

RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING STANDARDS FOR THE BC GAMBLING INDUSTRY

For most people, gambling is an enjoyable form of entertainment. For a small number, however, gambling can become a serious problem. Problem gambling occurs when gambling behavior has negative consequences for individuals, families and communities.

The Province of British Columbia is committed to ensuring gambling activities are carried out in a socially responsible manner. The Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB) regulates all gaming, including horse racing, in British Columbia.

As an agent of government, the BC Lottery Corporation (BCLC) conducts, manages, and operates most commercial gaming in the province, including casinos, commercial bingo halls, community gaming centres and lotteries. The Corporation contracts with registered service providers to deliver gaming services on a day to day basis.

Private companies are licensed by GPEB as service providers to operate horse race tracks and teletheatre outlets.

Community organizations may be licensed by GPEB to conduct gaming events, such as ticket raffles, independent bingos, social occasion casinos and wheels of fortune.

Authority and Application

Section 27(2)(d) of the *Gaming Control Act* authorizes GPEB's General Manager to establish public interest standards for the gaming industry. Responsible Gambling Standards and Advertising and Marketing Standards for the B.C. Gaming Industry are part of the Province's overall Responsible Gambling Strategy.

Part A of the Responsible Gambling Standards apply to all gaming products, events and/or facilities conducted, managed and operated by BCLC, operational services provided to BCLC by its service providers, BCLC designated lottery distribution channels, and licensed horse race tracks, teletheatres, and horse racing service providers. Gaming facilities include casinos, commercial bingo halls, community gaming centres, horse race tracks and teletheatre operations.

Part B of the Responsible Gambling Standards applies to charitable gaming event licensees.

Compliance will be regularly monitored by GPEB, and appropriate action taken in instances of non-compliance.

Objectives

Application of these standards helps ensure:

- Responsible management and delivery of gaming in British Columbia;
- A shared understanding of roles and responsibilities in relation to responsible gambling;
- The creation of gambling practices and environments that respect the rights of individuals and communities;
- A safe and supportive environment for the delivery of gaming products and services;
- Decisions about gambling participation that are based on informed choice;
- Gambling related risks are minimized; and
- Persons negatively affected by gambling have access to timely and effective information and assistance.

These standards require the gaming industry and community organizations conducting gaming events to implement and adhere to responsible gambling practices, with a focus on player protection.

PART A: COMMERCIAL GAMING (INCLUDING BCLC, BCLC GAMING SERVICES PROVIDERS, LOTTERY RETAILERS, AND HORSE RACING)

1. ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

- 1.1 BC's gaming industry must comply with the Province's *Advertising and Marketing Standards for the BC Gambling Industry*. All advertising must be delivered in a responsible manner, with consideration given to potential impacts on those individuals who may be adversely affected by gambling. The Advertising and Marketing Standards address issues such as responsible messaging, the odds of winning and protection of minors.

2. INFORMED CHOICE

BCLC, all BCLC gaming service providers, all licensed horse racing service providers, and BCLC designated lottery distribution channels must ensure players can make informed choices by prominently displaying in gaming areas:

- 2.1 The Province's Problem Gambling Help Line, and BCLC's responsible gambling or GameSense messaging, as approved by GPEB;
- 2.2 Information about potential risks associated with gambling and where to get help for a gambling problem:
 - a) This information must be displayed at point of sale, including all lottery retail outlets; and
 - b) In all gaming facilities, this information must also be displayed in customer service areas, washrooms and at ATMs;
- 2.3 Meaningful and accurate information about games, rules of play and general odds of winning (detailed information on the odds of winning on specific games may be available on a website);
- 2.4 Information about self-exclusion programs (in facilities where such programs are available); and
- 2.5 In gaming facilities, all reasonable efforts will be made to make responsible and problem gambling information available in languages that reflect the customer base.

3. APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

BCLC, all BCLC gaming service providers, and BCLC designated lottery distribution channels must:

- 3.1 Respond to requests from, and maintain all reasonable links with, the Province's problem gambling counsellors and prevention staff;
- 3.2 Ensure all gaming facility staff who interact with patrons receive training to help them identify and respond appropriately to patrons that may be experiencing distress; and
- 3.3 Ensure each gaming facility and each designated lottery distribution channel has staff specifically trained to:
 - a) Assist customers displaying signs of gambling-related problems and/or distress by providing information on the help that is available;
 - b) Respond appropriately through direct intervention in specific instances to customers displaying visibly discernable signs of distress or gambling-related problems, by providing information on the help that is available and/or by directly contacting the appropriate agencies to initiate help; and
 - c) Direct gaming staff with gambling related problems to appropriate program resources.

4. RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES

BCLC, all BCLC gaming services providers, all licensed horse racing service providers, and BCLC designated lottery distribution channels must have policies, procedures and training in place to:

- 4.1 Prohibit minors from participating in any form of gambling, or entering any designated adult-only gaming area; ‡
- 4.2 Prevent customers who are, or appear to be, visibly intoxicated from participating in gambling;
- 4.3 Ensure that employees who interact with customers as part of their job function in gaming facilities where alcohol is served, have completed “Serving It Right” (a responsible service program);
- 4.4 Confirm there is no tolerance for unattended children on gaming facility property. Security policies must be in place aimed at preventing the abandonment of children on venue property (e.g., children left in cars while parent plays) and to sanction the parent or guardian involved, where appropriate;
- 4.5 Facilitate regular interaction with customers as standard practice in a gaming facility. Interaction must be more frequent if a customer’s play is, or appears to be, extended, intensive or repetitive; and
- 4.6 Ensure clocks displaying the time of day are placed in gaming facilities in areas readily accessible to customers.

5. FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

BCLC, all BCLC gaming services providers and all licensed horse racing service providers must prominently display information stating:

- 5.1 Gaming services providers may not extend credit or lend money to patrons as per provincial policy;
- 5.2 Key elements of their financial transaction policies and practices (for example, pay out practices for certain types of games and, as applicable, large cash transactions); and
- 5.3 Employees are prohibited from soliciting gratuities from customers.

6. VOLUNTARY SELF-EXCLUSION PROGRAMS

BCLC and all BCLC gaming services providers must:

- 6.1 Provide voluntary self-exclusion (VSE) programs;
- 6.2 Ensure policies and practices are in place so that all customers requesting VSE are treated with respect and offered a referral to problem gambling treatment and support services;
- 6.3 Ensure policies and practices are in place to monitor premises for self-excluded customers and appropriate security procedures are designed to reduce the ability of excluded players to re-enter the venue; and
- 6.4 Ensure policies and practices are in place so that marketing/promotional materials are not sent to self-excluded customers, or to any other person who has requested that such material not be sent.

PART B: CHARITABLE GAMING (GAMING EVENT LICENSEES)

1. ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

- 1.1 Community organizations that have been licensed to hold gaming events must comply with the Province's *Advertising and Marketing Standards for the BC Gambling Industry*. All advertising must be delivered in a responsible manner, with consideration given to potential impacts on those individuals who may be adversely affected by gambling. The Advertising and Marketing Standards address issues such as responsible messaging, the odds of winning and protection of minors.

2. INFORMED CHOICE

Gaming event licensees must ensure players can make informed choices by prominently displaying in promotional materials and websites:

- 2.1 Information about potential risks associated with gambling and where to get help for a gambling problem; and
- 2.2 Meaningful and accurate information about games, rules of play and general odds of winning.

3. RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES

Gaming event licensees must have policies, procedures and training in place to:

- 3.1 Prohibit minors from participating in any form of gambling, or entering any designated adult-only gaming area; ‡
- 3.2 Prevent customers who are, or appear to be, visibly intoxicated from participating in gambling; and
- 3.3 Confirm there is no tolerance for unattended children at licensed gaming events. Where appropriate, security policies must be in place aimed at preventing the abandonment of children on venue property (e.g., children left in cars while parent plays).

‡ *A limited number of exceptions are permitted by the Gaming Control Regulation, Sections 37 and 38.*

Issued by:

Derek Sturko
Assistant Deputy Minister and General Manager
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