



# Frequently Asked Bingo Questions

1 away game .....	9	House rules .....	4
23 and free game .....	9	Information posted .....	4
Age of players .....	4	Inventory (bingo paper, month-end) .....	2
Alternative prize levels .....	7	Last person standing game .....	6
Bad weather program .....	7	Late sales .....	3
Bar bingo .....	8	Loaning hard cards and equipment .....	2
Bingo balls .....	2	Numbers not called .....	6
Bingo coupons .....	3	Participation restricted .....	3, 9
Bingo equipment .....	2	Player information .....	4
Bingo numbers, not called .....	6	Posted information .....	4
Bingo occasions .....	6	Power failure .....	4
Bingo paper		Prices - bingo paper and hard cards .....	3
defective, spoiled .....	2	Prize receipts .....	7
inventory .....	2	Prizes	
price .....	3	bad weather .....	7
Bingo programs .....	6	based on % of gross receipts (sales) .....	7
Blackout minus one game .....	9	based on price paid .....	7
Cash discrepancy report .....	3	early bird game .....	7
Continuation game .....	6	multiple winners .....	7
Coupons .....	3	turkeys .....	7
Cover-all game		Progressive game	
linked bingo .....	9	consolation prize .....	10
odd/even game .....	9	bingo program .....	10
prize limit .....	9	cover-all game .....	10
prizes for multiple games .....	9	limiting bingo number count .....	10
participation restricted .....	9	prize limit .....	10
Employee restrictions .....	5	Sale of food and beverages .....	5
Equipment .....	2	Turkey bingo, program required .....	6
Food and beverages sales .....	5		
Good neighbor game .....	7		

## REFERENCES

Lawful Gambling Manual - 2009  
 Minnesota Statutes 349.12 Definitions  
 Minnesota Statutes 349.17 Conduct  
 Minnesota Statutes 349.18 Premises  
 Minnesota Statutes 349.19 Records & Reports  
 Minnesota Statutes 349.211 Prize Limits  
 Minnesota Rules 7861.0210 Definitions  
 Minnesota Rules 7861.0260 Conduct  
 Minnesota Rules 7861.0270 Bingo

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# Bingo Equipment

## Bingo balls

### When do we have to replace our bingo balls?

All equipment used for bingo must be in sound working order. Bingo balls must be free of defects and equal in all characteristics that control their selection. The life span of bingo balls depends on several factors:

- the amount of use
- the type of bingo balls
- the bingo ball selection device
- how the caller handles them

If there are any concerns about bingo balls currently in play, replace the bingo balls immediately.

## Defective bingo paper

### What do we do with bingo paper received from a distributor when the bingo paper is found to be defective?

Return defective paper to the distributor for credit. Enter the return of bingo paper to a distributor on the perpetual inventory record--form LG900, and keep the credit invoice received from the distributor.

Defective linked bingo paper is returned to the linked bingo game provider and recorded on inventory records.

## Providing hard cards or device to another organization

### Our organization has changed from using hard cards to paper at our bingo occasions. May we give our old bingo hard cards to the senior citizens group in our community?

No. However, your organization may arrange with a distributor licensed by the Gambling Control Board to document a transaction that would involve your organization returning the hard cards to the distributor, who may then give the hard cards to the senior citizens group. In the alternative, your organization could loan bingo hard cards to an organization for an event.

### A nearby church has obtained an "exemption" permit from the Gambling Control Board to conduct bingo on a Saturday later this spring. May we provide them both our bingo number selection device and bingo hard cards to help them have a successful event?

Yes. An organization may loan bingo number selection devices and bingo hard cards to another organization authorized to conduct bingo. However, you may not provide them with bingo paper.



"Let's see if we can borrow bingo items from the other organization."

## Month-end inventory

### How is the month-end physical inventory of bingo paper conducted?

At the end of the month an organization must complete an actual physical inventory using form LG903.

- This is a physical count of each type of bingo paper in inventory. The various types may include sheets, packets, and packages.
- The bingo paper is valued using the per unit cost charged by the distributor or linked bingo game provider.
- The total valuation of the bingo paper inventory must be included in the ending inventory amount reported on the G-1 Lawful Gambling Monthly Summary & Tax Return.
- If a variance is found between the perpetual and physical inventory records of \$50 or more, the discrepancy must be reported to the Gambling Control Board using form LG903.

