

VQA ONTARIO
Ontario's Wine Appellation Authority
NEWS & TIPS MAY 2020

COVID-19 Operations Update

Our main focus continues to be keeping core services functioning, including wine testing and approval.

VQA Ontario is operating its own ad-hoc tasting panels for the duration that the LCBO panels are suspended. Subject to the availability of qualified panelists, panels are operating every Wednesday and there are currently no delays for tastings. Wineries should continue to deliver samples for testing to the LCBO Quality Assurance Department (noting their reduced hours of Monday-Thursday 8:30 am – 3 pm).

LCBO is operating the laboratory at reduced capacity, with priority for VQA samples. There are no current delays for lab testing.

There are no delays in label reviews.

Please note that we are processing cheques only one day per week, and this may affect how quickly payments made by cheque are posted. If you are concerned about this, please call us.

We continue to ask that you help us manage these emergency circumstances:

Spread out your submissions if practical and try not to submit more than 5 wines at once.

If you have samples in progress, please login to the VQA Services website for information on the status of testing. You can monitor receipt date, tasting schedules and individual test results throughout the process. We also highly recommend you pay online – both for faster service and to avoid the personal contact involved in handling and depositing cheques.

If you have samples that have completed the tasting and lab testing, but are not finalized, please upload your labels and pay the fee. We have hundreds of “pending completion” files in the system that make it difficult to sort, find and address active applications. We're happy to help if you have questions about what is missing.

This continues to be a very challenging and uncertain time across the industry, and we will do what we can to make the VQA process as normal and responsive as possible. Call us – we are here to help. 416-367-2002

VQA Services website - Geo-fencing notice

As a result of escalating random hacking attempts, the VQA Services website is now restricted to Canadian based internet traffic only. Any login attempts originating outside of Canada are blocked. We don't anticipate these new security measures will impact users but please contact us if you require access to your online account from an international location.

Final notice to upload your monthly sales reports, effective with your April report due May 10.

VQA continues to modernize its record-keeping and payment systems to be more efficient for members and reduce errors. We have now added the final phase of system improvements to link our financial accounting to member services and it is essential that all transactions be processed through the VQA Services portal.

Each sales report uploaded to VQA Services generates an invoice for levies due on VQA sales. Payments can then be accepted for these invoices. Because we cannot process cheques that are not associated with an invoice, these will be returned to the sender beginning with the April reports. Eventually, non-compliance will result in default notices and the suspension of membership.

If you are one of the few wineries that are not uploading your reports, please do so. If you need assistance, we are happy to guide you through the process – it is very simple to use and we believe it will save you considerable time, especially if you are sending in small amounts. If you are not responsible for uploading sales reports at your winery, please forward this important message to the appropriate person and make sure they have a login ID. Step by step instructions are available on the VQA Services website via the "Document Library" link on the main menu.