

Johnson Act

The Johnson Act, as amended, generally prohibits the manufacture, possession, use, sale, or transportation of any “gambling device” in Indian Country, the District of Columbia, and possessions of the United States. 15 U.S.C. § 1175. It also requires all persons manufacturing, using, selling, transporting, or providing for the use of others to register with the US Department of Justice and certain disclosures when gambling devices are shipped. The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, 25 U.S.C. § 2701 et seq., includes an exception to the Johnson Act prohibition against gambling devices in Indian Country. The Johnson Act is enforced by the United States Department of Justice and all questions regarding the Johnson Act should be directed to the Department of Justice.

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Definitions, 15 U.S.C. 1171

As used in this chapter--

(a) The term "gambling device" means--

(1) any so-called "slot machine" or any other machine or mechanical device an essential part of which is a drum or reel with insignia thereon, and (A) which when operated may deliver, as the result of the application of an element of chance, any money or property, or (B) by the operation of which a person may become entitled to receive, as the result of the application of an element of chance, any money or property; or

(2) any other machine or mechanical device (including, but not limited to, roulette wheels and similar devices) designed and manufactured primarily for use in connection with gambling, and (A) which when operated may deliver, as the result of the application of an element of chance, any money or property, or (B) by the operation of which a person may become entitled to receive, as the result of the application of an element of chance, any money or property; or

(3) any subassembly or essential part intended to be used in connection with any such machine or mechanical device, but which is not attached to any such machine or mechanical device as a constituent part.

(b) The term "State" includes the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam.

(c) The term "possession of the United States" means any possession of the United States which is not named in subsection (b) of this section.

(d) The term "interstate or foreign commerce" means commerce (1) between any State or possession of the United States and any place outside of such State or possession, or (2) between

points in the same State or possession of the United States but through any place outside thereof.
(e) The term "intrastate commerce" means commerce wholly within one State or possession of the United States.

(f) The term "boundaries" has the same meaning given that term in section 1301 of Title 43.

[1992 Amendments. Pub.L. 102-251 added subsec. (f). 1962 Amendments. Subsec. (a)(2), (3). Pub.L. 87-840, S 2, substituted provisions including machines and mechanical devices designed and manufactured primarily for gambling by the operation of which a person may become entitled to receive, as the result of chance, any money or property, for provisions which included machines or mechanical devices designed and manufactured to operate by inserting a coin, token, or similar object, in par. (2), and inserted ", but which is not attached to any such machine or mechanical device as a constituent part", in par. (3). Pub.L. 87-840, S 3, substituted "the District of Columbia" for "Alaska, Hawaii". Pub.L. 87-840, S 3, added subsecs. (d) and (e).]

Transportation Of Gambling Devices As Unlawful, 15 U.S.C. 1172

(a) General Rule

It shall be unlawful knowingly to transport any gambling device to any place in a State or a possession of the United States from any place outside of such State or possession: Provided, That this section shall not apply to transportation of any gambling device to a place in any State which has enacted a law providing for the exemption of such State from the provisions of this section, or to a place in any subdivision of a State if the State in which such subdivision is located has enacted a law providing for the exemption of such subdivision from the provisions of this section, nor shall this section apply to any gambling device used or designed for use at and transported to licensed gambling establishments where betting is legal under applicable State laws: Provided, further, That it shall not be unlawful to transport in interstate or foreign commerce any gambling device into any State in which the transported gambling device is specifically enumerated as lawful in a statute of that State.

(b) Authority of Federal Trade Commission

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to interfere with or reduce the authority, or the existing interpretation of the authority, of the Federal Trade Commission under the Federal Trade Commission Act.

(c) Exception

This section does not prohibit the transport of a gambling device to a place in a State or a possession of the United States on a vessel on a voyage, if-- (1) use of the gambling device on a portion of that voyage is, by reason of subsection (b) of section 1175 of this title, not a violation of that section; and (2) the gambling device remains on board that vessel while in that State.

[1992 Amendments. Pub.L. 102-251, S 202(a)(1), (3), (4), designated existing provisions as subsecs. (a) and (b), inserted headings, and added subsec. (c). Pub.L. 102-251, S 202(a)(2), which directed that ", District of Columbia," be struck out in subsec. (a), was executed by striking out ", the District of Columbia," after "place in a State" and "outside of such State" to reflect the probable intent of Congress. 1962 Amendments. Pub.L. 87-840 excepted gambling devices used or designed for use at and transported to licensed gambling establishments where

betting is legal under State laws, and provided that it shall not be unlawful to transport such devices into any State in which the device is specifically enumerated as lawful in a State statute.]

