

Reducing Alcohol-Related Harms and Costs in Northwest Territories: A Policy Review



Northwest Territories

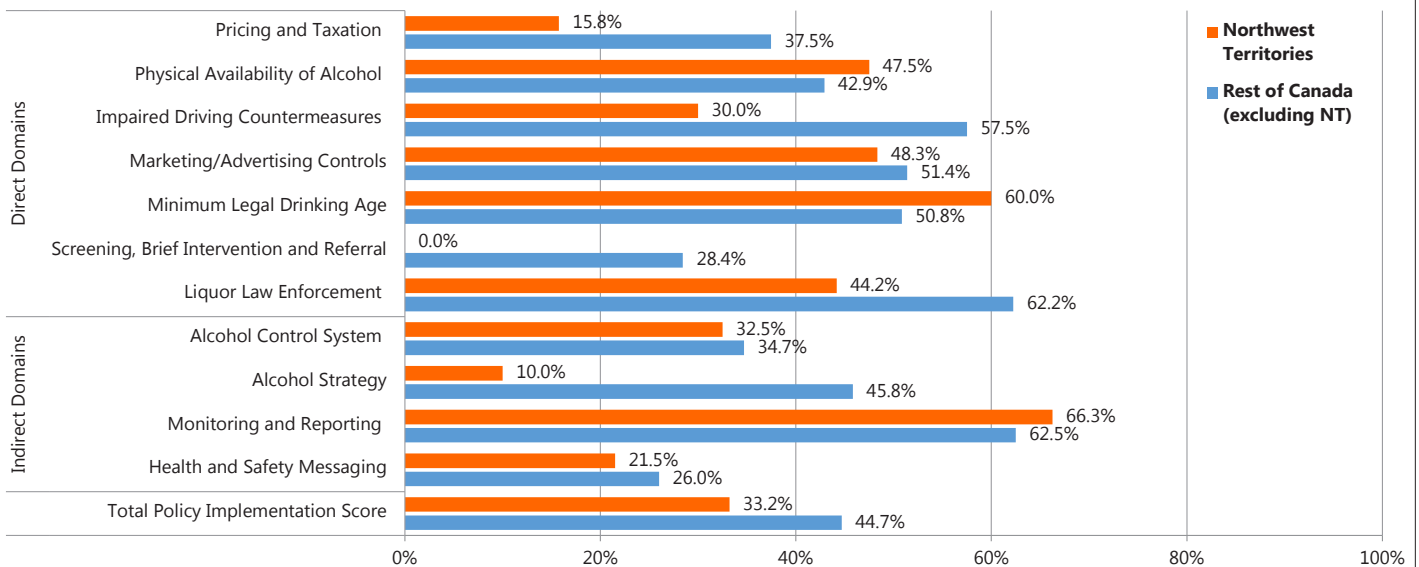
Population (2016)	41,786
Per capita alcohol consumption age 15+*	12.8L pure ethanol**
Overall alcohol harm costs (2014)	\$56M
Net revenue from alcohol (2014)***	\$30M
Type of alcohol retail system	Wholesale: government monopoly Retail: Private consignment system

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, 2019² for the full methodology and findings.

The three territories represent distinct cultural and geographical contexts but are also unique in terms of population size and dispersion with varying alcohol regulatory frameworks and less infrastructure capacity. Despite these differences, the evidence-based policies assessed in this project are still relevant and the same study protocol has been carefully applied, to the extent possible, to evaluate their implementation across these three jurisdictions.

