



Division of Charitable Gaming

Bingo Inspector's Guide

The Bingo Licensing Law (General Municipal Law, Article 14-h) requires that each municipality closely control all phases of the supervision, licensing and regulation of bingo games licensed under its jurisdiction, to ensure that the games are conducted fairly and to prevent the diversion of proceeds from their intended lawful purposes. To carry out these mandates, the governing body of a municipality may delegate its regulatory oversight authority to a bingo inspector.

A thorough and effective bingo inspection requires the bingo inspector's presence from approximately one-half hour prior to the calling of the first ball, until the conclusion of the occasion. A bingo inspection consists primarily of a comparison of the inspector's count of the bingo opportunities sold with the sales records compiled by the person in charge of the games.

Upon arrival at the bingo hall, an inspector must examine the bingo license (and any amendments thereto), inspect the bingo equipment (including the balls) to ensure that it all equipment is in sound working order, and compare the name reflected on the photo-identification badge of each of the persons conducting the games with the list of names appearing on Schedules 2 and 4 of license form BC-2A. The name of any worker not listed on the license application must be brought to the attention of the person in charge of the games, who shall relieve that person of any duty related to the conduct of bingo. (Unlicensed members and non-members may assist the organization by performing duties unrelated to the games, such as food service.) The years of membership reflected on the BC-2A for the caller and assistant caller must be checked to ensure that they have been members for at least one year, as required by Rule 4820.35.

Another one of the inspector's primary responsibilities is to verify that the profits generated from the sale of bingo opportunities are properly reported. A failure to verify sales activity can result in the "skimming" of profits intended for charitable causes and a reduction in the additional license fees paid to the licensing municipality.

In order to perform an accurate count of the opportunities sold, it is imperative that an inspector be familiar with the definitions of the different types of bingo games (see the *Glossary of Bingo Terminology* for a comprehensive list of definitions):

- Admission Card represents the card or cards entitling a player to participate in all "regular" bingo games for a single admission price that shall not exceed \$5.00 per bingo occasion.
- Bingo Face or face-card is the twenty-five spaced playing grid marked by the participants in the playing of bingo. Each face-card bears a face number (or plate number) used in the verification of a winning bingo, which is usually located in the center "Free Space."
- Bingo Opportunity is a board or sheet of paper bearing one or more bingo face-cards.
- Bonus ball, also referred to as *cash ball* and *the pickle jar*, is a special bingo game played in conjunction with one or more regular and/or special bingo games that have been designated by the licensed authorized organization on its application for bingo license and on its bingo program as "Bonus Ball Games" and in which a "Bonus Ball Prize" is awarded to the player acquiring the designated winning bingo pattern when the last number called and marked by that player is identical to the "Bonus Ball Number."
- Early Bird Cards, also known as "share the wealth" or "split-pots," are opportunities to play in a special game that is conducted no more than twice during any single licensed occasion, in which a fixed percentage of the receipts from the sale of Early Bird cards is awarded as a prize. The prize awarded in the conduct of an Early Bird game cannot exceed seventy-five percent of the sales receipts. A popular Early Bird game is known as the "60/40 Game" in which 60% of the money collected from the sale of bingo cards for that game is awarded to the winning player(s); the

remaining 40% of the money is kept by the licensed organization as profit. The price for an opportunity to participate in an Early Bird game shall not exceed \$1.00; however, if an organization sells “**one-on**” Early Bird cards for \$1.00, they may also offer “three-on” Early Bird cards for the same game for \$2.00 per sheet. (See the first paragraph on Page 2 for an explanation of the term “**on**”.)

- Extra Regular Cards are additional bingo cards sold separately that entitle purchasers to participate in all regular bingo games played during an occasion. Players are not be required to purchase extra regular cards; the purchase of such opportunities is optional.
- Regular Bingo Game is any bingo game that may be played on an admission card. The term “regular bingo,” unfortunately, is also referred to as the winning pattern of numbers needed to win a game by forming a horizontal, vertical or diagonal line, or by marking the four outside or inside corners of a bingo face. A regular bingo is, for the purposes of this section, any bingo game that can be played on an admission card, regardless of the pattern of numbers necessary to win.
- Special Cards are additional bingo cards sold separately that entitle purchasers to participate in bingo games that cannot be played on either an admission card or an extra regular card. The purchase of special cards is also optional but, if a player wants to participate in one or more special games, special cards must be purchased to do so. Special cards may be offered for sale by the licensee separately, or are sold only as part of a package, at the discretion of the licensed organization.
- Supercards (also known as “Supercard line-games”) are opportunities to participate in a game played concurrently with a regular or special bingo game, that are selected by the players and which bear numbers that correspond with the fifteen numbers appearing under each letter of the letters B,I,N,G, and O displayed on the bingo flash-board. At least 13 lines out of the 15 lines available must be sold, or the Supercard game shall be cancelled and the monies collected from the players returned. Winning Supercards are usually paid at 13 for 1 (12 to 1) odds.
- Cut refers to the number of face-cards on a sheet, and the direction in which the face-cards are printed. If the face-cards are printed vertically on the sheets they are called “**verticals**”; if printed horizontally across the page, they are called “**horizontal**”; and, if printed on a square sheet they are referred to as “**squares**”.

The counting of bingo opportunities during “traditional occasions” in which “hard-board” bingo cards and separate newsprint sheets of bingo cards is a long and tedious process. Fortunately, due to the latest in printing technology, the hard-boards and cumbersome newsprint cards have been replaced with sheets of newsprint bearing six, twelve, eighteen and more faces, in packages comprised of enough differently colored sheets to accommodate any bingo program.

The number of bingo faces appearing on each sheet of opportunities is referred to as “on” and the number of newsprint sheets stacked together to comprise a package is referred to as “up.” For example, a package of opportunities comprised of a stack of ten sheets, each of which bears three bingo faces, is called a “three-on, ten-up.” If the faces are printed vertically on the sheets they are called “verticals”; if printed horizontally, they are called “horizontal.”

Unlike the counting of individual bingo faces necessary during “traditional occasions,” the counting of packages of cards at “all paper occasions” requires only a count of the types of packages sold. For instance, if an organization sells “three-on, ten-up vertical” admission packages for a price of three dollars, the inspector, ensuring that each player has a package of “three-on verticals,” counts the number of admission packages and multiplies that number by three dollars to determine the profit from the sale of admission cards. If the organization is selling “extra-regular” packages of “six-on, ten-ups” for six dollars; “twelve-on, ten-ups” for ten dollars; and “eighteen-on, ten-ups” for fifteen dollars, the inspector need only count the number of “six-ons,” “twelve-ons,” and “eighteen-ons” and multiply the total number of each type of package by the price of each per package.

A comparison of the total number of each type of package sold, and the profits derived from the sale of those opportunities, should agree with the numbers compiled by the person in charge of recording the sales. Errors in counts, particularly in halls with larger seating capacities, are not uncommon. However, in most cases, the inspector’s count is **lower** than that of the organization. Counts recorded by an inspector that are repeatedly higher than those reported by the

licensee indicate a potential problem. If an accurate count cannot be effectively conducted by one inspector because of the number of players, consideration should be given to utilizing more than one inspector during those occasions.

The number of “ups” contained in the admission package and each of the extra-regular packages of “six-on,” “nine-on,” etc. are often identical. In such cases, since the players are entitled to play in all of the admission (regular bingo) games using the admission cards and extra-regulars, all of the games played during that occasion are regular games of bingo, since no extra purchase is required to play in those games. (Note: If Early Bird or Supercard games are also conducted, opportunities for those “special games” must be sold separately; the sale of Early Bird cards or Supercards *cannot* be included in any package of bingo opportunities.)

If an organization sells packages of opportunities comprised of more sheets “up” than the number of “ups” in the admission package, the additional opportunities are “specials.” For instance, if an organization sells “three-on, ten-ups” for its admission package, and is also selling “nine-on, fifteen-ups,” each of the ten opportunities in the “nine-on, fifteen-up” package that corresponds in color with one of the ten opportunities comprising the admission package are considered “extra-regulars.”

