(9):808. doi:10.1001/archpediatrics.2012.265

2. White AM, Castle IJP, Powell PA, Hingson RW, Koob GF. Alcohol-Related Deaths During the COVID-19 Pandemic. JAMA. 2022;327(17):1704. doi:10.1001/jama.2022.4308

3. Division of Population Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Deaths from Excessive Alcohol Use in the United States. Alcohol and Public Health. Published July 6, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/features/excessive-alcohol-deaths.html#:~:text=Excessive%20alcohol%20use%20was%20responsible,application%2C%20using%20a%20new%20methodology>.