



# TTB Distilled Spirits Formulas and Labels

## What is the Connection?

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# Key Objectives



Explain connection between a formula approval and label approval.



Provide examples of approved labels with corresponding formula approval.



Hear from you!



# TTB Disclaimer

## Notice:

- This information is being presented to help the public to understand and comply with the laws and regulations that the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau administers
- It is not intended to establish any new, or change any existing, definitions, interpretations, standards, or procedures regarding those laws and regulations
- In addition, this presentation may be made obsolete by changes in laws and regulations - please consult the regulations for the most current regulatory requirements
- Sample documents (such as records, returns, and labels) are for illustrative purposes only and contain fictitious data

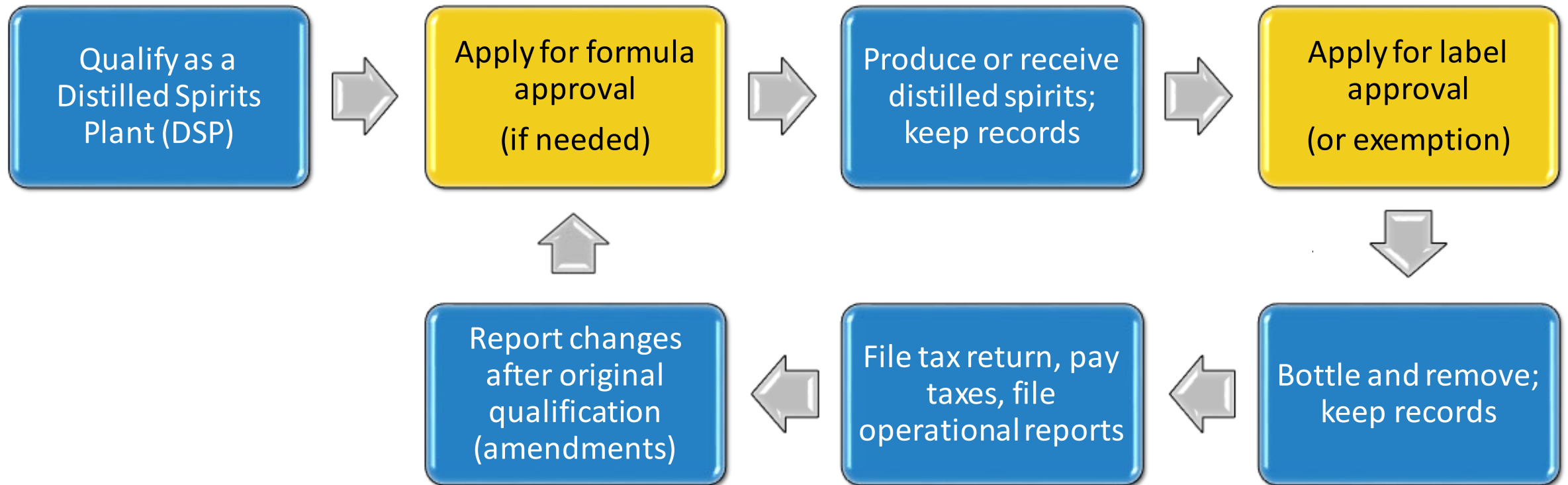


# Background

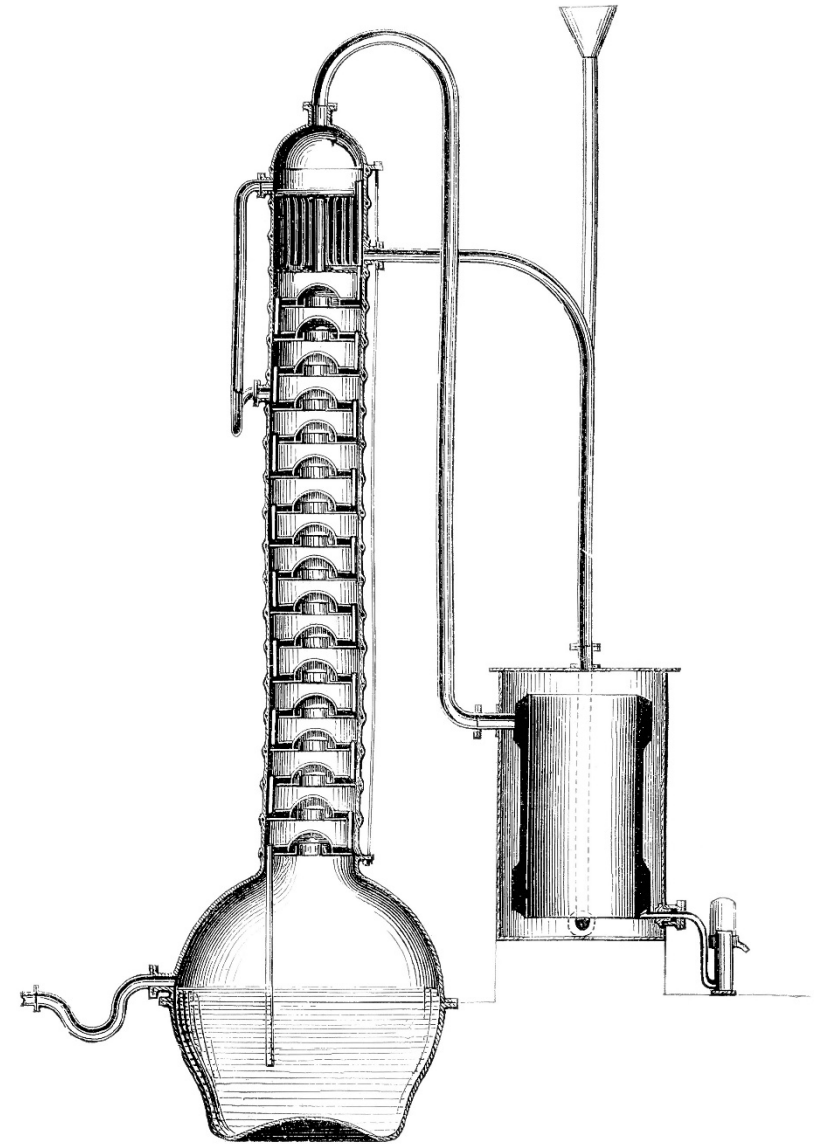
- Increased error rates
  - Formula approvals
  - Label approvals
- Misunderstanding of Statement of Composition/Class Type
- Connection between Formula & Label Approval



# Typical TTB Touchpoints for Beverage Distilled Spirits Industry Members



# Formulas Overview





# What is a Formula?

- A formula is the recipe for your distilled spirit product
- It must include:
  - a total yield, or batch size
  - a list of all ingredients by quantity
  - a description of how the product is made