## Spoiled bingo paper in inventory

### What do we do with bingo paper that is spoiled while in our possession?

An organization must account for all bingo paper purchased. The loss of bingo paper for a significant quantity through spoilage must be entered on the appropriate perpetual inventory record—Form LG900, LG901, LG902, and/or LG930.

Keep the spoiled paper for 3-1/2 years as supporting documentation for the inventory entries.

For a significant quantity of spoiled paper, contact the Department of Revenue for written authorization to destroy the spoiled paper.

# Pricing, Coupons, Sales, Discrepancies



## Determining selling price of bingo paper

**Bingo rules state that the sales price charged to players for bingo paper must be stated on the distributor's invoice. How is this price determined?**

When an organization orders bingo paper, the organization sets the sales price and informs the distributor. The organization is responsible for ensuring that the sales price listed on the distributor's invoice is the price charged to players for its paper. The sales price does not have to be printed on the bingo paper.

## Allowing late sales

**May we sell bingo packets or bingo packages to players who arrive after the occasion has started?**

Yes. However, the bingo paper for all games that have been played or are in play must be defaced by an organization employee before the sale.

## Changing selling price of bingo paper

**May we change the selling price of bingo paper?**

The price of bingo paper may only be changed in one of the following ways:

1. Unopened cases of bingo paper may be returned to the distributor for credit. The organization may then repurchase the paper with the desired selling price listed on the new invoice.
2. The price of bingo paper may be reduced through the use of coupons.

## Limiting participation in jackpot games

**Our organization sells packets at our weekly bingo occasion. May we limit participation in the grand jackpot game to those players who have purchased a bingo packet?**

Yes, provided those restrictions are included in the bingo program and in the house rules posted at the site.

## Reducing prices with coupons

**What information is required when using a coupon to reduce the price of bingo paper sheets or bingo hard cards?**

The following information must be on a coupon:

- dollar value of the coupon
- player's name, address, and driver's license number or other form of picture ID
- printed name and signature, in ink, of the player redeeming the coupon

If the player does not have adequate identification, then another player's identification may be used including the telephone number and signature of the other player.

Identification of players may be kept on file to speed up the use of coupons. Identification must be maintained either in a paper/card file or by computer and must be available upon request of the Gambling Control Board.

## Filing discrepancy report - \$50 or more

**Bingo paper** - If a discrepancy of more than \$50 is found between the gross profits as shown by the occasion records and the gross profits determined by adding the cash receipts, the discrepancy must be reported to the Board within five days of the occasion using form LG909.

**Hard cards** - If a discrepancy of more than \$50 is found between the gross profits as reported by the checkers and the gross profits determined by adding the cash receipts, the discrepancy must be reported to the Board within five days of the bingo occasion using form LG811.

## Pricing of bingo hard cards

**Our organization conducts bingo using hard cards. The price of the cards has been \$1.00 for the first 15 games, \$.50 for the next five games, and \$.25 for the final five games. May we continue to price bingo hard cards in this manner?**

Yes. However, your organization must prominently post the price for each bingo card for each game.

A checker must ensure that the amount of cash obtained during the occasion is reconciled with the number of cards in play.

# Player Information

## Posted information and house rules

### What information must be posted at the bingo occasion?

An organization must post:

- organization name, and license and premises permit number;
- problem gambling hotline number 1.800.333.HOPE;
- statement that illegal gambling is prohibited;
- house rules that include policies governing the conduct of bingo;
- selling price of bingo card, bingo paper, and electronic bingo device; and
- that only cash sales are permitted;

House rules, on an 18" x 24" sign, must include:

- policy on declaring bingo and last number called;
- reasons for potentially canceling bingo;
- statement that a copy of the Gambling Control Board's bingo rules may be obtained from Minnesota's Bookstore;
- if bingo hard cards are used, whether duplicate bingo hard cards are in play (unless the organization has otherwise notified all players before purchase of bingo hard cards for a game or number of games); and
- if breakopen bingo games are conducted, that identical sealed bingo paper sheet faces may occur during the game, the color of all original sealed paper, and the price at which the original and trade-in, if any, sealed paper must be sold.