The five opportunities that do not correspond in color with any of the ten opportunities comprising the admission package are considered “specials,” since the players are not entitled to participate in those games using their admission packages. Players wishing to play in those special games must purchase a package of “nine-on, fifteen ups” to do so.

Separate Admission Fee Required For Each Bingo Occasion

(Note: A bingo “occasion” is defined by Rule 4800.1(q) as: “a single licensed period in which an aggregate of prizes not to exceed three thousand dollars is awarded in a series of at least 10 bingo games (or a combination of bingo games and subparts of multiple-part bingo games in which ten separate prizes are awarded), provided not more than 35 successive bingo games are played. During double header and triple header sessions, at least one of the occasions shall be comprised of 10 bingo games (or a combination of bingo games and subparts of multiple-part bingo games in which ten or more separate prizes are awarded). A licensed authorized organization may offer fewer than 10 games per occasion during multiple successive occasions if at least one of the session’s occasions is comprised of at least 10 bingo games...”

A “double header” is defined by Rule 4800.1(g) as: “a session of bingo in which two successive licensed bingo occasions are conducted by the same licensed authorized organization, provided that not more than thirty minutes time shall elapse between the calling of the last numbered ball in the first licensed occasion and the calling of the first numbered ball in the second occasion.”)

Admission Fee For each Occasion Required By The Bingo Licensing Law [Article 14-H of the General Municipal Law]:

§ 489. Charge for admission and participation; amount of prizes; award of prizes. Except in the conduct of limited period bingo, not more than five dollars shall be charged by any licensee for admission to any room or place in which any game or games of bingo are to be conducted under any license issued under this article, which admission fee, upon payment thereof, shall entitle the person paying the same to participate without additional charge in all regular games of bingo to be played under such license on such occasion. In the conduct of limited period bingo: (a) no admission fee shall be charged, (b) not more than twenty-five cents shall be charged for a single opportunity to participate in any one game, which charge, upon payment thereof, shall entitle the person paying the same to one card for participation in one such game, and (c) no licensee shall sell more than five opportunities to each player participating in any one game. Every winner shall be determined and every prize shall be awarded and delivered within the same calendar day as that upon which the game was played. No alcoholic beverage shall be offered or given as a prize in any game of bingo.

Admission Fee For each Occasion Required By Commission Rule 4820.8

§ 4820.8 Admission charge.

“No more than \$5 shall be charged by any licensee for an admission card or cards required to enter any room or place in which any game or games of bingo are to be conducted, which admission fee shall entitle the person paying the same to participate, without additional charge, in all regular games of bingo to be played under such license during such occasion.”

Submission of Financial Statement For each Occasion Required By The Bingo Licensing Law

§ 491. Statement of receipts, expenses; additional license fees.

1. Within seven days after the conclusion of any occasion of bingo, the authorized organization which conducted the same, and its members who were in charge thereof, and when applicable the authorized organization which rented its premises therefor, shall each furnish to the clerk of the municipality a statement subscribed by the member in charge and affirmed by him as true, under the penalties of perjury, showing the amount of the gross receipts derived therefrom and each item of expense incurred, or paid, and each item of expenditure made or to be made, the name and address of each person to whom each such item has been paid, or is to be paid, with a detailed description of the merchandise purchased or the services rendered therefor, the net proceeds derived from such game or rental, as the case may be, and the use to which such proceeds have been or are to be applied and a list of prizes offered and given, with the respective values thereof, and it shall be the duty of each licensee to maintain and keep such books and records as may be necessary to substantiate the particulars of each such statement and within fifteen days after the end of each calendar quarter during which there has been any occasion of bingo, a summary statement of such information, in form prescribed by the state, shall be furnished in the same manner to the state racing and wagering board.

2. Upon the filing of such statement of receipts, the authorized organization furnishing the same shall pay to the clerk of the municipality as and for an additional license fee a sum based upon the reported net proceeds, if any, for the occasion covered by such statement and determined in accordance with such schedule as shall be established from time to time by the commission to defray the cost to municipalities of administering the provisions of this article and of article nineteen-B of the executive law.

Submission of Financial Statement For each Occasion Required By Commission Rule 4821.1

§ 4821.1 Financial statement form.

The financial statement of bingo operations required by ordinance or local laws, State laws and this Chapter shall be on form BC-7 and in the case of limited period bingo, on form BC-9, each of which is hereby approved and adopted by the Gaming Commission. The licensee shall execute and file the original of the report with the clerk of the municipality within seven days after the conclusion of each occasion. Within 15 days after the end of each calendar quarter during which there has been any occasion of bingo, a summary statement of such information shall be on form BC-7Q, which is hereby approved and adopted. The licensee shall execute and file the original of the quarterly report with the Gaming Commission and a copy with the clerk of the municipality. The licensee shall retain a copy of each report for its permanent records.

Sample Bingo House Rules

Each licensed authorized organization **must**, pursuant to Rule 4820.53, adopt house rules to inform the players how situations not addressed by law, rule or regulation will be handled. Such house rules shall include, but need not be limited to, the licensee’s policy stating whether or not seat reservations are permitted, how "late calls" of bingo will be addressed, the effects of electrical power interruptions, participation by minors, and the licensee’s policies determining whether or not a player’s winning bingo pattern must contain the last number called in that game, and whether or not

another ball must be drawn and announced when a single player obtains two parts of a multiple-part game on the same call.

House rules shall be prominently posted, listed in the bingo program required by Rule 4820.39, and shall be audibly announced prior to the commencement of each licensed bingo session.

- 1) The first game begins promptly at _____ [list the time that the first ball will be drawn].
- 2) Only one admission card or package can be purchased, per player. Every person entering the bingo hall, including minors, must purchase at least an admission card or package. No person shall play more than one admission board or package.
- 3) No child under the age of ____ [age to be determined by each licensed organization] shall be admitted to our bingo hall. You may be asked to provide proof of your child's age.
- 4) Children shall be accompanied and controlled at all times by responsible adults.
- 5) The reserving of seats is strictly prohibited. Everyone must buy their own admission card and find their own seat. No seat can be saved using bingo cards, daubers or items other than our "Reserved Seat" sign.

OR

We reserve the right to reserve seats using "Reserved Seat" signs; see a member in charge of the games for details. No seat can be saved using bingo cards, daubers or items other than our "Reserved Seat" sign.

- 6) Bingo cards are sold randomly; players shall not select their own cards or packages.
- 7) No bingo card shall be exchanged unless it is defective due to a manufacturing error, or it is an exact duplicate of another card purchased ***by the same player.***
- 8) Ink daubers must be used for all games played on newsprint paper cards.
- 9) A Regular Game of bingo is a game that can be played using a face-card included in the admission package. Opportunities to participate in Special Games, including Early Bird (share the wealth) games, must be purchased separately.
- 10) No ball is official until the letter AND the number have been announced by the Caller.
- 11) A call of bingo will be honored and the winner paid until both the letter and number of the next ball drawn have been called. Once the caller announces the letter of the ball, the number must also be announced. No call of bingo will be honored after an announcement has been made that the game is "officially closed."
- 12) The flash-boards are a convenience to the players. Winning cards will be verified by the Caller's comparison of the numbers appearing on the balls drawn and called with the numbers read back from the player's bingo face-card by the floor checker. If there is a discrepancy between a number appearing on a ball drawn and a number appearing on the flash-board, the number on the ball drawn is official.
- 13) A player does not need to bingo on the last number called to be eligible for a prize.

OR

A player must complete a winning bingo pattern on the last number called. A "sleeper" is ineligible to win the prize associated with a winning pattern after the next ball has been called.

- 14) It is the winning player's responsibility to stop the game by raising his or her hand and calling out "BINGO" loud enough to be heard.
- 15) Organizations are urged to choose **ONE** of the following house rules:

If a player wins two parts of a multiple-part game (for instance, a letter T and a Round Robin) on the same number called, that player is entitled to both prizes, without another number being called.