- In some instances a sample of the product must also be submitted to TTB for laboratory analysis
- See [Formula Basics](#) page on TTB.gov



# When is a Formula Required?

**Generally, formula approval is required when a distilled spirit contains:**

- Artificial sweeteners
- Carbonation
- Compounded/artificial/imitation flavors
- Ingredients derived from hemp
  - See webinar presentation: [Using Hemp and Hemp Derivatives in Alcohol Beverages](#)

In addition, certain classes/types of distilled spirits always require formula approval





# What TTB Looks For

- Class and Type – Is the base alcohol produced according to the stated standard for the specified class and type?
- Flavors and Flavor Ingredient Data (FID) sheets
- Restricted and prohibited ingredients
- Colors
- Food safe ingredients under FDA regulations (including Generally Recognized As Safe or GRAS ingredients)



# Helpful Hints

- Supply a quantitative list of ingredients
- Provide a complete method of manufacture
- Indicate at what stage flavors are added to the product
- Flavor Ingredient Data Sheets (FIDS) should include a TTB number, a Flavor Product Number, and the TTB Approval status (Nonbeverage Products Lab Approval)
- Provide the common name and scientific name (genus and species) for any unusual herbal ingredients
- Ensure that ingredients are considered GRAS or otherwise approved by the FDA



# Common Reasons Formulas Are Returned for Correction

**To speed up the formula approval process, don't forget:**

[Ingredient Specification Sheet \(Spec Sheet\)](#) for ingredients composed of more than 1 component

