

# Gambling in the Workplace Policy Development Toolkit

This toolkit was created to support Problem Gambling Professionals in developing a “Gambling in the Workplace Policy”—not only for your own organization, but also to assist in broader community efforts with partner organizations.

The purpose behind a workplace gambling policy is to help foster a healthy, safe, and supportive environment—one that protects the well-being of employees, the integrity of the organization, and the individuals and communities you serve.

By promoting awareness and creating a culture of care, your organization can help reduce risks associated with gambling-related harm while supporting employee wellness and organizational resilience.

## Understanding Gambling & Its Impact in the Workplace

Gambling is a common activity that many people engage in for entertainment. However, when gambling begins to negatively affect a person’s well-being, relationships, or job performance, it can become a concern—especially in the workplace.

This section is designed to help problem gambling professionals, supervisors, and HR teams better understand what gambling is, how it can show up at work, and what signs to look for. It also offers practical guidance on how to respond with care and support when concerns arise.

By increasing awareness and promoting a supportive work environment, organizations can reduce risks, protect employee well-being, and foster a culture of trust and accountability.

## What is Gambling?

Gambling is when someone risks money or something of value on an event with an uncertain outcome, hoping to win something of greater value.

## What is Problem Gambling?

Problem gambling is when someone continues to gamble despite negative impacts on their personal life, relationships, or finances. It doesn't always meet the criteria for a clinical diagnosis, but it can still cause serious harm.

Most people who gamble do so without problems.

However, in Oregon, according to the **2024 Oregon Adult Gambling Attitudes, Behavior, and Health Survey**:

- 15.0% of adults are at risk of experiencing gambling-related problems
- Among those at risk, 3% meet the criteria for a gambling disorder diagnosis

## How Gambling Can Affect the Workplace

Gambling-related issues often show up at work—whether it's the employee themselves or a family member who is impacted. These effects can include:

- Decreased productivity
- Misuse of company time or resources
- Strained relationships with coworkers
- Increased absenteeism
- Triggers for others in recovery

## What Gambling in the Workplace Might Look Like

Gambling at work can take many forms, such as:

- Office pools (e.g., fantasy sports, NCAA brackets, baby arrival bets)
- Lottery tickets used as gifts or incentives
- Group lottery purchases
- Raffles for fundraising
- Online gambling on work computers or phones

This list isn't exhaustive - gambling can show up in many ways.

## Workplace Warning Signs

### Performance Issues

- Trouble concentrating or staying focused
- Drop in work quality or productivity
- Preoccupation with gambling
- Secretive use of phone or internet

### Financial Red Flags

- Frequently borrowing money from coworkers
- Talking about debt or financial stress
- Bills sent to work instead of home
- Volunteering for extra shifts for financial reasons
- Irregularities in financial records
- Theft or misuse of company funds

### Time Management Concerns

- Frequent lateness or unexplained absences
- Long breaks or lunches
- Missed deadlines

### Behavioral Changes

- Increased stress, anxiety, or mood swings
- Personality changes (e.g., irritability, secrecy)
- Signs of depression or withdrawal

## What Supervisors Can Do

If you notice any of these signs, here are some supportive steps you can take:

- Start the conversation during team meetings or request a training on problem gambling
- Express concern in a caring, non-judgmental way
- Focus on work-related observations
- Be clear about expectations and boundaries
- Offer information—not advice
- Be prepared for denial or discomfort
- Refer to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Monitor financial processes if appropriate
- Know your local help resources (like OPGR, Evive, GamFin)

# Tips to Support Developing a Gambling in the Workplace Policy

## Establish a Clear Policy Statement

### Purpose – What is the policy for?

Example: To support a safe, productive, and healthy workplace for all.

### Scope – Who does it apply to?

Example: All employees, volunteers, contractors, and temporary staff.

### Sample Policy Statement:

Gambling during work hours or on company property is not permitted. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Online sports betting
- Card games
- Office pools (e.g., March Madness)
- Raffles
- Internet gambling using company devices or networks

## Define Restricted Behaviors

### Prohibited Activities Example:

- Gambling during work hours or on company premises
- Using company equipment, devices, or networks for gambling
- Organizing or promoting gambling-related activities at work

### Clarifying Boundaries Example:

Personal gambling outside of work is not regulated unless it interferes with job performance, violates company policy, or creates risk for the organization.

