

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING
HELPLINE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

March 28, 2005

Establishment of a National Helpline

It is the policy of the National Council on Problem Gambling (hereafter referred to as NCPG) that a national helpline number on problem gambling be established.

The purpose of the number is to provide one national point of contact for problem gambling services. The number will be connected to a network of problem gambling call centers across the country that meet the criteria below. The national helpline number will be routed to a particular call center based on the area code of the caller.

This policy of the National Council on Problem Gambling affirms that the operation of the national helpline number is a function of the national organization, not a function of its member affiliates.

There are two ways a call center may be linked to the national helpline number:

1. State Affiliate members of the NCPG may direct national helpline number calls from their state to a call center of their choice, provided the Affiliate certifies that call center meets the minimum standards in this document.
2. The NCPG may direct national helpline number calls to Affiliates or to directly to a qualified call center

NCPG has the final authority over the routing of the national helpline number in all states, and may alter the routing at its sole discretion.

Standards to be a call center on the NCPG Helpline Network

In order for an organization or its designee to answer calls to the National Helpline number, the answering site must meet the minimum standards as determined by the NCPG Helpline Committee and approved by the NCPG Board of Directors.

These standards are:

1. Provides 24/7 live access (may be preceded by message) to all callers
2. Demonstrates qualifications and training of help line employees in answering problem gambling help line calls.
3. Demonstrates training and protocols in place for suicidal callers.
4. Has referral capabilities in the targeted areas.

5. Has at least one rollover line.
6. Maintains liability insurance.
7. Provides summary of call data to NCPG on a quarterly basis or as requested.

Referral Policy

In order to make appropriate referrals the call centers shall present the caller with a variety of organizations or individuals that purport to provide certain services. Each call center must maintain a referral policy that includes these minimum standards:

1. Pledges that services will not be denied to any individual on the grounds of race, color, creed, national origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age or on the basis of disability.
2. Maintains a written referral resource list based on written criteria. Inclusion or exclusion of a particular resource is at the discretion of the call center, and any liability in regard to inclusion or exclusion is the responsibility of the local call center.
3. Ensures that no individual or agency service is included that violates federal, state, or local laws or regulations or operates illegally.
4. Makes no distinction between NCPG members, nonmembers, or contributors.
5. Agree to indemnify, hold harmless and defend the NCPG from all claims, actions and expenses incidental to any investigation and/or defense thereof, arising out of or based upon damage or injuries to persons or property caused by said listing.

Requesting reimbursement from Affiliate members

The Board of Directors has authorized NCPG to request reimbursement from each Affiliate Member for the long distance charges generated in their state by calls to the national helpline number.

Data Reporting

Data on calls to the national helpline number shall be collected and reported by each call center according to the recommendations and format of the NCPG. Reports will be submitted to the NCPG office in a mutually acceptable electronic format on a quarterly basis or upon request.

Disclaimer of Responsibility

Inclusion of any entity, product, service or information does NOT constitute an endorsement or recommendation by the NCPG. NCPG is not responsible for the actions or products of the referral source accessed through a call center, nor does NCPG necessarily endorse or oppose the views expressed by any other entity or referral personnel. Referral resource information is compiled by the call center from information believed reliable, but neither the accuracy nor completeness of such information is guaranteed in any way and anyone using the same does so at their own risk. These resources are compiled and maintained at the sole discretion of the call center, which reserves the right to deny inclusion based on its proprietary criteria.

These Policies and Procedures are subject to change without advance notice.