OR

If a player wins two parts of a multiple-part game (for instance, a letter T and a Round Robin) on the same number called, the prize for the letter T shall be awarded, another number will be called, and the winner(s) of the Round Robin shall be paid.

16) Disorderly persons will be asked to leave the premises, and no refund will be offered.

17) If a power outage occurs prior to the halfway point of the bingo occasion, we will attempt to refund each player half price for their bingo cards. If the outage occurs after the halfway point, the occasion will be considered over, and no refunds will be made.

OR

Take your newspaper opportunities home with you and bring them to the next occasion where the occasion will be completed;

OR

Power outages are beyond our control. Therefore, no refunds will be made if a power outage occurs after the games begin.

18) All problems, questions and/or disputes will be resolved by the Members In Charge. Their decision is final.

19) All of our workers are volunteers and are conducting these bingo games solely to raise money for our organization's lawful purposes. Our volunteers are prohibited from participating in the games in any way. Please do not ask them to watch your cards.

20) We thank you for your patronage and support. We hope you win, but please keep in mind that the primary purpose of these games is to have fun and help us raise much-needed funds.

FREQUENTLY ASKED BINGO QUESTIONS

1. Q: What is a bingo package?

A: To clearly describe bingo packages, we must first define certain terms:

- a) **Face-card** means the twenty-five-squared grid comprised of five rows of five equally sized squares that are marked by the player during the conduct of bingo, which may have the letters B,I,N,G and O printed horizontally across the top. Each square, with the exception of the center square which shall be designated as a "free space," shall bear a number ranging from one to seventy-five, inclusive, none of which shall be repeated on the same face-card. The free space shall bear the face-card number (also known as the manufacturer's "permutation number" or "perm-number") which identifies the unique configuration of numbers assigned to each face-card by the licensed bingo manufacturer for comparison and verification of winning calls of bingo.
- b) **Admission Card** represents the card or cards entitling a player to participate in all "regular" bingo games played during an occasion upon the payment of a single admission price not exceed \$5.00 per bingo occasion.
- c) **Regular Bingo Game** is any bingo game that can be played on an admission card, regardless of the pattern of numbers necessary to win.

- d) **Extra Regular Cards** are additional bingo cards sold separately that entitle purchasers to participate in all regular bingo games played during an occasion. Players are not be required to purchase extra regular cards; the purchase of such opportunities is optional.
- e) **Special Cards** are additional bingo cards sold separately that entitle purchasers to participate in bingo games that cannot be played on either an admission card or an extra regular card. The purchase of special cards is also optional but, if a player wants to participate in one or more special games, special cards must be purchased to do so. Special cards may be offered for sale by the licensee separately, or are sold only as part of a package, at the discretion of the licensed organization.
- f) **Cut** refers to the number of face-cards on a sheet, and the direction in which the face-cards are printed. If the face-cards are printed vertically on the sheets they are called “**verticals**”; if printed horizontally across the page, they are called “**horizontal**”; and, if printed on a square sheet they are referred to as “**squares**”.

Due to improvements in printing technology, the hard-boards and cumbersome loose sheets of newsprint cards used in the past have been replaced with sheets of newsprint bearing six, twelve, eighteen and more face-cards, formed into packages comprised of enough differently colored sheets to accommodate bingo programs of all sizes.

The number of bingo face-cards appearing on each sheet of opportunities is referred to as “**on**” and the number of newsprint sheets stacked together to comprise a package is referred to as “**up**”. For example, a package containing ten sheets with three face-cards printed vertically on each sheet is called a “**3-on, 10-up, vertical**”.

The number of “ups” contained in an admission package and each of the extra-regular packages of “6-on,” “9-on,” etc. are often identical. In such cases, since the players are entitled to play in all of the “regular bingo games” using just the admission cards and extra-regular cards, all of the games played during that occasion are regular games of bingo – there are no “special games” since the players need not buy additional cards to play in any of the games.

(Note: If Early Bird (also known as “share the wealth”) cards are included in a package, opportunities for those “special games” must also be available for sale separately for not more than one dollar per face-card.)

Alternatively, if an organization sells extra packages of opportunities comprised of more sheets “up” than the number of “ups” contained in their admission package, the additional opportunities in the extra packages are “special cards” entitling only the purchasers of those special cards to participate in the special games.

For example, if an organization sells “3-on, 10-ups” for its admission package, and also sells “9-on, 15-ups,” each of the ten sheets in the “9-on, 15-up” package corresponding in color with one of the ten sheets in the admission package is considered an “extra-regular” card, and the five opportunities that do not correspond in color with any of the ten opportunities included in the admission package are considered “special cards” because the players are not entitled to participate in those special games using any card contained in their admission packages.

Additionally, if the organization does not sell special cards individually (and we recommend that they do not), players wishing to participate in any of the special games must purchase an extra package to do so.

Selling the jackpot and/or special cards contained in a package separately may seem like a nice gesture to allow the “small bettor” a chance to participate in all games but, in practice, when a person who has purchased only an admission card and a single jackpot or special card wins a large cash prize it greatly upsets the majority of players who purchase the extra packages and hurts both overall sales and profit. While some lower stakes players may complain that requiring players to buy an extra package to enable them to play the special games is unfair, the fact remains that licensed organizations must charge separately to play the jackpot special games if they are to pay the higher prizes that players expect in such games and still make a profit.

We recommend, to accommodate the players on a tight budget, that licensees offer several cuts of extra packages with differing price ranges, wherein the price per face-card is reduced as the number of face-cards printed on each sheet is increased.

The following sample packages are provided solely as examples of the packaged paper theory; each licensee is urged to review the types of cards sold and the bingo card prices in their locale to enable them to adjust the cut, color and prices per package accordingly:

Cards Sold Separately

3-on, 6-up admission card - \$3.00;
Green 1-on sealed Pre-Drawn bingo card - \$1.00;
Solid blue 1-on Early Bird card for EB#1- \$1.00;
Solid red 1-on Early Bird card for EB#2 - \$1.00; and
One six-face Tri-Color sheet - \$2.00

Package #1: Price \$8

- 3-on, 6-up admission card;
- 3-on, 10-up booklet comprised of 6 extra regular cards and 4 special cards;
- One green 1-on sealed Pre-Drawn bingo card;
- One blue 3-on Early Bird card for EB#1(priced @ \$2.00);
- One red 3-on Early Bird card for EB#2 (priced @ \$2.00);
- One yellow 1-on jackpot card; and
- One twelve-face (double) Tri-Color sheet.

Package #2: Price \$15

- 3-on, 6-up admission card;
- 6-on, 10-up booklet comprised of 6 extra regular cards and 4 special cards;
- One green 3-on sealed Pre-Drawn bingo card;
- One blue 6-on Early Bird card For EB#1 (priced @ \$3.00);
- One red 6-on Early Bird card For EB#2 (priced @ \$3.00);
- One 3-on yellow jackpot card; and
- One twelve-face (double) Tri-Color sheet.

Package #3: Price \$20

- 3-on, 6-up admission card;
- 12-on, 10-up booklet comprised of 6 extra regular cards and 4 special cards;
- One green 3-on sealed Pre-Drawn bingo card;
- One blue 9-on Early Bird card For EB#1(priced @ \$4.00
- One red 9-on Early Bird card For EB#2 (priced @ \$4.00);
- One yellow 6-on jackpot card; and
- One eighteen-face (triple) Tri-Color sheet.

As explained above, offering packages in several different price ranges encourages players to buy the larger packages in order to get the best possible value but, more importantly, it also offers the players on a tight budget a reasonably priced opportunity to play every bingo game in the occasion.

2. **Q: Can we sell an admission package comprising “All Games included” (*Admission book, Early Bird, Player Select, Bonanza, Extra Jackpot, Tri-Color game, Quick Bingo Card, etc.*) at a \$1 or \$2 discount if the Admission card is a 6-on instead of the usual 3-on.**

A: Yes, providing players who wish to do so can purchase only an admission card or cards entitling them to play in all regular games of bingo. However, as we will explain below, we recommend that licensees review the answer to question 1. above, compare it with the information to follow, and determine whether selling “all games included” packages is in their best financial interest.

