

In Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Department of Correction's prison population increased by 9% between 2005 and 2014. As of 2014 the prison population reached 11,034 offenders.¹ The Massachusetts incarceration rate is approximately 200 incarcerated per 100,000 population compared with the national average of about 500 incarcerated per 100,000.

Massachusetts takes substance abuse in prison seriously, maintaining a zero tolerance for substance abuse by all inmates.² All inmates, unless specifically exempted, are subject to substance abuse monitoring and, where appropriate, may participate in available drug treatment programs.²

However, no such identification, monitoring, and treatment is currently available for gamblers with a gambling problem or a gambling disorder who are incarcerated in Massachusetts.³



Gambling in Prison

Prison gambling is associated with crime and substance abuse when offenders re-enter the community. Researchers find that gambling often complicates offenders' efforts to live crime-free and say this problem urgently needs to be addressed if parolees are to transition successfully from prison to a community.⁵

33%

of prisoners report gambling while incarcerated

even though prisons and jails in the United States routinely prohibit gambling.⁴



Prisoners are a vulnerable population and many struggle with managing impulsive behavior and have problems associated with "quick fix" solutions.⁶ Gambling in prison can take on many forms, including: card games, bingo, sports

betting, and betting on situations that occur within prison.⁷

Prisoners report that they gamble while in prison to pass the time, provide excitement, and to socialize.⁹ For female prisoners gambling provides an emotional escape from the harsh realities of imprisonment.⁸

Prisoners may gamble for money, cigarettes, commissary items, food, specific tasks, or sexual favors. Violence may occur when debts are not paid.⁷

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Massachusetts Council on
**COMPULSIVE
GAMBLING**

We understand the problem. We can help.

What is gambling?

Gambling is risking something of value on the outcome of an event when the probability of winning is less than certain.⁹

What is problem gambling?

Problem gambling is characterized by gambling behavior which leads to adverse consequences for the gambler, others, and the community.¹⁰

What constitutes social gambling?

Social gamblers gamble for entertainment, typically will not risk more than they can afford, often gamble with friends, chase losses briefly, gamble for limited periods of time, and are not preoccupied with gambling.¹¹

See DSM-5 for clinical definitions

The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling: A Resource For Help

The Council's Helpline provides live, confidential, and compassionate support 24-hours a day, 7-days a week: **800-426-1234**.

Helpline workers provide:

- Information about problem gambling
- Referrals to self-help groups, treatment providers, and other community resources.

For more information, visit masscompulsivegambling.org or contact us at info@masscompulsivegambling.org or 617-426-4554.

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