

Who Is Licensed in a Pineapple Under the Sea?

April 2023



“

For far too long, King Neptune has governed with an overly bureaucratic approach stunting innovation and economic growth (which is no surprise coming from an absolute monarch), said former Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey. It’s time that Spongebob and his friends are allowed to live without the weight of burdensome government regulation. I encourage Bikini Bottom to follow the example of many other great American states in implementing a comprehensive universal licensing law which provides more opportunities for all. ”

Background

Much like the United States, Bikini Bottom has a stable [economy](#), labor laws and a system of law enforcement. Though depicted as a city, it also has a national anthem (see “[Imitation Krabs](#)”); thus, it is perhaps most accurate to call it a “city-state.” [Estimates](#) put the population around 50,000 sentient beings. Unlike the United States, however, Bikini Bottom’s government structure seems to be a monarchy; it has been ruled by a variety of kings, from Krabs to Neptune.

But Bikini Bottom is like the United States in a key, unfortunate respect: Both suffer from excessive regulation. Much as in our [own](#) federal code, even mundane activities, such as reading someone else’s diary without permission, are considered criminal. Moreover, the city-state licenses a variety of behaviors that are sorted below into the categories of occupational, vending, vehicle and recreational. This analysis evaluates the status, purpose and value of each license and then recommends how the district can reform the current system.



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Occupational Licenses

According to all available sources on Bikini Bottom, the only occupational licenses that exist are for professionals who make milkshakes (separate from the Milkshake Dispenser Operator vending license), marriage officiants, fry cooks, magic practitioners and teachers. Compared to the United States, Bikini Bottom licenses **drastically** fewer occupations. However, Bikini Bottom also licenses occupations that the United States does not, as well as some that it does.

Like Bikini Bottom, **all** states in America license teachers. But unlike Bikini Bottom, no states license the practice of magic—some **localities** do license fortune tellers, however. Bikini Bottom also has occupational licenses for fry cooks and milkshake producers. While American restaurants often need a variety of permits and licenses, fry cooks and those who make milkshakes are not licensed. U.S. marriage officiants are regulated **differently** by each state and eligible according to different requirements, but no state requires them to obtain state licenses.

License	Type	S/E	Episode	Exemptions	Image
Milkshake	Occupational	S9/E181	License to Milkshake	N/A	
Marriage (license to marry others)	Occupational	S12/E242	Farmerbob	N/A	
Fry cook	Occupational	S11/E239	The Night Patty	N/A	
Magic practicing	Occupational	S4/E76	Hocus Pocus	N/A	
Teacher	Occupational	S11/E222	Teacher's Pests	N/A	

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Vending Licenses

Vendor licenses and variations thereof are common in the United States and are also a form of license in Bikini Bottom. A license is required to sell cookies in Bikini Bottom. Similarly, in the United States, the ability to sell homemade food is regulated by “cottage food” laws that vary by state. There are some states, such as Wyoming and Utah, that permit the sale of almost all kinds of homemade food, while others only allow shelf-stable foods, such as sweet snacks and baked goods, to be sold. Bikini Bottom also has a separate vending license for selling lemonade. Likewise, in order for children to open a lemonade stand in the United States, most states require them to obtain a license. The final type of vending license is the aforementioned “Milkshake Dispenser Operator” license.

License	Type	S/E	Episode	Exemptions	Image
Vendor	Vending	S9 E189	SpongeBob You're Fired	N/A	IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE
Cookie-selling	Vending	S11 E236	Call the Cops	N/A	IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE
Lemonade-selling	Vending	S11 E231	Ink Lemonade	N/A	IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE
Milkshake Dispenser Operator	Vending	S7 E132	Yours, Mine and Mine	N/A	IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE



Vehicle Licenses

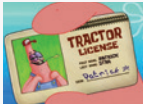


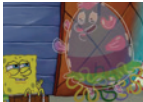
Bikini Bottom also licenses multiple kinds of vehicles, including tractors, boats, invisible boats and bubbles. Boating licenses are only required to drive standard boats, and are not required in order to drive self-driving boats, bubbles or sandwiches. Presumably and according

EXPLAINER

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to available information, sandwiches as vehicles are not otherwise licensed in Bikini Bottom. Here again, we see similarities with American law. States generally [place](#) restrictions on who may or may not drive boats, and some states do require licenses. However, no state appears to have special or distinct licenses for [invisible](#) boats or bubble boats, whereas in Bikini Bottom, it has its own class of license. And no license is [required](#) in order to drive a tractor in the United States.