Registration Of Manufacturers And Dealers, 15 U.S.C. 1173

(a) Activities requiring registration; contents of registration statement

(1) It shall be unlawful for any person engaged in the business of manufacturing gambling devices, if the activities of such business in any way affect interstate or foreign commerce, to manufacture any gambling device during any calendar year, unless, after November 30 of the preceding calendar year, and before the date on which such device is manufactured, such person has registered with the Attorney General under this subsection, regardless of whether such device ever enters interstate or foreign commerce.

(2) It shall be unlawful for any person during any calendar year to engage in the business of repairing, reconditioning, buying, selling, leasing, using, or making available for use by others any gambling device, if in such business he sells, ships, or delivers any such device knowing that it will be introduced into interstate or foreign commerce after the effective date of the Gambling Devices Act of 1962, unless, after November 30 of the preceding calendar year, and before the date such sale, shipment, or delivery occurs, such person has registered with the Attorney General under this subsection.

(3) It shall be unlawful for any person during any calendar year to engage in the business of repairing, reconditioning, buying, selling, leasing, using, or making available for use by others any gambling device, if in such business he buys or receives any such device knowing that it has been transported in interstate or foreign commerce after the effective date of the Gambling Devices Act of 1962, unless, after November 30, of the preceding calendar year and before the date on which he buys or receives such device, such person has registered with the Attorney General under this subsection.

(4) Each person who registers with the Attorney General pursuant to this subsection shall set forth in such registration (A) his name and each trade name under which he does business, (B) the address of each of his places of business in any State or possession of the United States, (C) the address of a place, in a State or possession of the United States in which such a place of business is located, where he will keep all records required to be kept by him by subsection (c) of this section, and (D) each activity described in paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of this subsection which he intends to engage in during the calendar year with respect to which such registration is made.

(b) Numbering of devices

(1) Every manufacturer of a gambling device defined in paragraph (a)(1) or (a)(2) of section 1171 of this title shall number seriatim each such gambling device manufactured by him and permanently affix on each such device, so as to be clearly visible, such number, his name, and, if different, any trade name under which he does business, and the date of manufacture of such device.

(2) Every manufacturer of a gambling device defined in paragraph (a)(3) of section 1171 of this title shall, if the size of such device permits it, number seriatim each such gambling device manufactured by him and permanently affix on each such device, so as to be clearly visible, such number, his name, and, if different, any trade name under which he does business, and the date of manufacture of such device.

(c) Records; required information

(1) Every person required to register under subsection (a) of this section for any calendar year shall, on and after the date of such registration or the first day of such year (whichever last occurs), maintain a record by calendar month for all periods thereafter in such year of--

(A) each gambling device manufactured, purchased, or otherwise acquired by him,

(B) each gambling device owned or possessed by him or in his custody, and

(C) each gambling device sold, delivered, or shipped by him in intrastate, interstate, or foreign commerce.

(2) Such record shall show--

(A) in the case of each such gambling device defined in paragraph (a)(1) or (a)(2) of section 1171 of this title, the information which is required to be affixed on such gambling device by subsection (b)(1) of this section; and

(B) in the case of each such gambling device defined in paragraph (a)(3) of section 1171 of this title, the information required to be affixed on such gambling device by subsection (b)(2) of this section, or, if such gambling device does not have affixed on it any such information, its catalog listing, description, and, in the case of each such device owned or possessed by him or in his custody, its location. Such record shall also show (i) in the case of any such gambling device described in paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection, the name and address of the person from whom such device was purchased or acquired and the name and address of the carrier; and (ii) in the case of any such gambling device described in paragraph (1)(C) of this subsection, the name and address of the buyer and consignee thereof and the name and address of the carrier.

(d) Retention of records

Each record required to be maintained under this section shall be kept by the person required to make it at the place designated by him pursuant to subsection (a)(4)(C) of this section for a period of at least five years from the last day of the calendar month of the year with respect to which such record is required to be maintained.

(e) Dealing in, owning, possessing, or having custody of devices not marked or numbered; false entries in records

(1) It shall be unlawful (A) for any person during any period in which he is required to be registered under subsection (a) of this section to sell, deliver, or ship in intrastate, interstate, or foreign commerce or own, possess, or have in his custody any gambling device which is not marked and numbered as required by subsection (b) of this section; or (B) for any person to remove, obliterate, or alter any mark or number on any gambling device required to be placed thereon by such subsection (b).

