



Reducing Alcohol-Related Harms and Costs in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Policy Review

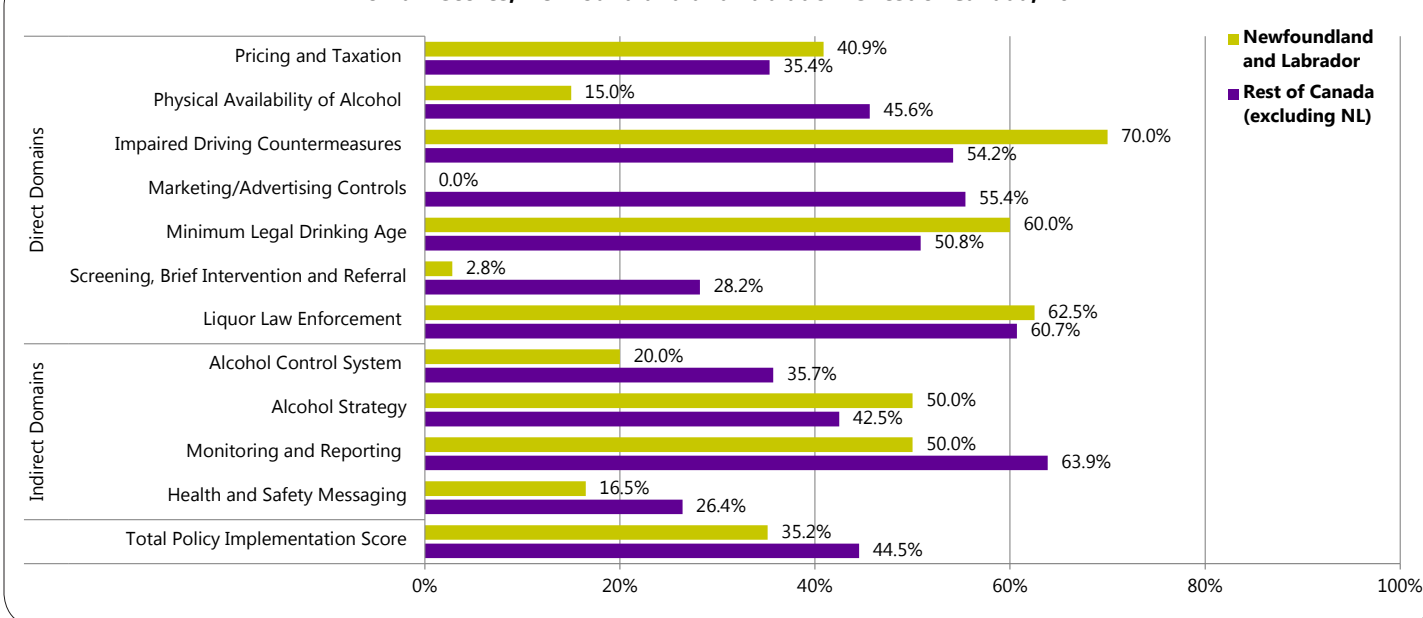
Newfoundland and Labrador

Population (2016)	519,716
Per capita alcohol consumption age 15+*	10.1L pure ethanol**
Overall alcohol harm costs (2014)	\$276M
Net revenue from alcohol (2014)***	\$248M
Type of alcohol retail system	Mixed government/private system

The Provincial and Territorial Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation (CAPE) project is a rigorous assessment of whether evidence-based alcohol policies were implemented within each province and territory in 2017. A comprehensive alcohol policy framework was developed, containing gold standard best practices across 11 different policy domains. The first seven domains have evidence of effectiveness as means of *directly* reducing population level consumption of alcohol and/or related harms. The last four domains are composed of evidence-based strategies that more *indirectly* facilitate implementation of the first seven domains. See Stockwell et al, 2019^a for the full methodology and findings.

