



# The House Advantage

The Odds Favour the House

## Independent Events

To understand gambling it's important to understand the concept of independent events. Each spin of the wheel or roll of the dice is an independent event; that is, the chances of a specific outcome remain the same and are not influenced by previous events.

For example, if you just rolled snake eyes, you are no more or less likely on the next roll to get snake eyes again. You're also not any more or less likely to hit a jackpot at a slot machine that hasn't awarded a jackpot for awhile. Roulette wheels are no more or less likely to land on red if they have just previously landed on black. And those hot streaks? No such thing! They are merely random sequences of events perceived by players to be favourable. The overall outcome of all casino games will favour the casino; that's the house advantage.

## Government Regulation

The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) licences and regulates all charitable gaming, conducts and manages all provincial gaming, registers gaming workers, inspects licensed gaming establishments, manages financial audits and investigates criminal activity. It also supplies and manages all electronic gaming equipment and collects licensing and registration fees.

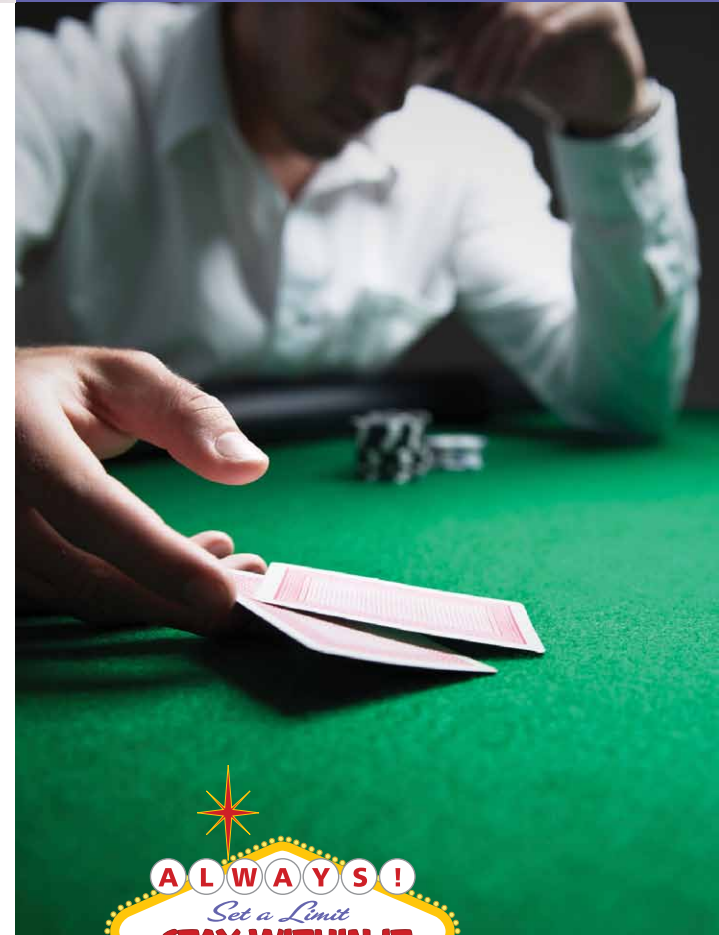
Within its role as licensor and regulator, the AGLC ensures that all games are fair and determined by chance. Rigging of slot machines or other games does not occur in Alberta casinos. Slot machines are tested and approved by an independent gaming laboratory and must meet stringent technical and operating standards, including specific payout percentages, before they ever reach the casino floor.

## Responsible Gambling Information Centres (RGICs)

RGICs are located on the gaming floors in 15 Alberta casinos and one Racing Entertainment Centre (Edmonton Northlands). The centres are staffed by representatives who provide support and referrals to customers that may have a gambling problem. RGIC representatives assist and educate patrons and casino staff about responsible gambling and help staff identify and assist problem gamblers.

RGIC representatives can be contacted by phone or email. See the posted contact information at the RGICs or visit the *Responsible Gambling* section of the AGLC website at [aglca.ca](http://aglca.ca).

The RGICs have materials that provide gamblers with information about the cost of play, house advantage and the Self-Exclusion Program. Check out the Player Awareness Terminal, with its interactive screens offering a gambling behaviour self-test, descriptions of popular gambling myths and tips on how to develop safe and responsible personal gambling guidelines. Or crunch some numbers with the Cost of Play Calculator.



[setalimitalberta.ca](http://setalimitalberta.ca)



## The House Advantage

Because the odds always favour the house, the more you play a casino game, the more you can expect to lose. The same applies to amounts wagered: **the more you wager, the more you will lose.**

Casino table games and slot machines are designed with a *house advantage*. House advantage is calculated according to the game that is being played, and as a percentage of the player's wager. For example, with a house advantage of five percent, a player will lose, on average, \$5 for every \$100 wagered.

Cost per hour of play is calculated as follows:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{House Advantage} \\ \times \\ \text{Bets per Hour} \\ \times \\ \text{Average Bet Amount} \end{array}$$

Following are typical house advantages (also referred to as hold percentages) in popular games in Alberta casinos:

Game	Hold Percentage
Baccarat	1.1% (player/banker bets) to 14.4% (tie bets)
Blackjack	0.5% to 1.4%
Craps	0.4% to 16.7%
Roulette	2.7% to 7.9%
Slot Machine	4% to 12%
Video Lottery Terminal (VLT)	8%

More information about casino games and the house advantage is available through your casino host or the Responsible Gambling Information Centres (RGICs), located on the gaming floors of most Alberta casinos.

## Finding Help

Are you concerned that you or someone you know may have a gambling problem? Visit an AGLC **Responsible Gambling Information Centre** located on the gaming floor of most Alberta casinos, call the **24-hour, toll-free Alberta Health Services Addiction Helpline** at 1-866-332-2322 or visit the website at [albertahealthservices.ca](http://albertahealthservices.ca).



## Cost of Play Calculator

Cost of Play calculators are accessed through the RGICs, with the help of the representative. The calculator is a useful tool for showing the average cost of playing slots and table games. The calculator shows the average amount per hour, per month and per year that players will spend. This cost includes all wins and losses.



## Wearing Your Lucky Shirt? Superstitions and False Beliefs

Rubbing a rabbit's foot, wearing your favourite lucky hat or shirt, blowing on the dice... all are reassuring rituals, but in no way do they affect the outcome of your gambling. Besides cheating, there's nothing you can do, wear, say, hum or wish that will influence the outcome of any casino game. Every casino game – whether it's blackjack, craps or a slot machine – is based on randomness, or chance. For more on randomness visit the RGIC located in most Alberta casinos.



## Skill and House Advantage

The house advantage can be somewhat affected in table games by player skill in either playing or betting decisions. **However, it's important to remember that even with a more skilled table game player, the house does have a statistical advantage in every play of every game.**