[Limited Ingredient Calculation Worksheet](#) when compounded flavors are used

[Flavor Ingredient Data \(FID\)](#) when compounded flavors are used



# What Should I Do After My Formula is Approved?

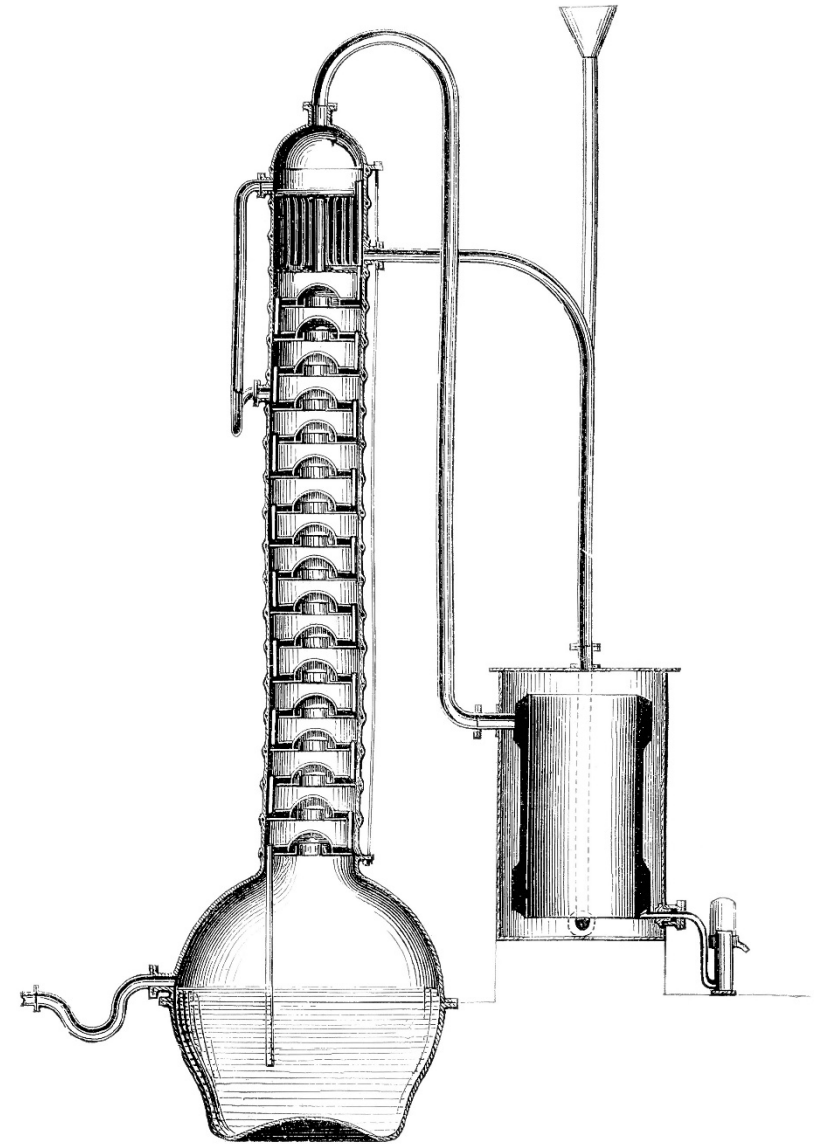
- In the RESULTS tab on the approved formula, TTB will provide a simple, general statement of composition for the product label, such as:
  - *Vodka with Natural Flavors and Artificial Color*
- You can either use this generic statement of composition to meet the requirement for the class/type statement on the label, or create a more specific labeling statement that discloses the specific flavors as well as the coloring agent, such as:
  - *Vodka with coconut and cinnamon, coffee flavor, and caramel color*



# What Should I Do After My Formula is Approved? (Cont.)

- Have formula information available when designing your label
- List your formula ID on your application for label approval (or exemption)
- More information can be found: [TTBGov – Distilled Spirits Example Formulas TTB G 2017-9](#)

# Labeling Overview





# Label Approval – What is a COLA?

A **C**ertificate of **L**abel **A**pproval signifies that a product label that was submitted to TTB complies with the applicable labeling requirements found in TTB regulations and policy

A COLA is required for each product sold in interstate commerce (product = distinct brand/distinct product designation/distinct label)

COLAs must be obtained by:

- importers of bottled products, i.e., products imported in consumer containers
- U.S. bottlers of domestic products and products imported in bulk and bottled in the U.S.