The scores presented in this summary reflect the degree to which Northwest Territories has implemented the gold standard best practices captured in the CAPE alcohol policy framework. **Overall, Northwest Territories scored 33% in 2017, which is 12% below the average of 45% for the rest of Canada (excluding Northwest Territories).**

Domain scores, Northwest Territories vs rest of Canada, 2017



Promising practices in Northwest Territories

- Northwest Territories has some strong policies in place for on-premise establishments such as restaurants and bars including **allowing unfinished wine to be recorked** and **having limits on the amounts of alcohol served** to an individual at one time.
- Unlike many other Canadian jurisdictions, Northwest Territories **does not allow trading hours for on-premise establishments and off-premise stores to be extended for special events.**
- The **graduated licensing program (GLP)** for new drivers in Northwest Territories has zero tolerance BAC for alcohol during the first 12 months (stage 1) which is a gold standard best practice. The restricted BAC continues for another 12 months after stage 2 of the GLP but could be further strengthened by being extended to 24 months.
- Northwest Territories is one of only two Canadian jurisdictions that currently requires **mandatory warning labels** be applied to all alcohol beverage containers sold in retail stores.



*Adjusted to account for unrecorded alcohol consumption. **Equivalent to 749 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.²

Strengthening alcohol policies in Northwest Territories

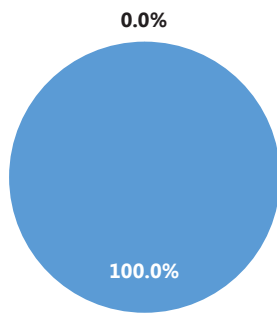
Policy Domain	Score	Selected recommendations
 Pricing and Taxation	16% F	<p>Implement legislated minimum alcohol prices in Northwest Territories and set the price to at least \$1.75* per standard drink for off-premise retail stores and \$3.50* per standard drink for on-premise establishments, after taxes with no exceptions (*2019 prices).</p> <p>Update all alcohol prices annually to reflect Northwest Territories-specific inflation rates to ensure alcohol does not become less expensive relative to other goods over time.</p> <p>Alcohol should be taxed at a higher rate than other consumer goods (e.g. apply a sales tax on alcohol).</p>
 Physical Availability	48% F	<p>Introduce legislated restrictions on outlet density and outlet placement for both on-premise establishments and off-premise retail stores.</p> <p>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.</p>
 Impaired Driving Countermeasures	30% F	<p>Strengthen the graduated licensing program (GLP) by increasing the minimum GLP start age to 16 years; enforce a nighttime driving ban for stage 2 drivers and extend the zero tolerance BAC for alcohol to three years beyond the GLP.</p> <p>Increase the minimum administrative license suspension (ALS) period for first offences from 24 hours up to 3 days and include a mandatory vehicle impoundment.</p> <p>The interlock program should be made mandatory for <i>Criminal Code</i> impaired driving offenders with successful completion required prior to relicensing.</p>
 Marketing and Advertising Controls	48% F	<p>Implement stronger marketing restrictions in Northwest Territories beyond the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications (CRTC) regulations that specifically protect priority populations including youth, women and girls and minority groups, those in recovery from addiction.</p> <p>Strengthen sponsorship restrictions to further limit exposure to and targeting of youth and young adults; ensure coverage of advertising regulations apply to all media platforms and advertisers.</p> <p>Appoint an independent authority responsible for enforcement with mandatory pre-screening requirements and introduce an independent complaint system; disseminate alcohol health and safety messaging through social media.</p>
 Minimum Legal Drinking Age	60% C	<p>Increase the minimum 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.</p>
 Screening, Brief Intervention/Referral	0% F	<p>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; give special consideration to remote communities where internet access and regular clinical care is limited. When available, online tools can increase accessibility, especially among younger populations or those not accessing health care in a clinical setting; implementation of SBIR tools should be tracked in order to inform future SBIR activities.</p> <p>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.</p>
 Liquor Law Enforcement	44% F	<p>Implement a risk-based licensing and enforcement (RBLE) program for off-premise consignment stores to inform licensing conditions and enforcement schedules, and enhance the RBLE program for on-premise establishments by including license holder characteristics and incident data to inform risk level.</p> <p>Have a defined follow-up period for failed compliance checks at all outlets and implement a Mystery Shopper program to ensure compliance with minimum drinking age laws for off-premise stores.</p> <p>Make responsible beverage training mandatory for all staff and volunteers at on-premise establishments and off-premise stores.</p>
 Alcohol Control System	33% F	<p>Consider implementing a government-owned and -run retail network for off-premise retail stores rather than the consignment model that is currently in place in Northwest Territories.</p> <p>Have the Northwest Territories Liquor Commission report to a ministry that focuses on health and/or safety and legislate earmarked funds to support prevention initiatives and health messaging.</p>
 Alcohol Strategy	10% F	<p>Develop an alcohol-specific government-endorsed strategy that has dedicated funding and includes a range of evidence-based public health and policies and is developed independently from the alcohol industry.</p> <p>Ensure the strategy has dedicated funding, an identified leader with a public health and/or safety focus to facilitate implementation, and systems in place to monitor implementation and effectiveness; update the strategy at least every five years.</p>
 Monitoring and Reporting	66% C	<p>Implement systematic tracking of alcohol-related crime data (in addition to alcohol consumption, hospitalization, and alcohol-related deaths) in Northwest Territories with public reporting of all indicators at least annually through a centralized system in order to support effective monitoring of trends in consumption and harms; ensure specific funding and/or staff resources are available to support these monitoring initiatives.</p>
 Health and Safety Messaging	22% F	<p>Strengthen the messaging of the current alcohol warning by including pictorial images and having rotating messages on a range of topics including health and safety, standard drink information and low-risk drinking guidelines.</p> <p>Implement legislated health and safety messages to be displayed in all on-premise and off-premise establishments, which include a variety of health-focused messages such as FASD risks and pregnancy, impaired driving and injury risks, alcohol's risks to minors, low-risk drinking guidelines, and alcohol's chronic disease and health impacts.</p>
Total Policy Implementation Score	33% F	<p>A comprehensive list of gold standard best practice alcohol policies is available in Appendix C of the full CAPE report²¹.</p>

