



Alcohol Law Enforcement

NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



ALE Mission and Overview



- ALE Mission
 - Reduce criminal activity at both licensed and illegal alcohol establishments
 - Prevent alcohol-related harm
- “All crimes” approach
 - Approximately 21,000 ABC permitted businesses
 - Illegal outlets
- Lead enforcement agency for the state’s alcoholic beverage control, gambling, lottery, and tobacco laws, with primary authority over nuisance abatement statutes



- 111 sworn special agents are assigned to 8 districts throughout North Carolina
- Partnership focus (Chiefs, Sheriffs, DAs, Alcohol Industry)
- National Alcohol Enforcement Agency of the Year (2021 & 2022)
- Only CALEA accredited alcohol enforcement agency in the United States

Criminal Enforcement & Regulatory Action



- Inspection authority at ABC permitted businesses
- Voluntary compliance and education preferred
- Violation reports to ABC Commission & NC Education Lottery Commission
 - Sanctions imposed by respective commissions (fines, suspension, revocations)
 - 874 Violation Reports submitted to ABCC/NCEL in 2024

Emphasis on Addressing Violence



- ALE special agents investigate after violent events occur at both permitted and illegal alcohol businesses to prevent further violence
- If the business is permitted:
 - Determine if business is suitable to continue selling alcoholic beverages
 - Submit investigative findings to ABCC for consideration of sanctions

NORTH CAROLINA NEWS

NC bar surrenders alcohol license due to homicide investigation, quintuple shooting

by: Sarah Winkelmann, Brayden Stamps

Posted: Nov 30, 2023 / 06:59 AM EST

Updated: Nov 30, 2023 / 06:59 AM EST

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WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (WGHP) — The owner of a Winston-Salem bar has surrendered its ABC license after a homicide and a separate shooting occurred within the last month, according to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety.

The owner of The Spott Bar on 3533 North Glenn Avenue, was cooperative and voluntarily surrendered the licenses to ALE special agents on Monday, according to NCDPS.



Recommendations

- Recommendation #1
 - Consider providing ABCC greater authority to suspend ABC permits following a violent event and a request from ALE
- Recommendation #2
 - Consider a requirement for permittees to maintain any video evidence following a request by ALE

