

Temporary Measures Regarding Bottle Size Regulations for Sake in South Africa

PRETORIA, 3 June – The Embassy of Japan in the Republic of South Africa and the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Johannesburg wish to announce that the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) has introduced temporary measures concerning container capacity regulations for sake under the South African National Standard (SANS 289:2022).

Following amendments to the regulations under the Liquor Products Act in March 2025, procedures for the import of sake into South Africa were simplified. In addition, the NRCS has implemented the following measures regarding the retail sale of sake:




- Packaged sake: No container capacity restrictions apply.
- Sake sold for on-premises consumption at retail establishments, including restaurants and bars: May be served in 25mL units or multiples thereof.

With the implementation of these measures, container capacity restrictions on sake packaged and retailed within South Africa have effectively been removed. This concession and reduction of import barriers is significant, as sake did not neatly conform to the standard bottle size measurements specificized and regulated by SANS 289:2022. This created a challenge in distribution, as traditional sake bottle sizes typically retail in 180mL increments, such as 720mL and 1,8L.

These measures are being applied retroactively from the date of approval, 9 February 2026.

Sake represents more than just a beverage. It embodies Japanese history and culture. The Embassy of Japan hopes that these measures will enable more people in South Africa to enjoy sake alongside both Japanese and South African cuisine, and further promote cultural, culinary, and business exchange between Japan and South Africa.

Please contact JETRO for any questions or further clarifications: infosuy@jetro.go.jp

CONCESSION			
Concession Number	LM-C-173-02-26	Compiled by: Jaco Marneweck Senior Manager: Inspections	Signature: 
Effective Date	09 February 2026		
Version No	Original	Approved by: Ivan Willis General Manager (Acting)	Signature: 
File name	LM-C-173-02-26 SANS 289; Annex E; Table E.1; Item 3; Alcoholic beverages		

1. Issued to

Manufacturers and importers of alcoholic beverages.

2. Scope

Permission to deviate from the current labeling requirements of SANS 289; Annex E; Table E.1; Item 3 Alcoholic beverages as per Table 1 below.

3. Reference documents

SANS 289 – Labeling requirements for prepackaged products (prepackages) and general requirements for the sale of goods subject to legal metrology control.

Legal Metrology Act, 2014 (Act 9 of 2014).

Legal Metrology Regulations, 2017 as published by Government Notice No. 41854 of 24 August 2018.

Regulations to the Liquor Products Act, 1989 (Act 60 of 1989).

4. Background

The labeling requirements for prepackaged products (prepackages) and general requirements for the sale of goods subject to legal metrology control are given in SANS 289, which is declared as legal metrology technical regulation (compulsory) under Regulation 20.


5. Concession

This concession is granted in terms of Regulation 34 of the Legal Metrology Regulations, 2017.

The manner of expressing the quantity and prescribed quantities for alcoholic beverages shall comply with requirements as prescribed in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Item	Product	Quantity to be expressed by	Prescribed quantities
3	Alcoholic beverages		
	a) When packaged		
	1) Wine, including sparkling wine, imported champagne, vermouth, wine cocktails, sacramental alcoholic beverages and flavoured grape liquors	Volume	Any quantity up to and including 500 mL, then in quantities of 750 mL, 1 L, 1,5 L, 2 L, 3 L, 4 L, 4,5 L, 5 L and integral multiples of 1 L above 5 L
	2) Potable spirits including liqueurs, bitters, cream liqueurs, dairy free liqueurs and spirit cocktails	Volume	Any quantity up to and including 50 mL, then in quantities of 200 mL, 250 mL, 300 mL, 375 mL, 500 mL, 750 mL, 1 L, then 150 L and integral multiples of 1 L above 150 L.

CONCESSION		 NRCS national regulator for compulsory specifications	
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	3) Beer including grain sorghum or a mixture of beer and lemonade, flavoured beer or other mixer and traditional african beer, containing more than 0,5 % by volume of alcohol	Volume	-
	4) Other, including spirit coolers, grape liquors, alcoholic fruit beverages, alcoholic fruit beers/ grain fermented alcoholic beverages/ sugar fermented alcoholic beverages/ kombucha and sugar fermented alcoholic beverages/ alcoholic honey beverage (mead)/ orange juice and sugar fermented alcoholic beverages	Volume	-
	5) Rice fermented beverages (sake)	Volume	-
	b) When served from bulk containers in the retail for consumption on the premises		
	1) Wine, including sparkling wine, imported champagne, vermouth, wine cocktails, sacramental alcoholic beverages and flavoured grape liquors	By the glass, provided that no reference is made to volume	-
	2) Potable spirits	Volume measured by an approved instrument, provided that where two or more potable spirits are taken from their bulk containers and mixed at the time of serving such mixture may be sold by the glass, provided that no reference is made to volume	25 mL or multiples thereof
	3) Liqueurs, cream liqueurs, dairy free liqueurs and spirit cocktails	By the glass, provided that no reference is made to volume	-
	4) Beer including grain sorghum or a mixture of beer and lemonade, flavoured beer or other mixer and, traditional african beer, containing more than 0,5 % by volume of alcohol	Volume measured by an approved instrument or filled to a clearly marked datum line on the container conforming to requirements for such containers	-
	5) Other, including spirit coolers, grape liquors,	Volume measured by an approved instrument or filled	-

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	alcoholic fruit beverages, alcoholic fruit beers/ grain fermented alcoholic beverages/ sugar fermented alcoholic beverages/ kombucha and sugar fermented alcoholic beverages/ alcoholic honey beverage (mead)/ orange juice and sugar fermented alcoholic beverages	to a clearly marked datum line on the container conforming to requirements for such containers	
	6) Rice fermented beverages (sake)	Volume measured by an approved instrument	25 mL or multiples thereof

Note: Presentation and container requirements for alcoholic beverages are given in relevant national legislation dealing with liquor products.

6. Conditions of the concession

- The concession is valid for the products identified in clause 5, Table 1.
- The concession does not imply conformance with the marking requirements of SANS 289 or the accuracy requirements in SANS 458, or any other relevant national legislation that may be applicable.
- The concession is valid until the revised and updated SANS 289 is published by the SABS.