DIRECT DOMAINS

INDIRECT DOMAINS

Northwest Territories: selected findings, 2017

Northwest Territories alcohol retail stores, 2017

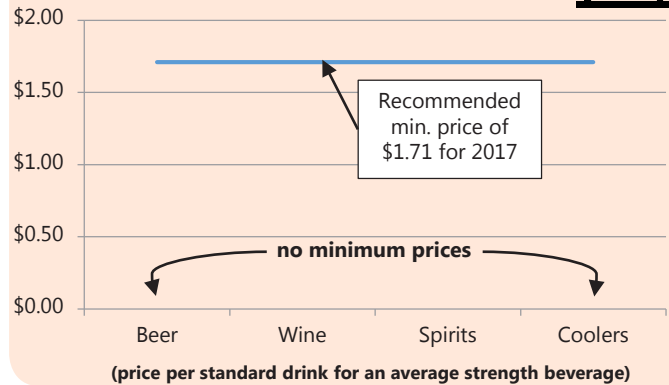


Government retail stores Private retail stores

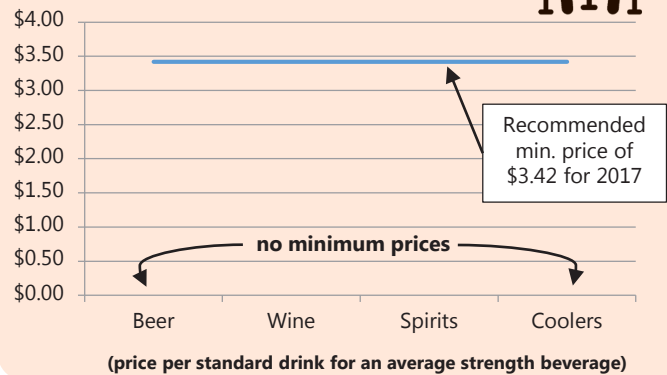
Best practice is 100% government-run alcohol retail stores

