

Brief guidance on labelling cider and perry for sale in the UK

This brief guide is to help with preparing packaged cider and perry for sale to the consumer. For full details please refer to the original legislation (1, 2) or guidance on the government web pages <https://www.gov.uk/food-labelling-and-packaging>

The information below is intended for guidance – if you have any concerns about your label please seek additional advice from the NACM or from your Trading Standards Officer. Only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

All labelling must be:

- clear and easy to read
- permanent
- easy to understand
- easily visible
- not misleading
- for alcoholic products must comply with Portman Group “Code of practice on the naming and packaging and promotion of alcoholic drinks” [Link to Portman Group Code](#)

Certain items **MUST** be included on the label: **See page 2 for details**

- name of the drink e.g. cider or perry it must be a true description of the product*
- alcohol content*
- lot mark
- net quantity (volume)*
- name and address of the business
- warning labels e.g. allergens
- QUID, if required
- Storage instructions, if required (usually large packs – once opened refrigerate and consume within x days)
- Origin or provenance if failure to give could mislead

The items marked * must appear in the same field of vision, all on the front, all on the back label or within 120 degrees if a circular container a can, for multi packs the information can be on one side or split over two adjacent sides or the top and one side.

Other items can be declared voluntarily, if they fall within the regulations, they must comply with the regulations: **More details of the rules are provided from page 4**

- best before indication (and signpost)
- ingredients
- nutrition information
- alcohol information and warnings (units, pregnancy), NACM recommends that this information is included
- Organic, if appropriate
- Vintage, if appropriate

Mandatory information - details

The minimum size for mandatory information is 1.2 mm as the height of a lower case “x” as in the example below:



Name of the drink

Must accurately describe the product in simplest form cider, perry, pear cider, vintage cider (see below)

Care must be taken when describing mixtures of cider and other fruit juices or cider and flavourings.

- Cider with raspberry **or** raspberry flavoured cider must contain raspberry juice, extract or pulp; (Care must be taken to comply with the need to declare the quantity of the additional ingredients (QUID))
- Cider with raspberry flavour may be cider with a flavouring and **no** fruit juice, extract, or pulp

Care must be taken when describing the origin of the product. Some origin descriptions are subject to PGIs. Please speak to your local TSO for further information.

Care must be taken not to emphasis the strength - Portman Group requirements “Code of practice on the naming and packaging and promotion of alcoholic drinks”. (4) [Link to Portman Group Code](#)

If sweeteners have been used (saccharin, aspartame, etc.) the name must be accompanied by the words with “sweetener(s)” or if sugar is also present the name must be accompanied by the words “with sugar(s) and sweetener(s)”.

If aspartame has been used the words “contains aspartame (a source of phenylalanine)” must appear on the label.

Low alcohol Cider – less than 1.2% alcohol by volume and the label should state the alcohol content preceded by the words “not more than”. (Low alcohol products must have an ingredient list and nutrition information)

Alcohol free Cider – contains less than 0.05% alcohol by volume.

Alcohol content

All products with more than 1.2% alcohol by volume must declare the alcoholic strength to one decimal place in the form “x% vol.” or “alc x% vol.” or “alcohol x% vol.” a product which is analysed as 4.57% would be declared as “4.5% vol” or “alc 4.5% vol.” or “alcohol 4.5% vol.” **Note: the labelling tolerance for cider is plus or minus 1%, however, HMRC requires that “on average” the alcoholic strength is the declared value.** (4)

Lot Mark

A lot mark or batch mark is required on all drinks to enable a product to be traced and/or recalled. The mark should be pre-fixed with an L if it is not clearly distinguished from other information. The usual form of lot code is to use the Julian code, the last digit of the year followed by the day of the year e.g. L0232, year 2020 and 232 day is 19 August.

A “best before” date can be used for the lot mark provided it is specific to the day, month, and year.

Net quantity

The volume of the liquid in the package in litres (l or L), centilitres (cl or cL) or millilitres (ml or mL)

Figures and words to be a minimum height based on the volume:

exceeding 1 L	6 mm
200 ml to 1 L	4 mm
50 ml to 200 ml	3 mm
Less than 50ml	2mm

Products complying with the “average quantity system” can mark the product with the “e” mark as a suffix to the quantity “330 ml e”. The “e” mark acts as a metrological passport in the EEA (European Economic Area), this must be a minimum of 3mm in height.