## Power failure: Suggested information for house rules

### What do we do if we have a power failure during a bingo occasion?

One suggestion may be to plan ahead and put something like this in your house rules:

*"In the event of a power failure, the bingo occasion may be cancelled. Players are required to return the unused portion of their bingo package and will receive a coupon for a future occasion."*

Your organization must report the occasion up to the point the gambling was discontinued. Deface and keep all unused bingo paper.

## Player age

### May we allow someone under 18 to be present at our regular licensed bingo occasion?

There are no restrictions that would prohibit someone under age 18 from being present at a bingo occasion (check your local ordinances). However, persons under 18 may not play bingo at your permitted premises.

Exception: Persons under 18 may participate as a player in bingo conducted by an exempt or excluded organization or at bingo conducted by an organization as part of an annual community event if accompanied by a parent or guardian.

# Employee Restrictions

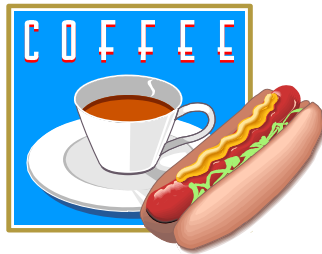
Employees playing bingo...when allowed/not allowed	Assisting players not allowed
<p><b>Our organization conducts bingo at a premises where bingo is conducted by more than one organization. May our employees play bingo when one of the other organizations is conducting the bingo occasion at the premises?</b></p> <p>Yes, as long as they are not involved in the conduct of any gambling during that occasion.</p> <p><b>Our organization conducts bingo at a premises where bingo is conducted by more than one organization. May our gambling employees and lessor’s employees play bingo when our organization is conducting bingo at the premises?</b></p> <p>It depends on whether the employee is working during that occasion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An employee may play at a bingo occasion that he or she does not work.</li> <li>• An employee may not participate as a player at a bingo occasion during which the employee works. For example, an employee who works the early bird games may not participate as a player in any games during that occasion.</li> <li>• An employee who sells pull-tabs during a bingo occasion may not play bingo during the occasion.</li> </ul> <p>The term “employee” includes a volunteer. An organization in its house rules or internal controls may adopt broader restrictions to limit employee player participation.</p>	<p><b>May floor workers play a bingo game for someone who has gone to the restroom?</b></p> <p>No. Bingo employees may not play bingo during occasions at which they work. This would include playing any player’s bingo paper.</p> <p><b>May floor workers assist players by pointing out winning bingo patterns or missed numbers?</b></p> <p>No. Bingo employees may not assist players.</p>

## Selling food and beverages at a bingo occasion

### LEASED premises

**Our organization leases the space where we conduct bingo. Is it okay for a gambling employee to sell lunch and sell bingo paper at a bingo occasion?**

It depends. The employee may sell lunch before the occasion starts or after the occasion has been completed. However, at a leased premises a person may not work as a gambling employee and provide food and beverage service during the same bingo occasion.



**At a leased premises may someone who is not a gambling employee working at the bingo occasion dispense food and beverages to players while bingo is being conducted?**

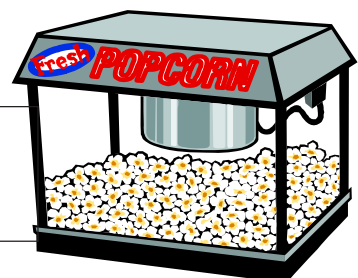
Yes. Food and beverages may be sold or served to players during a bingo occasion provided that, at a leased premises, the persons involved with dispensing food or beverages are also not involved with the conduct of gambling during that occasion.

An organization may not purchase food and beverage items using lawful gambling funds. This includes coffee, cups, and candy.

### OWNED premises

**Our organization owns the building where we conduct bingo. May a bingo employee also sell or serve food and beverages to the players during the same occasion?**

Yes. If your organization owns the premises where bingo is conducted, your bingo employees may also sell or serve food and beverages to players during the same occasion.



# Bingo Programs

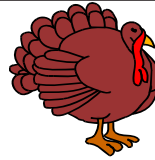
## No limits on programs

## Turkey bingo program

**Is there a limit to the number of bingo programs our organization may have on file with the Board?**

No. There is no limit on the number of bingo programs an organization may have on file with the Board.