Northwest Territories minimum prices per standard drink, 2017

Off-premise retail stores



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



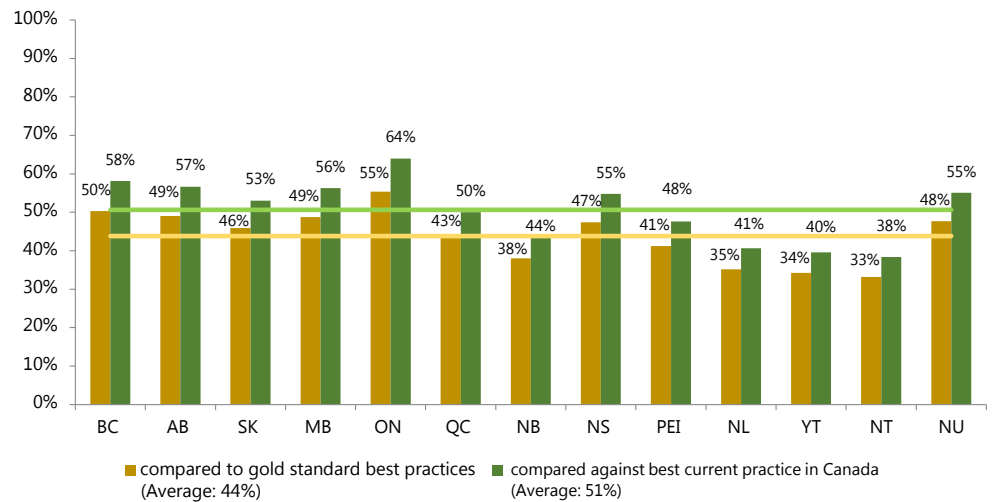
Select Best Practices for Impaired Driving Countermeasures Across the Territories

	Yukon	Northwest Territories	Nunavut
Has a graduated licensing program (GLP) in place	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
.05% BAC administrative license suspension (ALS) has mandatory vehicle impoundment for 1st offence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ALS period for 1st offence at least 3 days	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ALS period for 2nd offence at least 7 days	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mandatory interlock program for <i>Criminal Code</i> impaired driving	Voluntary program	Voluntary program	No interlock program

How does Northwest Territories stack up against other provinces and territories?

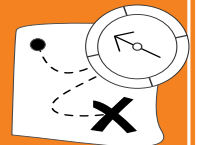
Even though the provinces and territories scored poorly overall in relation to gold standard best practices, many examples of strong alcohol policy components were found across Canada. **In fact, if a province or territory chose to implement all of these best current practices that were identified they 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 Northwest Territories

- 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 report².
- Position liquor boards within ministries directly concerned with health and safety rather than with finance and economic development.
- Learn from other provinces' and territories' experiences with successful implementation of effective alcohol policies (see Best Practice Leaders identified on P11 of the full report²).
- 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 as 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 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.



Suggested citation: Chow, C., Vallance, K., Wettlaufer, A., Stockwell, T., Giesbrecht, N., April, N., Asbridge, M., Callaghan, R., Cukier, S., Davis-MacNevin, P., Dube, M., Hynes, G., Mann, R., Solomon, R., Thomas, G., Thompson, K. (2019). Reducing Alcohol-Related Harms and Costs in Northwest Territories: A Policy Review. Victoria, BC: Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, University of Victoria.

Acknowledgements: Thank you to all of the provincial and territorial stakeholders who provided valuable feedback for this project as well as assisting with data collection and validation activities. We gratefully acknowledge MADD Canada for permitting us to use materials from their 2017 legislative review. Thanks also to our three external expert reviewers, Robyn Burton, Toben Nelson and Tanya Chikritzhs and to all of the extended members of the project team. This study was funded by Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Health Canada or the other organizations acknowledged.

▣ 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.