

Self Service Wine at the Table

Guidelines for Sanitary Wine Self Service at the Table

Wine sold by the glass is popular in California. Bottles may be opened at a bar or in the kitchen and may also be filled from a bulk container. In some cases only the glass of wine is served, while in others a bottle or decanter is left for self service. In the latter instance, wine remaining in the decanter may be returned to the bar or kitchen, the bottle refilled, and offered to other customers. This practice is allowed by the California Uniform Retail Food Facilities Law (CURFFL) provided that certain guidelines for food safety are observed.

Elements of Wine Self Service:

- 1) If the bottle is to be refilled, it must be constructed of materials approved for food contact and designed to be effectively washed and sanitized according to the methods and procedures specified in CURFFL.
- 2) Exterior surfaces of bottles must be washed and sanitized each time they come in contact with a customer. Care must be taken to avoid contamination of wine with sanitizing solution.
- 3) Bottles which are refilled must be emptied and washed and sanitized on the inside as often as necessary to prevent adulteration by mold, dirt, or foreign materials, but in no case more than fourteen days after the last complete washing.
- 4) Wine which remains in a bottle which is to be emptied and washed may not be poured into another bottle, whether empty or partially full, for service to customers. Such wine may be used in the kitchen for culinary purposes.
- 5) If the bottle contains a cap or stopper which is to be reused it must be constructed of materials approved for food contact and designed to be effectively washed, rinsed, and sanitized according to the methods and procedures specified in CURFFL.
- 6) Caps or stoppers must be removed and sanitized after each occasion in which they come in contact with customers.
- 7) In the event that there is any indication that a customer may have tampered with or contaminated wine through returning poured wine back to the bottle, adding anything to the bottle, or touching the bottle with the mouth or lips the wine must be discarded and the bottle and stopper washed and sanitized before reuse.
- 8) Food establishments must comply with all laws and regulations of Alcohol Beverage Control dealing with serving and labeling of wine.