## Acknowledge the Risks

### Why It Matters in the Workplace:

Problem gambling can impact individuals and teams in several ways:

- Reduced productivity and focus
- Increased absenteeism or tardiness
- Financial misconduct (e.g., misuse of funds)
- Workplace tension or interpersonal conflict

## Outline Policy Enforcement

### Monitoring and Reporting:

- Train supervisors to recognize early signs of gambling-related concerns
- Encourage a culture of support and early intervention

### Disciplinary Actions (based on organizational policy):

- Verbal or written warnings

- Suspension or termination (depending on severity)
- Referral to support services or Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

## Promote Employee Education & Training

### **Awareness Campaigns:**

- Use posters, newsletters, and intranet articles to share information
- Include the Guidelines for a Healthier Relationship with Gambling and maintaining balance

### **Recognizing the Signs:**

- Preoccupation with betting or gambling talk
- Frequent borrowing of money
- Mood swings, secrecy, or changes in behavior

### **Supervisor Training:**

- How to approach conversations with empathy and discretion
- When and how to refer employees to support services

## Implement Risk Mitigation & Fraud Prevention

### **Assess Risk Factors:**

- Easy access to online gambling platforms
- Limited financial oversight or controls

### **Implement Safeguards:**

- Require dual signatures for financial transactions
- Segregate duties in accounting and finance roles

### **Accountability Measures:**

- Clearly communicate consequences for misuse of company resources

## Provide Support & Resources

If you or someone you know is facing challenges related to gambling, help is available—confidential, free, and without judgment.

### **Oregon Problem Gambling Resource (OPGR)/Helpline**

- **What it is:** A statewide hub for free, confidential help
- **How to connect:**
  - Website: [www.OPGR.org](http://www.OPGR.org)
  - Call: 1-877-MY-LIMIT or 1-844-TU-VALES
  - Live Chat & Text Support: Mon–Fri, 9 AM–9 PM
  - Phone Support: Available 24/7

### **Free Counseling & Treatment**

- **What it is:** Free evaluations and treatment through certified providers
- **Who it's for:** Individuals and families affected by gambling

### **Gamblers Anonymous (GA)**

- **What it is:** Peer support for individuals who want to stop gambling
- **How to connect:** Call Problem Gambling Helpline or visit [www.OPGR.org](http://www.OPGR.org) for local meeting info

### **Gam-Anon**

- **What it is:** Support for loved ones of someone affected by gambling
- **How to connect:** Contact Problem Gambling Helpline or visit [www.OPGR.org](http://www.OPGR.org) for meeting details

### **Evive**

- **What it is:** A digital platform offering confidential, personalized support
- **Access:** Free for Oregon residents
- **Learn more:** [www.getevive.com](http://www.getevive.com)

### **GamFin**

- **What it is:** Financial counseling for those impacted by gambling
- **Access:** Free for Oregon residents
- **Learn more:** [www.gamfin.org](http://www.gamfin.org)

## **Wrap Up with Final Thoughts**

Creating a workplace gambling policy is not just about setting boundaries—it's about fostering a culture of well-being, accountability, and support. By clearly outlining expectations, educating staff, and offering access to resources, organizations can help prevent problems before they start and ensure that employees feel safe and supported.

Remember, the goal is not to judge or penalize, but to promote a healthy, balanced work environment where everyone can thrive. With the right tools and a compassionate approach, your workplace can be a leader in prevention and support for gambling related harms.

## **Tips to Support Developing a Gambling in the Workplace Policy**

### **Sample Workplace Gambling Policy**

#### **Our Commitment**

We are dedicated to maintaining a healthy, productive, and supportive work environment for all employees.

This policy is designed to raise awareness about gambling-related harm and provide guidance for employees and managers. Our goal is to support employee well-being while protecting the integrity of our workplace.