Multiple shootings, fights lead to Press Box Bar & Grille ABC permit suspension



By WBTV Web Staff

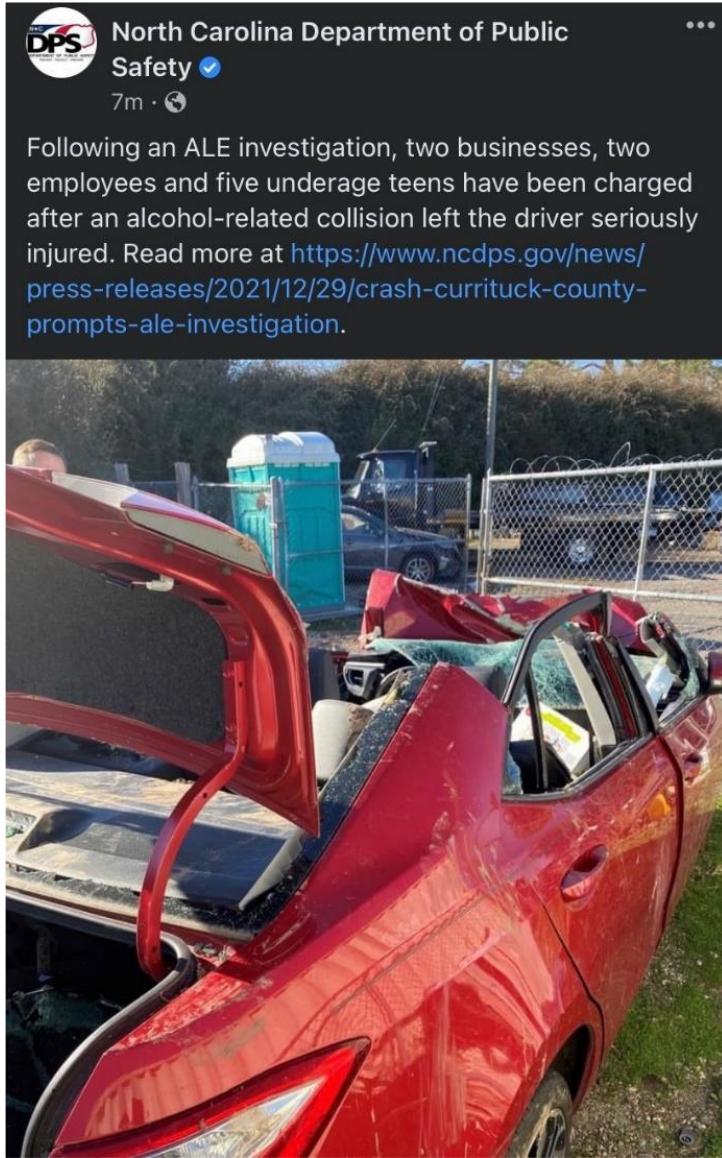
Updated: Apr. 17, 2021 at 9:01 AM EDT



CHARLOTTE, N.C. (WBTV) - After multiple shootings and fights, the North Carolina Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission has suspended Press Box Bar and Grille's liquor license. The bar will no longer be able to sell, unfortified wine, wine and malt beverages.



Source Investigations



- Conduct investigations following any incident resulting in death or serious injury in which underage alcohol use was a contributing factor
- The goal is to identify the source of alcohol
- Time sensitive investigations that require immediate attention
- Effective communication with partner agencies is essential