The scores presented in this summary reflect the degree to which Newfoundland and Labrador has implemented these gold standard best practices captured in the alcohol policy framework. **Overall, Newfoundland and Labrador scored 35% in 2017, 10% below the average of 45% for the rest of Canada (excluding Newfoundland and Labrador).**

Domain scores, Newfoundland and Labrador vs rest of Canada, 2017













Promising practices in Newfoundland and Labrador

- Newfoundland and Labrador has some strong impaired driving countermeasures in place such as the requirement of a .00% BAC for new drivers that extends up to 4.25 years beyond completion of the **graduated licensing program (GLP)**. They also have **mandatory vehicle impoundment for the first offence** with a minimum 7 day suspension and an administrative license suspension (ALS) of 14 days for a second offence.
- The **risk-based licensing and enforcement program** in place Newfoundland and Labrador includes consideration of on- and off-premise outlet characteristics as well as licence history. Past violations that occurred in on-premise establishments are also taken into account when issuing licenses. Other noteworthy elements of the program include increasing penalties for each new violation and tracking and public reporting of liquor law offenses.
- Newfoundland and Labrador's "Responsible Choices" program disseminates **health messaging** through various media including posters and billboards as well as online through social media and websites.



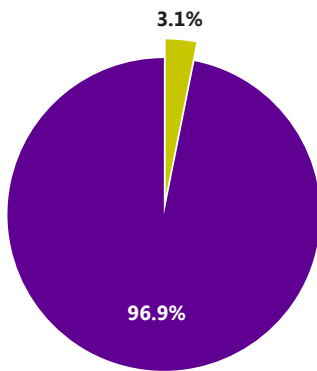
*Adjusted to account for unrecorded alcohol consumption. **Equivalent to 594 standard drinks (1 standard drink contains 17.05mL of pure alcohol and is equivalent to 341mL of 5% beer; 142mL of 12% wine; or 43mL of 40% spirits). *** Net income of liquor authorities, total taxes, and other revenue. See CAPE report for full list of data sources.^a

Strengthening alcohol policies in Newfoundland and Labrador

Policy Domain	Score	Selected recommendations
DIRECT DOMAINS	 Pricing and Taxation	41% F Ensure minimum prices are set at a rate per standard drink (e.g. 17.05mL of pure alcohol) of at least \$1.75* per standard drink for off-premise retail stores and \$3.50* per standard drink for on-premise establishments , after taxes with no exceptions (*2019 prices). Currently, average prices for off-premise spirits and all on-premise alcohol falls below recommended minimum prices. Update all alcohol prices annually to reflect Newfoundland and Labrador-specific inflation rates to ensure alcohol does not become less expensive relative to other goods over time. Set alcohol sales taxes at a higher rate than other consumer goods. Remove pricing loopholes that allow retailers to clear out old inventory by marking down delisted products below the social reference price and that allow licensees to provide alcohol to patrons at reduced prices within all-inclusive packages or bundles.
	 Physical Availability	15% F Reduce the existing density of both on-premise establishments such as restaurants and bars and off-premise retail stores and implement stronger regulations around density and placement of off-premise store locations. Limit the availability of alcohol by reducing trading hours ; do not allow early morning alcohol sales (i.e. before 11:00am) or late-night sales (i.e. after 8pm for off-premise retail stores and 1am for on-premise establishments) without exceptions.
	 Impaired Driving Counter-measures	70% B- Increase the minimum duration of stage 1 of the graduated licensing program (GLP) to 12 months regardless of participation in a driver education course and increase stage 2 from 12 up to 24 months. Introduce a zero tolerance rule for GLP drivers testing positive for any drug use , regardless of level of impairment. Administrative license suspensions (ALS) should remain on the driver abstract for at least 3 years with an equivalent lookback period of 3 years, rather than the current 2-year period.
	 Marketing and Advertising Controls	0% F Implement alcohol marketing and advertising regulations that go beyond the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications (CRTC) rules by including restrictions on content, placement and quantity of ads, as well as restrictions on the advertisement of discount prices, and sponsorships. Ensure coverage of advertising regulations apply to all media platforms and all advertisers; assign an independent third party to both screen ads and enforce advertising restrictions with penalties for violations that vary by severity of offence and increase with repeat offences. Ensure that at least 50% of social media posts from the NLC have a health and safety focus .
	 Minimum Legal Drinking Age	60% C- Increase the legal drinking age ; give consideration to graduated drinking policies that grant phased-in legal access to alcohol by limiting the amount and type of alcohol that can be purchased in specific settings between the ages of 19 and 21.
	 Screening, Brief Intervention/Referral	3% F Collaborate with health care professionals to develop screening, brief intervention and referral (SBIR) practice guidelines and tools to be implemented in a health care setting and online or consider adopting the SBIR resource developed by the College of Family Physicians. Work with health care providers in order to increase the proportion of physicians or other clinical staff who routinely ask adults 18+ about their alcohol use .
	 Liquor Law Enforcement	63% C- Ensure relevant outlet-level data from police (such as assaults) is taken into consideration during the licensing approval process and in determining the frequency of enforcement for both on-premise establishments and off-premise retail stores. Introduce a dedicated police inspection program for on-premise establishments and implement a Mystery Shopper program for off-premise retail stores to ensure legal drinking age laws are followed. Employ at least 1 liquor inspector per 300 outlets to conduct frequent compliance checks and follow-up checks for violations. Make the Responsible Beverage training program mandatory for all staff and volunteers at all licensed events, SOPs, venues, on-premise establishments and off-premise stores with recertification at least every 2 years.
	INDIRECT DOMAINS	 Alcohol Control System
 Alcohol Strategy		50% D- Develop an alcohol-specific government endorsed strategy that includes a range of evidence-based public health policies and is developed independently from the alcohol industry ; the strategy should be updated at least every 5 years .
 Monitoring and Reporting		50% D- Improve the current tracking of per capita alcohol consumption and related hospitalizations with a centralized monitoring and reporting system ; expand data collection to include alcohol-related deaths and crime and ensure all data are made publicly available at least annually . Have an identified leader with a health and safety focus responsible for monitoring alcohol harm .
 Health and Safety Messaging		17% F Implement legislated enhanced alcohol labels as a manufacturer requirement with health and safety messages, standard drink information and national low-risk drinking guidelines; labels should have prominent rotating messages accompanied by pictorial images. Implement legislated health and safety messages to be displayed in all on-premise establishments and off-premise retail stores and have liquor control boards use a range of media platforms to communicate this messaging .
Total Policy Implementation Score	35% F	A comprehensive list of gold standard best practice alcohol policies is available in Appendix C of the full CAPE report².