Rule 4820.8 permits the sale of bingo packages that include both admission cards and opportunities to participate in special games, provided identical admission cards are also offered for sale separately by the licensee for a price not to exceed five dollars. However, if I understand the example cited in this question, the sale of 6-ons in an “all games included” package when 3-on admission cards are sold separately would violate Rule 4820.8, because the rule requires that all admission cards be “identical” in color, cut and the number of face-cards. To rectify the violation the licensee must include identical 3-on admission cards in each of the “all you can play” packages.

Please note that Supercards cannot be included in any package of bingo opportunities, and must be sold separately.

Furthermore, as reflected in the answer to question number 1. above, if Early Bird (also known as “share the wealth”) cards are included in an “all games included” package, the licensee must also have “1-on” cards for those games available for sale separately for not more than one dollar.

Since Pre-Drawn bingo (commonly called “Bonanza”); extra jackpot cards; Tri-Color; and Quick Bingo are all “special games,” they may be included in an “all games included” package (pursuant to Rule 4820.14) and sold at a price per face-card lower than buying the cards singly, provided the opportunities sold separately are clearly different and readily distinguishable in border color and/or design from the opportunities sold separately. As an example, if the jackpot card is a solid blue 1-on, the multi-faced jackpot card offered in the package(s) can be one of the following:

- a) a solid blue 2-on, or larger cut; or
- b) a white, blue-bordered 2-on, or larger cut.

In the case of Tri-Color opportunities, the organization may offer a single, 6-face Tri-Color sheet for sale singly, and include a double, 12-face Tri-Color card in their package. Since the single Tri-Color sheet and double Tri-Color sheet correspond with each other but are readily distinguishable from each other by their cut, such sales comply with Rule 4820.14.

In view of the fact that the fundamental premise behind offering “all games included” packages is to increase profits, as explained in the answer to question 1. above, it is more profitable to sell admission packages with fewer “ups” than are contained in the larger packages because players interested in playing all games must purchase one of the extra packages.

Nevertheless, to assist organizations choosing to offer “all games included” packages in addition to selling individual admission cards, extra regular cards and special cards, we recommend that they offer several different cuts of extra packages with differing price ranges, wherein the price per face-card is reduced as the number of face-cards is increased.

For a example:

Cards Sold Separately

3-on, six-up admission card - \$3.00;
Green 1-on sealed Pre-Drawn bingo card - \$1.00;
Solid blue 1-on Early Bird card for EB#1- \$1.00;
Solid red 1-on Early Bird card for EB#2 - \$1.00;

One six-face Tri-Color sheet - \$2.00; and
Yellow 1-on jackpot card - \$2.00.

Package #1: Price \$8

- 3-on, six-up admission card;
- 3-on, ten-up booklet containing 6 extra regular cards and 4 special cards;
- One green 1-on sealed Pre-Drawn bingo card;
- One blue 3-on Early Bird card for EB#1(priced @ \$2.00);
- One red 3-on Early Bird card for EB#2 (priced @ \$2.00);
- One yellow 1-on jackpot card; and
- One twelve-face (double) Tri-Color sheet.

Package #2: Price \$15

- 3-on, six-up admission card;
- 6-on, ten-up booklet containing 6 extra regular cards and 4 special cards;
- One green 3-on sealed Pre-Drawn bingo card;
- One blue 6-on Early Bird card For EB#1 (priced @ \$3.00);
- One red 6-on Early Bird card For EB#2 (priced @ \$3.00);
- One 3-on yellow jackpot card; and
- One twelve-face (double) Tri-Color sheet.

Package #3: Price \$20

- 3-on, six-up admission card;
- 9-on, ten-up booklet containing 6 extra regular cards and 4 special cards;
- One green 3-on sealed Pre-Drawn bingo card;
- One blue 9-on Early Bird card For EB#1(priced @ \$4.00
- One red 9-on Early Bird card For EB#2 (priced @ \$4.00);
- One yellow 6-on jackpot card; and
- One eighteen-face (triple) Tri-Color sheet.

Please note that, while Quick Bingo cards and Player Select cards are not traditionally offered in bingo packages, bingo programs and schedules can be adjusted to include them.

3. Can we sell an admission package comprising “All Games included” at a \$1 or \$2 discount if the Extra Jackpot is Purple instead of the usual Pink?

No, because the Extra Jackpot cards offered in the package are a different color than the Jackpot cards:

...the Extra Jackpot is Purple instead of the usual Pink.

Pursuant to Rule 4820.14, if the 3-on cards sold separately to participate in the Jackpot game are pink, the Extra Jackpot cards must correspond with the Jackpot cards in the admission package, but be readily distinguishable in cut and/or design from the opportunities contained in the admission package. For example, if the Jackpot cards in the admission package are pink 1-ons, the Extra Jackpot cards can be pink 2-ons or larger cut, or 2-ons or larger cut printed on white paper with a pink borders to distinguish them from the admission cards.

4. **Q: Can we offer a 7 number Player Select game with a \$1,000 prize if you get your 7 numbers in the first 17 numbers (or fewer) called, with a \$150.00 consolation if you get the 7 numbers in 18 or more calls, without having to increase the minimum number of balls called every week?**

A: Yes, if the Player Select game is a “stand-alone” game; that is, it is not held in conjunction with another bingo game (to ensure that not more than \$1,000 is awarded in a single game). There is no requirement that the number of balls drawn be increased progressively from one occasion to the next until a winner is determined; licensed authorized organizations are free to decide for themselves how they will structure their progressive bingo games, but must clearly define their policies on their bingo license application and on their bingo programs required by Rule 4820.39.

[Please refer to Question 15, below, for additional information regarding the Player Select Game.]

5. **Q: Can we offer a Bonus Prize that will guarantee a total prize of \$600 if you win on a designated number? For example, Regular bingo pays \$50, Letter X pays \$150, Round Robin pays \$200 BUT if you win any of those games when the last number called is the designated number, your prize for that part of the game will be \$600?**

A: Only if the total amount of the prizes that can potentially be awarded in all parts of the game does not exceed \$1,000 (like the example cited), and that the series of prizes per occasion will not exceed \$3,000.

A simpler alternative would be to conduct “Bonus Ball” bingo in conjunction with that three-part game, a change that would award a bonus prize to the player who obtains the winning pattern on the last number called that is not subject to the prize limits on single games or series of prizes.

Instructions for conducting Bonus Ball bingo are accessible on the Charitable Gaming page of the Commission’s website under, **Guidelines For Conducting Bonus Ball Bingo**.

4. **Q: Can we use the Bonus Prize rule to offer a "Pick A Pet" game? The player who obtains the winning pattern receives a guaranteed \$200 cash prize and then gets to choose one of several stuffed animals that have envelopes underneath them. The envelope contains a card stating what the "Bonus Prize" will be: anything from \$100 to \$800 additional.**

A: No, the *Pick A Pet* prize (which is based on the random selection of an envelope) is not contingent on the player’s specific winning pattern on a bingo face-card with a bingo number drawn and, therefore, does not constitute a bonus prize permitted by Rule 4820.20, which states in part:

...A bonus prize may be awarded on the basis of either a specific winning pattern or the type of face-card required to win a game provided the amount of the bonus prize is listed on the application for bingo license and on the licensed authorized organization’s bingo program required under 4820.39 of this Subtitle, and provided the winning pattern and the type of bingo face-card to be used have been approved by the board in accordance with Section 4820.19(j) of this Subtitle...

5. **Q: Can we offer a "Bonus Prize" for winning with a certain number: While playing the "7" pattern, can we offer a \$77 bonus prize if they obtain the number 7 on any number that ends in 7 (B-7, I-17, I-27, etc.)?**

A: Yes, since the bonus prize is based on the winning pattern. In theory, it's similar to the wild ball, where the players mark all spaces that end in the same digit (i.e. 5, 15, 25, 35, etc). The “*Lucky Seven Bonus Prize*” must be clearly listed on the license application and explained on the bingo program.