The programs must be submitted to the Board at least 24 hours in advance of the programs' implementation, along with a list of occasions during which each program will be used.



**Our organization conducts bingo once a year using hard cards. We give turkeys for prizes. Are we required to file our bingo program with the Board?**

Yes. A copy of the program must be submitted to the Board at least 24 hours in advance of its implementation.

The bingo program must also be included with the minutes of your organization's next monthly meeting.

## Bingo Occasions

## Bingo Numbers Not Called

### No limit on number of occasions

**May our organization conduct three one-hour long bingo occasions six days each week?**

Yes. There is no limit on the number of bingo occasions your organization may conduct each week.

### No minimum time or number of games

**May our organization conduct a bingo occasion in which only five bingo games are played? The occasion would last about 1/2 hour.**

Yes. There is no minimum time or minimum number of games required to be played at a bingo occasion.

### Marathon bingo occasion

**On Thursday nights, our organization wants to conduct a "Marathon" bingo occasion that will last from 4 p.m. to midnight. May we do this as one bingo occasion or do we have to split it into two occasions?**

Because a bingo occasion may last up to 8 consecutive hours, your organization may conduct "Marathon" bingo as a single bingo occasion.

Reminder: The total prizes awarded must not exceed the occasion limits of \$2,800 for regular games plus up to \$1,000 for all coverall games conducted during the occasion.

**During our bingo occasions we play a game called "small round robin" that does not include any numbers in the winning pattern from the B and O columns. Does our caller have to call out and display the B and O bingo balls that are drawn?**

No. The caller must verbally state before the drawing of the first ball that drawn bingo balls not pertaining to the pattern being played will not be called.

Bingo balls not called may not be returned to the receptacle until they have been made available for inspection by at least one neutral player after the conclusion of the game or continuation game.

**If we do not have to call bingo balls that are not part of the pattern in play, and the players must bingo within 45 numbers, are those uncalled bingo balls counted as part of the 45 numbers?**

An organization has the option of counting all bingo balls drawn in its limited ball count or just counting those contained in the predetermined pattern.

The method your organization uses must be clearly noted in the house rules, and verbally stated to players before the start of the game.

## Continuation Game

### # of games played on one face

## Last Person Standing Game

**May our organization play four bingo games on a single face?**

No. A continuation game is a bingo game where up to 3 games may be played on one bingo face and each portion of the continuation game is considered a complete game even though the bingo numbers are not returned to selection devices until all games are complete.

**May our organization conduct a "last person standing" game in which numbers are called, players remain standing as long as the numbers called are not on the bingo faces that they are playing, and the last person standing is the winner?**

Yes, as long as the game is described completely in the bingo program.

# Prizes and Prize Receipts



## Reducing prizes when bad weather affects attendance

**May bingo prizes be reduced for an occasion in the event of bad weather?**

Yes. An organization may reduce bingo prizes if the program contains information regarding prize reduction due to reduced attendance and the program has previously been submitted to the Gambling Control Board.

### Awarding prizes based on price paid

**If an organization sells differently priced paper for the same bingo game and the prize is determined by the price paid by a player for the paper, is a prize receipt required?**

Yes. A prize receipt must be completed for bingo games in which the prize amount is determined by the price paid for the bingo paper.

### Awarding prizes for multiple winners

**In the event there are multiple winners of a bingo game, may an organization round up to the nearest dollar when splitting a cash prize?**

Yes. An organization may round the prize to the nearest higher dollar, provided the total amount of prizes does not exceed prize limits. Include the policy in house rules.

**May we award prizes for a good neighbor game in which players on the right or left side of the winner get a small prize?**

Yes, as long as the game is described in the bingo program and the total prize amount does not exceed the limit listed in the program.

### Awarding prizes based on % of gross receipts

**If our organization determines the amount of a bingo prize based on the percentage of gross receipts, is a prize receipt required?**

- A prize receipt is required if the prize value is announced after the game begins.
- A prize receipt is not required if the prize value is announced before the game starts.

**If our bingo prize is a percentage of gross receipts up to a specific dollar amount, how do we notify the players?**

Your organization may state in the bingo program that the game pays a specific percentage of the gross receipts not to exceed the prize limits for that type of bingo game.

