

CHAPTER 158
HB 467 - FINAL VERSION

26Mar2025... 1084h

2025 SESSION

25-0706
08/11

HOUSE BILL

467

AN ACT defining "social districts" and enabling municipalities to create social districts.

SPONSORS: Rep. B. Boyd, Hills. 12; Rep. Bordes, Belk. 5; Rep. Edwards, Rock. 31; Rep. Grill, Hills. 18; Rep. Moffett, Merr. 4; Rep. Nelson, Rock. 13; Rep. Osborne, Rock. 2; Sen. Murphy, Dist 16

COMMITTEE: Commerce and Consumer Affairs

ANALYSIS

This bill defines "social districts" and enables municipalities to create social districts.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struckthrough~~.]
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five

AN ACT defining "social districts" and enabling municipalities to create social districts.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 158:1 New Subdivision; Social Districts. Amend RSA 178 by inserting after section 32 the following
2 new subdivision:

Social Districts

4 178:33 Definitions.

I. "Licensee" means a person holding any of the following licenses:

- (a) An on-premises beverage and wine license issued pursuant to RSA 178:20.
- (b) An on-premises beverage and liquor license issued pursuant to RSA 178:21.
- (c) An on-premises cigar, beverage, and liquor license issued pursuant to RSA 178:20-a.
- (d) A brew pub license issued pursuant to RSA 178:13.
- (e) An on-premises cocktail lounge license issued pursuant to RSA 178:22.

II. "Social district" means a defined outdoor area in which a person may consume alcoholic beverages sold by a licensee. This term does not include the licensee's premises or an extended area of such premises allowed under RSA 178:24.

178:34 Local Option.

I. Any town or city may allow the operation of social districts according to the provisions of this subdivision, in the following manner:

(a) In a town, the question shall be placed on the warrant of an annual town meeting under the procedures set out in RSA 39:3, and shall be voted on a ballot. In a city, the legislative body may vote to place the question on the official ballot for any regular municipal election, or, in the alternative, shall place the question on the official ballot for any regular municipal election upon submission to the legislative body of a petition signed by 5 percent of the registered voters.

(b) The selectmen, aldermen, or city council shall hold a public hearing on the question at least 15 days but not more than 30 days before the question is to be voted on. Notice of the hearing shall be posted in at least 2 public places in the municipality and published in a newspaper of general circulation at least 7 days before the hearing.

(c) The wording of the question shall be substantially as follows: "Shall we allow the operation of social districts within the town or city?"

II. If a majority of those voting on the question vote "Yes," social districts may be operated within the town or city.

III. If the question is not approved, the question may later be voted upon according to the provisions of paragraph I at the next annual town meeting or regular municipal election.

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1 IV. A municipality that has voted to allow the operation of social districts may consider rescinding
2 its action in the manner described in paragraph I of this section.

3 IV-a. An unincorporated place may allow the operation of social districts by majority vote of the
4 county delegation, after a public hearing is held.

5 V. The liquor commission shall maintain a list of municipalities where social districts are
6 approved.

7 178:35 Requirements of a Social District. A social district shall:

8 I. Be clearly defined with signs posted in a conspicuous location indicating which area is included
9 in the social district, the days and hours during which alcoholic beverages may be consumed in the social
10 district, the telephone number for the New Hampshire liquor commission and the local law enforcement
11 agency with jurisdiction over the area comprising the social district and a clear statement that alcoholic
12 beverages purchased for consumption in the social district shall:

13 (a) Only be consumed in the social district; and

14 (b) Be disposed of before the person in possession of the alcoholic beverage exits the social
15 district unless the person is reentering the licensed premises where the alcoholic beverage was
16 purchased. The hours set by a city or town during which alcoholic beverages may be consumed in a
17 social district shall be in accordance with RSA 179:17.

18 II. The board of selectmen, town council, city council, or board of alderman shall establish
19 management and maintenance plans for the social district and post these plans, along with a rendering of
20 the boundaries of the social district, on the Internet website of the city or town. The social district shall be
21 maintained in a manner that protects the health and safety of the general public.

22 III. Before allowing consumption of alcoholic beverages in a social district, the city or town shall
23 submit to the liquor commission a detailed map of the social district with the boundaries of the social
24 district clearly marked and the days and hours during which alcoholic beverages may be consumed in the
25 social district.

26 178:36 Requirements for Sale of Alcoholic Beverages. A licensee located in or contiguous to a social
27 district may sell alcoholic beverages for consumption within the social district it is located in or contiguous
28 to in accordance with the following:

29 I. The licensee shall only sell and serve alcoholic beverages on its licensed premises.

30 II. The licensee shall only sell alcoholic beverages for consumption in the social district in a
31 container that meets the following requirements:

32 (a) The container clearly identifies the licensee from which the alcoholic beverage was
33 purchased.

34 (b) The container clearly displays a logo or some other mark that is unique to the social
35 district in which it will be consumed.

36 (c) The container is not made of glass.

37 (d) The container displays, in no less than 12-point font, the statement, "Drink Responsibly --
38 Be 21."

39 (e) The container shall not hold more than 16 fluid ounces.

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1 III. The licensee shall not allow a person to enter or reenter its licensed premises with an
2 alcoholic beverage not sold by the licensee.

3 178:37 Requirements for Possession and Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages. The possession and
4 consumption of an alcoholic beverage in a social district is subject to the following requirements:

5 I. Only alcoholic beverages purchased from a licensee located in or contiguous to the social
6 district may be possessed and consumed.

7 II. Alcoholic beverages shall only be in containers that meet the requirements set forth in RSA
8 178:36.

9 III. Alcoholic beverages shall only be possessed and consumed during the days and hours set by
10 the city or town in accordance with the RSA 178:35 of this section.

11 IV. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed as authorizing the sale and delivery of alcoholic
12 beverages in excess of the limitations set in RSA 179:5.

13 V. A person shall dispose of any alcoholic beverage in the person's possession prior to exiting
14 the social district unless the person is reentering the licensed premises where the alcoholic beverage was
15 purchased.

16 178:38 Rulemaking. The commissioner may adopt rules under RSA 541-A to implement and enforce
17 this subdivision.

158:2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

Approved: July 07, 2025

Effective Date: September 05, 2025