

Small Games of Chance: Basic Guidance on what is Legal versus Illegal

In Pennsylvania, all forms of gambling are illegal unless specifically authorized by law. The Pennsylvania Lottery, Bingo, slots, table games and small games of chance are forms of gaming authorized by law.

The Pennsylvania Local Option Small Games of Chance Act was passed in 1988 and has been amended several times since its enactment. The act authorizes organizations licensed to conduct small games of chance to offer the following types of gambling:

- Pull-tab games
- Punchboards
- Raffles (including special permit raffles)
- Daily drawings
- Weekly drawings
- 50-50 drawings (including major league sports drawing)

Following are some examples of illegal forms of gambling:

- Quarter auctions
- Night at the Races
- Monte Carlo/casino/poker nights (outside of authorized casinos)
- Sports betting
- Numbers games (outside the Pennsylvania Lottery)

NOTE: This list is not exhaustive and is intended for illustrative purposes only. Ultimately, police and law enforcement officials are responsible for determining and prosecuting illegal gambling activity.