

Energy Drink Ban

Although regulated by the Natural Health Products Directorate, Prince Edward Island is talking about banning energy drinks in their province.

Will Prince Edward Island restrict or ban sales of energy drinks? What about other provinces? While c-store operators in P.E.I. anxiously wait to see what the provincial government is going to do, industry stakeholders from across the country are also watching closely. After all, P.E.I. was the first province to introduce public smoking bans in 2003, and other provinces have since followed suit. Will the same thing happen with energy drinks?

Energy drinks - new to Prince Edward Island in 2008

When Prince Edward Island lifted its ban on cans in the spring of 2008, the province was immediately flooded with canned beverages, including energy drinks. Concerns about energy drinks being consumed by school children were raised by doctors, educators and the media. By the end of 2008 P.E.I. school boards banned energy drinks from their schools.

Last November the provincial legislature directed its Standing Committee on Social Development to consult Islanders regarding the health risks of energy drinks, and to seek direction on possible restrictions on the sale of these drinks. By the end of June the committee had heard three presentations and read ten written submissions from organizations and individuals. In their submission, the Atlantic Canada Convenience Store Association assured the committee that they were looking “forward to working with partnership with government to address any public concerns on energy drinks.”

The committee’s final report will be presented in November 2009. Judging by the interim report that was released by the committee in April, it is unlikely that energy drinks will be banned from the island altogether, but it is likely that stricter rules will be put in place to regulate the sale of energy drinks, especially to youth.

Islanders concerns about energy drinks

“The number one concern from all presenters and written submissions is accessibility to children,” says Melissa Keefe, the committee clerk. In their interim report the committee states, “The majority of respondents expressed concerns regarding the consumption of energy drinks by youths and many supported a ban on the sale of such products to individuals under the age of 18.”

Another concern, voiced by Lynn McCabe of the P.E.I. Dietetic

Association, was that “Many of the parents with whom I spoke did not realize that an energy drink is not the same as a sports drink.” While sports drinks rehydrate athletes, energy drinks can actually dehydrate.

“There needs to be a lot more education around what these drinks are,” said Charmaine Campbell of the P.E.I. Healthy Eating Alliance

Finally, there is the concern that some people mix energy drinks with alcohol. Ms. McCabe told the committee, “Many of the reports that came from Health Canada on their adverse reaction reports were young adults combining alcohol and energy drinks.” In fact, Health Canada has written a fact sheet warning Canadians that excessive drinking of energy drinks or mixing them with alcohol can have serious health effects.

How c-stores can address concerns

What can c-store operators do to address public concerns, while they wait to see whether new rules and regulations are put in place?



Fun Facts from P.E.I.

- **Prince Edward Island is the smallest province in Canada as well as the most densely populated province (24 people per square kilometer). It joined the Confederation in 1873.**
- **There are over 800 beaches around the shoreline.**



Between 1908 to 1911, cars were banned on the island. They were allowed to be used on roads in 1919 and they drove on the left hand side until 1924.

- **Beer and soda (or pop) was not sold in cans on PEI until May 2008.**
- **It’s the potato capital of Canada.**



Lobsters are harvested twice per year - once in the spring and again in the fall.

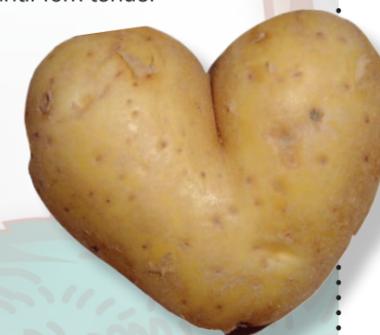
- **PEI’s famous red soil gets its color from the high iron content which oxidizes when exposed to the air.**
- **Potatoes represent over 1/3 of farm revenue for the province and PEI represents nearly 1/3 of Canadian potato production.**

How can I make perfect mashed potatoes?

Some varieties are better suited to boiling and mashing than others. For a fluffy, mashed potato choose a Russet variety because of its drier, fluffier texture; soggy, mashed potatoes could result from over-cooking, i.e. too rapid a boil or too long a cooking time; sticky, gluey, mashed potatoes could be caused by over-whipping.

For perfect results:

- Choose a P.E.I. Russet variety of potato
- Add a small amount of water
- Cook on Medium High just until fork tender
- Drain well and mash
- If despite your best efforts, your mashed potatoes are too wet; add some instant potato flakes and stir just until combined.



“C-stores are part of the community and can play an important role in educating consumers about the appropriate use of these beverages,” says Justin Sherwood, president of Refreshments Canada, a trade association that represents more than 30 brands of non-alcoholic beverages. C-stores should not be targeting youth in their promotion of energy drinks, and Sherwood suggests that c-store staff ask youth if their parents are aware they are drinking them.

C-stores operators can encourage shoppers to read labels, and keep information handy for people who have questions about the drinks. Sherwood suggests the Health Canada fact sheet “Safe Use of Energy Drinks”, which can be downloaded from the Health Canada website (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/prod/energy-energie-eng.php).

Safeguarding future sales

Energy drinks are a profitable and growing beverage category for c-store operators. While the P.E.I. government is the first to look at regulating the sale of energy drinks, it likely won’t be the last. C-store operators who sell energy drinks in an ethical manner will be more likely to maintain public goodwill - and their share of sales in this lucrative beverage category.

Why the concern about energy drinks?

In their presentations and submissions, people from P.E.I. expressed three major concerns:

1. Health risks to children and youth.
2. Lack of education and awareness about energy drinks. For example, many young athletes and their parents don’t understand the differences between sports drinks and energy drinks.
3. Risks associated with mixing energy drinks with alcohol.

What can c-store owners do?

1. Be pro-active and self-regulate before the government steps in with legal regulations.
2. Do not sell energy drinks to children under the age of 12.
3. Ask older children if their parents are aware they are drinking energy drinks.
4. Help educate the public about the risks of mixing energy drinks with alcohol. Provide a copy of the Health Canada fact sheet “Safe Use of Energy Drinks” or refer them to the Health Canada website www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/prod/energy-energie-eng.php.