



Washington State GAMBLING COMMISSION

POKER RUNS



A poker run is a raffle where tickets or tally sheets are sold and prizes are awarded to winners based on their hand of playing cards (“alternative” drawing).

Alternative Drawing v. Standard Drawing

In poker runs, winners are determined by their hand of cards; this is an “alternative” drawing. A “standard” drawing is pulling tickets out of a hat. Whenever raffle winners are not determined by a “standard” drawing, you must get a raffle license.

What is a Raffle?

A raffle is a gambling activity because it involves prize, chance and consideration. If one of these elements is removed, it is no longer gambling. For example, if entry into a contest is free (no consideration), it’s not gambling.

Who can Offer a Poker Run?

Only charitable or non-profit organizations that have a raffle gambling license can offer a poker run. Individuals and commercial businesses cannot offer raffles or poker runs.

How are Poker Runs Operated?

The organization sells consecutively numbered tickets or tally sheets. Participants travel (often using motorcycles, snowmobiles, classic cars, boats or horses) to predetermined checkpoints. Usually, there are five to seven checkpoints. At each checkpoint, participants randomly draw a playing card for each ticket or tally sheet purchased. Checkpoint attendants verify the card drawn and record the card value on the poker tally sheet. After all participants have completed the run, the participant with the best, or worst, recorded poker hand wins (depending on rules of play).

Can my Organization Apply for a Raffle License?

Washington State law requires that your charitable or non-profit organization’s by-laws or articles of incorporation state that the organization is organized and operating only for one or more of the following purposes:

| | | |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| Agricultural | Civic | Patriotic |
| Athletic | Educational | Political |
| Charitable | Fraternal | Social |

Or be one of the following:

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
| Agricultural Fair | Religious Society | Grange |
| Fraternal Society | Church | |

If your organization’s by-laws or articles of incorporation include any stated purpose(s) other than those listed above, you do not qualify to offer a raffle or a poker run. Normally, trade unions or associations that primarily lobby do not qualify.

In addition to the “stated purpose” requirement above, your organization must also meet the following two requirements:

1. Have been organized and operating for at least 12 months before offering a poker run
2. Be able to prove your organization has made significant progress towards accomplishing its stated purpose(s) during the 12 consecutive months before offering a poker run

Tickets

Your organization must sell tickets, determine winners and award prizes only in Washington.

Selling Tickets

- Maximum price per ticket is \$100
- No free tickets or tickets as gifts
- Tickets may be bundled and sold at a discount
- Tickets must be paid for in full by cash, check or credit card. No IOU's.
- Tickets can't be sold over the Internet; however, you can advertise on the Internet
- Tickets and/or payment for tickets can't be mailed; however, you can mail advertisements
- Tickets must be consecutively numbered or printed with letters or symbols that don't repeat
- Only members of your organization, or volunteers under the supervision of a member, may sell tickets
- Individuals under 18-years-old may sell tickets only if: (1) your organization's primary purpose is to develop youth; and (2) at least 3 members of your organization, 18 years or older, supervise the poker run; and (3) a member, 18 or older, manages the poker run.

Purchasing Tickets

You must be 18 or older to purchase a ticket. Organization members may purchase tickets; however, membership must not be based on purchasing a ticket.

Prizes

- Prizes must be owned by your organization before they are awarded
- Firearms may be awarded under certain restrictions
- If the retail value of a prize is \$40,000 or more, or total prizes will exceed \$80,000 in a year, you must get approval from us
- Display your license, or a copy of your license, at the location where prizes will be awarded

Management, Record Keeping and Reporting

- Members must not be paid for managing or operating the poker run

- Record keeping and reporting requirements and forms are available on our website
- Records must be kept for three years

Use of Proceeds

Proceeds must be used towards your organization's stated purpose. However, proceeds may go to the charitable benefit of a specific person, but only if you get approval from us before offering the poker run.

Rules of Play

The following must be clearly printed on each ticket, poker tally sheet or available in writing:

1. Cost per chance (\$100 max per ticket)
2. Name of your charitable or non-profit organization
3. Whether or not participants need to be present to win
4. Date, time and location of where winners will be determined
5. Description of all prizes. If the prize is a percentage of the gross receipts of the raffle, a minimum prize must be disclosed.
6. For members-only poker runs: Rules of play may be posted at each ticket sales point, rather than printing rules on each ticket or providing them in writing.

Contact Your Local City or County

Notify local law enforcement, in writing, before selling tickets. Check with your local taxing authority for any taxes due. The first \$10,000 of net proceeds is exempt from taxation.

Is your Business a Poker Run Drawing Station?

Before allowing your business to be a stopping point or drawing station for a poker run, make sure the charitable or non-profit organization operating the poker run has a gambling license and they are operating the poker run correctly.