

Problem Gambling – Responsibility as a Merchant

What is Problem Gambling?



Gambling is making or placing a bet or wager where outcomes are dependent at least partly upon chance.

Problem gambling is considered an addictive disorder that shares symptoms and signs similar to substance use disorders. Problem gambling includes all gambling behavior patterns that compromise, disrupt or damage personal, family or vocational pursuits.¹

Why should we care?

Gaming and gambling is on the rise nationwide, with over 30 states currently offering some form of legal gambling, gaming, or sports betting. In 2020, the Virginia legislature expanded access to gaming and gambling opportunities across the Commonwealth with legalization of iLottery, Sports Betting, and Casino gambling. Gambling addiction may develop in 2-3% of the adult population. Three C's may be shown in someone with an addiction: cravings, continued behavior, and loss of control.

The Symptoms and Consequences Include:

- 1 Betting more money more frequently, irritability when attempting to stop, and “chasing” losses.
- 2 Loss of control from continual gambling despite mounting, serious, negative consequences.
- 3 In extreme cases, problem gambling can result in financial ruin, legal problems, loss of career and family, or even suicide.

Attitude towards Problem Gambling:²

Addition to gambling is a lot like addiction to drugs and alcohol



The gambling industry should do more to help people with an addiction



■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree



What are the warning signs for Problem Gambling?³



Financial

- ✓ Money missing from bank accounts/wallet
- ✓ Regularly short on money even with a waged job
- ✓ Having many loans and borrowing money
- ✓ Being secretive about financial records/pay slips



Mood and Behavior

- ✓ Becoming withdrawn from others/family events
- ✓ Performance at work is being affected
- ✓ Seeming worried, agitated, hopeless, or depressed
- ✓ Controlling and/or manipulative behavior



Time

- ✓ Spending more and more time gambling
- ✓ Often being late or taking days off from work
- ✓ Taking an unusual amount of time for simple tasks (e.g., taking two hours to get the paper).

¹What is problem gambling? - . Virginia Council on Problem Gambling. (2022, February 23). <https://vcpg.net/about/what-is-problem-gambling/>

²National Council on Problem Gambling. (2019, March 11). National Survey on Gambling Attitudes and Gambling Experiences (Virginia). National Survey on Gambling Attitudes and Gambling Experiences. <https://www.ncpgsurvey.org/virginia/>

³Signs of a problem. Gambling Help Online. (n.d.). <https://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au/helping-others/signs-of-a-problem>



Recommendations for Merchants



Advertising Regulations

Merchants should restrict ad placements to minimize messaging impact on youth and restrict the number of ads per lottery retailer to minimize ad exposure, including:

- removing gaming/gambling advertising in places below three feet
- removing gaming/gambling advertising from close to candy displays
- removing gaming/gambling advertising from counter tops and the surrounding areas



Community Awareness Efforts

Merchants should post signs promoting problem gambling hotlines, resources, warnings about the legal age for Lottery games is 18 and electronic gambling games being 21 at sale points.



Checking ID

Merchants should check the I.D. of anyone purchasing lottery tickets, scratch cards, and anyone using electronic gaming and gambling machines. They also should agree to restrict access to electronic gaming/gambling machines for individuals under 21 years old.

What are the Penalties for Illegal Gambling and Underage Betting?

The Virginia Lottery may deny, suspend, revoke or refuse to continue a merchant's license if they:⁵

- Have been convicted of a felony.
- Have been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude.
- Have been convicted of any form of illegal gambling.
- Have committed any act of fraud, deceit, misrepresentation or conduct prejudicial to public confidence in the Virginia Lottery.
- Fail to comply with all applicable laws, instructions, terms or conditions of the license, or rules and regulations of the department.
- Cater to or are frequented predominantly by person under 18 years of age.

Conducting Illegal Gambling

The operator of an illegal gambling enterprise, activity or operation shall be guilty of a **Class 6 felony**. This may include fines and imprisonment.⁴

Selling a Ticket to a Minor

No ticket or share shall be sold to or redeemed from any person under the age of eighteen years. Any licensee who knowingly sells or offers to sell or redeem a lottery ticket or share to or from any person under the age of eighteen years is guilty of a **Class 1 misdemeanor**.⁴

Buying a Ticket for a Minor

No ticket or share shall be given as a gift or otherwise to any person under the age of eighteen years. Any person who knowingly gives a lottery ticket or share to any person under the age of eighteen years is guilty of a **Class 3 misdemeanor**.⁴

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, please call our confidential and toll-free helpline at

1-800-GAMBLER or
1 (888) 532-3500

Chat: 1800gamblerchat.org

For more information about local resources, contact your area's Community Service Board, which can be found by visiting dbhds.virginia.gov/community-services-boards-csbs/

⁴Virginia General Assembly. (n.d.). Chapter 8. Crimes Involving Morals and Decency: Article 1. Gambling. Virginia State Law Portal. <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title18.2/chapter8/#article1/>

⁵Virginia General Assembly. (n.d.-a). 11VAC5-31-160. Denial, suspension, revocation, or noncontinuation of license. Virginia State Law Portal. <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title11/agency5/chapter31/section160/>