6. **Q: Can we offer to Double the Prize on any regular bingo that is obtained in the first four numbers called?**

A: Yes, provided the prize for the game does not exceed the single prize limit of \$1,000 or the \$3,000 limit on the series of prizes, and that the rules for *“Double the Prize Bingo”* are clearly listed on the license application, and explained in the bingo program required by Rule 4820.39.

7. **Q: Can you have more than one Wild Number in a single game? For example, “Wild Number Full Board Game: First three (non-duplicate) numbers called will be wild.”**

A: Such an option is permissible, provided the rules are clearly listed on the license application and explained in the bingo program required by Rule 4820.39, and that the game can otherwise be conducted in accordance with the definition of “Wild Number Game” in 4800.1(ee):

“Wild Number Game” shall mean a “speed-up game” in which players mark those numbers appearing on their face-cards whose second digits match the “wild number’s” single digit number (or its second digit if the “wild number” is a two-digit number) so designated by the licensed authorized organization prior to the start of the occasion by drawing a bingo ball and announcing it to be the “wild number ball” and returning it to the receptacle prior to the start of the game. “Wild Number Games” are permitted only when the bingo system utilized has a “wild number” function that automatically causes the bingo display board to illuminate the “wild number” ball and all numbers corresponding with it.”

8. **Q: Can we have a "Cash Ball" number? The Cash Ball Bonus Prize is a bonus prize awarded to the player obtaining a winning bingo pattern within a specified Cash Ball game, when the last number called is the Cash Ball Number designated for that occasion. To play Cash Ball, a bingo ball is drawn, displayed and announced immediately prior to the start of a bingo session, and it is then returned to the receptacle with the remaining 74 bingo balls. Players wishing to compete for the Cash Ball Bonus Prize must purchase a two-part, carbon-less "Cash Ball Receipt" for \$1.00, upon which they write their name. The original receipt is collected along with the \$1.00 fee, and the player retains the copy for verification. Any player obtaining a winning pattern when the last ball called is the designated Cash Ball Number will receive (or share, if there is more than one winner) the Cash Ball Bonus Prize.**

A: Yes, “Cash Ball” is a name commonly used to describe Bonus Ball bingo, an authorized game described in the Guidelines For Conducting Bonus Ball Bingo and the Guidelines For Conducting Bonus Ball Bingo During Double and Triple Header Sessions that are accessible in the Special Features section on the Charitable Gaming page of the Commission’s website.

9) **Q: Can the Bonus Ball Prize be in the form of a “progressive carry-over”?**

A: Bonus Ball prizes, pursuant to statute, **MUST** be “progressive carry-over” games.

Each winner of a bonus ball game shall be awarded a cash prize equal to a percentage of the proceeds collected from the sale of opportunities to participate in bonus ball, which cannot exceed seventy-five percent of the proceeds derived from such sales. The remaining percentage of the proceeds from those sales, which cannot be less than twenty-five percent, is retained by the licensed authorized organization as profit. The percentage of sales used to calculate bonus ball prizes must be specified in the licensed authorized organization’s application for bingo license, on its license, and on its bingo program, and must be consistently applied. (Note: Although the prizes awarded in Bonus Ball games are comprised of a predetermined percentage of the proceeds collected from the sale of opportunities identical to the prizes awarded in Early Bird bingo games, Early Bird and Bonus Ball are two distinctly separate bingo games. Authorized organizations may be licensed to conduct two Early Bird games per occasion, and can also designate any or all of the regular and/or special bingo games conducted during that occasion to be Bonus Ball games.)

If there is no winner during a bingo occasion in which opportunities to play bonus ball are sold, the bonus ball prize money shall be carried-over and added to the specified percentage of the proceeds derived from the sale of bonus ball opportunities during each subsequent bingo occasion, until a winner is determined and the bonus ball prize is awarded.

Note: pursuant to Subsection 11-b of Section 1 of Section 476 of the General Municipal Law, no bonus ball prize can exceed the sum of \$6,000. Therefore, when a bonus ball prize reaches \$6,000, the prize must remain at \$6,000 until a winner is determined.

All proceeds from the sale of opportunities collected after a bonus ball prize has reached \$6,000 shall be retained by the licensed authorized organization as profit until the \$6,000 bonus ball prize is awarded, at which time the caller shall declare the bonus ball game closed for the remainder of that bingo occasion.

Bonus ball prizes are exempt from the single game prize limitation of \$1,000 and the \$3,000 limit on the series of prizes imposed by Subsections 5 and 6 of Section 479, paragraph (a) of Subsection 1 of Section 481 of the General Municipal Law, and Section 4820.25 of the Commission's Rules and Regulations. However, pursuant to Subsection 11-b of Section 1 of Section 476 of the General Municipal Law, no bonus ball prize can exceed the sum of \$6,000. Therefore, when a bonus ball prize reaches \$6,000, the prize must remain at \$6,000 until a winner is determined. As explained above, all proceeds from the sale of opportunities collected after a bonus ball prize has reached \$6,000 shall be retained by the licensed authorized organization as profit until the \$6,000 bonus ball prize is awarded, at which time the caller shall declare the bonus ball game closed for the remainder of that bingo occasion.

10. Q: Can we stipulate that “the Jackpot Game will payout \$250 with fewer than 75 players, \$500 with fewer than 100 players, and \$1,000 with 100 players or more.”

A: Yes, provided those payouts are clearly described in the application for bingo license (or amendment); are explained in the bingo program required by Rule 4820.39; and are consistent with the “attendance option” permitted by Rule 4820.28 (underscored below for clarification):

Section 4820.28 Varying value of prizes offered. Within the limits heretofore established, the prizes offered may be varied depending upon the number of people who attend the occasion, provided the application for bingo license and the license so specify. If a licensee avails itself of the provisions of this section, it must announce at the beginning of the occasion the number of people present and the prizes to be awarded. If such option is exercised, it must apply to all games. In the conduct of limited period bingo, the licensee may vary the prize for each game depending upon the number of people participating in each game, and the prize for each game shall be announced before the commencement of each game.

[Please refer to Question 14, below, for more information regarding the Attendance Option.]

11. Q: Can we have a Pre-Drawn Game that pays \$1,000 to any player(s) that obtain a full board in 52 numbers or fewer and a consolation prize of 50% of sales if obtained in 53 numbers or more?

A: No; the game described offers both a “fixed prize” and a consolation prize that is based on a percentage of the sale of opportunities to participate in that game.

The organization must offer either a fixed prize and a fixed consolation prize, or conduct this game as one of its two Early Bird games offering, for example, 75% of the sales of cards sold for that game to the winner obtaining a full-card in 52 or fewer numbers, or a consolation prize to the winner obtaining a full-card in 53 or more numbers comprised of 50% of the sales of the cards sold for that game.

12) **Q: Must any regular bingo or special game that pays out a percentage prize be listed as one of the two early bird games or as one of the Bonus Ball games?**

A: Yes. The General Municipal law permits only two types of bingo games in which prizes are based upon percentages of the sales of opportunities to participate: Early Bird and Bonus Ball. While a licensee may designate any or all of its bingo games as Bonus Ball games, not more than two Early Bird games can be conducted during any bingo occasion.

13) **Q: Can we sell Bonus Ball cards at the start of a Double-Header or Triple-Header session, or must we sell them separately during each of the occasions?**

A: Bonus Ball cards for multiple occasions may be sold prior to the start of the first occasion of a Double-Header or Triple-Header session, provided the monies collected from the sale of Bonus Ball cards for each occasion is maintained separately. (See the **Guidelines For Conducting Bonus Ball Bingo During Double and Triple Header Sessions** that are accessible on the Charitable Gaming page of the Commission's website.)

