

Dealing Blackjack From The Hand

Gaming Equipment

Rules of the Games

Proposed Amendments: N.J.A.C. 19:46-1.10, 1.18 and 1.19; and 19:47-2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 2.6A, 2.10, 2.12 and 2.15

Authority: N.J.S.A. 5:12-5, 69a, 69e, 70f, 99a and 100

Calendar Reference: See Summary below for explanation of exception to calendar requirement.

Submit written comments by August 20, 2010 to:

Lon E. Mamolen, Senior Counsel
Casino Control Commission
Arcade Building
Tennessee Avenue and the Boardwalk
Atlantic City, NJ 08401

The agency proposal follows:

Summary

The proposed amendments would authorize casino licensees to permit a dealer to deal the game of blackjack from the hand, using one or two decks of cards. Currently, except for the 6 to 5 blackjack variation, a manual or automated dealing shoe is required to be used when dealing blackjack. Under the proposed rules, the initial two cards dealt to each player would be dealt face down and players would be permitted to touch their initial two cards. Under current rules, all player cards are generally dealt face up and players are not permitted to touch the cards.

The proposed amendment to N.J.A.C. 19:46-1.10 requires the blackjack layout to include an inscription indicating that the dealer must draw to 16 and soft 17 if the casino licensee implements this optional drawing rule. The proposed amendment to N.J.A.C. 19:46-1.18 requires cards in use to be changed at least once every four hours if blackjack is dealt from the hand. The proposed amendment to N.J.A.C. 19:46-1.19 provides that blackjack using one

or two decks of cards may be dealt from the dealer's hand in accordance with the same procedures currently used in dealing the 6 to 5 blackjack variation. The proposed amendment at N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.2 specifies that blackjack dealt by hand shall be dealt with one or two decks of cards and two additional cutting cards and addresses the requirement for the use of an automated shuffling device. The proposed amendment at N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.5 governs the rules for cutting the deck and the use of the cutting cards, and provides for alternative procedures for multiple or one round of play with a single deck. The proposed amendment at N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.6 creates an exception for blackjack using one deck or two decks of cards from the requirement that blackjack shall be dealt from a dealing shoe, enabling dealing by hand in accordance with the same procedures used in dealing the 6 to 5 blackjack variation. The proposed amendment at N.J.A.C. 19:47- 2.10 addresses special double down rules that a casino licensee may implement if offering blackjack dealt by hand. The proposed amendment at N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.12 provides special rules for the drawing of additional cards by the dealer that a casino licensee may implement if offering blackjack dealt by hand. The proposed amendment at N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.15 addresses the irregularity whenever there are insufficient cards to complete a round of play.

This notice of proposal is not required to be referenced in a rulemaking calendar since a public comment period of 60 days is being provided. See N.J.A.C. 1:30-3.3(a)5.

Full text of the proposal follows (additions indicated in boldface **thus**; deletions indicated in boldface brackets [thus]):

19:46-1.10 Blackjack table; card reader device; physical characteristics; inspections

(a) – (h) (No change.)

(i) In order to collect the cards at the conclusion of a round of play as required by N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.6(i) and at such other times as provided in the rules of the Commission, each blackjack table shall have a discard rack securely attached to the top of the dealer's side of the table. The height of each discard rack shall equal the height of the cards, stacked one on top of the other, contained in the total number of decks that are to be used [in the dealing shoe] **to play the game** at that table; provided, however, that a taller discard rack may be used if such rack has a distinct and clearly visible mark on its side to show the exact height for a stack of cards equal to the total number of cards contained in the number of decks to be used [in the dealing shoe] **to play the game** at that table. Whenever a double shoe is used at a blackjack table, the same number of decks shall be used in each side of the double shoe, and the height and marking requirements as set forth above for that table's discard rack shall be determined from the number of decks used in one side of the shoe.

(j) – (q) (No change.)

(r) Notwithstanding (c) above, if a casino licensee elects to have the game of blackjack dealt from the hand pursuant to N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.6(a) and further elects the dealer draw option set forth in N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.12(e), the layout shall include an inscription indicating that the dealer must draw to 16 and soft 17.

19:46-1.18 Cards; receipt, storage, inspections and removal from use

(a) – (f) (No change.)

(g) Any cards which have been opened and placed on a gaming table shall be changed at least every 24 hours. Notwithstanding the foregoing:

1. - 3. (No change.)

4. Cards opened for use on a blackjack table **at which the cards are dealt from the hand, including any table** offering the 6 to 5 blackjack variation, shall be changed at least every four hours;

5. - 7. (No change.)

(h) – (r) (No change.)

19:46-1.19 Dealing shoes; automated shuffling devices

(a) (No change.)

(b) Cards used to game at blackjack, spanish 21, double attack blackjack, pai gow poker, minibaccarat, red dog, caribbean stud poker, let it ride poker, three card poker, fast action hold'em, colorado hold 'em poker, casino war, boston 5 stud poker, double cross poker, four card poker, texas hold 'em bonus poker, ultimate texas hold 'em poker, flop poker, two card joker poker, asia poker, winner's pot poker and double down stud shall be dealt from a manual or automated dealing shoe which shall be secured to the gaming table when the table is open for gaming activity and secured in a locked compartment when the table is not open for gaming activity. Cards used to game at baccarat shall be dealt from a dealing shoe which shall be secured in a locked compartment when the table is not open for gaming activity.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, cards used to game at:

1. Pai gow poker, double down stud, caribbean stud poker, three card poker, colorado hold 'em poker, boston 5 stud poker, double cross poker, flop poker, four card poker, texas hold 'em bonus poker, ultimate texas hold 'em poker, asia poker, winner's pot poker and two card joker poker may be dealt from the dealer's hand in accordance with the rules for each game in N.J.A.C. 19:47; [and]

2. The 6 to 5 blackjack variation shall be dealt from the dealer's hand in accordance with N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.6A[.]; **and**

3. Blackjack may be dealt from the dealer's hand in accordance with N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.6(a) and 2.6A.

