



# Illinois Department of Revenue

# Informational Bulletin

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Director of Revenue

## Bingo Information

### For information or forms...

- Call us at:  
**1 800 732-8866** or  
**217 782-3336**
- Call our TDD  
(telecommunications device  
for the deaf) at:  
**1 800 544-5304**
- Write us at:  
Illinois Department of Revenue  
P.O. Box 19044  
Springfield, IL 62794-9044
- Visit our web site at:  
**tax.illinois.gov**
- Call our 24-hour  
Forms Order Line at:  
**1 800 356-6302**

This bulletin is written to  
inform you of recent changes;  
it does not replace statutes,  
rules and regulations, or court  
decisions.

Public Act 95-228 made changes to the Bingo Act. The purpose of this bulletin is to provide guidance for some of those changes.

### What is Bingo?

The law defines bingo in its commonly understood sense as a game in which each player has a card or board, containing 5 horizontal rows of spaces, with each row except the center one containing 5 figures. The central row may have the word "free" marked in the center space or it may also be designated in some other manner indicating it as predrawn or "free" space. "Bingo" also includes games that otherwise qualify under this paragraph, except for the use of cards where the figures are not preprinted but are filled in by the players.

A player wins a game of bingo by completing a preannounced combination of spaces or any combination of 5 spaces in a row, vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. A license is required whenever consideration is paid for the cards or boards in order to play bingo.

In Illinois, it is illegal to operate the game commonly known as "bingo" without first being licensed by the department. It is also illegal to supply bingo equipment or provide a bingo facility to anyone who does not possess a current Illinois Bingo License.

**Note:** Anyone who operates a game "commonly known as bingo" without being licensed by the department may also be in violation of the Illinois Criminal Code related to gambling (720 ILCS 5/28-1 *et seq.*).

### How is a Bingo license obtained?

Each qualifying organization that wishes to conduct a bingo event must complete an application with the department. You should allow at least 60 days prior to the event. Visit our Web site at **tax.illinois.gov** for forms you may need and more information.

