

# Product Testing Parameter Guidelines - Spirits

## PURPOSE

The following table outlines acceptable limits for each parameter the NSLC test for. Each column represents an internal triage level with corresponding actions. This table is meant to help you understand the results of your Certificate of Analysis (COA).

**GREEN** (adherence) indicates your product complied with Health Canada regulated and NSLC limits and no further action is required.

**YELLOW** (minor variance) indicates your product is approaching either the Health Canada regulated limit or the NSLC limit. Products that fall into the yellow category will receive follow-up communication and may be triaged for further assessment including retesting or a sensory review.

**RED** (major variance) indicates your product has exceeded either the Health Canada regulated limit or the NSLC limit. Products in this category will receive a follow-up communication and may trigger a notification to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), if applicable. The CFIA will work with you directly to assess risk and advise on the next steps if required.

## PARAMETER LIMITS

TESTING PARAMETER	ADHERENCE	MINOR VARIANCE	MAJOR VARIANCE	HEALTH CANADA LIMIT
ABV Allowance - No Macerated fruit/plants	Less than or equal to $\pm 0.3\%$	$\pm 0.4\%$ to $\pm 0.9\%$	Greater than or equal to $\pm 1.0\%$	N/A
ABV Allowance - Macerated fruit/plants	Less than or equal to $\pm 1.0\%$	$\pm 1.1\%$ to $\pm 1.9\%$	Greater than or equal to $\pm 2.0\%$	N/A
Methanol	Less than or equal to 6000 mg/L	N/A	Greater than 6000 mg/L	N/A
Sugar - Vodka/Dry Gin products	Less than or equal to 2 g/L	N/A	Greater than 2 g/L	Limit 2 g/L
Ethyl Carbamate - non fruit spirit	Less than or equal to 150 $\mu\text{g/L}$	N/A	Greater than 150 $\mu\text{g/L}$	Limit 150 $\mu\text{g/kg}$ *(150 $\mu\text{g/L}$ )
Ethyl Carbamate - fruit spirit	Less than or equal to 400 $\mu\text{g/L}$	N/A	Greater than 400 $\mu\text{g/L}$	Limit 400 $\mu\text{g/kg}$ *(400 $\mu\text{g/L}$ )
Arsenic	Less than or equal to 100 $\mu\text{g/L}$	N/A	Greater than 100 $\mu\text{g/L}$	Limit 100 $\mu\text{g/L}$
Cadmium	Less than or equal to 20 $\mu\text{g/L}$	N/A	Greater than 20 $\mu\text{g/L}$	Limit 20 $\mu\text{g/L}$
Cobalt	Less than or equal to 20 $\mu\text{g/L}$	N/A	Greater than 20 $\mu\text{g/L}$	Limit 20 $\mu\text{g/L}$
Lead	Less than or equal to 200 $\mu\text{g/L}$	N/A	Greater than 200 $\mu\text{g/L}$	Limit 200 $\mu\text{g/L}$
Synthetic Dyes - liqueurs only	Not Present	N/A	Present	See testing parameters below
Caffeine**	Less than or equal to 30 mg per serving	N/A	Greater than 30 mg per serving	N/A

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**ABV** - alcohol by volume  
**g/L** - grams per litre  
 **$\mu\text{g/kg}$**  - micrograms per kilogram  
 **$\mu\text{g/L}$**  - micrograms per litre  
**mg/L** - milligram per litre  
**mg** - milligram

\*Conversion factor = micrograms per litre divided by the density ( $\text{g/cm}^3$ ) of the product  
 \*\* Serving defined as complete contents of single-serve items or 75 ml, whichever is greater.

## SYNTHETIC DYES

Note: According to the Food and Drug Regulations, synthetic dyes are not permitted for use in standardized beverage alcohol products except for Liqueurs.

Group	Dye Name	Maximum Allowable Limit
Group A*	Allura Red	300 mg/L
	Amaranth	300 mg/L
	Erythrosine	300 mg/L
	Tartrazine	300 mg/L
	Sunset Yellow FCF	300 mg/L
Indigo Carmine (Indigotine)	300 mg/L	
Group B*	Fast Green	100 mg/L
	Brilliant Blue FCF	100 mg/L
Group C	Any combination of synthetic dyes named in Group A or B above.	300 mg/L
		Individual dyes shall not exceed maximum Allowable Limit stated for the named dye.

**[\\*Health Canada - List of Permitted Colouring Agents - Group A - see Item No. 3](#)**

**[\\*Health Canada - List of Permitted Colouring Agents - Group B - see Item No. 4](#)**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have further questions regarding the established limits, product testing, or your COA results, please direct them to [ProductTesting@MyNSLC.com](mailto:ProductTesting@MyNSLC.com)