License	Type	S/E	Episode	Exemptions	Image
Tractor	Vehicle	S12 E242	Farmerbob	N/A	
Boating	Vehicle	S12 E242	Farmerbob	Self-driving boat [S11 E227], Bubble [S10 E210], Sandwich [The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie]	
Invisible Boating	Vehicle	S2 E31	Mermaid Man and Barnacle Boy II	N/A	
Bubble	Vehicle	S10 E210	Burst Your Bubble	N/A	



Recreational Licenses





Licensed recreational activity also bears some resemblance to that of America. Bikini Bottom licenses fishing and jellyfishing. Fishing is often [licensed](#) in America and jellyfishing is a [multimillion](#) dollar industry. These licenses differ somewhat from those in Bikini Bottom, as the fishing license held by Patrick Star may actually be more akin to a “license to kill,” and may also [explain](#) the money Star has to spend without otherwise working. Unlike in the United States, jellyfishing in Bikini Bottom is not a primarily economic but recreational activity, in part due to the [massive](#)

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abuse that took place when Mr. Krabs attempted to monetize jellyfishing wherein he took to factory farming the gentle sea creatures.

The district of Bikini Bottom also licenses those who play the [sitar](#), a stringed instrument of the lute family. Neither this, nor other instruments, are the subject of licenses in America. Crop circles are also licensed in Bikini Bottom and are not so licensed in America.

License	Type	S/E	Episode	Exemptions	Image
Fishing	Recreational	S12 E242	Farmerbob	N/A	
Jellyfishing	Recreational	S7 E134	SpongeBob's Last Stand	N/A	
Sitar	Recreational	S7 E134	SpongeBob's Last Stand	N/A	
Crop Circle	Recreational	S12 E242	Farmerbob	N/A	



Certifications

In addition to licenses, many certifications exist in Bikini Bottom. In most cases, it is unclear if these certifications are overseen by the government or by the private sector and, if the latter, whether the government requires private certification in order to participate in the relevant activity. Thumbologists are the only kind of doctor to be board-certified. It is possible that doctors are licensed in a similar way to how they are in the United States, but there is no clear evidence on that matter. That said, when Star [impersonated](#) a physician, a real physician used the hands of Hans to inflict punishment. It was unclear if the punishment was at the physician's discretion or if using the

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offender to clean a toilet is the official punishment for impersonating a physician, or even if impersonation of a physician is an offense. Only one other known board certification exists and that is for antique macrame connoisseurs. Other certifications include foot masseurs, Mermaid Man and Barnacle Boy impersonators, public accountants and fools. A final certification is not for an activity but for a product: snail shells may be certified indestructible.

License	Type	S/E	Episode	Exemptions	Image
Thumbologist	Board/ Occupational	S9 E19	Two Thumbs Down	N/A	IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE
Antique macrame connoisseur	Board/ Recreational	S6 E11	Dear Vikings	N/A	IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE
Foot masseur	Occupational	S4 E4	Good Neighbors	N/A	IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE
Mermaid Man and Barnacle Boy impersonator	Occupational	S6 E17	Shuffleboarding	N/A	IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE
Public Accountant	Occupational	S9 E16	Patrick! The Game	N/A	
Indestructible shell	Product	S6 E21	Shell Shocked	N/A	IMAGE NOT AVAILABLE
Fool	Recreational	S12 E1	FarmerBob	N/A	

Recommendations

In most cases, Bikini Bottom residents would benefit from fewer licenses in order to open up competition. Creating or dispensing milkshakes

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Marriage is good for the economy and should not be discouraged; therefore that license should also be considered for full deregulation.

Contact Us

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and frying Krabby Patties are no more dangerous than any other food-creation methods and ought to be considered for full deregulation. The licensing of marriage officiants by Bikini Bottom government also likely reduces access to professionals and harms the ability of residents to marry. Marriage is **good** for the economy and should not be discouraged; therefore that license should also be considered for full deregulation. Much in the same way that government licensing of fortune tellers confers a strange legitimacy on the profession, so does licensing of magicians. Magicians should not be licensed in the district.

Vendor licenses should be consolidated into a simpler form, only as necessary to ensure health and safety of the public. The reason for the license is not clear and if it exists, it should remain narrow and targeted. Special licenses to sell cookies and lemonade are unnecessary.

When it comes to vehicles, Bikini Bottom should consider consolidating licenses. Because boats are street-legal, ensuring only drivers who can pass boating school are able to drive one makes sense. But this license should also work for invisible boats and bubbles. Invisible licenses, used for invisible boats, may be easily lost. And similarly, bubble licenses for bubble boats may too easily pop. If sandwiches are street legal, Bikini Bottom may want to require a license to drive them or allow them to be covered by boating licenses. Tractors, however, probably don't need a license if they are primarily used for farm work.

Recreational licenses generally may work well in their current forms. Jellyfish licenses may be necessary for jellyfish population control and conservation. Musical instrument licenses are not necessary, nor are licenses for crop circles.

For a very different reason, the district ought to reconsider the fishing license. If this analysis is correct and the license amounts to a sanction to kill fellow sentient fish, this power should not be given by license to private citizens.