

Cook County Unincorporated Video Gaming License FAQ's

On June 5, 2018, the Cook County Board of Commissioners passed the Video Gaming Ordinance (“Ordinance”) to govern licensing of establishments that wish to have video gaming terminals in accordance with the Illinois Video Gaming Act, 230 ILCS 40/5, and Cook County Code of Ordinances, Sec. 58-161.

1. When does the ordinance go into effect?

The ordinance takes effect on August 5, 2018.

2. What is a video gaming terminal?

A video gaming terminal (“VGT”) is any electronic video game machine that, upon insertion of cash, is available to play or simulate the play of a video game, including but not limited to video poker, line up, and blackjack. VGTs cannot directly dispense coins, cash, or tokens.

3. Is a license required to place a video gaming terminal in your establishment?

Yes. A valid license must be issued by both the Illinois Gaming Board and the Cook County Liquor Control Commission. Those found operating a video gaming terminal without a license are subject to criminal penalties.

4. Where can I find the Cook County video gaming license application?

The electronic video gaming license application can be found on the Cook County Business License Portal (<https://revenue.cookcountyil.gov/LicensePortal>).

5. Where is video gaming allowed?

Pursuant to the ordinance, video gaming is allowed in any establishment in unincorporated Cook County that has a valid Cook County retail liquor license and has obtained a valid video gaming license from the Illinois Gaming Board.

6. Can I put video gaming terminals anywhere in my establishment?

No. Video gaming terminals must be located in an area restricted to persons over 21 years of age, with entrance to the area within view of at least one employee over 21 years of age. The Illinois Gaming Board will assure video gaming terminals are located appropriately within the establishment.

7. How many video gaming terminals will be allowed in each establishment?

Up to six machines may be placed at each licensed establishment.

8. Are there any restrictions on the hours of operation of video gaming terminals?

Yes. Both the Video Gaming Act and the Cook County ordinance restrict the hours of operation of video gaming terminal. They can only be operated during the same hours in which alcoholic liquor is served.

9. How much does it cost to get a Cook County video gaming license?

To obtain a video gaming license, the following fees must be submitted with your application:

- Application fee - \$500
- License fee - \$1,000 per video gaming terminal position

The license is issued for the number of video gaming terminal positions, not for a specific video gaming terminal. You must indicate in your applications how many video gaming terminals you wish to have, and that number will be indicated on your license.

10. Can I apply for a Cook County video gaming license at the same time as I apply for a State license?

Yes. However, a valid state video gaming license must be submitted to the Cook County Liquor Control Commission before a County video gaming license can be issued. Applications submitted to the Liquor Control Commission must be otherwise complete when submitted to be processed.

11. Are there any other Cook County prerequisites to getting a video gaming license?

Yes. An establishment seeking a video gaming license must already have a Cook County retail liquor license. The liquor license application can be found on the Cook County Business License Portal (<https://revenue.cookcountyil.gov/LicensePortal>). Also, the establishment must contact the Cook County Department of Building and Zoning to assure it is in compliance with all applicable zoning and occupancy requirements. Building and Zoning can be reached at (312) 603-0500 or info.bnz@cookcountyil.gov. If you already have a liquor license and will be completing any building or structural changes to accommodate video gaming, you must also fill out the Liquor License Business Update Application, which can also be found on the Liquor Control Commission website.

12. How does the video gaming license work with the Cook County Gambling Machine Tax?

The Gambling Machine Tax is separate from the licensing process. Licenses must be obtained by the establishment where video gaming terminals will be operated. The Gambling Machine Tax must be remitted by terminal operators for each machine they own that will be operated in an establishment in unincorporated Cook County. After remitting the tax, a gambling machine decal is issued and must be affixed to each video gaming terminal. All of these must be completed before the video gaming terminals are operational.

13. How long is a video gaming license valid?

A video gaming license is valid for 12 months from the date of issuance. A complete application and applicable fees must be submitted each year for renewal. If your license is up for renewal but your state video gaming license renewal is delayed due to timing of the applicable Illinois Gaming Board meeting, your County license will remain valid until such time as the Illinois Gaming Board can vote on your renewal and your County renewal application can be processed.

14. How do I complete my license application?

Video Gaming License application is available electronically and can be found at the Cook County Business License Portal, <https://revenue.cookcountyil.gov/LicensePortal>

15. Who can I contact if I have questions?

Questions can be directed to Tihomir Knezevic at (312) 603-7163 or Tihomir.Knezevic@CookCountyIL.gov.