For example, if there is a Bonus Ball winner during the first occasion of a Triple-Header, the Bonus Ball prize (which includes the percentage of the sale of Bonus Ball cards for that first occasion only) shall be awarded, and an announcement must be made that the Bonus Ball game is closed for the remainder of that occasion.

The percentage of the receipts from the sale of the second occasion (which were separated before the first occasion began) now represent the Bonus Ball Prize for the second occasion. If there is a Bonus Ball winner in the second occasion, the Bonus Ball prize shall be awarded, and an announcement must be made that the Bonus Ball game is closed for the remainder of that occasion.

If there is no winner of the Bonus Ball Prize during the second occasion, the prize money from the second occasion shall be added to the receipts from the sale of Bonus Ball opportunities for the third occasion (which were separated before the first occasion began) and shall represent the Bonus Ball Prize for the third occasion. If there is a Bonus Ball winner in the third occasion, the Bonus Ball prize shall be awarded, and an announcement must be made that the Bonus Ball game is closed for the remainder of that occasion.

If there is no Bonus Ball winner during the third occasion, the Bonus Ball prize money for that occasion shall be deposited into the special bingo checking account along with the other receipts from that bingo session and must be withdrawn and carried-over to form the Bonus Ball prize pool prior to the start of the next bingo occasion.

14) **Q: Can we make our jackpot (or any game) \$500 if more than 100 players are in attendance and \$250 if fewer than 100 players in attendance if it is clearly spelled out on our program and license? Can SOME games be reduced in prizes or MUST ALL prizes be reduced due to low attendance?**

A: Prizes may be based on attendance, as explained in our response to question 10 above, provided those payouts are clearly described in the application for bingo license (or amendment); are explained in the bingo program required by Rule 4820.39; and are consistent with the "attendance option" permitted by Rule 4820.28 (cited in our response to question 10. above).

Asking whether some or all of the prizes must be reduced is an excellent question, and many people are confused by the provision in Rule 4820.28 stating that, "***If such option is exercised, it must apply to all games.***"

Please note that the intent of this rule is not to require that an organization lower all of its prizes to take advantage of the Attendance Option as many suspect; it is intended to ensure that the prizes to be awarded are known in advance to prevent licensed organizations from arbitrarily “picking and choosing” which games they will reduce prizes in an ad-hoc manner during the middle of a bingo occasion.

To utilize the attendance option, we recommend that a licensed organization include at least two prize schedules with their application for bingo license, each of which specifies the prize to be awarded in each game played, and a specific range of attendance. By listing each prize separately, organizations select those games that will have reduced prizes, and those that will not. Generally, the larger prizes will vary based upon attendance, but smaller dollar amounts remain unchanged. For example:

Attendance Option #1 - 50 to 99 Players

| | |
|--|-------|
| Game #1 – Regular Bingo..... | \$15 |
| Game #2 – Regular Bingo..... | \$20 |
| Game #3 – Yellow Special – Crazy T.... | \$50 |
| Game #4 – Red Special – Full Card..... | \$75 |
| Game #5 – 3 Part Blue Special | |
| Regular Bingo..... | \$25 |
| Letter X..... | \$30 |
| Full Card..... | \$75 |
| Game #6 – Regular Bingo..... | \$25 |
| Game #7 – Jackpot..... | \$100 |

Attendance Option #2 - 100 to 149 Players

| | |
|--|-------|
| Game #1 – Regular Bingo..... | \$15 |
| Game #2 – Regular Bingo..... | \$20 |
| Game #3 – Yellow Special – Crazy T...\$75 | |
| Game #4 – Red Special – Full Card....\$100 | |
| Game #5 – 3 Part Blue Special | |
| Regular Bingo..... | \$25 |
| Letter X..... | \$30 |
| Full Card..... | \$75 |
| Game #6 – Regular Bingo..... | \$50 |
| Game #7 – Jackpot..... | \$250 |

Attendance Option #3 – 150 Or More Players

| | |
|--|-------|
| Game #1 – Regular Bingo..... | \$25 |
| Game #2 – Regular Bingo..... | \$40 |
| Game #3 – Yellow Special – Crazy T...\$75 | |
| Game #4 – Red Special – Full Card....\$200 | |
| Game #5 – 3 Part Blue Special | |
| Regular Bingo..... | \$30 |
| Letter X..... | \$60 |
| Full Card..... | \$100 |
| Game #6 – Regular Bingo..... | \$60 |
| Game #7 – Jackpot..... | \$500 |

Please note that, while each of the prizes offered in Schedule #3 is higher than the corresponding prizes offered in both Schedule #1 and Schedule #2, some of the prizes offered in Schedule #2 are identical to the prizes offered in Schedule #1.

You will note, therefore, that it is not required that every prize on a schedule be raised as the attendance increases (or lowered, as the attendance decreases) but, if an Attendance Option is utilized, all of the prizes listed on the option selected must be awarded as stated.

An organization utilizing Schedule #2 cannot, for instance, decide during an occasion to lower or raise the \$75 prize in Game #4; all prizes reflected on an Attendance Option prize schedule must be awarded throughout the occasion as listed on that schedule.

Lastly, Rule 4820.28 permits a licensed organization to decide whether or not to exercise the Attendance Option, because there are times when a smaller crowd, sensing that their odds of winning increases with fewer players, spends more, per capita, than a group of players twice its size. In such cases, the licensee may opt not to exercise the attendance option, and award a higher series of prizes as a gesture of good will or to thank their patrons who attended during inclement weather.

15) Q: Can we use the Player Select as a progressive Early Bird game? Must we increase the numbers needed to obtain the Player Select Full Card or can we simply state that it must be obtained in 17 numbers or fewer to receive the full 75% plus carryovers from previous weeks?

A: This question is similar to question 4, above, in that it proposes that the number of calls not be increased from one occasion to another, while the prize is increased in the occasion following one in which a bonus prize is not awarded.

In this case, however, the prize suggested is a Progressive Early Bird, and not the fixed Bonus/Consolation Prize recommended in question 4.

As stated previously in our review of Progressive Games, since there is no requirement that the number of balls drawn be increased progressively from one occasion to the next until a winner is determined, licensed authorized organizations are free to decide for themselves how they will structure their progressive bingo games.

A Player Select game can, therefore, be designated as either an Early Bird game or a Progressive Early Bird game, at the discretion of the licensed organization.

16) Q: Can we use tri-color paper as an Early Bird game with payouts 50% on Red, 60% on White and 70% on Blue WITH MULTIPLE WINNERS ON MULTIPLE COLORS sharing 50% of total sales?

A: Yes, and no.

Tri-Color bingo opportunities may, pursuant to Rule 4820.56, be conducted as Early Bird Games in which the prize for each of the three colors is based on a percentage (not to exceed 75%) of the gross receipts from the sale of bingo opportunities to participate in that game.

However, multiple winners cannot be awarded 50% of the total sales as suggested; the prize for each color must be divided by the total number of winners in all colors, pursuant to Rule 4820.56(f):

When it is determined that there are multiple winners in a Tri-Color game on face-cards of different colors, the winner in each color shall be awarded the dollar amount of the prize scheduled for that color, divided by the total number of winners in all colors for that game.

For example, if there are three winners on one color, two winners on a second color and one winner on the third color, the three winners on the first color will each be awarded one-sixth of the dollar amount of the prize for that

color; the two winners on the second color will each receive one-sixth of the dollar amount of the prize for the second color; and the sole winner on the third color shall be awarded one-sixth of the dollar amount of the prize for the third color.

17) Q: What is the rule under NY State Bingo Law when there is a missing ball in the hopper discovered after the games are played? If a player alleges that he or she would have won the game if a number would have been called, claimed that it was due to a missing ball, and then after the games were played, it was found that this particular numbered ball was missing from the hopper during the games, what is the obligation (if any) by the "house/organization" in charge of the bingo event?

A: The problem that you describe in which it is determined at the conclusion of a bingo occasion that one or more balls were not in the "hopper" because they were either not in the receptacle before the occasion began or because they were lodged under the tray at some point during the occasion but failed to drop into the hopper are not common occurrences, but we do receive complaints about them periodically.

