

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

Purpose

For many people, gambling is an enjoyable entertainment activity that doesn't cause any issues or problems. Unfortunately, some people can experience a loss of control over their gambling that results in problems for themselves, their families, their employer and the community in general.

This Responsible Gambling Code of Conduct promotes responsible gambling practices, to minimise harm to individuals and to the broader community associated with an individual's loss of control over gambling.

The Code sets out minimum requirements for gambling providers to adopt to reduce the harm associated with problem gambling.

What is responsible gambling?

Responsible gambling is where an individual gambles for pleasure and entertainment but is aware of the likelihood of losing, and understands the associated risks. The person exercises control over his or her gambling behaviour, and it occurs in balance with other activities in their lives and is not causing problems or harms for themselves or others.

What is problem gambling?

Problem gambling is characterised by difficulties in limiting the money and/or time spent on gambling, which leads to negative impacts for the gambler, others, or for the community.

The negative impacts resulting from problem gambling can broadly include, but are not limited to:

- excessive financial losses relative to the gambler's income
- adverse personal effects on the gambler, family, friends and work colleagues as well as the broader community
- adverse physical and mental health issues
- negative impacts on work performance, and
- legal problems.

However, the negative impacts from problem gambling can run much deeper.

A problem gambler may experience stress or depression, suffer isolation from family and friends, commit theft, fraud or other crimes, and even consider, and sometimes attempt, suicide.

The family of a problem gambler may experience neglect by the gambler, pawning or selling family items, domestic and family violence, and family breakdown.

Employers may face poor performance, absenteeism and theft from the employer or other staff members.

The broader community suffers from problem gambling through the costs associated with family breakdown, the need for intervention services and counselling, and costs associated with imprisonment or hospitalisation.

Expected outcomes

This Code has been established to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Minimising the extent of gambling-related harm to individuals and the broader community
2. Enabling people to make informed decisions about their gambling activities
3. Enabling people (not just the gambler) adversely affected by gambling to have access to timely and appropriate assistance and information
4. Promote a shared understanding between individuals, the community, the gambling industry and the Authority of responsible gambling practices and an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of all parties.

The Code of Practice for Responsible Gambling

This Code is intended to promote best practice in the provision of gambling products and services.

While the principles of this Code are intended to apply to all gambling providers, the method of achieving them will vary from venue to venue according to the form of gambling offered.

Gambling providers will be required to demonstrate implementation of the Code to achieve the stated outcomes. Appropriate records corroborating this are required and must be made available periodically as required by the Authority.

Responsible Gambling Practices

This Code commits gambling service providers to responsible gambling practices with a focus on strong customer protection. Due to the diversity of gambling providers, some of the practices below may not apply to all of them.

Practices have been organised into the following broad categories:

1. Provision of Information
2. Interaction with Customers and Community
3. Training and Skills Development
4. Exclusion provisions
5. Physical Environment
6. Minors
7. Financial Transactions
8. Advertising and Promotions
9. Privacy Policy

1. *Provision of Information*

All gambling providers are to make available information that will allow their patrons to make informed decisions about their gambling habits. The information to be displayed includes:

- Information relating to the potential risks associated with gambling which must be displayed prominently as well as information about where patrons can seek assistance with any gambling issues they may have. The information is to be displayed in all gambling areas plus those locations where an ATM or EFTPOS machine is available.
- Meaningful and accurate information regarding the odds or win rates of major prizes should be clearly displayed in all gambling areas and providers who utilise websites must ensure this information is easily accessible by patrons.

All gambling providers must make available, when requested, the following types of information for their patrons:

- this code of conduct for responsible gambling
- the nature of games, game rules, odds or returns to players for all products offered
- information relating to the Self-Exclusion process, and
- gambling-related complaint resolution mechanisms and appropriate documentation.

2. *Interaction with Customers and Community*

To support early intervention and prevention strategies, gambling providers are to establish appropriate links with gambling support services in Antigua and Barbuda.

Commercial gambling providers must appoint a person to:

- be available during opening hours
- provide appropriate information and assistance to patrons with gambling related problems
- support other staff in providing assistance to these affected patrons.

Mechanisms for recognising and addressing complaints are to be established and promoted by gambling providers. Any complaints concerning breaches of the Code will be directed to the individual provider. It is then the responsibility of that particular gambling provider to address

complaints in a manner that enables any legitimate issue to be dealt with effectively, in order to ensure that this Code is upheld and that any breach is rectified as soon as possible.