Newfoundland and Labrador: selected findings, 2017

Newfoundland and Labrador alcohol retail stores, 2017



■ Government retail stores ■ Private retail stores

Best practice is 100% government-run alcohol retail stores

Newfoundland and Labrador minimum prices per standard drink, 2017

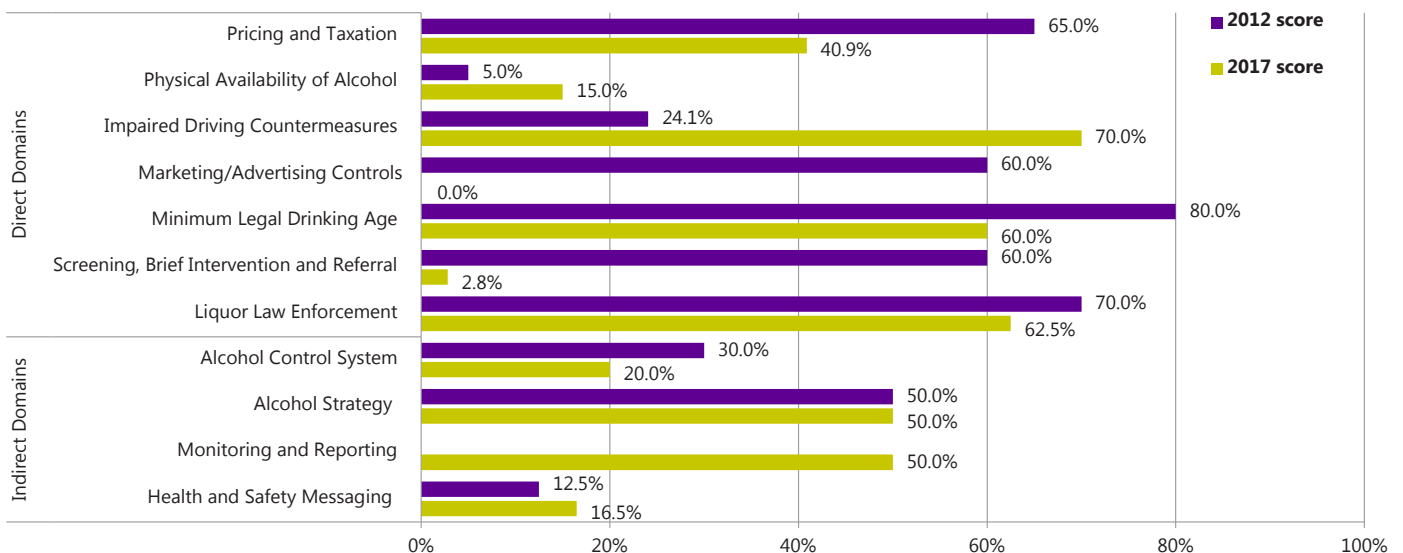
Off-premise alcohol retail stores



On-premise establishments (restaurants, bars, etc.)



