

## STANDARD INTERPRETATION No. 13-018

### Help Screens – iGaming

<b>Relevant Standard(s):</b>	<b>2.4, 2.8, 10.1</b>
<b>Application:</b>	<b>iGaming</b>
<b>Issue:</b>	
Do online games need to use the prescriptive screen texts that are in land-based games?	
<b>Response:</b>	
<p>Electronic Gaming Equipment Minimum Technical Standards prescribe very specific text that needs to be clearly visible on each machine. The statements are intended to address certain behaviours of slot machines that can be considered to mislead players if they're not provided with sufficient information (e.g. the misperception that a player hitting a "stop reels" button can influence the game outcome).</p> <p>The Registrar's Standards for Gaming do not prescribe the specific text to be used for online games; however, they do require that players be provided with meaningful and accurate information in order to enable them to make informed choices (e.g. Standards 2.4 and 10.1) and that players not be misled by game designs and features (e.g Standard 2.8). For example, if an online game has a "stop reels" button, the Registrar's Standards would require that players be provided with sufficient information and not be misled about the button's influence on the outcome of the game.</p> <p>In summary, while online games are not obliged to use the text prescribed in the EGM Technical Standards, they are obliged to ensure the player is provided with sufficient information and not misled in order to satisfy the Registrar's Standards. At a minimum, the EGM Technical Standards would certainly provide some guidance as to the AGCO's expectations.</p>	
<b>Relevant Standard Excerpt(s):</b>	
<p><b>2.4 Patrons shall be provided with meaningful and accurate information to enable them to make informed choices.</b></p> <p><b>Requirements</b> – At a minimum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meaningful and accurate information on the rules of play shall be clearly stated and made available to patrons.</li> <li>2. Meaningful and accurate information on the odds of winning, payout odds or returns to patrons shall be clearly stated and made available to patrons.</li> </ol> <p><b>2.8 Game designs and features shall be clear and shall not mislead the player.</b></p> <p><b>Requirements</b> – At a minimum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Where a game simulates a physical device, the theoretical probabilities and visual representation of the game shall correspond to the features and actions of the physical device, unless otherwise disclosed to the player.</li> </ol>	

2. Game design shall not give the player the perception that speed of play or skill affects the outcome of the game when it does not.
3. After the selection of game outcome, the game shall not make a variable secondary decision which affects the result shown to the player. If the outcome is chosen that the game will lose then the game shall not substitute a particular type of loss to show to the player (i.e. near miss).
4. Where the game requires a pre-determined pattern (for example, hidden prizes on a map), the locations of the winning spots shall not change during play, except as provided for in the rules of play.
5. Games shall not display amounts or symbols that are unachievable.
6. Games shall not contain intentionally programmed subliminal messaging.
7. Where games involve reels:
  - a. For single line games, jackpot symbols shall not appear in their entirety more than 12 times on average, adjacent to the pay-line, for every time they appear on the pay-line;
  - b. For multi-line games, jackpot symbols shall not appear in their entirety more than 12 times, on average, not on any pay-line, for every time they appear on any pay-line.
8. Free-to-play games shall not misrepresent or mislead players as to the likelihood of winning or prize distribution of similar games played for money.
9. The denomination of each credit shall be clearly displayed on game screens.

**10.1 The player shall be provided with accurate information to enable the player to make informed choices.**

**Requirements – At a minimum:**

1. For each game, the theoretical payout shall be provided:
  - a. For games that include progressive awards, limited time awards, metamorphic elements or game-within-a-game awards, the variable contribution of such awards to the theoretical payout percentage shall be clearly disclosed;
  - b. For games which have different theoretical payout percentages for different betting options, the lowest theoretical payout percentage of all betting options shall be disclosed, as a minimum;
  - c. For games which have skill and/or strategy components, the theoretical payout percentage shall be calculated using a standard/published strategy. If there is no such standard/published strategy, the theoretical payout percentage shall be calculated using a blind strategy (random choice).
2. Games with elements of skill or strategy shall either disclose the optimal strategy or provide other information to the player that is sufficient to derive the optimal strategy.
3. For any top award that has a probability of less than 1 in 17 million to win, the probability shall be disclosed to the player.
4. For any other award that has a probability of less than 1 in 34 million to win, the probability shall be disclosed to the player

**(Registrar's Standards for Gaming, December 2014)**

*This interpretation is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. The interpretation relates to a specific set of circumstances and the standards, laws and regulations in force at the time the interpretation was issued; however, it is not an exhaustive or definitive interpretation of the standard(s) referenced herein.*

*The AGCO has established the Standards Interpretation Protocol, which acts as a single point of contact for inquiries from the gaming industry related to the interpretation of the Standards. For more information, please contact the AGCO's Customer Service Department at 416 326-8700 (in the GTA) or 1 800 522-2876 (toll free in Ontario).*