



Legislation Details (With Text)

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On agenda:	5/27/2026	Final action:	6/24/2026
Enactment date:	6/24/2026	Enactment #:	26
Effective date:	6/26/2026		
Title:	Ordinance amending and supplementing the Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances, Title Seven, Business Licensing, Article Nine, Amusement Businesses with a new Chapter, Chapter 774: Mechanical Amusement Devices Tax and Licenses.		
Sponsors:	Anthony Coghill, Barbara Warwick, Kim Salinetto		
Indexes:	PGH. CODE ORDINANCES TITLE 07 - BUSINESS LICENSING		
Code sections:			
Attachments:	1. 2026-0544 - Mechanical Amusement Devices Tax, 2. 2026-0544 V3		

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
6/26/2026	2	Mayor	Signed by the Mayor	
6/24/2026	2	City Council	Passed Finally	Pass
6/24/2026	3	Standing Committees	AMENDED	Pass
6/24/2026	3	Standing Committees	Affirmatively Recommended as Amended	Pass
6/23/2026	2	Committee on Hearings and Policy	Public Hearing Held	
6/2/2026	2	City Council	Motion	Pass
6/2/2026	2	City Council	AMENDED	Pass
6/2/2026	2	City Council	RECOMMITTED	Pass
6/2/2026	2	City Council	Held for Cablecast Public Hearing	Pass
6/2/2026	2	City Council	Motion	Pass
5/27/2026	1	City Council	Read and referred	
5/27/2026	1	City Council	Waived under Rule 8	Pass
5/27/2026	1	Standing Committees	Held for Cablecast Public Hearing	Pass

Ordinance amending and supplementing the Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances, Title Seven, Business Licensing, Article Nine, Amusement Businesses with a new Chapter, Chapter 774: Mechanical Amusement Devices Tax and Licenses.

(Public Hearing held 6/23/26)

Whereas, nearly 1 in 5 municipalities in this Commonwealth require the licensing of mechanical amusement devices, including half of Allegheny County's 130 municipalities; and,

Whereas, there has been a marked proliferation of mechanical devices in establishments all over the City; and,

Whereas, the City needs to identify revenue sources which do not further burden city homeowners or renters:
and,

Whereas, the City ended 2025 with a deficit, its first since 2003, when the City was declared a financially distressed municipality and its finances taken over by the Commonwealth.

Be it therefore resolved that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. The Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances, Title Seven, Business Licensing, Article Nine, Amusement Businesses is hereby amended and supplemented with a new chapter, Chapter 774: Mechanical Amusement Devices Tax and Licenses.

CHAPTER 774: MECHANICAL AMUSEMENT DEVICES TAX AND LICENSES.

§ 774.01 - Title.

This Chapter shall be known as the “City of Pittsburgh Amusement Device Ordinance.”

§ 774.02 - Definitions.

Unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the following words and phrases, used in this chapter or in an application for license of amusement devices, shall have the meaning given to them in this section.

AMUSEMENT DEVICE - The amusement devices and apparatus to be covered by this chapter shall be divided into three classes:

- A. Class I. Class I devices include poker machines, video slot machines, video sweepstakes machines, and any other type of purely amusement device permitted by law.
- B. Class II. Class II devices include machines which offer prizes for amusement such as stuffed animals, toys, candy or other items.
- C. Class III. Class III devices include machines and apparatus used for entertainment and public participation for sport which includes, but is not limited to, darts, jukeboxes, pool tables, pinball machines, shuffleboard machines and children's video games.

APPLICANT - Any individual, partnership or corporation who seeks to obtain a license for an amusement device under this chapter.

APPLICATION FOR LICENSE OF AMUSEMENT DEVICES - The document filed by an applicant requesting a permit to possess in the City of Pittsburgh any video or mechanical amusement device, and/or other electronic device, machine or apparatus whatsoever, for the playing of games and amusement.

BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT - Any restaurant, bar, tavern, retail, manufacturing, wholesale, institutional, educational, religious, governmental or other nonresidential establishment, store or business, whether or not in operation.

ILLEGAL GAMBLING DEVICE - Any device, machine or apparatus designed and/or specifically equipped to be used for the playing of poker, blackjack, keno, bingo, slots or other casino gambling games by the insertion therein of any coin, currency, metal disc, slug or token, which has, or is designed to facilitate the ready use of, a

knock-off or knockdown device or other capability for erasing or eliminating accumulated playing credits.

LICENSE OFFICER - The Director of the Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections who is hereby empowered to delegate any authority granted him or her or any other officer or employee of the Department. Any duty prescribed herein to be performed by the Director may be performed by the Director or other officer or employee of the Department assigned such duty by the Director.

PROPRIETOR - Any individual, partnership or corporation who owns, leases or maintains the business establishment in which any video or mechanical amusement device is placed for the use, patronage, recreation or amusement of the public or of persons in or about the business establishment.

VENDOR - Any individual, partnership or corporation who is the lawful owner of any video or mechanical amusement device for which a license is sought under this chapter, or any individual, partnership or corporation who makes, assembles, sets up, maintains, sells, lends, leases, gives away, or offers for sale, loan, lease or gift, any video or mechanical amusement device for which a license is sought under this chapter.

VIDEO OR MECHANICAL AMUSEMENT DEVICE - Any device, machine or apparatus used for the playing of games or otherwise used for the purpose of amusement or entertainment by the insertion therein of any coin, currency, metal disc, slug or token, including but not limited to claw machines, electric or electronic dart boards, **gambling devices,** pinball machines, and video games.

§ 774.03 - License required.

No person, firm, partnership, corporation or other entity shall at any time have in his possession, within the City of Pittsburgh, any video or mechanical amusement device for the playing of games and amusement without first having procured a license therefor as hereinafter provided in this chapter.