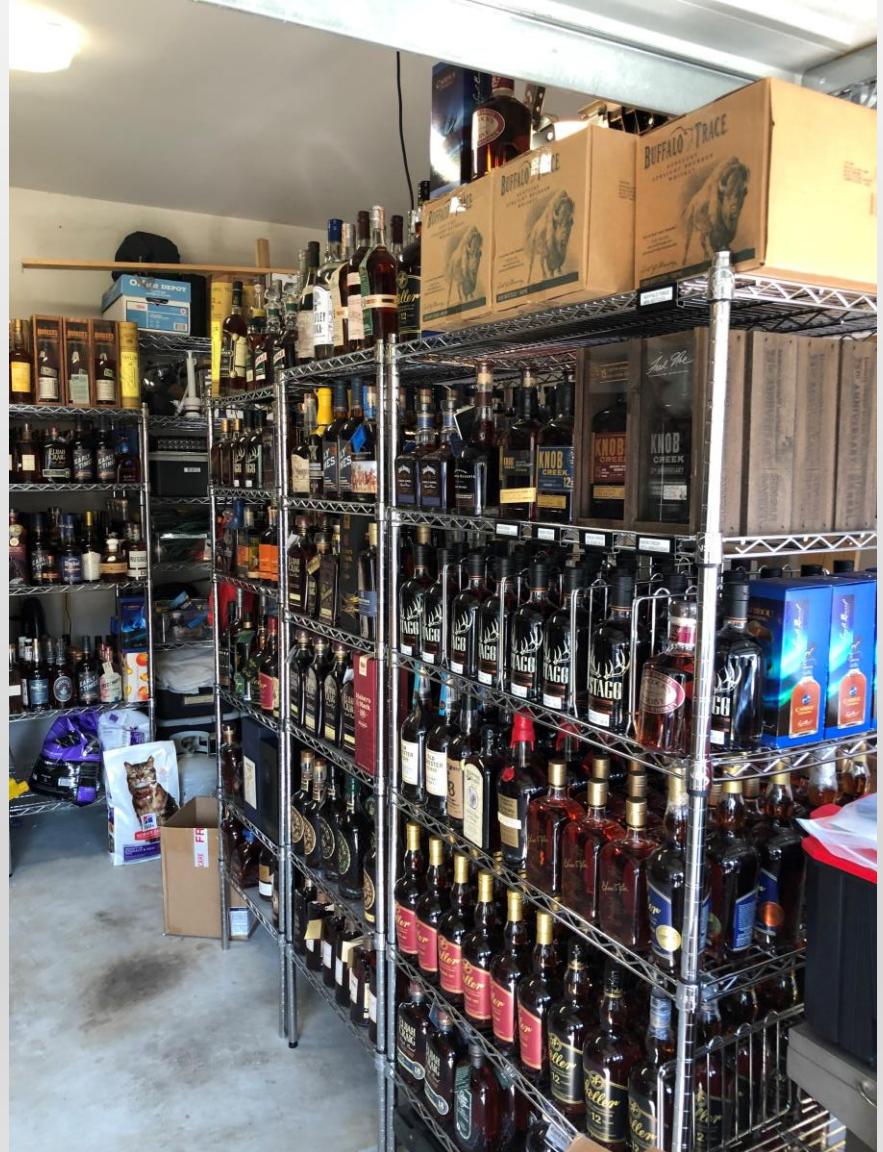
Source Investigations



Illegal Bar Trends



- ALE saw a similar number of illegal outlets from 2023 to 2024
 - 2023: 137 illegal outlets closed
 - 2024: 138 illegal outlets closed





Provide Training to Employees

295 Educational Programs were provided for 2,506 participants in 2024.

Be A Responsible Seller (B.A.R.S.)

- Topics Include
 - Responsible sales of alcohol
 - Sales of age restricted products
 - Fictitious IDs
 - Sales to intoxicated patrons
 - ABC laws and regulations



Stop Alcohol Violence through Education (S.A.V.E.)

- Topics Include
 - Using Technology
 - Preventing anonymity
 - Intoxicated patrons
 - Parking lot safety
 - Lighting
 - Licensed security



Nuisance Abatement Team



- ALE has primary authority over nuisance abatement statutes
- The ALE NAT consists of 5 Special Agents who are subject matter experts and certified paralegals
- Assist attorney of record (DA or local attorney) with preparing and filing civil litigation to resolve chronic criminal activity using Chapter 19
- These cases have the potential to close properties declared to be nuisances
- Cases begin after receiving a written request by a Chief, Sheriff, or DA



Nuisance Abatement Team

- Due to the number of requests, currently there is a three-month delay before the commencement of a case



Gaming Investigations



- 2024 Gaming Statistics

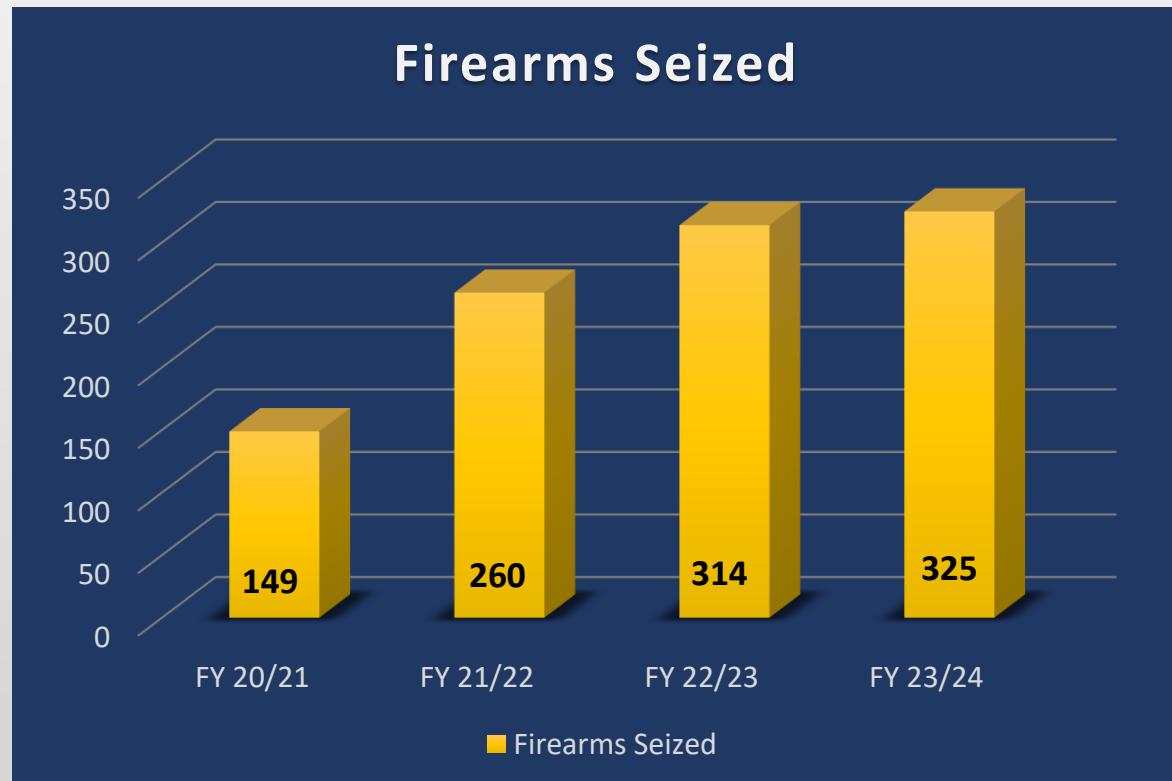
- 1,008 unlawful machines seized or disarmed
- 136 defendants charged with 1,474 criminal charges
- Over \$1.8 million seized as evidence
- 41 ABC violation reports submitted
- 170 NCEL violation reports submitted
- 29 search warrants executed