Provide detail regarding the percentage payback and the upper limit in the bingo program.

Example: 75% payback, up to \$99.

### Awarding prizes for early bird games

**Our organization offers a \$20 prize to the winners of our early bird games. In the event of multiple winners for any of our early bird games, we award a \$10 prize to each winner. May we offer minimum prizes for multiple bingo winners?**

Yes, with the following requirements.

1. A prize receipt must be completed because minimum prizes are considered as "alternative prize levels" that are not announced prior to the start of the game.
2. A written description of any minimum prizes must be included in the bingo program.
  - For regular bingo games, the description must state that the total of all prizes for one game may not exceed \$200.
  - In instances where the prize is limited to \$200, the \$200 must be divided equally among all winners.

# Bar Bingo



## What is bar bingo?

Bar bingo is a bingo occasion conducted at a permitted premises in an area where:

- intoxicating liquor or 3.2 malt beverages are sold, and
- the licensed organization conducts another form of lawful gambling.

- √ Rent may not be paid for a bar bingo occasion.
- √ Bar bingo must be conducted using bingo paper sheets purchased from a licensed distributor or a linked bingo game provider.

### Lessor may not manage bar bingo

**May the lessor of the site where we conduct bar bingo run the bingo for us or does the gambling manager have to be there?**

The lessor may not manage the conduct of gambling at a site. Although it doesn't have to be the gambling manager, someone from the organization needs to be at the premises to oversee the bar bingo occasions.

### Compensation prohibited to lessor employees

**May we pay the lessor's employees for helping us conduct bar bingo?**

No. Compensation may not be paid by an organization to the lessor or the lessor's employees for the conduct of bar bingo. However, the lessor or lessor's employee may assist with bingo as long as no compensation is paid by the organization.

### When LG904 is not used for bar bingo

**For our weekly bar bingo occasions we only sell single 3-on sheets for \$1. We have just one seller who, prior to each game, goes around to each player to see if they want to buy any sheets for the next game. Do we need to complete an LG904 Admission Sales/Bingo Paper form for each occasion?**

No. Sales made by an organization's floor seller at a bar bingo occasion may be tracked on the LG906 Floor Sales/Bingo Paper or the LG920 Bar Bingo Paper Sales, which combines sales and prizes on one form.

The LG904 is only used to track the sale of paper (usually bingo paper packets or packages) from a stationary location to players as they enter a premises where bingo will be conducted.

### Participation in bar bingo

**May the lessor participate (play) in bar bingo?**

No. However the lessor's immediate family and lessor's employees may participate if they are not involved with the sale or operation of bar bingo.

### Selling in order from pads

**We sell bingo paper from pads of 25 sheets for our bar bingo activity. A player has asked to purchase only bingo sheets from the end of the pad. Are we allowed to do that?**

No. First, Board rule prohibits any organization from reserving bingo paper for any person. Second, an organization is required to maintain accurate bingo paper inventory records through the use of control numbers and other information. Therefore, the paper must be sold in sequence from the pad to maintain accurate records.

### Staying in compliance

**My organization has started conducting bar bingo. Are there any tools I can use to see if we are following all the bingo statutes and rules.**

Yes. A bingo site inspection checklist is available at [www.gcb.state.mn.us](http://www.gcb.state.mn.us). Use the LG913 checklist to ensure compliance with statutes and rules pertaining to bingo.

## Cover-All (Blackout) Game

Prizes for multiple cover-all games	Cover-all prize limit
<p><b>We have three cover-all games (non-progressive) during our bingo occasion. The prize for the first cover-all is \$500, and the prizes for the other two are 80% of the gross receipts of each of the games. Is there any problem with this?</b></p> <p>There may be. The total amount that may be awarded at any bingo occasion for non-progressive cover-all games is \$1,000.</p> <p>Since your first cover-all game is already paying \$500, the total or aggregate amount of the other two cover-all games (which pay 80% of the gross receipts of each game) may not exceed \$500.</p> <p>The bingo program could state that the prize for each of the other two cover-all games will be 80% of gross receipts, with a maximum prize of \$250 each.</p>	<p><b>The total amount of prizes awarded during our bingo occasion is \$3,900. We have one cover-all game for \$1,000. We do not play any progressive games. Are we in compliance with gambling statutes?</b></p> <p>No. The prize limit was exceeded by \$100 because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) single games are limited to \$2,800 in prizes paid per occasion; and</li> <li>2) cover-all games are limited to \$1,000 in prizes paid per occasion.</li> </ol>

### Restricting participation in a special game

**Our organization does not sell bingo packets or packages. Instead, we sell individual bingo sheets for each game played. May we require players to have played the five preceding games in order to participate in the special game?**

Yes, provided those restrictions are included in the bingo program and in the house rules posted at the site.