# Is a COLA Always Required?

- COLAs are required for each product that will be sold or otherwise introduced into interstate commerce (including products imported in bottles)
- If a distilled spirit product will only be sold in the state where it is bottled, the bottler may instead obtain a Certificate of Exemption from Label Approval
- Label must include statement, **For sale in [name of state where bottled] only**

27 CFR 5.23





# At What Stage do I Apply for Label Approval?

**Domestically bottled** – COLA must be obtained prior to bottling/canning the distilled spirit

**Imported in bottles** – COLA must be obtained prior to removal from Customs custody



# Mandatory Information

## In the Same Field of Vision

- Brand Name
- Class/Type
  - Fanciful Name (if applicable)
  - Statement of Composition (if applicable)
- Alcohol Content

## Anywhere on the Label

- Bottler's or Importer's Name and Address
- Net Contents
- Health Warning Statement
- Country of Origin (if imported)

27 CFR 5.63



# Mandatory Information (if applicable)

## May appear anywhere on the label:

- Sulfite declaration
- Coloring or flavoring material
- FD&C yellow #5
- Cochineal extract or carmine
- Treatment with wood
- Percentage of neutral spirits
- Commodity statement
- Statements of age
- State of distillation

27 CFR 5.63



# Class and Type

There are **12 standards of identity**:

1. Neutral Spirits (Vodka)
2. Whisky
3. Gin
4. Brandy
5. Blended Applejack
6. Rum
7. Agave Spirits (e.g., Tequila)
8. Cordials and Liqueurs
9. Flavored Spirits
10. Imitations
11. Geographical Designations
12. Distilled Spirits Specialty Products

27 CFR 5.141



# Class and Type (Continued)

- If product does not fall under one of the other standards of identity, it is a distilled spirits specialty product and must be designated in accordance with trade and consumer understanding, or, if no such understanding exists, with a distinctive or fanciful name appearing in the same field of vision as the statement of composition.
- For cocktails, a statement of added colors and the class/type of the spirits is sufficient:
  - e.g., Margarita made with tequila, triple sec liqueur, and FD&C Yellow #5

27 CFR 5.156



# Additional Information

## **The label may contain information other than the mandatory information**

- Must be truthful, accurate, and specific
- May not conflict with or qualify mandatory information
- Must comply with the corresponding sections of the regulations

27 CFR 5.56



# Translating Formula to Label

**Label information must be supported by formula information, which can be viewed in:**

- Results Tab
- Formula Tab
- Docs/Links Tab

**Determined by formula:**

- Class and Type
  - Statement of Composition (if required)
- Alcohol content
- Mandatory disclosures (if required)



# Formulas Online

TTBONLINE.GOV  
ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO TAX AND TRADE BUREAU  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Formulas Online  
COLAS Home Text Menu My Profile Help Contact Us Log Out

new View Company

Submissions Search Advanced Search

### Beverage

Main **Formula** Samples **Results** Company Comments **Docs/Links** Workflow Needs Correction History

[Print](#) | [Comment](#) | [Upload](#) | [Close Historical](#)

Expedite  Paper Submission Note:

**Product Information** Class: IMITATION DISTILLED SPIRITS Type: Product Name: DS Example #1 [Change Product Information](#)

Definition

What does TTB look for?

#### 1 Measurement

Type:  Percentage  Volume/Weight

#### 2 Yield Summary

Total Yield:

Alcohol Content of Finished Product:





# Examples

- ❖ Distilled Spirits Specialty / Imitation Product
- ❖ Corn Whisky
- ❖ Bourbon Whisky
- ❖ Bourbon Whisky Finished in Sherry Barrels



# Formula Resources

- [Formula Approval guidance pages on TTB.gov](#)
- [Which Alcohol Beverages Require Formula Approval?](#)
- [Distilled Spirits Beverage Alcohol Manual \(BAM\)](#)
  - [BAM Chapter 1](#): Commodity Statements
  - [BAM Chapter 4](#): Quick product reference guide stating basic technical requirements
  - [BAM Chapter 7](#): Provides chart listing limitations placed on harmless coloring blending and flavoring materials (HCBFM)



# Labeling Resources

- [Distilled Spirits Labeling homepage](#)
- [Mandatory Information Checklist](#)
- [Anatomy of a Distilled Spirits Label Interactive Tool](#)



# Contact Information

## Alcohol, Labeling and Formulation Division, Customer Service:

- Phone: 1-866-927-2533 or 202-453-2250
  - Option 2 – COLAs Online technical assistance
  - Option 3 – COLAs Online registration
  - Option 4 – Distilled Spirits Questions
- Online: <https://www.ttb.gov/contact-alfd>