(c) – (h) (No change.)

19:47-2.2 Cards; number of decks; value of cards

(a) Blackjack shall be played with at least one deck of cards. All decks of cards used to play blackjack shall comply with the requirements of N.J.A.C.

19:46-1.17 and, except as otherwise provided in this section, all decks of cards shall be identical in appearance. Blackjack shall also be played with one additional cutting card or, if **blackjack is dealt from the hand or** the 6 to 5 blackjack variation is in use, two additional cutting cards, which shall be opaque and in a solid color readily distinguishable from the color of the backs and edges of the playing cards in use at the table, as approved by the Commission. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the minimum number of decks used to play blackjack shall be:

1. One or two, if **blackjack is dealt from the hand or** the 6 to 5 blackjack variation is offered;

2. - 4. (No change.)

(b) – (d) (No change.)

(e) Notwithstanding (d) above, an automated card shuffling device shall be utilized **when blackjack is dealt from the hand or** for the 6 to 5 blackjack variation, which shall shuffle and store one deck or a set of two decks of cards while the other deck or set of two decks is being dealt or used to play the game. Each deck or set of two decks of cards shall be alternated for use, with the deck or set of two decks in use to be shuffled upon completion of the round of play after reaching the cutting card.

19:47-2.3 Wagers

(a) – (e) (No change.)

(f) Once the first card of any hand has been [removed from the shoe] **dealt** by the dealer, no player shall handle, remove or alter any wagers that

have been made until a decision has been rendered and implemented with respect to that wager except as explicitly permitted by these regulations.

(g) – (k) (No change.)

19:47-2.5 Shuffle and cut of the cards

(a) – (h) (No change.)

(i) [For] **When blackjack is dealt from the hand, including** the 6 to 5 blackjack variation, after the cards have been removed from the automated shuffling device and cut, the dealer shall maintain one cutting card to cover the bottom card of the deck or, if two decks are used, the stacked decks. If a casino licensee elects to deal multiple rounds of play from a single deck or two decks, the dealer shall insert a second cutting card at a position at least one-third of the way in from the back of the deck or decks. If a casino licensee elects to deal only one round of play from a single deck, the casino licensee shall rotate decks of cards with each round of play in accordance with the requirements of N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.2(d).

(j) – (k) (No change.)

19:47-2.6 Procedure for dealing of cards

(a) All cards used to game at blackjack shall be dealt from a dealing shoe specifically designed for such purpose [with the exception of the 6 to 5 blackjack variation which shall be] **unless such cards are** dealt from the dealer's hand in accordance with the procedure set forth at N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.6A.

(b) – (o) (No change.)

19:47-2.6A Procedure for dealing cards [in] **from the dealer's hand, including the** 6 to 5 blackjack variation

(a) If a casino licensee **elects to deal blackjack from the dealer's hand** or offers the 6 to 5 blackjack variation, a dealer shall deal the cards from his or her hand in accordance with [the subsections below] **this section**.

(b) – (g) (No change.)

(h) In lieu of the procedures set forth in (d) through (g) above, a casino licensee may permit a blackjack dealer [in the 6 to 5 variation] to deal his or her second card face downward and to utilize a card reader device pursuant to N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.6(j) prior to dealing any additional cards to the players.

(i) – (k) (No change.)

19:47-2.10 Doubling down

(a) Except for [Blackjack] **blackjack** or a point count of twenty-one in two cards, a player may elect to double down, that is, make an additional wager not in excess of the amount of the player's original wager, on the first two cards dealt to the player or the first two cards of any split pair on the condition that one and only one additional card shall be dealt to the hand on which he has elected to double down. **Notwithstanding the foregoing and upon compliance with the notice requirements set forth at N.J.A.C. 19:47-8.3, if the game of blackjack is dealt from the hand pursuant to N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.6(a) and 2.6A, a casino licensee may prohibit doubling down:**

1. Unless the player establishes a hard total of 9, 10 or 11 by turning his or her cards face up; and

2. After the player splits a pair.

(b) – (d) (No change.)

19:47-2.12 Drawing of additional cards by players and the dealer

(a) (No change.)

(b) Except as provided in (c), [or] (d) **and (e)** below, a dealer shall draw additional cards to his or her hand in accordance with one of the following options:

1. - 2. (No change.)

(c) – (d) (No change.)

(e) If blackjack is dealt from the hand pursuant to N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.6(a) and 2.6A, a casino licensee may, at its option, require the dealer to draw additional cards to the dealer’s hand until the dealer has a hard total of 17 or a hard or soft total of 18, 19, 20 or 21, at which point no additional cards shall be drawn by the dealer. The casino licensee shall make any such election on its rules of the games checklist.

19:47-2.15 Irregularities

(a) – (e) (No change.)

(f) If there are insufficient cards remaining in the shoe to complete a round of play, all of the cards in the discard rack or in a segregated area of the double shoe shall be shuffled and cut according to the procedures outlined in N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.5, the first card shall be drawn face downwards and burned, and the dealer shall complete the round of play. [For the 6 to 5 blackjack variation] **If the cards are being dealt from the hand**, if there are insufficient cards remaining in the deck **or decks** in use to complete a round of play, all the discarded cards from the deck **or decks** in use shall be shuffled by hand and cut according to the procedures outlined in N.J.A.C. 19:47-2.5, the first card shall be drawn face downwards and burned, and the dealer shall complete the round of play. **All cards shall then be reshuffled for the next round of play in the automated card shuffling device.**

(g) – (p) (No change.)