

LEGALIZED GAMBLING IN CANADA

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HISTORY AND REGULATION

The history of gambling in Canada is inextricably linked to the Canadian Criminal Code, which in 1892 declared a complete ban on most gambling activities with the exception of horse racing. Gambling on horse races at the end of the century occurred both on and off the track. Although the legal status of on-track betting was uncertain, authorities were inclined to accommodate it. This Criminal Code is closely based on the English laws that Canada incorporated at the time of its Confederation in 1867. Since that time, the ban on gambling has gradually been lifted.

Over time, Criminal Code exemptions that permitted small scale gambling on behalf of charities were introduced. Between 1892 and 1969, Canadians could wager on horse races or gamble at summer fair midways. These charitable experiences with gambling eventually led to a Criminal Code amendment in 1969 that gave the provincial and federal governments the opportunity to use lotteries to fund worthwhile activities (e.g. 1976 Montreal Olympics).

A 1969 amendment authorized provincial governments to manage and conduct lottery schemes and authorized charitable groups to do likewise under license – the federal government still had control, however, and even had their own lottery. The provincial and territorial governments soon negotiated provisions that led to the introduction of further gambling options in Canada such as province-run ticket lotteries. Governments began to generate substantial revenues from their virtual monopoly on Canadian gambling and became interested in diversifying their gambling offerings.

A major 1985 amendment to the Criminal Code permitted provincial governments to administer computer and video gaming devices (i.e. VLTs, slot machines) and gave them exclusive control over gambling. Along with the expansion of electronic gambling, the amendment further solidified the provinces' grip on gambling as charitable groups and First Nations' bands were required to operate under their authority. Since that time, gambling in Canada has expanded rapidly and continues to evolve at a brisk pace.

Canada has a unique policy structure with respect to gambling. It differs from many international counterparts as gambling operates exclusively under the control of the provincial and territorial governments. These governments work within the limitations of the Criminal Code to offer gambling options that the market and the political environment demand. Charities, First Nations and private operators also benefit from gambling in Canada by providing provincially-authorized gambling activities through operational arrangements.

It is necessary to examine the provinces and territories individually to understand the regulation of gambling in Canada as a whole.

FORMS OF GAMBLING LEGAL IN CANADA

Ticket lotteries, horse racing, and charitable gaming (including bingo) are currently legal in all ten provinces, Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut Territory (but not offered in all jurisdictions). **Casino-style gaming** is available in all provinces with the exception of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland & Labrador. Provincial electronic gaming policy in Canada makes a distinction between slot machines and VLTs (Video Lottery Terminals). **Slot machines** are usually found in casinos and at racetracks, and are available in all provinces with the exception of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland & Labrador. **VLTs** are available in all provinces but Ontario and British Columbia. **Internet Gambling** is not featured among the legalized gambling offerings in Canada.

PROGRAMS IN PLACE FOR PROBLEM GAMBLERS

All provincial governments fund prevention and treatment services to deal with the consequences of problem gambling. In the fiscal year 2001/2002, the provinces combined to make spending commitments of over \$44 million (Canadian) on programs. Using figures from provincial studies, estimates of problem gambling prevalence rates in Canada generally range from 3-5% of the adult population.

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<http://www.camh.net/egambling/issue1/policy/>

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NATIONAL:

Canada West Foundation Gambling in Canada Project
<http://www.cwf.ca/gambling.cfm>

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) – Gambling
<http://www.ccsa.ca/gambgen.htm>

Gambling in Canada -- A Report by the National Council of Welfare (Winter 1996)
<http://ccsa.ca/ncw/gambcont.htm>

North American Association of State & Provincial Lotteries
<http://www.naspl.org/index.html>

North American Gaming Regulators Association
<http://www.nagra.org/>

Problem Gambling: A Canadian Perspective
<http://www.problemgambling.ca/>

ALBERTA:

AADAC (Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission) -- Addictions Information on Gambling
http://www3.gov.ab.ca/aadac/addictions/subject_gambling.htm

Alberta Gaming
<http://www.gaming.gov.ab.ca/>

Alberta Gaming & Liquor Commission
<http://www.aglc.gov.ab.ca/>

Alberta Gaming Research Institute
<http://www.abgaminginstitute.ualberta.ca/>

Wynne Resources Limited
<http://www.wynne.com/>

BRITISH COLUMBIA:

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor - General Gaming Policy and Enforcement
Branch

<http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/gaming/>

MANITOBA:

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba – Gambling

<http://www.afm.mb.ca/afmservices/Gambling/gambling.html>

Manitoba Gaming Control Commission

<http://www.mgcc.mb.ca/>

NEW BRUNSWICK:

New Brunswick Addiction Services

<http://www.gov.nb.ca/0378/en/>

New Brunswick Coin Machine Owners Association Inc.

<http://www.nb-videogames.ca/>

New Brunswick Department of Finance – Reports

<http://www.gnb.ca/nosearch/0024/reports/index.asp>

-- includes *Lotteries Commission Annual Reports*

NOVA SCOTIA:

Nova Scotia Alcohol and Gaming Authority

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/aga/defaultindex.htm>

Nova Scotia Department of Health – Problem Gambling Services

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/gambling/>

Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation

<http://www.gamingcorp.ns.ca/>

ONTARIO:

Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario

<http://www.agco.on.ca/en/c.gaming/c.gaming.html>

eGambling – The Electronic Journal of Gambling Issues
<http://www.camh.net/egambling/index.html>

Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre
<http://www.gamblingresearch.org/>

Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation
<http://www.olg.ca/>

Problem Gambling Research Group – University of Windsor
<http://venus.uwindsor.ca/pgrg/index.htm>

Responsible Gambling Council (Ontario)
<http://www.responsiblegambling.org/>

The Chase: Report on Problem Gambling
<http://www.thechase.ca/>

QUEBEC:

Centre québécois d'excellence pour la prévention et le traitement du jeu
<http://www.psy.ulaval.ca/~jeux/eng/>
-- English version of site available

International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors
<http://www.youthgambling.com/en>

Loto-quebec
<http://www.loto-quebec.com/indexa.htm>