The scenario wherein one or balls were missing entirely before the start of the occasion would never occur if the caller ensures that all 75 balls are in the receptacle's numbered tray before releasing them as required by Rule 4820.15, and the caller visually inspects the "gate" and inside of the tray after dropping the balls to ensure that none are stuck in the ramp leading to the hopper.

It is strongly encouraged that one or more players be invited to view the full tray before dropping the balls into the receptacle:

§ 4820.15 Kind of equipment used for games.

(a) The equipment used in the conduct of bingo shall be maintained in good repair and sound working condition. The utilization of such equipment and the method of play shall be such that each player is afforded an equal opportunity to win. The objects or balls to be drawn shall be essentially the same as to color, shape, weight, balance and all other characteristics so as to be, at all times during the conduct of bingo, equally agitated and circulated within the receptacle, except that each of the five letters comprising the word "BINGO" reflected on the objects or balls may be designated its own color, provided that all of the fifteen numbered balls or objects corresponding to the color of each letter in the word "BINGO" shall be identical in color to each other. All 75 objects or balls shall be present in the receptacle before each game is begun.

(b) If a determination is made by the caller during the calling of the numbered objects or balls of a game in progress that one or more of the 75 objects or balls were not present in the receptacle prior to the calling of the first ball drawn in that game due to mechanical malfunction or human error, an announcement shall be made that the game has been cancelled, all 75 objects or balls shall be returned to the receptacle and the game shall be restarted. During occasions in which indelible ink daubers and disposable paper bingo opportunities are utilized, an announcement shall be made requiring that all participants mark their cards for the restarted game in a different colored ink than that color used during the cancelled game. All numbers announced shall be clearly audible to all the players present.

Where more than one room is used for any one game, the receptacle, the caller and the assistant caller must be in the room where the greatest number of players are present and all letters and numbers announced shall be clearly audible to the players in such room and also clearly audible to the players in the other room or rooms.

It is further noted that, pursuant to Rule 4820.21, all players have the right to call for a verification of both the numbers drawn and those remaining in the receptacle and not yet drawn, a regulation that affords players suspecting that one or more numbers are missing from the hopper to investigate that suspicion:

§ 4820.21 Verification of numbers drawn.

Any player shall be entitled to call for a verification of all numbers drawn at the time a winner is determined, and for a verification of the objects or balls remaining in the receptacle and not yet drawn. The verification shall be made in the immediate presence of the member in charge of the occasion and in the immediate presence of one or more disinterested players.

While we have received complaints from players alleging that they would have won had their ball been in the hopper as required, it is impossible to determine whether or not they would have won had the ball been present. Therefore, it is unreasonable to require that the organization pay both the verified winner and the player who believes he or she would have won, although a licensed organization may decide to pay the latter using general funds as a gesture of good faith.

If one or more balls are not in the bingo receptacle prior to the start of the occasion the members of the licensed organization and the players are equally to blame for not verifying that all 75 balls were present. If, during the operation of bingo one or more balls get stuck in the tray and do not return to the hopper and the error is discovered mid-game, the requirements of Rule 4820.15 (b) above must be followed.

Bingo players may need reminding occasionally that bingo games must, pursuant to the Constitution and laws of New York, be conducted on behalf of authorized charitable organizations by their volunteer members, and the sole purpose of legalizing bingo is to benefit worthy causes. While the preponderance of the more than forty-thousand bingo occasions conducted each year go incident-free, volunteer members do make mistakes periodically, and players must be more understanding at times.

18. Q: What is the minimum legal age for playing Bingo?

A: There is no minimum age to play bingo established by the Bingo Licensing Law and, pursuant to Rule 4820.2 Responsibility for children:

In those municipalities which permit children under the age of 18 years to attend bingo occasions, the adults accompanying such children shall assert control and be responsible for the actions of such children throughout the bingo occasions.

Many organizations have adopted a house rule limiting the age of attendees, and we encourage it. For example:

No child under the age of 10 years of age shall be admitted to our bingo hall. You may be asked to provide proof of your child's age.

19. Q: There has been a question about who gets paid when a child wins a bingo game. Some claim the law requires the adult be paid and it is clearly set out in law, my reading of the law appears to indicate the winner is the one to be paid (no matter how old), which is correct?

A: You are correct that, generally, the winner must be paid. Since there is no law requiring that the adult be paid, nor is there a law or rule requiring that a minor be paid, we leave it to the discretion licensees to draft a House Rule stating whether the player of the card (regardless of age) or the purchaser of the card when the player is a minor will be paid on winning bingo cards. While we occasionally receive telephone calls from players complaining that children get paid when winning bingo, the issue of who actually gets paid should be of no concern to the other players, since the card was paid for and the holder is entitled to win a bingo prize if a winning pattern is obtained thereon.

20. Q: There has been a dispute that occurs from time to time concerning late calls and ball in hand of caller, but not yet announced. As I read the law and guidelines a ball is not called until the caller announces letter and number. Am I correct on this?

A: You are correct; a bingo ball is not called until announced by the caller, but the decision to require that both the letter and number be called, rather than just the letter, is subject to a House Rule. Most organizations prefer that the letter and number both be called, since it gives a late caller a little more time to call bingo.

21. Q: If a person calls out bingo, and the bingo caller removes the ball from the camera and drops it back into the blower (before realizing what they did) and the person who called bingo doesn't actually have a bingo...since the ball hadn't officially been called...is the caller to turn the blower back on and take the next ball that comes up to continue the game? or are they to put the ball that had previously been in the camera back up as the next ball? (because people already have it marked on their papers).

A: Your question is not an uncommon one, although resolving the problem in a way that satisfies the majority of bingo players is difficult.

To eliminate events like the one you described, we strongly warn licensed bingo organizations not to turn off the blower machine until after a bingo has been verified and the winner paid. Unfortunately, due to the difficulty in hearing the assistants calling back the numbers on a player's card the callers often shut off the noisy blower, which causes the balls in the machine's throat, including the one that is at the top and displayed on the video system, to fall back into the hopper with the rest of the unselected balls.

Since there is no law or rule dictating how this situation must be handled, we recommend that each licensee adopt a house rule explaining how the game will proceed if such a mistake occurs. One widely chosen option, as you suggested, is to simply turn on the blower and remove and call the next numbered ball.

Another option, provided the caller is for the caller to open the machine; remove that ball; call it; and, if there is a winner, award the prize. If there is no winner on that selection, the caller turns the blower on and continues to select and announce the balls until a winner is determined.

22. Q: We were playing the last three games of the evening, played on the same card, single, double then coverall. Someone called bingo. When they were reading off the numbers, the number was G49. The caller said G49 was not called, everyone yelled "yes it was", but the caller made a mistake, the number was actually G46. He decided he was going to pay the bingo, which they should have. Then what should have happened? He continued on to a double bingo, the person that won the double bingo also had G49. So they paid two bingo's that were not bingos. The crowd said that they should have continued on with a single bingo until there was an actual bingo without G49 and same with the double, but those bingo's also should have paid. It was their mistake and they should have paid for the mistakes they made.

A: While the bingo laws, rules and regulations do not, as you noted, address the handling of miscalled bingo numbers, this Board has always maintained that the "official" number to be used to verify winning bingo patterns when it is determined that the caller miscalled a number is the number actually printed on the ball drawn. For example, as cited in your message, if number "G-46" is drawn but the caller mistakenly announces "G-49" the number that was drawn ("G-46") must be used to verify winning bingo patterns, not the number miscalled ("G-49") by the caller.

In the scenario presented the caller, upon recognizing that G-49 had not in fact been called, should have announced that all players should mark G-46 spaces on their cards (if any) and disregard the G-49 space. If there are no winners for the first part of the game after that announcement is made and the players daub the G-46 numbers on their cards, the caller would resume drawing and announcing numbers until each of the various parts of the bingo game are concluded. Your statement that "*The crowd said that they should have continued on with a single bingo until there was an actual bingo without G49 and same with the double, but those bingo's also should have paid*" was, therefore, correct.

