News Release

Launch of Global Illegal Gambling Awareness Week

November 9, 2026

Victoria

The International Association of Gaming Regulators (IAGR), of which the Independent Gambling Control Office (IGCO) is a member, is spearheading its first Illegal Gambling Awareness Week (IGAW), which runs from November 9–13, 2026. This is the first internationally coordinated effort to help consumers learn about, identify and avoid unregulated online gambling sites.

“The IGCO is concerned about the risks that unregulated online gambling websites pose to British Columbians, including fraud, access by minors, and lack of responsible gambling controls,” said Sam MacLeod, General Manager of the IGCO. The proliferation of gambling advertising across Canada has led to confusion for players in the province, who might not be aware that online gambling websites being advertised in BC are not licensed or regulated in BC. The British Columbia Lottery Corporation (BCLC)’s PlayNow.com is the only legal and regulated online gambling platform permitted in BC.

Unregulated online gambling websites can appear legitimate, often using familiar brands and sports sponsorships to create a false sense of credibility. However, these platforms operate outside a regulated gambling framework, exposing players to unfair or manipulated outcomes, deceptive practices, and withheld winnings, among other risks.

As part of IGAW, the IAGR has developed a public education campaign to make the risks of unregulated gambling easier to understand. The campaign shows how unregulated operators can appear familiar and entertaining while offering none of the safeguards consumers receive in the regulated market. Through www.checkbeforeyouplay.org, players can verify whether an online gambling site is licensed in their jurisdiction before placing a wager, helping them avoid operators who may not provide essential consumer protections.

The IGCO takes harms from gambling seriously, with many player health protections and supports in place, including free prevention and clinical treatment services through Gambling Support BC for anyone experiencing harm from gambling.

The IGCO's participation in the IGAW campaign supports its public safety and consumer protection objectives by raising awareness of the risks associated with unregulated online gambling, helping the public better understand what is and isn't regulated and where they can find more information or support.

Learn More:

- www.iagr.org
- https://iagr.org/conference/iagr-announces-igaw-2026/
- www.checkbeforeyouplay.org
- www.igcobc.ca
- www.gamblingsupportbc.ca

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