

Self Exclusion: The Facts

What is self-exclusion?

The Gambling Act 2003 allows any person who wishes to do so to exclude themselves from entering the gambling area of a casino or any pub, club or hotel with pokie machines. TAB venues can also do this but slightly different rules apply.

A self exclusion is a legally binding agreement between you and the gambling operator. Essentially, you agree not to gamble in the venues and operators agree to support you to leave if you do go in.

Self-exclusion is a very effective tool for reducing or stopping gambling. It can give you some time to be gamble free and help prevent the urge to gamble. Although the self exclusions will not address factors that may have led you to gamble, it can provide an opportunity to address these issues in counselling, free of the additional complications of more gambling.

How is it done?

You can choose to visit selected venues and ask to be excluded. If this is your preference, please bring a large current photo of yourself which clearly identifies you, and some form of ID. It is a good idea to take a support person with you so you are not tempted to gamble while you are there - this can be a friend, family member or your counsellor.

Alternatively, you can write to venues to ask for an exclusion order. In this case you must supply a photo and postal contact details in each letter.

How long do I exclude for?

An exclusion can be issued for any period up to two years. They can also be renewed as often as required. It may be better to do shorter exclusions, renewed more frequently, than a longer exclusion.

This can keep exclusion more prominent in your mind and regularly remind venue operators as well.

How do I choose the venues?

Exclusion orders are always going to work best when you are confident they will be enforced by venue staff. They will be most effective in the venues where you go regularly and are known there. The exclusions can be useful in preventing you from gambling in other venues which are near to your home or work. A counsellor can help you with choosing venues.

Please note, if you are seeking an exclusion from pokie machines in a venue that also has TAB gambling, the venue operator may use their discretion and exclude you from the whole venue. This can lead to a regional TAB ban and will extend to other TAB venues in the area.

What is Multi-Venue Exclusion?

The Multi-Venue Exclusion (MVE) procedure was developed to make self-exclusions easier to complete and to reduce the stress of going into each venue. You can exclude from any number of pubs, clubs, hotels and casinos using an MVE.

Completing an MVE form can be done at any PGF office, and one of our administrators or counsellors can take your photo. Please bring some ID with you.

What is third-party exclusion?

Third-party exclusion is something casinos, pubs, clubs and hotels in New Zealand can do if someone is worried about your gambling and you have said no to a self-exclusion.

The third-party might be a whānau member, friend, employer, your GP or even a casino or venue staff member. If the venue is convinced that the third-

party's concern is genuine and justified, then it will take the step to exclude you for two years to help you control your gambling. Casino exclusions have conditions you must meet to gain re-entry.

TAB exclusion

The TAB has an online form that you can download, complete and take in to any TAB for processing with your photo and ID. Alternatively, you can complete the exclusion form in a PGF office.

You can designate a region of the country to be excluded from or the whole of New Zealand. TAB do not process individual venues, and the exclusion will include the casino in the designated region if they have a TAB outlet.

The TAB will then close your betting account and refund any credit and outstanding bets. When the exclusion expires the TAB send a letter inviting you back to gambling unless they record that you have breached the agreement by visiting a TAB site during your exclusion.

The TAB also offers a 'Set Your Limits' programme which allows you to designate spending limits on your phone account. See the TAB website for further details.

Casino Exclusion

You may just want to self-exclude from a casino or add this to your list of other venues. A casino requires you to have at least 3-6 counselling sessions prior to being allowed to return to the casino. This may be enforced even if you wish to return to the casino many years later.

Casinos also share their exclusion orders, so your exclusion will include the other casinos in the country.

What happens if you go into a venue when under an exclusion order?

After you are on the list, a venue may refuse to accept your bets and may ask you to leave the gambling area. If you do gamble, you may be

unable to collect winnings or recover any losses. Breaching a self-exclusion order can lead to being asked to leave by venue staff, the police may be called and you may be fined \$500.

Gambling venue staff should take some of the responsibility in reducing gambling harm. They are expected to commit each face to memory and act if they see you in their venue.

Although you cannot completely rely on them noticing you, if you believe venue staff are not meeting their obligation to ask you to leave, your concerns can be raised with the Gambling Compliance Office at the Department of Internal Affairs. A counsellor can be available to support you in this process.

Can I cancel my self exclusion or MVE?

No, exclusion orders are legally binding documents and can not be cancelled prior to their expiration date. When they have expired you won't receive a notification unless you have indicated on your MVE form that you would like someone to notify you.

After the exclusion order expires you will need to contact the Casino before going into their premises. They usually conduct an interview with you and may require you to attend counselling.

Most pubs, clubs or TAB premises will stop monitoring expired exclusion orders automatically and allow you to re-enter without further contact.

Need Help?

We know it can be hard to ask for help, but if gambling is affecting your life, we can help you get back on track.

At PGF Services we provide free, professional and confidential support for gamblers and their loved ones. We also run education and support groups and help with self-exclusion from gambling venues.