

Permitted Poker Games

Recently there has been a lot of interest in poker tournaments, particularly Texas Hold-em. Under our regulations a poker tournament is permitted under a Games of Chance Licence as long as the total prize payout for the event does not exceed \$500.

Under a Monte Carlo Licence an organization can have poker tables as long as they are in conjunction with other Monte Carlo games. A licence will not be issued for a Monte Carlo event where the only activity will be poker. Organizations are also not permitted to apply for a Monte Carlo licence in which they state they will have other games with poker tables, and then during the event only operate the poker tables. For a licence to be approved, the ratio of table games and wheels to poker tables must be at least 3 to 1. For example if you have 2 blackjack tables and 1 wheel you can have 1 poker table or if you have 2 blackjack tables, 1 wheel and 3 roulette tables you can have 2 poker tables.

A licence will not be issued for a Games of Chance or Monte Carlo event where the location of the event will be a commercial bar or tavern. Some commercial bars and taverns have attached to their clubs or taverns a separate room that is used for special events. This type of room may be considered a suitable location for a tournament if the following conditions are met:

1. The room has its own outside entrance;
2. The room is not accessible from the bar or tavern during the event;
3. No alcoholic beverages are served during the event unless the charitable organization conducting the event have their own special events liquor licence.

It is our opinion that it is illegal for bars or similar establishments to conduct Texas Hold-em tournaments and it is suggested that such establishments seek legal advice regarding Sections 201 and 206 of the Criminal Code.