



Washington State Gambling Commission

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 42400, Olympia, WA 98504-2400

Headquarters: 4565 7th Avenue SE, Lacey, WA 98503

(360) 486-3440 ♠ (800) 345-2529

FAX (360) 486-3631

Website: www.wsgc.wa.gov ♠ Twitter: [WAGambling](https://twitter.com/WAGambling) ♠ E-mail: AskUs@wsgc.wa.gov

Illegal Gambling Activities

Gambling in Washington is illegal unless the activity is specifically authorized by state law ([Washington State Constitution, Article II Section 24](#)).

Gambling involves three elements: prize, chance and consideration (Consideration includes an entry fee, wager, donation, or anything of value).

Conducting illegal gambling activities may result in:

- Criminal charges being filed against you, your organization, and/or its officers.
- Forfeiture of all property or money associated with the illegal gambling ([RCW 9.46.231](#)).

Illegal Bookmaking ([RCW 9.46.0213](#))

Bookmaking means taking bets or wagers on the outcome of a future event, typically sporting events, when you:

- Conduct the activity as a business.
- Accept a fee or “vigorous” from the bettor for the chance to place a bet.

Illegal Animal Fighting

- Professional gambling is illegal ([RCW 9.46.0269](#)) and is usually involved with animal fights.
- State law prohibits anyone from training animals to fight, fighting animals, or being present at fights ([RCW 16.52.117](#)), whether or not professional gambling is taking place.

Illegal Internet Gambling ([RCW 9.46.240](#))



Internet gambling is illegal in Washington State and in the United States. See our “[Illegal Internet Gambling](#)” brochure.

Illegal Gambling Devices ([RCW 9.46.0241](#))

The following gambling devices are illegal:

- Slot machines
- Video poker and video pull-tabs
- Pachinko and pachislo machines
- Other electronic games of chance

Antique Slot Machines ([RCW 9.46.235](#))

An antique slot machine is ok to have if it is:

- At least 25 years old (antique);
- Played at no cost; and
- Not operated for gambling purposes.



Sports Wagering ([RCW 9.46.0335](#))

Sports wagering is illegal, except for 100 square sports pool boards under restricted conditions. See our “[Sports Wagering](#)” brochure.

Card and Dice Games

- It is illegal for individuals to offer card or dice games, or *any* gambling activity, for profit.
- No one, except a licensed card room, can collect a fee or percentage of wagers from card games.
- **Only commercial businesses** that sell food or drink for on premises consumption can:
 - Apply for a license to offer card games for profit ([RCW 9.46.0282](#)).
 - Allow patrons to roll dice or flip coins for food, drink, or coin-operated music purchases only. ([RCW 9.46.0305](#)). Patrons *must never* be allowed to roll dice for money.
- **Charitable/nonprofit organizations:**
 - May let their *members* play unlicensed card and dice games under restricted conditions. You must have a liquor license ([RCW 66.24.400](#)). See our “[Unlicensed Gambling for Charities](#)” brochure ([RCW 9.46.0351](#)).
 - Must get a card room license to let nonmembers play card games and/or collect a fee from card players.

Gambling in Washington

Learn more about what activities are authorized in Washington State and who can offer them. For:

- Licensed gambling, see our “[Gambling License Certification](#)” brochure.
- Unlicensed gambling, see our brochures for:
 - [Commercial businesses](#); and
 - [Charitable/nonprofit organizations](#).

Following is a brief outline of criminal laws and penalties for illegal gambling.

Professional Gambling (RCW 9.46.0269)

If you have a substantial interest in or other control over any premises, you will be held responsible and could be charged with professional gambling if you knowingly allow unauthorized gambling activity on your premises.

You are engaged in "professional gambling" if, acting other than as a *player*, you knowingly:

- Engage in conduct which materially aids any form of gambling activity;
- Pay a fee to participate in a card game, contest of chance, lottery, or other gambling activity;
- Accept or receive money or other property from participation in a gambling activity.

Conduct may include activity directed toward:

- Creating or establishing the particular game, contest, scheme, device;
- Acquiring or maintaining the premises, paraphernalia, equipment or apparatus;
- Soliciting or inducing persons to participate in the activities;
- Actually conducting the playing phases;
- Arranging any of its financial or recording phases or any other phase of its operation.

Player (RCW 9.46.0265)

"Player," as used in gambling laws, means:

- A natural person who engages, on equal terms with the other participants, solely as a contestant or bettor;
- No person will profit from the activity *other than personal gambling winnings*; and
- Not offering material assistance to the establishment, conduct or operation of the social game merely by performing, without fee or remuneration, acts directed toward the arrangement or facilitation of the game, such as inviting persons to play, permitting the use of premises for the game, or supplying cards or other equipment to be used in the games.

A person who engages in "bookmaking" is not a "player."

If you or someone you know have a gambling problem, call (800) 547-6133

To inquire about the availability of this document in an alternate format, please call (360) 486-3466 or (800) 345-2529, ext. 3466. Teletype (TTY) users please call (360) 486-3637

Criminal Penalties

First Degree Professional Gambling

- Class B Felony
- Maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, or a \$20,000 fine, or both.

You are engaged in professional gambling in the first degree (RCW 9.46.220) if you:

- Act in concert or conspire with five or more people;
- Accept wagers exceeding \$5,000 during any calendar month; or
- Operate, manage, or profit from the operation of a premises or location where persons are charged a fee to participate in card games, lotteries or other gambling activities not authorized or licensed by us.

Second Degree Professional Gambling

- Class C Felony
- Maximum penalty of 5 years in prison or a \$10,000 fine, or both.

You are engaged in professional gambling in the second degree (RCW 9.46.221) if you:

- Act in concert or conspires with less than five people;
- Accept wagers exceeding \$2,000 during any calendar month; or
- Maintain a gambling premises or gambling records as defined in RCW 9.46.020.

Third Degree Professional Gambling

- Gross misdemeanor
- Maximum penalty of 1 year in prison, or a \$5,000 fine, or both.

You are engaged in professional gambling in the third degree (RCW 9.46.222) if:

- The activity does not constitute first or second degree;
- You operate unlicensed activities in an illegal way; or
- Directly participating in, but not managing or directing any gambling activity.

For more information:

- Gambling laws: RCW 9.46
- Gambling rules: WAC 230

Contact our Regional Field Office closest to you:

Everett.....(425) 304-6300...EverettFO@wsgc.wa.gov
Spokane..(509) 325-7900...SpokaneFO@wsgc.wa.gov
Tacoma...(253) 671-6280...TacomaFO@wsgc.wa.gov