## What's Not Allowed

To help prevent potential issues, employees may not engage in any form of gambling while:

### On the job

Using company equipment or internet access

This includes online betting, office pools, or any gambling-related activity during work hours.

### Internet Use Policy (Excerpt)

Employees may not use company internet access to:

- Gamble online
- Play excessive online games
- Conduct personal business
- Engage in illegal activities

## Example Operational Policy OHA/ODHS

|                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Title:</b>          | Workplace Gambling Policy |
| <b>Related to:</b>     |                           |
| <b>Effective date:</b> |                           |

### Policy/Purpose

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) are committed to promoting the health and safety of all its employees. OHA/DHS seeks to create a supportive workplace environment in which employees feel comfortable and supported in seeking assistance and recovering from a variety of behavioral health issues, including problem gambling/gambling disorder.

### Description

The purpose of this policy is to reduce the impact of problem gambling in the workplace by increasing awareness of problem gambling, by providing a supportive environment for persons in recovery from gambling problems, and to provide guidance for employees and management in acceptable and unacceptable employee gambling practices.

### Applicability

This policy applies to all DHS and OHA staff including employees, volunteers, trainees, interns, contractors and sub-contractors.

As keepers of the public trust, all agency employees have a responsibility to comply with state and agency policies, administrative rule, and state and federal law. The agency takes this responsibility seriously and failure to fulfill this responsibility is not treated

lightly. Employees who fail to comply with state or agency policy, administrative rule, or state and federal law may face progressive discipline, up to and including dismissal from state service. Contractors and subcontractors may face termination of the working relationship.

## **Definitions**

**Gambling:** Wagering of money or something of material value on an event with an uncertain outcome with the hope of winning something of even greater value.

**Problem Gambling:** Continuation of gambling activities despite negative personal, social or financial consequences that do not reach a clinical diagnostic level of disordered gambling.

**Disordered gambling:** Clinical term relating to a score assessed by a professional using a recognized set of nine criteria; persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behavior leading to clinically significant impairment of distress. Also referred to as gambling disorder or gambling addiction.

## **Guidelines**

1. While not all gambling meets the criteria for a gambling disorder, any gambling during state business work time or using state issued related resources to gamble is not an appropriate or acceptable use of state time or resources.
  - A. Employees shall not participate in any gambling or gambling related activity while on state business time or using state issued equipment. This includes the use of state issued computer, e-mail, phone, internet, etc. to gamble.
  - B. Employees shall not participate, while on State owned or leased property, in any gambling activity that is not a Director's Office approved charitable fund-raiser.
    - a. OHA/DHS reserves, and intends to exercise, all rights relating to any gambling activities that occur at the workplace.
      - i. OHA/DHS intends to trace, review, intercept, block, restrict, screen, and disclose any information, in accordance with applicable disclosure of information policies.
      - ii. OHA/DHS may stop any gambling activities at any time.
  - C. Gambling activities approved by the Director's Office must be a charitable fund-raiser.
    - a. That approval shall be granted in accordance with [ORS 167.118](#) and only after the gambling activity has been assessed for risk factors including minimizing relapse triggers for persons in recovery from gambling problems.
    - b. Gambling activities approved by the Director's Office must be consistent with the agencies mission and values.
  - D. Training and education will be provided to employees on problem and disordered gambling, the links between gambling and other addictive behaviors, and information on how to access available resources for those who may need assistance.
  - E. The Oregon Problem Gambling Resource (1-877-695-4648) helpline and website ([OPGR.org](http://OPGR.org)) materials shall be accessible and included in messaging related to

charitable fund raising to reduce triggers and provide support to those in recovery from gambling problems.

F. If an employee is discovered to be gambling on state time or using work related resources, the employee may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, in accordance with Human Resources policy and procedure. In such a case, the employee may be given an opportunity to go to an employee assistance program and/or problem gambling treatment program for a problem gambling evaluation and treatment, if recommended.

G. Employees and family members shall be informed that free, confidential treatment for gambling problems are available and can be accessed by connecting with the Oregon Problem Gambling Resource.

