



## GAMBLING IN THE WORKPLACE

# GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING A WORKPLACE GAMBLING POLICY

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

May 2014

## TIPS

# FOR DEVELOPING A WORKPLACE GAMBLING POLICY

The following section provides tips developing a workplace gambling policy to assist employers to provide a safe and healthy workplace.

## STATEMENT

Formulate a headline statement that recognises gambling in the workplace as a potential problem

- For example, 'The gambling environment is constantly changing and gambling is increasingly accessible during working hours.'

Include a commitment to a safe, healthy and productive workplace

- For example, 'Every employer has an obligation to provide a safe, healthy and productive workplace for their employees.'

## OBJECTIVES

State the objectives of the policy. This could include:

- To reduce the potential for gambling to have negative impacts on the organisation and employees
- To provide confidential access to information on gambling and encourage employees who have problems with gambling to seek help

## WORKPLACE BEHAVIOUR

Include a statement on appropriate workplace behaviour.

This could include:

- If and when it is considered appropriate or inappropriate to gamble at work

## EMPLOYER ACTIONS

Include an explanation of how your objectives will be accomplished and what, in particular, the organisation will do.

- To reduce the potential for gambling to have negative impacts on the organisation and employees, an employer might:
  - limit employee exposure to gambling through the use of mobile phones at work or the organisation of gambling related workplace social events like pools or sweeps
  - regulate conditions that encourage gambling such as blocking access to gambling websites on work computers
  - make available and prepare early intervention strategies for employees who may develop problems with gambling. These could be delivered through employee consultations and workplace monitoring
- To provide confidential access to information on gambling support services and encourage employees who have problems with gambling (or who have a family member who has problems with gambling) to seek assistance, an employer might:
  - provide information on where employees can seek help by publishing details of the local employee assistance provider (EAP) and local Gambler's Help agencies
  - support an employee's return to work if that employee has taken temporary leave to address their problem with gambling or a related issue by applying a flexible working conditions policy.

## EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Allocate responsibilities to different staff. For example:

- Managers
  - Be aware of signs that indicate gambling is occurring or that issues that may be associated with problem gambling are occurring
  - Are responsible for monitoring and supporting an employee who is gambling or someone who is suspected of having a problem with gambling
  - Ensuring discussions related to problem gambling are confidential and undertaken without prejudice
- Human resources
  - Communicating the policy to employees
  - Communicating information relevant to the policy to managers
  - Keeping accurate and up-to-date records
  - Maintaining confidential reporting procedures
  - Adding gambling problems to the list of issues to check for when unusual or poor employee behaviours are noted
  - Ensuring the presence of procedural fairness in dealing with negative behaviour or conduct associated with problem gambling
  - Identifying support networks
- Employees
  - Respecting the privacy of fellow employees
  - Ensuring you have an appropriate relationship or the authority to approach another employee you suspect may be suffering from problem gambling
  - Ensuring the responsible and appropriate use of workplace equipment such as electronic devices, within the spirit of the policy

## CHECK LIST

# FOR DEVELOPING A WORKPLACE GAMBLING POLICY

### 1. Organise consultations with employees:

- Discuss the potential problems related to gambling in the workplace
- Develop a policy statement in consultation with employees

### 2. Determine what hazards or risks exist in the workplace by asking:

- How might gambling occur in the workplace?
- What aspects of the workplace may enable or encourage gambling?
- What types of gambling are or might be occurring and what level of risk do they pose in terms of uncontrolled or problem gambling?

### 3. Begin your policy with a statement:

- What is your organisation's commitment to health and safety?
- How does your organisation plan to address gambling in the workplace?

### 4. Decide on the aims of your policy:

- What are the expected outcomes of this policy?
  - Do you want to regulate gambling in the workplace or prohibit the activity all together?
  - Define how the issue fits in with other policies related to behaviour, conduct and health and safety?
  - Does the policy lead to privacy obligations that must be adhered to?
  - Do you intend to pursue both prevention and assistance aims?

### 5. Determine the scope of your policy:

- Who is covered under the policy?
  - Are managers included?
  - Are subsidiaries or other locations of the business included?
  - What about contractors?

### 6. Determine the code of behaviour required of employees:

- What must employees do or not do to comply with the policy?

### 7. Include a list of the different roles and responsibilities of staff members:

- Who is responsible for approaching an employee suspected of having a problem with gambling? Is it the boss, manager, or a fellow employee? Are records kept?

### 8. Determine what the organisation will do:

- This could include:
  - the provision of educational materials on problem gambling
  - sign-posting to financial and gambling counsellors
  - rehabilitation and flexible work options for employees

### 9. Include a list of support services and avenues of action for employees:

- Where can an employee get help?
- Who can an employee talk to?