Firearm Seizure Trends

- Increase in the number of firearms seized at ABC permitted and illegal alcohol businesses
- Started tracking in FY 17/18 with 78 firearms seized. Last fiscal year, 325 weapons were seized
- National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN)
 - Started participating in 2022
 - 72 "Hits"
 - 26 Ghost guns



Special Operations Group



- **Special Operations Group (SOG)**
 - High Risk Arrests and Operations
 - Warrants Service/Apprehensions
 - Protective Details
 - Officer Rescues
 - Emergency Medical Care (Dr./Paramedic/EMT)
 - Bearcat Armored Vehicle
- In 2024, SOG completed 24 missions to include high risk search and arrest warrants, quick reaction force operations, and assists to other agencies



THC Products



- In the past few years, ALE has received complaints for THC products being sold primarily in unregulated tobacco/vape shops
- Cases opened by ALE are complaint driven primarily by and conducted in partnership with local law enforcement and most are related to youth access
- In 2024, 163 items were submitted for testing with 89% (146) of those items testing above .3% Delta-9 THC
- Percentages ranged up to 10.27% Delta-9 THC



Recommendation



- THC products do not have age restrictions
- Recommendation #3
 - Consider regulatory oversight and age restrictions on THC products





2024 Statistics

- 4,924 Arrests
- 11,111 Charges
- 2,010 Felony Charges
- 204 Search Warrants
- 874 Violation Reports
- 138 Illegal Outlets Closed
- 425 Firearms Seized



ALE Agents and ABC Officers



- NCGS 18B-805(c)(2) requires local ABC Boards to spend at least 5% of gross receipts for law enforcement
- Monthly enforcement reports (arrests/educational programs) are required to be submitted to the ABC Commission by the local board and that information is published on ABCC website
- 171 local ABC boards
 - 14 local ABC enforcement agencies
 - 91 sworn ABC officers
 - Contracted law enforcement agencies (ALE has 9 contracts)
- ALE/local ABC partnerships
 - Collaborate on enforcement operations and investigations
 - ALE coordinates and hosts annual ABC officer training



Recruitment and Retention

- The greatest challenge ALE has faced over the past few years has been recruitment and retention
 - The starting salary for an ALE Special Agent is \$53,477, which is lower than many local agencies
 - From January of 2022 – March of 2025, 50 ALE Special Agent positions turned over resulting in a less experienced workforce (**45%**)
- Recommendation #4
 - Consider using ABC funds or any new licensing fees to increase starting salaries for ALE Special Agents according to the state law enforcement officer salary schedule and adjust all other sworn positions at the same rate to prevent salary compression amongst ranks



Agency Name

- Special Agents are tasked with a variety of unique responsibilities
- “Alcohol Law Enforcement” implies limited enforcement capabilities, and creates confusion within both the public realm as well as the law enforcement community
- Recommendation #5
 - Consider changing the name of the Alcohol Law Enforcement Division to be more reflective of the range of responsibilities



Integrity, Perseverance, Excellence