

Policy: Horse Race Track Operator Licensing

Introduction

The Independent Gambling Control Office (IGCO) is responsible for regulating all legal gambling and horse racing in British Columbia. Under section 93 of the *Gaming Control Act*, a person must not hold a horse race, or manage or operate a race track with *pari mutuel* betting on races, unless they hold a horse racing licence issued by the General Manager of the IGCO authorizing those activities.

Purpose of Document

The purpose of this document is to set out the General Manager's policy with respect to the licensing of a person proposing to hold a horse race or manage or operate a horse race track at a site that is not currently licensed for those purposes. This policy applies to all new horse race tracks with *pari mutuel* betting, regardless of the number of race days proposed.

Application Process

Proposed race track operators are encouraged to begin the application process well in advance of proposed race dates to allow sufficient time for IGCO staff review.

Prior to submitting an application, applicants should contact the IGCO's Corporate Registration department by email at Gaming.Registration@igcobc.ca for information regarding the required documents and submission details.

The application process consists of three steps:

Step 1 – Intake Assessment

To determine disclosure requirements, the applicant will need to provide:

- proof of ownership of the property, or a lease or letter of commitment or intent from the lessor;
- an overview of the company's ownership structure detailing the distribution of shares and ownership percentages, and a business relationship chart, including all direct and indirect shareholders; and
- an organization chart of the applicant organization with the directors, officers and senior employees describing their responsibilities.

Step 2 - Background Investigation

The IGCO must evaluate whether the applicant:

- is suitable to participate in the horse racing industry; and
- has a reasonable plan for developing, managing, and operating a race track that is suitable and safe for horse racing.

To allow for completion of a background investigation, the applicant must complete the appropriate corporate disclosure forms, as directed by the IGCO's Corporate Registration department, after submitting the information in Step 1. The applicant must also submit information to the Director of Racing regarding the proposed new race track, including:

- ☐ Location and description of the proposed site, including a survey and/or description of any existing facilities on the site that will be used for racing.
- ☐ Photographs of the proposed site.
- ☐ Preliminary business plan, including:
 - Market study that analyzes horse supply, projected attendance, average spend, and estimated handle. If a marketing strategy has been prepared, it should also be included.
 - Proposed training and race seasons. Specific race dates are not required at this step, but the preliminary business plan should include the number of proposed race dates and the time period for racing and training.
 - Type of racing (e.g., Thoroughbred, Standardbred, Quarter Horse).
 - Description of the proposed race track facility. This should include a description of any on-site public amenities and other facilities for training and racing (e.g., barns (including test barn), public areas, parking, restrooms, restaurants, etc.).
 - Description of any upgrades or new construction required to make the site suitable for racing, and a project plan for completion of any work needed.
 - Dimensions of the proposed track.
 - Description of all local, provincial, and federal government approvals required before racing can commence and a plan/schedule for obtaining those approvals.
 - Preliminary budget, including revenues and funding sources, expenses, and a break-even analysis.
 - 5-year financial projections.
 - Staffing plan, including a description of key personnel and a hiring and training plan.

- ☐ Written confirmation from the relevant local government that site zoning allows for horse racing. If confirmation is not available, a description of the plan and schedule for obtaining confirmation and/or rezoning must be provided.
- ☐ Correspondence from the relevant breed association(s) stating their support for the application.

The applicant must also submit a licence application fee of \$6,285 (or \$125 if fewer than 25 race days in a calendar year are proposed).

Applicants that successfully pass Step 2 will receive written notification allowing them to proceed to Step 3. They will also be provided with a document outlining race track licensing requirements, including on-site facilities and equipment needed to support the proposed volume and type of racing (e.g., track, barns (including test barn), paddock, suitable work areas for racing officials, communication systems, etc.).

Step 3 – Licensing

Once the race track facility has been built and equipped in accordance with:

- the requirements provided by the IGCO after the completion of Step 2, and
- any other relevant local, provincial, or federal government requirements,

the proposed operator must submit additional information to the IGCO to obtain a race track horse racing licence.

The purpose of Step 3 is to evaluate whether:

- the facility has been appropriately constructed and equipped for horse racing;
- the applicant has received all approvals required to conduct horse racing; and
- the applicant has appropriate plans in place to suitably and safely operate and manage the facility.

To initiate Step 3, the following information must be submitted to the IGCO's Director of Racing:

- ☐ Final business plan. This should include any updates to the preliminary business plan and a detailed budget showing commission rates for simulcast and track betting.
- ☐ Confirmation that all facilities and equipment have been constructed and/or installed in accordance with the requirements provided at the conclusion of Step 2.
- ☐ Report from a licensed surveyor certifying the track's grade and distance measurements.

- ☐ Statement from an independent third party with significant experience in race track construction and/or design, stating that, in their opinion, the track is suitable for competitive *pari mutuel* horse racing.
- ☐ Final copy of lease (if relevant).
- ☐ Proof of appropriate zoning (if not provided earlier).
- ☐ Signed agreement between the applicant and horsepersons' group(s) related to revenue-sharing.
- ☐ Proof of all required fire, health, and safety approvals.
- ☐ Copy of business licence (if required by local government).
- ☐ Operational plan(s) that include, at a minimum, procedures for:
 - the flow of horses through the facility during training and racing;
 - ensuring the welfare of race horses;
 - appropriate waste management; and
 - responding to contingencies and emergencies (e.g., evacuation procedures, medical response during training or racing).
- ☐ Race track maintenance plan.
- ☐ Site security and surveillance plans.
- ☐ Fire safety plan.
- ☐ Certificate of liability insurance.
- ☐ Letter authorizing the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency to disclose wagering information to the IGCO.

Related IGCO Approvals

Individuals working for the track operator at the race track may require licensing. Further information can be found on the IGCO website: <https://www.igcobc.ca/horse-racing/horse-racing-worker-licensing>.

Under section 99 of the *Gaming Control Act*, a person must not carry on horse racing at a race track except on race days assigned by the General Manager of the IGCO. A list of race days should be submitted to the Director of Racing for the General Manager's approval after the licensing process is complete and a licence has been issued.



Contact Information

Director of Racing

Compliance Division – Horse Racing Unit
Independent Gambling Control Office
220 - 4370 Dominion Street
Burnaby, B.C. V5G 4L7

Phone (Vancouver): [604-660-0245](tel:604-660-0245) (option 5)

Toll Free within Canada and USA: [1-800-663-7867](tel:1-800-663-7867) (request transfer to number above)

Email: Horse.Racing@igcobc.ca

Corporate Registration

Licensing, Registration and Certification Division
Independent Gambling Control Office

Courier Address:

3rd Floor – 910 Government Street
Victoria BC V8W 1X3

Mailing Address:

220 - 4370 Dominion Street
Burnaby BC V5G 4L7

Phone (Victoria): [250-356-0663](tel:250-356-0663)

Toll Free within Canada and USA: [1-800-663-7867](tel:1-800-663-7867) (request transfer to number above)

Email: Gaming.Registration@igcobc.ca