Casinos Ban Gamblers from Using Google Glass

Wayne Parry, Associated Press

Casinos in several states are forbidding gamblers from wearing Google Glass, the tiny eyeglasses-mounted device capable of shooting photos, filming video and surfing the Internet.

Regulators say the gadgets could be used to cheat at card games.

The New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement issued a directive on Monday ordering Atlantic City's 12 casinos to bar casino patrons from using the device. The directive was first reported by The Press of Atlantic City.

Similar bans are in place at casinos in Las Vegas, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Connecticut, among other places.

"If these eyeglasses were worn during a poker game, they could be used to broadcast a patron's hand to a confederate or otherwise be used in a collusive manner," David Rebuck, the division's director wrote in a memo to the casinos.

That type of use would constitute a crime in New Jersey. But it would be difficult to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that the glasses were actually being used to cheat, Rebuck wrote. For that and other reasons, he decided to ban the glasses on the casino floor and anywhere else gambling is taking place.

"Even if the glasses had not been used for cheating ... their presence at a gaming table would lead to the perception that something untoward could be occurring, thereby undermining public confidence in the integrity of gaming," he wrote in the directive.

In a statement issued Wednesday, Google said, "We are thinking very carefully about how we design Glass because new technology always raises new issues." It said its "Glass Explorer" pilot program "will ensure that our users become active participants in shaping the future of this technology."

The New Jersey casinos must ask anyone wearing the glasses to remove them, and can kick out any customer who refuses.

The prohibition against photography or video filming in the casinos is not unique to Google Glass. New Jersey regulators require five days' advance notice — and explicit approval from the gaming enforcement division — for any type of photos or videos to be shot on the casino floor, and Las Vegas has similar restrictions. But as a new technology, the glasses are catching the attention of regulators, who are updating their rules to keep pace.

In Las Vegas, Caesars Entertainment and MGM Resorts have directed their security workers to ask patrons to remove the devices before beginning to gamble.

Caesars spokesman Gary Thompson said Las Vegas guests will need to take off their glasses when they hit the tables.

"Gaming regulations prohibit the use of computers or recording devices while gambling, so guests can't wear Google Glass while they're gambling," Thompson said. "The devices will also not be able to be used in showrooms."

The edict will also be applied at casinos in Cincinnati and Cleveland.

In Pennsylvania, state regulators plan to advise its 11 casinos that an existing regulation prohibiting gamblers from using electronic devices at a table game also applies to the Google Glass, a Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board spokesman said Wednesday.

Mohegan Sun in Connecticut also bans the devices on the casino floor.

Source URL (retrieved on *08/01/2014 - 1:07am*):
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