



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 29, 2025

Media Contact | Dayne O'Brien
602.921.0232 | dobrien@azgaming.gov

ADG PSA: Tips for Safe and Responsible Online Gaming

PHOENIX – The Arizona Department of Gaming (“ADG”) urges residents to exercise caution when engaging in online gaming activities, especially during Identity Theft Awareness Week, which serves as an important reminder to safeguard personal and financial information. With advertisements for online casinos and gaming platforms proliferating on social media, scammers are targeting unsuspecting individuals to steal personal information and financial assets. By staying vigilant and informed, Arizonans can better protect themselves from fraud and identity theft.

Illegal online casinos and sweepstakes platforms present themselves as legitimate platforms, aiming to exploit players by offering illegitimate or illegal gaming services. However, many of these operations are not legal or regulated, leaving users vulnerable to fraud, identity theft, and other serious risks. Due to their unregulated nature, ADG is unable to resolve complaints and disputes arising from unregulated and illegal gaming sites, leaving victims with little to no chance of recovering lost funds. In light of these developments, the Arizona Department of Gaming urges residents to verify the legitimacy of any online gaming platform before engaging in play.

Sweepstakes in Arizona

Only certain games styled as “free-to-play” are legal in Arizona. Some, instead, promote illegal gambling. “Free-to-play” games or contests, sometimes referred to as “sweepstakes” (which is not a term defined in Arizona law), seek to remove a participant’s act of risking or giving something of value for the opportunity to obtain a benefit from the game or contest.

The ADG has published new guidance that may help you understand requirements for games or contests styled as “free-to-play” or “sweepstakes” to avoid the prohibition on illegal gambling. Please note, the Department recommends that you obtain independent legal advice to ensure compliance with the law. You can find more information regarding the legality of these styles of games by viewing **Arizona Revised Statutes §13-3301 et seq.** or visiting our website: gaming.az.gov/resources/sweepstakes.

The Dangers of Illegal Online Casinos and Sweepstakes

Fraudulent online casinos and illegal sweepstakes often mimic reputable platforms, using familiar branding, flashy advertisements, and enticing promotions to lure victims. These unregulated operations leave participants vulnerable to:

- Financial loss through fake gaming platforms or fraudulent prize fees.
- Identity theft resulting from shared personal or financial information.
- False claims of unpaid taxes or fees tied to sweepstakes "winnings."

How to Protect Yourself:

- Check before you bet: verify the licensed and regulated casinos and operators in Arizona.
- Be skeptical of advertisements or promotions on social media promising guaranteed wins or no-risk gaming.
- Avoid sharing personal or financial information with unverified sources.
- Look for sites that include resources for dispute resolution, as well as self-exclusion, responsible gaming messaging, or a toll-free helpline number.

Know the Legal Operators in Arizona

Legal, regulated operations provide important consumer protections not found in the illegal market, helping ensure a safer experience for participants. A list of all licensed and regulated casinos, event wagering, and fantasy sports operators legally taking bets in Arizona can be found on the Department's website at gaming.az.gov. Just because you can download the app, visit the website, and play the games, does not mean it is a legitimate and legal gaming platform.

What to Do If You Encounter Fraud or Identity Theft:

If you believe you or someone you know has been targeted by a fraudulent online casino or sweepstakes, file a consumer complaint by visiting azag.gov/consumer. You can also contact the Attorney General's Office:

- **Phoenix:** (602) 542-5763
- **Tucson:** (520) 628-6648
- **Statewide:** (800) 352-8431

If you suspect identity theft, report it to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC): for help in English, go to IdentityTheft.gov and for help in Spanish, go to RoboDeIdentidad.gov.

ADG takes complaints about illegal gambling seriously. To report suspected illegal gambling activity, visit our website at gaming.az.gov/about/contact-us, call (602) 255-3886, or email publicaffairs@azgaming.gov. You can remain anonymous.

About ADG

Established by the Arizona State Legislature in 1995, ADG is the state regulatory agency for [tribal gaming](#), [event wagering & fantasy sports contests](#), [racing and pari-mutuel/simulcast wagering](#), and [unarmed combat sports](#). ADG also provides and supports education, prevention, and treatment programs for people and families affected by problem gambling through its [Division of Problem Gambling](#) and 24-hour confidential helpline, 1-800-NEXT STEP.