

Advertising and Marketing Standards for Gambling in British Columbia

Context

The Province of British Columbia wants to ensure gambling activities are carried out in a socially responsible manner. The Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch regulates gambling in B.C.

Authority and Application

Section 27(2)(d) of the Gaming Control Act authorizes the General Manager of the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch to establish public interest standards for the gambling industry. The following advertising and marketing standards apply to products and/or gaming facilities promoted by BC Lottery Corporation, gaming service providers, and gaming event licensees. These standards do not apply to corporate advertising which does not include references to, or promote, products and/or gaming facilities.

As an agent of government, the BC Lottery Corporation conducts and manages most commercial gaming in the province, including casinos, commercial bingo halls, community gaming centres, and lotteries. The Corporation contracts with gaming services providers to operate those gaming facilities.

Private companies are licensed, as gaming services providers, to operate horse race tracks and tele-theatre outlets.

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

All advertising related to gambling is expected to abide by provincial standards of conduct as outlined in this document. Furthermore, organizations are expected to abide by any additional marketing and advertising standards published in relevant Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch standard procedure documents.

Objectives

- To ensure gambling is represented in a responsible manner in all advertising and marketing.
- To ensure that targeted media campaigns enhance public awareness of both responsible and problem gambling issues and services.

Advertising and Marketing Standards

Any advertising or marketing of a gaming event or scheme must be displayed in compliance with applicable laws and policies and must not be immoral or obscene in any way. Any depiction of a dominant characteristic of which is the undue exploitation of sex, or of sex, and any one or more of the following subjects, namely, crime, horror, cruelty and violence, shall be deemed to be obscene.

In cases not specifically covered in this document, it is expected that the spirit of the requirements will be followed.

Responsible Gambling

- Advertising and marketing materials must, as deemed reasonable and appropriate by GPEB, contain a responsible gambling message. Questions related to reasonable and appropriate messaging should be directed to GPEB's Director, Responsible and Problem Gambling.

- The Province's responsible/problem gambling materials and information about how a problem gambler may obtain help must be easily visible - in high traffic areas of gaming facilities, on electronic media pages such as PlayNow.com where gambling is promoted, at locations where gaming products are being sold, or (when requested) at licensed gaming events.
- Responsible and problem gambling messaging must reflect the demographic targeted by the advertising and marketing materials/activities. Responsible and problem gambling messaging must be presented in the same language as the language of the advertisement.
- Advertising and marketing materials **must not**:
 - Encourage people to play beyond their means;
 - Imply the certainty of financial reward or alleviation of personal and financial difficulties;
 - Present gambling as an alternative to employment or as a financial investment;
 - Encourage play as a means of recovering past gambling or other financial losses;
 - Imply that chances of winning increase the longer one plays;
 - Suggest skill, practice and experience, individually or together, can ensure a positive outcome;
 - Knowingly depict inappropriate use of the product(s) or be placed in, or adjacent to, other media that depict inappropriate use of the product(s); or depict a pre-occupation with gambling.

Odds of Winning

- Information on the odds of winning must be clearly stated and made available to the public through relatively accessible means.
- Information on the odds of winning must factually report the chances of winning in various gambling activities.
- Advertising and marketing materials must:
 - Not present winning as the most probable outcome, nor misrepresent a person's chance of winning a prize; and
 - Describe prize amounts accurately, indicating, where necessary, if prizes are in the form of annuities.

Protecting Minors

Minors are defined as youth and/or children under the legal purchase age of 19.

- Advertising and marketing materials must not:
 - Use individuals who are, or appear to be, minors to promote gambling;
 - Appear in media directed primarily to minors, or where most of the audience is reasonably expected to be minors;
 - Appear on outdoor displays that are directly adjacent to schools or other primarily youth-oriented locations;
 - Appear at venues where the primary audience is reasonably expected to be minors;
 - Be based on themes, or use language, intended to appeal primarily to minors;
 - Promote gambling in television or radio programming whose primary audience is expected to be minors; or
 - Contain cartoon figures, symbols, role models, and/or celebrity/entertainer endorsers whose primary appeal is to minors.

Issued by:

John Mazure, General Manager

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