The dimensions of the “e” mark are found in The Weights and Measures (Packaged Goods) Regulations, 2006, S.I. No. 659 (5)

Name and address of the business

Prepacked drinks must bear the name and address of the drink business operator that takes responsibility for the food information. The name must be the appropriate legal entity and the address must be a postal address that is sufficiently detailed (this could be a post code if specific enough). A small business may use a PO box or address of a legal professional (with their permission).

Allergenic ingredients

You must draw consumers attention to the presence of any of the 14 allergens. Cider and Perry usually contain sulphur dioxide/ sodium metabisulphite /potassium metabisulphite. If this is present at more than 10 mg per litre then the name should be emphasised in the ingredient list. Where there is no ingredient list (alcoholic products) there should be a statement “Contains XXXX” usually for cider this takes the form “Contains sulphites”

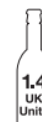
NACM recommendation to include voluntarily:

Alcohol information and warnings

NACM recommends that the following three pieces of information are included, ideally in a separate clearly defined box as laid out in the Portman “Communicating alcohol and health-related information” available from the Portman group Marketing toolkit. (6)

Units

The container should state the number of units in the package and display them within the appropriate icon, bottle or can. Units calculated by multiplying the volume of the drink (in ml) by the alcoholic strength by volume (ABV) and dividing the answer by 1000. The number should be rounded to 1 decimal place.



In multi-serve containers (above 500ml) then the number of units per typical serving 284ml (½ pint) can also be declared. (optional)

Retail multipacks can also state the individual package icon with an indication of the number of units in the multipack. (optional)

Pregnancy

The circular logo



or the statement “it is safest not to drink alcohol when pregnant”

Chief Medical Officers’ low risk drinking guidelines:

‘The UK Chief Medical Officers recommend adults do not regularly drink more than 14 units per week’.

Drinkaware

Drinkaware is an independent charity working to reduce alcohol misuse and harm in the UK. The Drinkaware logo is used to signpost the public to the Drinkaware website where they can find information and advice. The logo is a registered trademark and if you wish to use it requires a Trademark Licence Agreement. There is a licence cost payable for the use of the Drinkaware logo which varies depending on the size and type of organisation. For more information contact <https://resources.drinkaware.co.uk/products/logo-licence> or email logos@drinkaware.co.uk or call 020 7766 9900

Nutrition information (Energy value)

Calories per 100ml and per serving

Ingredients

If voluntarily declared, then the rules apply: Heading “Ingredients” followed by a list of ingredients in descending order by weight at the mixing bowl stage of production. Should be in a separate box/panel

Voluntary information

Best before indication (and signpost)

For products with a shelf life between 3 and 18 months:

“Best before” followed by day/month/year e.g. “Best Before 23 July 2021”, **OR**
“Best before end” followed by month/year e.g. “Best before end July 2021”

For products with a shelf life greater than 18 months:

“Best before end” followed by year e.g. “Best before end 2021” (many cider makers still use month and year as above)

Often the main display panel will provide a signpost to the BBE information e.g. “For best before see base of can”, “For best before see cap”

Nutrition information

Currently exempt. Voluntarily can declare just the energy value (Article 30, 4 FIC Regulations) (2)

Additional alcohol warning information

The Portman Group – “Communicating alcohol and health-related information” include other items which can be included such as:

Chief Medical Officers’ low risk drinking guidelines:

‘The UK Chief Medical Officers recommend adults do not regularly drink more than 14 units per week’.

Calorie Content

Calories per 100ml and per serving

Drink Driving message

“don’t drink and drive” or the logo



Responsible drinking message

A statement such as ‘Drink responsibly’, ‘Drink in moderation’, ‘Drink sensibly’ or ‘Know your limits’.

Age-restricted product

Container to carry the logo




Organic, if appropriate

Products certified by an approved UK organic control body must be labelled with details of the organic control body. “Organic Certification: GB-ORG-XX” – where XX is the number allocated to the certifier. You may also use their logo. The statement of agricultural origin will be:

- “UK Agriculture” where 98% of the ingredients are from the UK
- “UK or non-UK Agriculture” where the product is produced with ingredient grown inside and outside of the UK
- “Non-UK agriculture” where 98% of the ingredients are produced outside the UK

The above labelling changes apply from 1 January 2021 and must be made on pack by 30 September 2022 (to allow for current labels to be used up)

Following agreement with the EU the current rules for organic products exported to EU countries will continue until 2023.

