

# GAMBLING AND THE WORKPLACE

## FACTS AND FIGURES

In 2009, 73 per cent of Victorians reported participating in gambling in the last 12 months

- Of these, 0.7 per cent were people with gambling problems (approximately 30 thousand adults) and 2.4 per cent were considered at risk (approximately 100 thousand adults)
- This equates to almost one in every 100 employees potentially having an issue with gambling
- For each person with a gambling problem, approximately five to 10 other people in their lives are affected
- This represents approximately one million Victorians
- This could equate to almost 10 in every 100 employees who are affected by someone experiencing a problem with gambling

### IMPACTS OF RISKY OR PROBLEM GAMBLING

Gambling can have negative impacts for a workplace that may create an unhealthy work environment including:

- reduced productivity by gambling employees and colleagues who cover for those employees
- ineffectiveness caused by disruption to work patterns
- tiredness and mistakes resulting from fatigue
- reduced quality of work potentially resulting in customer complaints or dissatisfaction
- dishonesty
- low self-esteem and associated conditions including depression
- absenteeism (days off, extended lunch hours and breaks)
- disruptions to customer service with impacts on a company's reputation
- loss of skill, knowledge and capacity due to job turnover

Gambling may be occurring in workplaces during working hours and using an employer's equipment such as a computer, tablet or mobile phone.

- 49 per cent of Australians access the internet from work making the workplace, including when using an employer supplied mobile phone, the second most popular place we access the internet.

Given that online gambling may go unnoticed by employers and fellow colleagues, employers cannot be confident that gambling does not occur in their workplace.

- In 2011, 87 per cent of online gamblers surveyed reported using a computer while 10 per cent used mobile phones to engage in online gambling.
- Australians have access to an estimated 30 to 35 legal online gambling sites operating in Australia.
- Internationally, Australians have access to approximately 2,170 online gambling sites based in 75 different jurisdictions that accept players from Australia.
- Australians playing casino-type games over the internet should be aware they're not protected by any specific Australian law. Australian consumer and other laws that seek to protect your rights or stipulate the fairness of the game are unlikely to be enforceable.

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### WARNING SIGNS

Employers should look for signs relating to:

- time
  - arriving late to work or leaving work early
  - extended lunch hours
  - unexplained disappearances / increased absenteeism
  - predictable pattern of absenteeism
- productivity
  - irritability, poor concentration
  - changes in productivity / incomplete work
  - misuse / excessive use of work telephone, mobile or internet
- finances
  - borrowing money from colleagues
  - employers approached for salary advances
  - constantly volunteering for overtime / additional shifts
- criminal activity
  - stealing money / goods from work colleagues / company
  - fraudulent expense claims
  - embezzlement

### REDUCING THE RISK OF GAMBLING AFFECTING YOUR WORKPLACE

There are some simple things an employer can do to reduce the risk of gambling affecting your workplace including:

1. educating staff about gambling and its risks
2. communicating responsible gambling messages and
3. implementing a workplace policy on gambling.

To find out more, go to

[www.responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/for-workplaces](http://www.responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/for-workplaces) for:

- Discussion paper - Gambling and the workplace: the issues, its impacts and actions for employers
- Guide – Gambling in the workplace: Guidelines to developing a workplace gambling policy
- Template - Example workplace policy on gambling

### MORE INFORMATION

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[responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au](http://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au)

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