### 10. Include an explanation of disciplinary procedures (if applicable)

- (1) Will disciplinary action be taken against an employee who gambles at work in a manner deemed inappropriate? Is this in contravention of your current workplace policy?
- (2) What is the process for disciplinary action and does it provide for procedural fairness? (ie. warnings, caution, removal of work mobile or tablet)

# GAMBLING IN THE WORKPLACE

Gambling is a widespread activity for many people, working across many industries and different occupations.

Changes to the gambling environment now mean gambling in the workplace and during working hours is more possible than ever before.

Online gambling sites and providers now advertise and offer access through smart phones, tablets and computers. While most people who gamble do not develop a problem, research confirms that some do and it is difficult to reliably predict who will develop problems.

Problem gambling can have a negative impact on workplaces. Employees affected by gambling problems may be tired at work, absent more often, distracted due to financial concerns or may suffer from low self-esteem, anxiety or depression.

Gambling problems can also affect those around the employee who gambles, including colleagues, family and friends.

Every employer has a duty of care under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to their employees to provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and without risks to health.

Given that problems with gambling can result in harm to employees, leading to potential health and safety risks in the workplace, an employer is obliged to eliminate (or if not possible, reduce) the risk of gambling at work or in connection with work, so far as is reasonably practicable.

This aim of this guide to help employers establish a workplace gambling policy to reduce the risk or impact of gambling in the workplace.

We recommend a workplace gambling policy which adopts a supportive approach and includes health promotion and prevention, education and harm reduction strategies.

Gambling is a legal activity and many adults choose to participate to some extent. A harm reduction policy focuses on reducing the harm resulting from problem gambling without necessarily eliminating gambling altogether.

Support and commitment from top levels of management is important to ensure the implementation of any policy developed. Active collaboration from staff in policy development also helps to ensure adoption by everyone.

Key stakeholders from the community, such as local gambling and health agencies, insurance companies and employment assistance providers (EAP) might also contribute to the policy development process.

A workplace policy on gambling may include:

- information on current occupational health and safety policies and programs
- workplace health and well being initiatives
- education and staff training on responsible gambling

For more on the issue of gambling in the workplace see our discussion paper on the topic. The paper reviews the latest research as well as providing insights and recommendations to address the issue.

You can find the discussion paper on the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation's website at: [responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/awareness and prevention/publications](https://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/awareness-and-prevention/publications)

# TEMPLATE WORKPLACE GAMBLING POLICY

Here is an example of a workplace gambling policy. When implementing your own policy, you should take care to have the policy examined by the appropriate people including human resources staff or legal representatives.

Different workplaces will require different policies, therefore this template should be adapted to fit the needs of your specific workplace.

At **(insert company name)**, we care about the physical and mental engagement of our employees.

At **(insert company name)**, we are committed to fostering a healthy and safe work environment for our employees. We have a statutory duty to ensure that our employees do not endanger their own safety or that of other employees in the workplace, through the harmful effects of problem gambling issues such as depression, debt and relationship problems. **(Insert company name)** is committed to regulating the workplace environment and limiting employee exposure at work to gambling.

As a matter of policy **(insert company name)** prohibits commercial gambling at work and during working hours. **(Insert company name)** prohibits visiting gambling sites on electronic communication devices such as mobile phones, computers and tablets supplied by **(insert company name)** for the purpose of work. **(Insert company name)** takes measures to block gambling sites on these devices. This policy applies to all employees, including managers, contract workers and visitors to the organisation.

**(Insert company name)** understands gambling may be an enjoyable recreational activity for many employees. If staff members choose to gamble, we advise staff members to gamble responsibly during their own time and support the responsible organisation of social gambling activities in the workplace such as charity lotteries or sweeps. Permitted gambling in the workplace may relate to, for example the Melbourne Cup or the Australian Football League, as long as events are promoted and managed in the spirit of this policy – that is to consider the health, safety and welfare of all employees.

If you are affected by a gambling problem, you are encouraged to contact **(insert company name)**'s Employee Assistance Program on **(insert EAP details)**, Gambler's Help or Human Resources. Information on problem gambling, responsible gambling and treatment services is available in **(insert those applicable - break out areas, staff room, workplace intranet, OHS area, etc)**. If you are aware that another employee is affected by gambling problems, you have a duty to respect the privacy of that person and to ensure that they are treated in a fair and reasonable manner. For further information on how to address your concerns appropriately contact Human Resources for information assistance.

If an employee requires reasonable adjustment to address personal or family issues related to gambling, we encourage the employee to discuss options with their immediate supervisor or Human Resources. **(Insert company name)** has a number of options available to employees as part of our flexible work conditions policy. For help we encourage employees to contact Gamblers' Help at 1800 858 858 or go to **www.gamblers help.com.au**.

© State of Victoria 2014



This publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence. The licence does not apply to any images, photographs, branding or logos.

Developed in partnership with the Australian Human Resources Institute. Published by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation

## Enquiries:

To order copies of the guide or to receive this publication in an accessible format:

email [communication@responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au](mailto:communication@responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au)  
telephone +61 03 9452 2649

May 2014  
[responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au](http://responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au)