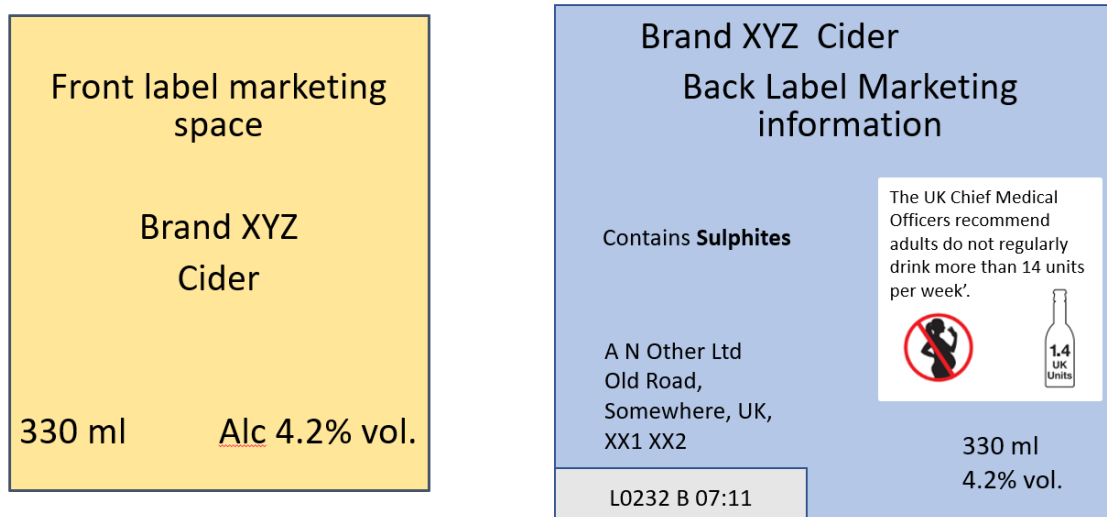
 Where the EU leaf is used on labels, the EU agricultural origin statement (i.e. EU/non-EU agriculture) should be used in place of a UK agricultural origin statement.

Items produced in the Northern Ireland, from ingredients from Great Britain, will need to change the statement of agriculture to reflect non-EU origin.

Vintage, if appropriate

If labelled as vintage the cider should carry a vintage year and be a minimum of 85% from the named year.

Example of a simple front and back label



References and other resources:

1. The Food Information Regulations, 2014, SI no. 1855. As amended <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/1855/contents>
2. Regulation (EU) no 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council on 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers. (Consolidated text) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1559832584009&uri=CELEX:02011R1169-20180101>
3. Portman Group, Code of Practice on the Naming, Packaging and Promotion of Alcoholic Drinks <https://www.portmangroup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Code-of-Practice-on-the-Naming-Packaging-and-Promotion-of-Alcoholic-Drinks-Sixth-Edition.pdf>

4. HMRC, Excise Notice 162 – Cider production
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/excise-notice-162-cider-production/excise-notice-162-cider-production>
5. The Weights and Measures (Packaged Goods) Regulations, 2006, S.I. No. 659 and guidance
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/659/contents> and [Guidance to Weights and Measures \(Packaged Goods\) Regulations 2006](#)
6. Portman Group, Communicating alcohol and health-related information” available from the Portman group Marketing toolkit <https://www.portmangroup.org.uk/marketing-toolkit/>
7. EU Organic labelling <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:02007R0834-20130701>
8. EU Organic logo rules https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/organic-logo-user-manual_en.pdf
9. Business Companion, trading standards law explained, guides, **food and drink**.
<https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink#strongFoodsafetyqualityamplabellingstrong>
10. Low alcohol descriptors
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/763840/low-alcohol-descriptors-guidance.pdf
11. Business Companion, trading standards law explained, guides, food and drink, **Alcoholic beverages, spirits and food** <https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink/alcoholic-beverages-spirits-and-food>
12. Business Companion, trading standards law explained, guides, food and drink, **Packaged Goods: average quantity**. <https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink/packaged-goods-average-quantity>
13. Business Companion, trading standards law explained, guides, food and drink, **Date and lot marking of prepacked food** <https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink/date-and-lot-marking-of-prepacked-food>
14. Business Companion, trading standards law explained, guides, food and drink, **Food allergens and intolerance** <https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink/food-allergens-and-intolerance>