Odd/even game	Blackout minus one game [23 and free; 1 away]	Linked bingo cover-all game
<p><b>For our cover-all game, may our organization allow players to cover all of the odd numbers on odd-numbered days, or all the even numbers on even-numbered days before any numbers for the game have been called?</b></p> <p>Yes. Your organization may conduct a cover-all game in which all odd or all even numbers are designated by the organization as covered prior to the start of the game.</p> <p>Sealed bingo paper must be used for this game. The prize amount counts towards the cover-all limit.</p>	<p><b>May our organization pay a \$300 prize for a game that is a “blackout minus one” game?</b></p> <p><u>Single game - NO:</u> The game described in this question (also referred to as “23 and free” or “1 away” game) is not a true blackout (cover-all) game. Thus, the amount of \$300 would exceed the prize limit of \$200 for a single bingo game.</p> <p><u>Progressive game - YES:</u> If the game is played as a progressive game, the amount of \$300 is acceptable as the prize amount.</p>	<p><b>Our organization conducts a \$1,000 cover-all game at the end of each occasion. If we add a linked bingo game that also uses a cover-all pattern, will we be in violation of the \$1,000 per occasion cover-all prize limit?</b></p> <p>No. Linked bingo cover-all prizes are not included when determining compliance with the cover-all prize limit.</p>

## Progressive Games

Progressive prize limit	Progressive prizes & bingo programs
<p><b>We run a number of progressive bingo games at our occasions. Is there any limit to the amount of a prize we can award for a progressive bingo game for that occasion?</b></p> <p>Yes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A prize of up to \$2,000 may be awarded for a progressive bingo game.</li> <li>• There is no annual limit for the total value of progressive prizes awarded in a calendar year.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Our organization uses several different programs each week. When operating a progressive bingo game, must the progressive prize be offered at the very next bingo occasion or may it be deferred to the next occasion that uses the same bingo program?</b></p> <p>An organization may choose to conduct the progressive bingo game at all of its occasions, or it may elect to defer progressive prizes until the next occasion that uses the same program.</p> <p>Players must be made aware of the progressive game schedule, either in the program or house rules.</p>

Consolation prize	Progressive cover-all game
<p><b>We play several progressive games each occasion. If a game does not have a winner, we pay a \$200 consolation prize. Would these consolation prizes be considered “progressive” prizes or would they be considered “regular” prizes?</b></p> <p>A consolation prize awarded in a progressive game is a “regular prize” and may not exceed \$200.</p> <p>Prize limits for regular prizes are limited to \$2,800 per occasion, including consolation prizes.</p>	<p><b>May we play a progressive cover-all bingo game in which:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the prize starts at \$500,</li> <li>• the prize is increased by \$100 every occasion (up to \$2,000) when no bingo is declared within a designated number of bingo balls, and</li> <li>• the game awards a \$300 consolation prize?</li> </ul> <p>No, because the maximum consolation prize allowed is \$200 in a progressive bingo game. In a progressive bingo game:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the prize may start at \$500,</li> <li>• may increase by up to \$100, and</li> <li>• a consolation prize of up to \$200 may be awarded.</li> </ul> <p><b>We play a cover-all game where the prize increases each occasion until the game is won. Is this game considered a “cover-all” or a “progressive” game?</b></p> <p>It is a progressive game because the prize increases. Therefore, the game would be subject to the prize limits established for progressive games.</p>

### Limiting bingo number count

**We have one bingo game where the designated prize remains constant but the limiting bingo number count increases by one number each occasion until the prize is won. Is this game considered a progressive game?**

No. This is a limiting bingo number count game. To be considered a progressive game, the designated prize must increase on a pre-determined schedule.