23. Q: “The Ladies Auxiliary is selling Bingo tickets and paying out the money which I was told is against your rules. I was also told that some of their names are on the license along with the men from the post home. I was under the understanding that this is also against the law.”

A: No, the Ladies Auxiliary members’ selling bingo paper and paying winning players is not against our rules, and the listing of the ladies’ names on the Post Home’s license application along with the men’s names is not against the law. On the contrary, listing the names of each auxiliary member assisting in the conduct or bingo is required by the Bingo Rules and Regulations:

4810.3 Organizations required to register.

Every authorized organization, affiliate or auxiliary thereof, seeking to conduct or assist in the conduct of bingo pursuant to the Bingo Licensing Law, ordinance or local law and this Chapter, shall register with the Gaming Commission and secure an identification number.

4820.3 Restriction on participation.

No person shall assist in the conduct of bingo except an active member of the licensee, an active member of an organization which is an auxiliary to the licensee, an active member of an organization of which the licensee is an ancillary, or an active member of an organization which is affiliated with the licensee by being, with it, auxiliary to another organization. Before a member of any organization assists the licensee in the conduct of bingo, such organization must register with the Gaming Commission and secure an identification number.

4820.35 Qualifications of person calling game.

No person shall act as a caller or assistant to the caller in the conduct of any game of bingo unless he has been a member in good standing of the licensee conducting such game or one of its registered auxiliaries for at least one year immediately prior to the date of such game, be of good moral character and never been convicted of a crime.

Since the Ladies Auxiliary has obtained the required Bingo Identification Number from this Commission, its members are entitled to list their names on the Post Home’s bingo license application and assist in the conduct of bingo.

24. Q: I have been playing for over 40 years and all of a sudden the bingo hall I go to has reserved papers on most of the tables and I was told I couldn't sit there because the table was saved for someone. I got at the bingo hall at 5:15 and bingo starts at 6:45 and most of the tables have reserved papers on them. I think it should be first come, first served. Please let me know if there are rules about saving seats at bingo.

A: Seat reservation is one of the most hotly contested issues in bingo, so we understand your frustration with finding so many seats reserved at your local game.

Since the handling of seat reservations is not mandated by bingo law, rule or regulation, it falls into the category of “house rules” that must be listed in the licensee’s bingo program, announced prior to the start of bingo, and posted in the bingo hall:

4820.39 Accommodations to be furnished players.

Each player must be furnished at no additional charge with a chair and a place with sufficient room to be able to play. Each player shall also be furnished with a bingo program listing the name and bingo identification number of the licensed authorized organization conducting the occasion, the house rules adopted by the licensee, and a schedule of all games and the prizes to be awarded therein, including the amount or odds to be paid out in each supercard game and the percentage of the receipts to be awarded as a prize in each early bird game. Each premises in which bingo is conducted shall comply with all federal, state and local smoking laws.

4820.53 House Rules.

Licensed authorized organizations shall adopt house rules to inform the players how situations not addressed by law, rule or regulation will be handled. Such house rules shall include, but need not be limited to, the licensee's policy stating whether or not seat reservations are permitted, how "late calls" of bingo will be addressed, the effects of electrical power interruptions, participation by minors, and the licensee's policies determining whether or not a player's winning bingo pattern must contain the last number called in that game, and whether or not another ball must be drawn and announced when a single player obtains two parts of a multiple-part game on the same call. House rules shall be prominently posted, listed in the bingo program required by Section 4820.39 of this Subtitle, and shall be audibly announced prior to the commencement of each licensed bingo session.

Licensees have the option of prohibiting seat reservations entirely or, if they choose to permit them, they must enact a house rule explaining how seats can be reserved. While such a house rule may require the issuance of "Reserved Seat" signs placed on the tables, at no time can bingo paper, daubers or other bingo equipment or supplies be used to reserve seats as you have experienced.

Here are the two options that licensees may select from when enacting house rules:

The reserving of seats is strictly prohibited. Everyone must buy their own admission card and find their own seat. No seat can be saved using bingo cards, daubers or items other than our "Reserved Seat" sign.

OR

We reserve the right to reserve seats using "Reserved Seat" signs; see a member in charge of the games for details. No seat can be saved using bingo cards, daubers or items other than our "Reserved Seat" sign.

It is recommended that you check with the municipal clerk in your area to determine if there is a local bingo inspector that you can discuss this problem with but, if there is no local inspector, you are urged to print this email message and present it to the members in charge of the bingo game in question. While the decision whether to reserve a seat, or not, rests solely with the bingo licensee, considering that you've been a bingo player for so many years it is reasonable to conclude that you are a valued customer deserving of having a seat reserved for you.

25. Q: Can a Bingo worker play anyone's paper?

A: No. While it is tempting to allow a bingo worker to "mind" a player's card when she/he is in the restroom, etc., Rule 4820.34 prohibits anyone participating in the conduct of bingo from playing bingo (and from purchasing bell jar and raffle tickets).

We recommend, to avoid potential conflicts, that each licensed bingo organization enact a House Rule similar to the following:

All of our workers are volunteers and are conducting these bingo games solely to raise money for our organization's lawful purposes. Our volunteers are prohibited from participating in the games in any way. Please do not ask them to watch your cards.

26. Q: Is a player restricted to playing only one admission card or package?

Yes. Rule 4820.8 states, in pertinent part that, ***"No person...shall be sold or shall be permitted to play more than one admission card or package per bingo occasion."***

27. ***Q: If you need to cancel Bingo, are any number of hours before the start of Bingo necessary?***

There is no law or rule specifying the time a bingo occasion can be cancelled. Naturally, in times of anticipated major snowstorms and other foreseeable events it makes sense to cancel an occasion as early as possible. However, in areas where extreme weather is common and often unpredictable, many organizations utilize an “attendance option” authorized by Rule 4820.28, wherein the amount of prizes are dictated by to a sliding scale based upon player attendance, and if the specified minimum number of players required to start an occasion is not met, the occasion is cancelled. In cases where the attendance teeters on the verge of cancellation, many licensees decide to wait until the last minute to cancel the games.

Bingo games, like restaurants and other entertainment venues, are customer relations-driven to a large extent, and players are urged to confer with the persons in charge of their local bingo games to design House Rules regarding cancellations that appeal to the majority of players. For instance, a house rule may require that the attendance be counted fifteen minutes before the time scheduled to call the first bingo ball and, if the minimum number of players reflected on the attendance option listed on the bingo license application is not reached, the occasion may be cancelled.

28. ***Q: Can we hold a drawing to determine a King or Queen For A Day, and give the winner a paper crown; a pillow or special chair to sit on; and award him/her \$5.00 extra for every bingo prize they win?***

A: Randomly selecting a bingo player, dubbing him or her King/Queen For a Day and awarding that player a paper crown and a special seat is permissible since bragging rights, a paper crown and a fancy seat are not considered things of value. However, awarding the King/Queen a bonus prize for winning a bingo game or giving them extra bingo cards would not be permissible, whether or not a separate fee is charged to enter the King/Queen For A Day drawing.

If no fee is charged and extra cash prizes or free bingo cards are given away the action would violate Rule 4820.29, Gifts Prohibited:

No licensee shall offer, distribute or give any service, thing of value, or opportunity to play bingo, without charge.

If a fee is charged for a ticket to enter the King & Queen event; a ticket is drawn; and the winner is awarded a cash prize, that event would constitute a raffle, and would be permissible only if the organization is licensed or authorized to conduct raffles.

If a fee is charged to purchase a ticket to enter the King/Queen drawing and the King/Queen is then awarded an additional cash prize only if he or she wins a bingo game that drawing would not be considered an authorized raffle and cannot be conducted as a raffle. Raffle prizes must be awarded based on the drawing of a winning raffle ticket. Raffle prizes cannot be based on whether the King/Queen wins a bingo game.