(2) It shall be unlawful for any person knowingly to make or cause to be made, any false entry in any record required to be kept under this section.

(f) Authority of Federal Bureau of Investigation

Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation shall, at any place designated pursuant to subsection (a)(4)(C) of this section by any person required to register by subsection (a) of this section, at all reasonable times, have access to and the right to copy any of the records required to be kept by this section, and, in case of refusal by any person registered under such subsection (a) to allow inspection and copying of such records, the United States district court for the district in which such place is located shall have jurisdiction to issue an order compelling

production of such records for inspection or copying.

[1962 Amendments. Pub.L. 87-840 amended section generally. Prior to such amendment, section provided that: "Upon first engaging in business, and thereafter on or before the 1st day of July of each year, every manufacturer of and dealer in gambling devices shall register with the Attorney General his name or trade name, the address of his principal place of business, and the addresses of his places of business in such district. On or before the last day of each month every manufacturer of and dealer in gambling devices shall file with the Attorney General an inventory and record of all sales and deliveries of gambling devices as of the close of the preceding calendar month for the place or places of business in the district. The monthly record of sales and deliveries of such gambling devices shall show the mark and number identifying each article together with the name and address of the buyer or consignee thereof and the name and address of the carrier. Duplicate bills or invoices, if complete in the foregoing respects, may be used in filing the record of sales and deliveries. For the purposes of this chapter, every manufacturer or dealer shall mark and number each gambling device so that it is individually identifiable. In cases of sale, delivery, or shipment of gambling devices in unassembled form, the manufacturer or dealer shall separately mark and number the components of each gambling device with a common mark and number as if it were an assembled gambling device. It shall be unlawful for any manufacturer or dealer to sell, deliver, or ship any gambling device which is not marked and numbered for identification as herein provided; and it shall be unlawful for any manufacturer or dealer to manufacture, recondition, repair, sell, deliver, or ship any gambling device without having registered as required by this section, or without filing monthly the required inventories and records of sales and deliveries."]

Labeling And Marking Of Shipping Packages, 15 U.S.C. 1174

All gambling devices, and all packages containing any such, when shipped or transported shall be plainly and clearly labeled or marked so that the name and address of the shipper and of the consignee, and the nature of the article or the contents of the package may be readily ascertained on an inspection of the outside of the article or package.

Specific Jurisdictions Within Which Manufacturing, Repairing, Selling, Possessing ETC, Prohibited; Exceptions, 15 U.S.C. 1175

(a) General rule

It shall be unlawful to manufacture, recondition, repair, sell, transport, possess, or use any gambling device in the District of Columbia, in any possession of the United States, within Indian country as defined in section 1151 of Title 18 or within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States as defined in section 7 of Title 18, including on a vessel documented under chapter 121 of Title 46 or documented under the laws of a foreign country.

(b) Exception

(1) In general -- Except as provided in paragraph (2), this section does not prohibit--

(A) the repair, transport, possession, or use of a gambling device on a vessel that is not within the boundaries of any State or possession of the United States;

(B) the transport or possession, on a voyage, of a gambling device on a vessel that is within the

boundaries of any State or possession of the United States, if-

(i) use of the gambling device on a portion of that voyage is, by reason of subparagraph (A), not a violation of this section; and

(ii) the gambling device remains on board that vessel while the vessel is within the boundaries of that State or possession; or

(C) the repair, transport, possession, or use of a gambling device on a vessel on a voyage that begins in the State of Indiana and that does not leave the territorial jurisdiction of that State, including such a voyage on Lake Michigan.

(2) Application to certain voyages

(A) General rule -- Paragraph (1)(A) does not apply to the repair or use of a gambling device on a vessel that is on a voyage or segment of a voyage described in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph if the State or possession of the United States in which the voyage or segment begins and ends has enacted a statute the terms of which prohibit that repair or use on that voyage or segment.

(B) Voyage and segment described a voyage or segment of a voyage referred to in subparagraph (A) is a voyage or segment, respectively--

(i) that begins and ends in the same State or possession of the United States, and

(ii) during which the vessel does not make an intervening stop within the boundaries of another State or possession of the United States or a foreign country.

