



## Gambling: Are Sports Pools Authorized?

Are you ready for some footbaaaall...!? The 2015 NFL Football Season is rapidly approaching, and with the upcoming season comes the lure of office football pools, brackets, fantasy football leagues (FFLs), etcetera. With that in mind, DoD 5500.7-R (the Joint Ethics Regulation) states, *“While on Government-owned or leased property or on duty for the Government (for military members, this means, in this context, present for duty), an employee shall not conduct or participate in any gambling activity, including operating a gambling device, conducting a lottery or pool, participating in a game for money or property, or selling or purchasing a numbers slip or ticket.”* This prohibition of gambling on Government property applies to military members as well as DoD civilian employees.

Reference: DoD 5500.7-R

What does this mean and what is allowed? Per Title 31, U.S. Code, Section 5362, betting or wagering is defined as, *“The staking or risking by any person of something of value upon the outcome of a contest of others, a sporting event, or a game subject to chance, upon an agreement or understanding that the person or another person will receive something of value in the event of a certain outcome.”* Simple translation is that conducting a football pool for anything of value (money, trophies, goods or service, etc.) while on duty and/or on Government property is a direct violation of the Joint Ethics Regulation. Pools, brackets, or fantasy leagues MAY be allowed if they are for “Bragging Rights Only.” If you have any doubt about whether or not an activity that may be considered gambling is authorized, consult your Staff Judge Advocate for guidance.

Reference: Title 31, U.S. Code, Section 5362

## Do Gambling Violations Even Get Reported?

Reports of gambling on DoD installations occur more than one might imagine; often, these allegations are substantiated by investigations resulting in appropriate disciplinary actions. Below are a few examples:

**In the state of Hawaii, the only legal gambling permitted by law is “Social Gambling,” which is defined in the Hawaii Statutes, section 712-1231. However, this does not supersede DoD policy on installations!**

### 1. Fantasy Football is Gambling

- Allegations that DoD employees operating a Fantasy Football League in the work place.
- Participants paid \$20.
- Funds were used for a luncheon at the end of the season.
- RESULT: General Counsel ruled the activity was a violation of DoD 5500.7-R.

### 2. Fantasy Football is Gambling - Take Two

- Allegations that a DoD employee was running an FFL on government computers.
- Each member of the FFL contributed \$10.
- The season’s winner paid for a pizza party at the end of the season. Of note, the party cost more than the winnings...
- RESULT: Violation of DoD 5500.7-R and misuse of government resources.

### 3. Gambling Ring Garners Federal Charges

- Allegations that a government employee was running a full-fledged gambling operation on government premises.
- While on official duty, the employee would receive betting slips from other employees and make pay-offs.
- The government employee’s subsequent threatening phone call to the tipster earned the employee additional charges.
- RESULT: Multiple violations of orders and regulations.



Nobody wants to be on the receiving end of an investigation for something as seemingly innocent as a sports pool. So this football season, enjoy your team of choice, cheer them on, and manage the greatest fantasy football team ever; but, do not participate in any illegal gambling activities.

## MFP Inspector General Contacts

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[www.marforpac.marines.mil/CommandSections/CommandInspectorGeneral.aspx](http://www.marforpac.marines.mil/CommandSections/CommandInspectorGeneral.aspx)

**DO NOT RISK your reputation, rank, and career over gambling events/pools conducted illegally and/or on government property, with government resources, or on government time...**

**When there’s doubt, there is NO DOUBT.  
 Don’t do it!**