Domain scores, Newfoundland and Labrador, 2012 vs 2017

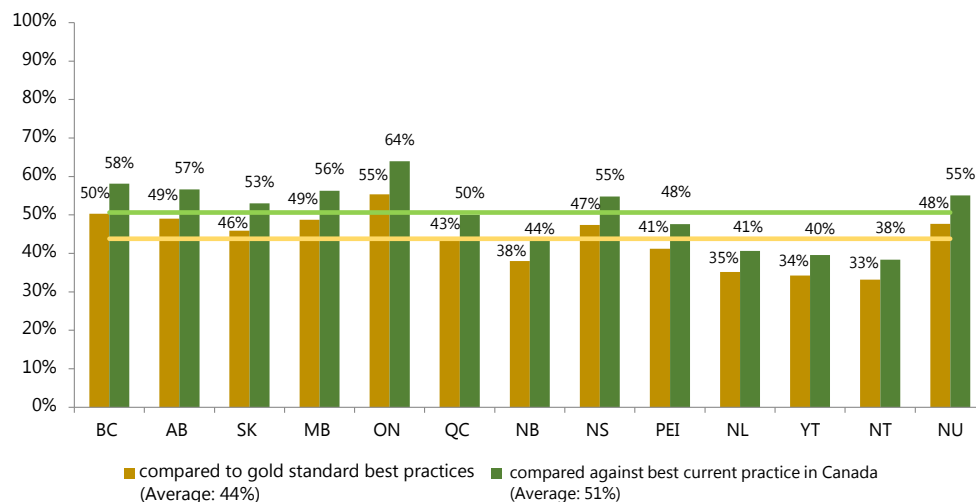


Note: policy indicators may have changed between 2012 and 2017 thus scores reflect best practices at the time of data collection.

How does Newfoundland and Labrador stack up against other provinces and territories?

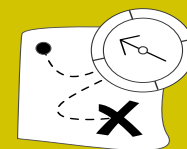
Even though the provinces and territories scored poorly overall in relation to gold standard best practices, many examples of strong alcohol policy components were found across Canada. **In fact, if a province or territory chose to implement all of these best current practices that were identified they would have scored 87% (Grade A).** Based on these best current practices identified across all jurisdictions, the scores were scaled up to show how the provinces and territories measure up against best current practices in Canada (green bars).

Total policy implementation scores by province and territories, 2017



Next steps for reducing alcohol-related harms and costs in Newfoundland and Labrador

- In light of the substantial and increasing harm from alcohol use, give greater priority to funding and implementing effective alcohol policies such as those outlined in this summary and in the full report²⁴
- Position liquor boards within ministries directly concerned with health and safety rather than with finance and economic development.
- Reconsider the treatment of alcohol as an ordinary commodity and instead limit low prices and extensive promotion and marketing, as this leads to greater consumption and related harm.
- Learn from other provinces' and territories' experiences with successful implementation of effective alcohol policies (see Best Practice Leaders identified on P11 of the full report²⁴).
- Government should take action in concert with NGOs and other stakeholders to implement a combination of population level policies prioritising the first seven policy areas identified in this summary.
- Inform the public about the risks of alcohol, including the comparative risks of alcohol and other substances, to create a more supportive climate for enacting effective policies. This can be achieved with initiatives such as mandatory warning labels on all alcohol containers and clear and consistent public health messaging on a range of health topics.
- Carefully document policy changes and regularly monitor and evaluate alcohol-related public health and safety outcomes to better inform future policy development.



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▣ To learn more about the Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation Project, read other jurisdictional summaries and download the full federal and jurisdictional reports, visit alcoholpolicy.cisur.ca or email cisur@uvic.ca.