

**POSSESSION OF GAMBLING RECORDS
IN THE FIRST DEGREE
Penal Law § 225.20(2)
(Committed on or after September 1, 1967)**

The (*specify*) count is Possession of Gambling Records in the First Degree.

Under our law, a person is guilty of Possession of Gambling Records in the First Degree when, with knowledge of the contents thereof, he or she possesses any writing, paper, instrument or article of a kind commonly used in the operation, promotion or playing of a lottery or policy scheme or enterprise, and constituting, reflecting or representing more than five hundred plays or chances therein.

The following terms used in that definition have a special meaning:¹

“POSSESS” means to have physical possession or otherwise to exercise dominion or control over tangible property.²

Under our law, proof of possession of any gambling record is presumptive evidence of possession thereof with knowledge of

¹ Depending on the facts and issues of the case, the terms, Gambling, Something of Value, and Contest of Chance, as defined in Penal Law § 225.00, may have to be explained as follows:

A person engages in GAMBLING when that person stakes or risks "something of value" upon the outcome of a "contest of chance" or a future contingent event not under his control or influence, upon an agreement or understanding that he will receive something of value in the event of a certain outcome. Penal Law § 225.00(2).

SOMETHING OF VALUE means any money or property, any token, object or article exchangeable for money or property, or any form of credit or promise directly or indirectly contemplating transfer of money or property or of any interest therein, or involving extension of a service, entertainment or a privilege of playing at a game or scheme without charge. Penal Law § 225.00(6).

CONTEST OF CHANCE means any contest, game, gaming scheme or gaming device in which the outcome depends in a material degree upon an element of chance, notwithstanding that skill of the contestants may also be a factor therein. Penal Law § 225.00(1).

² Penal Law §10.00(8). If necessary, an expanded definition of “possession” is available in the section of General Instructions under Possession.

its character or contents.³ What this means is that, if the People have proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant was in possession of a gambling record, you may, but you are not required to, infer that the defendant had knowledge of its character or contents. Whether or not to draw that inference is for you to decide and will depend entirely on your evaluation of the evidence.⁴

“LOTTERY” means an unlawful gambling scheme in which (a) the players⁵ pay or agree to pay something of value for chances, represented and differentiated by numbers or by combinations of numbers or by some other media, one or more of which chances are to be designated the winning ones; and (b) the winning chances are to be determined by a drawing or by some other method based upon the element of chance; and (c) the holders of the winning chances are to receive something of value.⁶

“POLICY” means a form of lottery in which the winning chances or plays are not determined upon the basis of a drawing or other act on the part of persons conducting or connected with the scheme, but upon the basis of the outcome or outcomes of a future event or events otherwise unrelated to the particular scheme.⁷

³ Penal Law §225.35(1).

⁴ In 2019, the last sentence was added to conform to the instruction for presumptions in other sections.

⁵ Penal Law §225.00(3).

⁶ Penal Law § 225.00(10). The definition continues with the following provision: "provided, however, that in no event shall the provisions of this subdivision be construed to include a raffle as such term is defined in subdivision three-b of section one hundred eighty-six of the general municipal law."

⁷ Penal Law § 225.00(11).

“UNLAWFULLY” means not specifically authorized by law.
⁸ Under our law, with certain exceptions not applicable here, a lottery or policy scheme is not authorized by law.

[Note: Add if appropriate:

It is a defense to this charge if the writing, paper, instrument or article possessed by the defendant constituted, reflected or represented plays, bets or chances of the defendant himself/herself in a number not exceeding ten.^{9]}

[Note: Add if appropriate:

It is a defense to this charge that the writing, paper, instrument or article possessed by the defendant was neither used nor intended to be used in the operation, promotion or playing of a lottery or policy scheme or enterprise.^{10]}

[Note: Add if appropriate:

It is not a defense to this charge that the lottery itself was drawn or conducted outside the state of New York and is not violative of the laws of the jurisdiction in which it was so drawn or conducted.]¹¹

In order for you to find the defendant guilty of this crime, the People are required to prove, from all of the evidence in the case beyond a reasonable doubt, each of the following three [four] elements:

1. That on or about (*date*) in the county of (*county*), the defendant (*defendant's name*) possessed a writing, paper, instrument or article of a kind commonly used in the operation, promotion or playing of a lottery or policy scheme or enterprise;

⁸ Penal Law § 225.00(12).

⁹ Penal Law §225.15(2).

¹⁰ Penal Law §225.25.

¹¹ Penal Law §225.40.

2. That the writing, paper, instrument or article constituted, reflected or represented more than five hundred plays or chances; and

3. That the defendant possessed the writing, paper, instrument or article with knowledge of its contents;

[Note: Add if the statutory defenses apply:

and

4. That the writing, paper, instrument or article possessed was used or intended to be used in the operation, promotion or playing of a lottery or policy scheme or enterprise.]

If you find the People have proven beyond a reasonable doubt each of those elements, you must find the defendant guilty of this crime.

If you find the People have not proven beyond a reasonable doubt any one or more of those elements, you must find the defendant not guilty of this crime.