Gambling providers will ensure they record all actions taken by staff in assisting people in accordance with the Code through a Responsible Gambling Incident Register. The register will need to include the following minimum amount of information:

- a) Date, time, location and nature of any event where a patron reports a gambling related issue or complaint.
- b) Name and address (or description of person where this information is unavailable) of the person the incident relates to; and
- c) The name of the staff member involved and the action they took.

The register should also list those patrons who have chosen to exclude themselves from the venue and include name, address, contact details and the date the exclusion commenced, duration and ending date.

3. Training and Skills Development

All new staff engaged in the provision of gambling services must complete appropriate gambling training within three (3) months of commencing employment. This should include training that will allow all relevant staff to identify and respond to 'Red Flag' behaviours as well as general information in relation to gambling and gambling products offered by the venue. Employees are to be trained to identify and intervene when they recognize that a customer is a minor or displaying signs of a gambling disorder.

Training is also to include making information/materials promoting responsible gaming available to all employees.

All staff involved in the provision of gambling services must undertake refresher training annually.

A Gambling Training Register is to be maintained and kept as a part of responsible gambling records. This register should include staff name, date of training and type of training. A copy of this register should be provided to the Gambling Authority on request.

4. Exclusion provisions

Gambling providers are to make available the option of patrons excluding themselves from the gambling venue for a period of up to six months.

All commercial gambling providers must use the generic form of self-exclusion which is enclosed.

Procedures with clear, supporting documentation are to be implemented, and application forms for self-exclusion must be available at Reception, within the gambling area, adjacent to the gambling products or/and on the website.

Management, the staff member responsible for compliance with this Code and/or security staff of the gambling provider, are to be supplied with the completed self-exclusion form together with a photo of the relevant person. This form will include the stated wish of the patron to be reminded of their desire to be excluded from the specified gambling provider. Details will also be entered in the Responsible Gambling Incident Register.

Gambling providers are to offer patrons who seek self-exclusion and/or express a concern that they have a gambling problem, contact information for appropriate counselling agencies.

Self-excluding gambling patrons are to be given support and encouragement in seeking self-exclusions from other gambling providers.

Gambling providers are not to send correspondence or promotional material to gambling customers who are excluded from their services or who request that this information not be sent to them.

Once a customer has self-excluded, the gambling provider is to make every effort to honour this action by the customer as best as possible. Information relating to self-exclusion is to be made available in the form of brochures. All staff, inclusive of supervisors, must be trained to assist customers to self-exclude, upon request by the customer.

5. *Physical Environment*

A gambling provider must maintain a safe environment.

Gambling providers must ensure the proper placement of clocks within the premises to enable customers to keep track of time spent.

Gambling providers are not to serve alcohol to persons who are visibly intoxicated. They must prevent visibly intoxicated persons from entering the premises and/or engaging in gambling on the premises. Signage may be placed to reflect these obligations.

6. *Minors*

All gambling providers are to adopt appropriate strategies to ensure minors are prohibited from gambling and not induced to gamble.

Minors are prohibited from gambling and gambling providers will check the identification of any person whom they have reason to believe might be less than 18 years of age.

7. *Financial Transactions*

Financial transactions associated with gambling are to be undertaken in a responsible manner, which includes such factors as the provision of credit and the cashing of cheques.

ATMs will carry or have within close sight of them problem gambling warning signage and appropriate support service contact details in a manner clearly visible to customers.

8. *Advertising and promotions*

Advertising and promotions are to be delivered in an honest and responsible manner, and must accurately detail prizes on offer and the game results available.

No advertising produced by any gambling provider is to give the impression that gambling is a reasonable strategy for financial betterment.

Advertising displays and point of sale material for gambling products must not be directed at minors, portray minors participating in gambling, or be set up in an area specifically to target minors.

Advertising displays at the point of sale are to have on or within sight of them appropriate problem gambling warning signage in a clearly visible manner.

Advertising of individuals' winnings paid should only be displayed within the gambling provider's premises and not externally in public spaces. Personal particulars of winners are only to be published with their consent. Any external advertising of individuals' winnings of jackpots can only be promoted following the approval of the Authority .

Gambling providers are not to verbally urge non-gambling customers to buy gambling products.

The gambling provider will ensure no advertising depicts or promotes the consumption of alcohol while engaged in gambling activities.

Gambling providers must obtain the written permission of a customer to send direct to customer (via email, text, or any other means) messages or advertising, and customers must be able to opt out of receiving direct messages (via email, text, or any other means) or advertising.

9. Privacy Policy

The gambling provider must maintain the privacy of player information and must ensure, as far as possible, that there is no unauthorised or inappropriate disclosure of personal information obtained or kept under this Code.