



pennsylvania
STATE POLICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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State Police Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement Provides Update on Enforcement, Reminder to Licensed Liquor Establishments

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania State Police reminds licensed liquor establishments to refrain from having patrons remain in their buildings to operate illegal video gambling devices.

The Pennsylvania State Police Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement (BLCE) recently received an influx of public inquiries related to liquor licensees allowing patrons to remain in their establishments to operate video gambling devices, sometimes marketed as “games of skill,” in violation of restrictions in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

“While our position on the legality of these devices remains unchanged, ensuring public safety in the midst of the ongoing health crisis is our top priority,” said Major Jeffrey Fisher, director of the Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement. “Liquor licensees are cautioned that in addition to potential unlawful gambling charges, they are subject to citation if they fail to take steps to prevent patrons from remaining on premises to operate video gambling devices.”

Governor Wolf authorized licensed retail establishments (including licensed restaurants and bars) to remain open during the COVID-19 epidemic for the express purpose of carry-out, delivery, and drive-through food and beverage service, so long as social distancing and other mitigation measures are employed to protect workers and patrons.

Licensed beer distributors are authorized to remain open and sell and supply beer to licensed grocery stores, convenience stores, and other retail licensees permitted to sell beer “to go.”

BLCE recommends that liquor licensees and non-licensee businesses, including convenience stores and restaurants, take the appropriate measures to discontinue the use of illegal video gambling devices and voluntarily comply with the governor’s orders to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

From March 18 to April 2, 2020 the BLCE completed 12,877 checks at licensed liquor establishments throughout the commonwealth and has issued 53 warnings and 4 notices of violations (which are pending an administrative citation). Two establishments have had their liquor licenses suspended by the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB) for failing to abide by the governor’s order.