(C) Exclusion of certain voyages and segments Except for a voyage or segment of a voyage that occurs within the boundaries of the State of Hawaii, a voyage or segment of a voyage is not described in subparagraph (B) if such voyage or segment includes or consists of a segment--

(i) that begins and ends in the same State;

(ii) that is part of a voyage to another State or to a foreign country; and

(iii) in which the vessel reaches the other State or foreign country within 3 days after leaving the State in which such segment begins.

(c) Exception

(1) With respect to a vessel operating in Alaska, this section does not prohibit, nor may the State of Alaska make it a violation of law for there to occur, the repair, transport, possession, or use of any gambling device on board a vessel which provides sleeping accommodations for all of its passengers and that is on a voyage or segment of a voyage described in paragraph (2), except that such State may, within its boundaries--

(A) prohibit the use of a gambling device on a vessel while it is docked or anchored or while it is operating within 3 nautical miles of a port at which it is scheduled to call; and

(B) require the gambling devices to remain on board the vessel.

(2) A voyage referred to in paragraph (1) is a voyage that--

(A) includes a stop in Canada or in a State other than the State of Alaska;

(B) includes stops in at least 2 different ports situated in the State of Alaska; and

(C) is of at least 60 hours duration.

[1996 Amendments. Subsec. (b)(1)(C). Pub.L. 104-324, S 1106(b), added subpar. (C). Subsec.

(b)(2)(C). Pub.L. 104-324, S 1106(a), added subpar. (C). A substantially identical subpar. (C)

was added by Pub.L. 104-264, Title XII, S 1222, Oct. 9, 1996, 110 Stat. 3286. Subsec. (c).

Pub.L. 104-324, S 1106(c), added subsec. (c). 1992 Amendments. Subsec. (a). Pub.L. 102-251, S 202(b)(1), (2), designated existing provision as subsec. (a), inserted heading, and inserted before

period at and ", including on a vessel documented under chapter 121 of Title 46 or documented under the laws of a foreign country". Subsec. (b). Pub.L. 102-251, S 202(b)(3), added subsec. (b). Applicability of Pub.L. 104-264 Except as otherwise specifically provided, Pub.L. 104-264 and the amendments made by Pub.L. 104-264 applicable only to fiscal years beginning after Sept. 30, 1996, and not to be construed as affecting funds made available for a fiscal year ending before Oct. 1, 1996, see section 3 of Pub.L. 104-264, set out as a note under section 106 of Title 49, Transportation.

Penalties, 15 U.S.C. 1176

Whoever violates any of the provisions of sections 1172, 1173, 1174, or 1175 of this title shall be fined not more than \$5,000 or imprisoned not more than two years, or both.

Confiscation Of Gambling Devices And Means Of Transportation; Laws Governing, 15 U.S.C. 1177

Any gambling device transported, delivered, shipped, manufactured, reconditioned, repaired, sold, disposed of, received, possessed, or used in violation of the provisions of this chapter shall be seized and forfeited to the United States. All provisions of law relating to the seizure, summary and judicial forfeiture, and condemnation of vessels, vehicles, merchandise, and baggage for violation of the customs laws; the disposition of such vessels, vehicles, merchandise, and baggage or the proceeds from the sale thereof; the remission or mitigation of such forfeitures; and the compromise of claims and the award of compensation to informers in respect of such forfeitures shall apply to seizures and forfeitures incurred, or alleged to have been incurred, under the provisions of this chapter, insofar as applicable and not inconsistent with the provisions hereof: Provided, That such duties as are imposed upon the collector of customs or any other person with respect to the seizure and forfeiture of vessels, vehicles, merchandise, and baggage under the customs laws shall be performed with respect to seizures and forfeitures of gambling devices under this chapter by such officers, agents, or other persons as may be authorized or designated for that purpose by the Attorney General.

Nonapplicability Of Chapter To Certain Machines And Devices, 15 U.S.C. 1178

None of the provisions of this chapter shall be construed to apply--

(1) to any machine or mechanical device designed and manufactured primarily for use at a racetrack in connection with parimutuel betting,

(2) to any machine or mechanical device, such as a coin-operated bowling alley, shuffleboard, marble machine (a so-called pinball machine), or mechanical gun, which is not designed and manufactured primarily for use in connection with gambling, and (A) which when operated does not deliver, as a result of the application of an element of chance, any money or property, or (B) by the operation of which a person may not become entitled to receive, as the result of the application of an element of chance, any money or property, or

(3) to any so-called claw, crane, or digger machine and similar devices which are not operated by coin, are actuated by a crank, and are designed and manufactured primarily for use at carnivals or county or State fairs.