



# Washington State Gambling Commission

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## Poker Runs

### What is a Poker Run?

A Poker Run is a raffle where tickets/tally sheets are sold and prizes are awarded to winners based on their hand of playing cards (“alternative” drawing).

### Alternative drawing vs. Standard drawing.

In Poker Runs, winners are determined by their hand of cards; this is an “alternative” drawing. A “standard” drawing is pulling winning tickets out of a hat. Whenever raffle winners are *not* determined by a “standard” drawing, you must get a raffle license.

### What is a raffle?

- ♠ A raffle is a gambling activity.
- ♠ A gambling activity involves *three* elements: **Prize, chance, & consideration** (entry fee/wager).
- ♠ If one of the elements is removed, it’s not gambling. For example:
  - ♠ If entry into a contest is **free** (*no consideration*) it’s not gambling.
  - ♠ If winners are selected based on their **skill** (*not chance*) it’s not gambling.

### Who can offer a Poker Run?

- ♠ Only charitable or nonprofit organizations that have a raffle gambling license.
- ♠ Individuals and commercial businesses **cannot** offer raffles or Poker Runs. As an alternative, ask your charity to sponsor a raffle and then give them a hand operating it.

### How are Poker Runs operated?

- ◆ The organization sells participants consecutively numbered tickets/tally sheets.
- ◆ Participants travel (often using motorcycles, snowmobiles, classic cars, boats, or horses) to predetermined checkpoints. Usually, there are 5 to 7 checkpoints.
- ◆ At each checkpoint, participants randomly draw a playing card for each ticket or tally sheet purchased.
- ◆ Checkpoint attendants verify the card drawn and record the card value on the poker tally sheet.
- ◆ After all participants have completed the run, the participant with the best, or worst, recorded poker hand wins (depending on rules of play).



Does my organization need a license to offer a Poker Run? **Yes, you need a raffle license.**

### Can my organization apply for a raffle license?

Washington State law requires that your charitable or nonprofit organization’s by-laws or articles of incorporation state the organization is organized and operating **only** for one or more of the following purposes:

- ♠ Agricultural ♠ Civic ♠ Patriotic
- ♠ Athletic ♠ Educational ♠ Political
- ♠ Charitable ♠ Fraternal ♠ Social

Or be one of the following:

- ♠ Agricultural Fair ♠ Church
- ♠ Fraternal Society ♠ Grange
- ♠ Religious Society

If your organization’s by-laws or articles of incorporation include any stated purpose(s) other than those listed above, you do not qualify to offer a raffle or a Poker Run. Normally, trade unions or associations that primarily lobby do not qualify.

If you meet the “stated purpose” requirement above, your organization **must also** meet the following three requirements:

- ♠ Have been organized and operating for at least 12 months **before** offering the Poker Run; and
- ♠ Be able to prove your organization has made significant progress towards accomplishing its stated purposes during the 12 consecutive months before offering the Poker Run; and
- ♠ Have at least 15 voting members who elect the governing body.

Your organization must sell tickets, determine winners, and award prizes **only** in Washington.

### Selling tickets:

- ♣ Maximum price per ticket is \$100.
- ♣ No free tickets or tickets as gifts.
- ♣ Tickets may be bundled and sold at a discount.
- ♣ Tickets must be paid for in full by cash, check, or credit card. No IOU's.
- ♣ Tickets cannot be sold over the Internet; however, you can advertise on the Internet.
- ♣ Tickets and/or payment for tickets cannot be mailed; however, advertisements can be mailed.
- ♣ Tickets must be consecutively numbered or printed with letters or symbols that don't repeat.
- ♣ Only members of your organization, or volunteers under the supervision of a member, may sell tickets.
- ♣ Individuals under 18 years of age may sell tickets, **only** if (WAC 230-06-010):
  - ♣ Your organization's primary purpose is to develop youth; and
  - ♣ At least three members of your organization, age 18 or older, supervise the Poker Run; and
  - ♣ A member, age 18 or older, manages the Poker Run.

### Purchasing tickets:

- ♣ You must be age 18 or older to purchase a ticket.
- ♣ Organization members may purchase tickets; however, membership must not be based on purchasing a ticket.

### Prizes:

- ♣ Prizes must be owned by your organization before they are awarded.
- ♣ Firearms may be awarded under certain restrictions (WAC 230-06-025).
- ♣ If the retail value of a prize is \$40,000 or more, or total prizes will exceed \$80,000 in a year, you must get approval from us (WAC 230-11-067).
- ♣ Display your license, or a copy of your license, at the location where prizes will be awarded.



### Management, recordkeeping and reporting:

- ♣ Members must not be paid for managing or operating the Poker Run.
- ♣ Recordkeeping/Reporting requirements and forms are available on our website or by contacting our field office closest to you.
- ♣ Records must be kept for 3 years.

### Use of proceeds:

Proceeds must be used towards your organization's stated purpose. However, proceeds may go to the charitable benefit of a specific person, but only if you get approval from us before offering the Poker Run.

### Rules of play:

The following must be clearly printed on each ticket, poker tally sheet, or available in writing:

- ♣ Cost per chance (\$100 maximum per ticket).
- ♣ Name of your charitable or nonprofit organization.
- ♣ Whether participants need to be present to win.
- ♣ Date, time, and location of where winners will be determined.
- ♣ Description of all prizes. If the prize is a percentage of the gross receipts of the raffle, a minimum prize must be disclosed.
- ♣ *For Members-Only Poker Runs:* Rules of play may be posted at each ticket sales point, rather than printing rules on each ticket or providing them in writing.

### Contact your local city or county:

- ♣ Notify local law enforcement, in writing, before selling tickets (WAC 230-06-055).
- ♣ Check with your local taxing authority for any taxes due. The first \$10,000 of net proceeds is exempt from taxation (RCW 9.46.110).

### Is your business a Poker Run drawing station?

Before allowing your business to be a stopping point/drawing station for a Poker Run, make sure the charitable or nonprofit organization operating the Poker Run has a gambling license and they are operating the Poker Run correctly.

### For more information about Raffles:

Visit our website at [www.wsgc.wa.gov](http://www.wsgc.wa.gov):

- ♦ Raffle: [Brochure](#), [FAQs](#), [Presentation](#), [Training](#), [Records](#), [Application for a license](#)
- ♦ Laws: [RCW 9.46.0209](#), [RCW 9.46.0277](#)
- ♦ Rules: [WAC 230-11](#)
- ♦ License Fees: [WAC 230-05-020\(6\)](#)

### For questions about:

- ♦ Applying for a gambling license: (360) 486-3440.
- ♦ Operating a Poker Run, contact our Regional Field Office closest to you:
  - ♦ **Everett**  
(425) 304-6300 ..... [EverettFO@wsgc.wa.gov](mailto:EverettFO@wsgc.wa.gov)
  - ♦ **Spokane**  
(509) 325-7900 ..... [SpokaneFO@wsgc.wa.gov](mailto:SpokaneFO@wsgc.wa.gov)
  - ♦ **Tacoma**  
(253) 671-6280 ..... [TacomaFO@wsgc.wa.gov](mailto:TacomaFO@wsgc.wa.gov)

For federal tax deduction and reporting requirements, contact the Internal Revenue Service at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

**If you or someone you know have a gambling problem, call (800) 547-6133**

To inquire about the availability of this document in an alternate format, please call (360) 486-3466 or (800) 345-2529, ext. 3466. Teletype (TTY) users please call (360) 486-3637