



Thailand Reinstates Nationwide Ban on Poker Activities

On 22 October 2025, the Ministry of Interior issued its order prohibiting the issuance of gambling licenses for poker activities nationwide, effectively reinstating a ban on poker as a sport.

This directive reverses a policy introduced less than three months earlier by the former Interior Minister which had decriminalized poker and permitted licensed tournaments. The order coincided with a scheduled poker event and was followed by clarification from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports that poker would be treated purely as a regulated sporting activity, not gambling.

However, following the new government's policy platform announced on 29 September 2025, to suppress all gambling activities, including those "disguised as sports," the The Department of Provincial Administration confirmed that poker tournaments and poker-related sporting associations will no longer be permitted to operate under any form of license or regulatory exemption.

The directive signals a zero-tolerance policy toward gambling, encompassing both traditional and rebranded forms such as poker competitions. This policy shift will likely result in:

- Revocation of licenses or permissions previously issued for poker clubs, tournaments, or sporting associations.
- Prohibition of poker-related commercial events, even when positioned as skill-based or entertainment activities.
- Increased enforcement scrutiny on establishments offering poker or similar games, including potential criminal liability under the Gambling Act B.E. 2478 (1935).

Businesses that had previously relied on poker-related activities—whether for tourism, sport, or entertainment—should immediately cease operations to avoid potential violations and review any promotional materials or events to ensure compliance with the renewed prohibition.