## **References**

ORS Chapter 167 – Gambling

- ORS 167.108      Definitions for ORS 167.109 and 167.112
- ORS 167.109      Internet gambling
- ORS 167.117      Definitions for ORS 167.108 to 167.164 and 464.270 to 464.530
- ORS 167.118      Certain games or event conducted by charitable, fraternal or religious organizations; rules

ORS Chapter 464 – Games

- ORS 464.310      Eligibility to participate in management or operation of games
- ORS 464.385      Exemption from licensing and reporting requirements for organizations conducting certain raffle.

OSHA Standard-29CFR-2202.6 – Gambling, betting, and lotteries

Oregon Problem Gambling Resource: <https://www.opgr.org/>

**Forms referenced** – None

**Related policies** - None

## **Contact**

Oregon Health Authority, Health System Division, Problem Gambling Services

[PGS.support@oha.oregon.gov](mailto:PGS.support@oha.oregon.gov)

## **Keywords**

Gambling, problem gambling, workplace gambling, gambling restrictions, workplace gambling policy, policies on workplace gambling, internet gambling, gambling disorder, charitable gaming

## Guidelines for Healthier Relationship with Gambling

Gambling can be a fun and social activity for many people. Like any form of entertainment, it's most enjoyable when it's done in a balanced and mindful way. These guidelines are designed to support individuals in making informed, healthy choices about gambling. Whether you gamble occasionally or more regularly, these tips can help you maintain control, reduce risks, and keep gambling a positive part of your life.

- **Enjoy gambling as a form of entertainment**, not a way to make money. Consider any money spent as the cost of having fun—like going to a movie or a concert.
- **Check in with your emotions**. If you're feeling stressed, lonely, or down, consider healthier ways to cope—like talking to a friend, going for a walk, or practicing mindfulness.
- **Set a spending limit in advance—and stick to it**. This helps you stay in control and enjoy the experience without regret.
- **Know that losing is part of the game**. Expect it, and don't try to win back what you've lost.
- **Use only money you can afford to spend**. Avoid borrowing or using credit cards to gamble.
- **Keep a healthy balance**. Make time for other activities you enjoy—like hobbies, social time, or exercise.
- **Avoid “chasing losses.”** Increasing your bets to recover money can lead to more stress and financial strain.
- **Set a time limit**. Take regular breaks and know when it's time to stop.
- **Be mindful of substances**. Gambling while drinking or using other substances can affect your judgment.
- **Stay informed**. Learn the signs that gambling may be becoming a problem and know where to find support and resources.

## Problem Gambling Warning Signs

Gambling can be a fun and occasional form of entertainment for many people. But for some, it can become more than just a game—it can start to affect their finances, relationships, and overall well-being. If you're wondering whether your gambling habits might be getting out of hand, you're not alone. Recognizing the signs early is a powerful first step toward regaining control.

This guide is here to help you reflect on your habits in a non-judgmental way and offer support if you need it.

Here are some signs that gambling might be becoming a problem:

- **You're spending more money than you can afford.**  
You find yourself dipping into savings, borrowing money, or using funds meant for bills or essentials.

- **You're chasing losses.**  
After losing money, you feel the urge to keep gambling to try to win it back.
- **You're hiding your gambling.**  
You lie or downplay how much time or money you spend gambling.
- **You feel anxious or irritable when you try to stop.**  
Taking a break from gambling makes you feel restless, moody, or uncomfortable.
- **You're gambling to escape.**  
You use gambling as a way to cope with stress, boredom, or difficult emotions.
- **You've tried to cut back but couldn't.**  
Even when you've wanted to stop or reduce your gambling, it's been hard to follow through.
- **It's affecting your relationships or responsibilities.**  
Gambling is causing tension with loved ones or interfering with work, school, or home life.

## What to Do Next

If any of these signs sound familiar, it might be time to talk to someone. You're not alone, and help is available. Reaching out is a sign of strength—not weakness.

Behavioral Health Division  
Problem Gambling Services  
[PGS.Support@oha.oregon.gov](mailto:PGS.Support@oha.oregon.gov)  
<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HSD/Problem-Gambling/Pages/index.aspx>

