

## Superstitions and False Beliefs

It might be fun to imagine that rubbing a rabbit's foot improves your chances of hitting a jackpot, but the reality is that this "magical thinking" has no impact whatsoever. Cheating aside, there's nothing you can do – no ritual and no lucky charm – to influence the outcome of any casino game. Superstitions can't determine whether you win or lose because every casino game – whether it's blackjack, craps or a slot machine – is based on randomness or chance.

## Independent Events

To understand gambling, it's also important to understand the concept of "independent events." Each spin of the wheel or roll of the dice is considered an "independent event," meaning that the chances of a specific outcome remain the same and are not influenced by previous events. For example, if you've just rolled snake eyes, you are no more or less likely on the next roll to get snake eyes again. Slot machines are not any more or less likely to hit a jackpot just because they haven't hit for a while. And roulette wheels are no more or less likely to land on red if they have just previously landed on black. So-called gambling "hot streaks" are merely random sequences of events perceived by players to be favourable. Over time, the overall outcome of the game will favour the casino and always approach the house advantage.

## Government Regulation

While some people believe that casinos can "rig" slot machines and other games, the reality is that the actions of every casino in Alberta are tightly controlled by the Alberta Liquor and Gaming Commission (AGLC), which ensure that all games are fair and determined by chance. Slot machines are tested and approved by an independent gaming laboratory and must meet stringent technical and operating standards, including specific payout percentages, before they ever reach the casino floor. For more information, visit the **Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission** website at [www.aglc.gov.ab.ca](http://www.aglc.gov.ab.ca)



## Help is Available

Are you concerned that you or someone you know may have a gambling problem? Call the 24-hour, toll-free Help Line at 1-866-332-2322, contact your nearest AADAC office, or visit [www.aadac.com](http://www.aadac.com)

**RESPONSIBLE**  
**GAMBLING**  
*hold your own*

1-866-332-2322

**Alberta**  
Gaming and  
Liquor Commission

**AADAC**  
Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission  
An Agency of the Government of Alberta

# THE HOUSE ADVANTAGE

## the odds favour the house

## The House Advantage

Casino table games and slot machines are designed with a house advantage. Mathematically, the house advantage is a measure of how much the house expects to win, expressed as a percentage of the player's wager. For example, in a wager with a house advantage of 5%, the player will lose, on average over time, \$5 for every \$100 wagered. In some table games, player betting or skill decisions can affect the house advantage, but it's important to keep in mind that the house always has some advantage over the typical player.

Assuming standard rules and players with average skills, typical house advantages in popular casino games range from 1.1% (player/banker bets) to 14.4% (tie bets) for baccarat; 0.5% to 1.5% for twenty one ("blackjack"); 1.4% to 16.7% for craps and 2.7% to 5.3% for roulette. For slot machines, the house advantage could range from 4% to 12%.

More information about these games is available on request from your casino host or floor person or at the Responsible Gaming Information Centre.

## Other Factors Behind Winning and Losing

While the house advantage is useful for understanding the casino's expected win (or your expected loss) per bet, there are other factors that can influence the amount you might spend when gambling in a casino.

### Length of Time Played, Speed of Play and Amount Wagered

Because the odds always favour the house, the more you play a casino game, the more you should expect to lose. In the same way, the more you wager, the more you should expect to lose. For instance, if the "hold percentage" (or house advantage) for a slot machine is 8%, then, on average, a player will win back \$92 for each \$100 wagered. However, if this player then re-wagers the \$92, the player will again win back, on average, 92% of the \$92, or \$84. As the betting continues, over time players are more and more likely to lose money, rather than win.

### Skill

The chances of winning are maximized when games involving an element of skill (in playing or betting) – such as blackjack or video poker – are played at the highest level. However, with few exceptions, it's important to remember that the house continues to have a statistical advantage in every play of every game, even against a skillful player.

