

SHIPPING BEER

I found this article and thought it might be of some interest to many and of real value to a few. It's worth thinking about! This article deals with homemade wine but is applicable to homebrew also. Heed this warning – the guy in the picture could be you!

Mike Retzlaff

How do I ship some of my homemade wine from Illinois to my brother in Colorado? He tried some at a party and would like to try my other wines.

Dan D. - IL



Hello Dan,

Unfortunately, shipping wine to family, friends — or anyone for that matter — is illegal on a Federal level. This means if you are caught you could be charged with a Federal offense. As an individual, shipping or transporting alcohol across state lines for the purpose of consumption is a big no-no! This is the case regardless if you have made the wine or not. It doesn't matter if you know the person or not. It would be possible to ship wine to brother and friends if you were a licensed winery or alcohol distributor, but even then each state has its own rules about importing and exporting alcohol, so you would be at the mercy of both Illinois' and Colorado's State rules.

Most of the regulations are just nonsense left over from prohibition; others are sternly there to protect the distributors and producers within their state. The home winemaker is just caught up in the broad net being thrown. It is legal to ship your

wines for analytical purposes on a Federal level. This would be for things such as shipping the wine to a laboratory for analysis or to a competition for judging. But again, state laws can interfere with this as well. So, unless your brother owns a laboratory or is sponsoring a wine judging competition, there is no way to legally get the wine to him. Perhaps, this would be a good excuse to have your brother come visit!

Best Wishes, Ed Kraus (E.C. Kraus Home Wine & Beer Making Supplies)

nota bene – for competitions, you can use UPS, FED-X, or motor freight. DO NOT USE the United States Postal Service! It is illegal to ship alcohol by USPS. The overall safest bet is to have a third party shipper package your home-brew to insure that it arrives at the competition in unbroken bottles. The box should be labeled “Perishable” but never “Beer” or “Alcoholic Beverages”. It's best to ship during the week to avoid your beer languishing in a hot warehouse or truck over the weekend. Also, remember the people on the other end of that journey. They are the ones who unpack and sort the entries. As you pack your bottles, don't tape the bottles together or use packing peanuts. Aggravating these volunteers with a lack of care and respect might result with them treating your entries with a lack of care and respect; karma can be swift and brutal.