

Enhancing Responsible Gambling Support for Workers in the B.C. Gambling Industry

As the organization responsible for commercial gambling in British Columbia, BCLC is committed to reducing the harm that can come from gambling, amongst our players and amongst those who work in the industry.

By better understanding the risks and challenges faced by those who work in the gambling field, we can adjust our outreach, training and supports to better suit the unique health and wellness needs of those who work in the industry.

To that end, BCLC, through Ipsos, conducted a Gaming Worker Survey and a BCLC Employee Survey in 2016. The results provided BCLC with insights into gambling behaviours, incidence of at-risk behaviours, impacts of workplace influences and awareness, attitudes and usage of responsible and problem gambling resources.

By taking better care of workers in B.C.'s gambling industry, BCLC is taking better care of our players, which in turn is better for the sustainability of our business.

KEY FINDINGS

The results of BCLC's 2016 Gaming Workers Survey show elevated rates of at-risk behaviours for gaming industry staff, which is consistent with research conducted elsewhere in Canada. It has also revealed opportunities to enhance BCLC corporate programs/policies, in conjunction with our private-sector service providers that operate gambling facilities and our regulator, the Gambling Policy Enforcement Branch (GPEB). In response to these research findings, BCLC has introduced additional responsible gambling measures, and initiated changes to policy, education and training, to better support workers in the B.C. gambling industry who may be at a higher risk of developing problems with gambling.

1. Update BCLC's [Voluntary Self-Exclusion \(VSE\)](#) Policy and Agreement to clarify that gaming facility employees and BCLC staff are eligible to enrol in the VSE program and that enrolment will not affect their employment status.
2. Develop new content for gaming workers' mandatory training courses, such as the [Appropriate Response Training \(ART\)](#) series, that highlights the increased risks for industry workers and outlines resources and support options available. As well, training should include recommendations for supporting co-workers experiencing gambling difficulties.
3. Ensure that informational materials on responsible gambling and problem gambling are available for employees in back of the house areas within gambling facilities, such as break rooms, staff lounges or other gathering places for workers.
4. Work with the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch to increase the number of [GameSense](#) Advisors, so that every gambling facility in the province has an on-site responsible gambling subject matter expert who can educate staff, along with customers, on responsible gambling best practices.

Workers stated they would be most likely to seek assistance from a GameSense Advisor, if they felt they had a possible gambling problem.

5. Work with the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch to establish connections and possibly regular communications between gaming workers and local counselors so that employees have contact information for support professionals before they need them.
6. Conduct follow-up research in three to four years to measure the progress of reducing the proportion of gaming workers who are at risk of developing problem gambling behaviours.

SURVEY BACKGROUND

BCLC's Responsible Gambling Strategy has identified the need to create programs for special populations that may be at a higher risk of developing problems with gambling, or that may have different needs than the wider population.

Canadian research indicates that gaming workers exhibit rates of problem gambling that are over three times the rate experienced by the general population. Several factors could explain the higher prevalence of problem gambling for gaming workers. For example, gaming workers may face different risks than typical players because of their ongoing exposure to gambling.

In addition to surveying gaming workers, BCLC surveyed its own corporate staff to better understand their gambling behaviour and responsible gambling awareness.

Overall, the intent of these two surveys was to identify opportunities to develop and implement programming that:

- a) assists gaming workers/staff who may be experiencing problem gambling behaviour;
- b) raises awareness of information and resources for gaming workers/staff; and,
- c) removes existing barriers that prevent gaming workers/staff from fully utilizing problem gambling resources.

SURVEY RESULTS

Gaming Worker Survey

BCLC issued a voluntary survey to gaming facility staff who work for BCLC service providers. To recruit survey participants, BCLC sent an email invitation with a unique survey link to 1300 of the approximately 7500 gaming workers. In addition, GameSense Advisors (GSAs) set up an information table and promotion adjacent to, or in, staff rooms at casinos and community gaming centres. GSAs used the promotion as an opportunity to engage with front-line staff, talk to them about the survey and encourage them to register to complete the survey. In total, 547 workers completed the online survey between May 4th and June 12th, 2016.

Results from the Gaming Worker Survey indicate that most (92%) gaming workers participated in at least one gambling activity in the past year. The main motivation for gambling was for entertainment and fun (72%). In terms of problem gambling, 14% of gaming workers classified as low-risk and another 14% classified in the moderate-risk or problem gambling categories (Table 1).

In terms of gambling frequency, 15% of gaming workers reported their participation in gambling activities had increased since they began working in the industry, while 33% reported participation decreased (48%

reported participation stayed the same). The majority of all gaming workers reported they have seen responsible gambling messaging inside and outside their workplace in the last 12 months.

BCLC Employee Survey

BCLC corporate staff, who work in our head office in Kamloops, our office in Vancouver, as well as remotely across the province, received a similar survey¹ regarding their current gambling behaviours. The survey invitation was emailed to 875 employees. In total, 434 employees completed the survey between June 7 and June 28, 2016.

Results from the BCLC Employee Survey reveal that 93% of BCLC employees gambled in the past 12 months. Employees reported that they gamble for entertainment and fun (77%), a chance to win big (63%) and the sense of anticipation/chance to dream (63%). In terms of problem gambling, 9% of BCLC employees classified as low-risk of gambling problems while 4% classified in the moderate-risk or problem gambling categories (Table 1). The majority of BCLC employees fall into the categories of non-problem gamblers (80%) or non-gamblers (7%).

	Gaming Workers	BCLC Employees	General Population²
Gambled in the past year	92%	93%	72.5%
At low-risk for problem gambling	14%	9%	7.9%
At moderate and high risk for problem gambling	14%	4%	3.3%

Table 1. Past year gambling, and prevalence of problem gambling, among gaming workers, BCLC employees and the general population.

SUMMARY OF BCLC'S ACTION ITEMS

BCLC Recommended Actions	Actions to Date
Changes to the Voluntary Self-Exclusion policy	- Policy revisions drafted
Changes to the Voluntary Self-Exclusion agreement	- Agreement revisions drafted
Changes to the Appropriate Response Training	- ART Level 1 revisions complete: course content being updated
Materials in back of the house areas for employees	- Materials being drafted
Expansion of the GameSense Advisor (GSA) program to community gaming centres	- BCLC and GPEB are developing an expansion strategy
Enhance awareness and access to local counseling services for gaming workers	- BCLC and GPEB discussions are ongoing

¹ Survey objectives were the same for the Gaming Worker Survey and BCLC Employee Survey.

² Data obtained from the 2014 BC Problem Gambling Prevalence Study.