§ 774.04 - Application for license.

All persons eligible under the terms of this Chapter shall make application with the License Officer. The License Officer shall create and provide an application which must contain the following information:

- A. The name and residence of the vendor of each video or mechanical amusement device to be licensed;
- B. The name and residence of the proprietor of the business establishment in which each video or mechanical amusement device is to be located, used or installed;
- C. The manufacturer, name of machine, serial number, type and fee for each machine, video or mechanical device, or apparatus to be located on the premises, installed or used;
- D. A verification by the vendor and proprietor that the facts set forth in the application are true and correct to the vendor's and proprietor's personal knowledge information or belief, and that any false statements therein are made subject to the penalties of the Crimes Code, 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities;
- E. That the vendor and proprietor have been provided a copy of this chapter and that he/they have read and agree to be bound by all terms and provisions hereof;
- F. That a license does not sanction or condone the use or possession of any illegal gambling device, whether illegal per se or as modified;

G. That the legal use or possession of an unlawful gambling device, either per se or as modified, may result in a criminal prosecution by law enforcement officials.

§ 774.05 - Persons ineligible for licenses.

The City shall not issue a license for any video or mechanical amusement device to any person who:

- (a) Is not 21 years of age;
- (b) Has been found guilty of or accepted accelerated rehabilitative disposition for possessing or using a video or mechanical amusement device in violation of the Crimes Code of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania within three years of the date of application.

§ 774.06 - Conditions for issuance.

No license shall be granted until a period of 10 days shall have elapsed from the date of application during which time the License Officer may, at his or her discretion, investigate the facts set forth in the application.

A. The City shall **[refuse to]** issue a license for any device **[that]** **[only after]** the applicant has **[not]** affirmed **[that said device(s)]** is/**are** **[not]** **[neither]** designed, **[nor]** intended to be used, for gambling purposes.

B. A license shall not be issued unless the applicant acknowledges:

- (1) That obtaining or displaying City license does not sanction or permit the use of any device for gambling purposes or possession of an illegal gambling device, either per se or as modified;
- (2) That if the applicant or licensee illegally uses or possesses an unlawful gambling device, either per se or as modified, he may be prosecuted by the City of Pittsburgh or other law enforcement officials.

§ 774.07 - Construal of provisions.

Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to authorize, license or permit any gambling devices whatsoever, or any mechanism that has been judicially determined to be a gambling device, either per se or as modified, or in any way contrary to any future laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

§ 774.08 - Privilege Tax.

A. No license under the Chapter shall issue until the following annual Taxes shall have been paid by the applicant to the City Treasurer for each and every device to be installed or used.

- 1. The annual privilege taxes are as follows:
 - i. Class One (1): One thousand dollars (\$1,000);
 - ii. Class Two (2): One hundred dollars (\$100);
 - iii. Class Three (3): Ten dollars (\$10).

iv. For Classes Two (2) and Three (3), where the establishment is deemed an amusement arcade, the tax shall be capped after the first ten (10) devices.

- 2. These privilege taxes may be changed from time to time by City Council.

B. The above annual taxes paid shall be a privilege tax until December 31 of each year; except, however, should any such device be installed after July 1 of any year, and an application therefor is made after such date, the tax levied in that year **[shall] may** be prorated on a schedule set by the City Treasurer.

§ 774.09 - Issuance and display.

A. Upon the payment of the privilege taxes provided by this Chapter, and if the application is in compliance with this Chapter, the License Officer shall issue a disc, plate, sticker or other visual device setting forth the number of the license for each machine so licensed, and said disc, plate, sticker or other visual device shall be attached and fastened to the respective machine or device so that the same may be clearly observable and readable. Discs, plates, stickers or other visual devices for a particular machine or device are not transferable to another machine or device. All discs, plates, stickers or other visual devices issued by the City for video or mechanical amusement devices shall state that the video or mechanical amusement device is for amusement purposes only, that it is not a gambling device as defined by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

B. The License Officer shall submit to the City Treasurer, no less frequently than monthly, a detailed listing of all such licenses (and taxes assessed) issued in that time period.

C. The Treasurer shall submit a report, not less than quarterly, detailing the number of licenses issued and the amount of taxes collected pursuant to this Chapter.

§ 774.10 - Inspection.

The City or its agents may, during regular business hours, conduct inspections of any business establishment where any video or mechanical amusement device licensed under this Chapter is located, installed, placed or used, to ensure compliance with this Chapter.

§ 774.11 - Revocation, debarment and contraband declaration.

A. In the event any applicant, vendor or proprietor falsifies any information on an application for license of amusement devices, or violates this chapter, the City shall immediately revoke all licenses issued under this chapter to such applicant, vendor or proprietor.

B. Moreover, in the event a vendor or a video or mechanical amusement device or a proprietor of a business establishment is convicted of possessing or using a video or mechanical amusement device in violation of the Crimes Code of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the City shall revoke each license issued to such person as an applicant, vendor, or proprietor.

C. Additionally, the City shall not issue a license of amusement devices to any person who has been found guilty of or accepted accelerated rehabilitative disposition for possessing or using a video or mechanical amusement device in violation of the Crimes Code of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania within three years of the date of application.

D. Any video or mechanical amusement device used or possessed in violation of the Crimes Code of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or this chapter, may be deemed contraband and forfeited in accordance with the provisions set forth in 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 6501(d) **[(relating to scattering rubbish)]**.

§ 774.12 - Violations and penalties.

For each and every violation of the provisions of this chapter, any person or persons, firm, partnership or corporation, violating any of the provisions of the chapter shall constitute a summary offense, and upon conviction by the issuing authority for the magisterial district which includes the City of Pittsburgh, be sentenced to pay a fine of not less than \$50 nor more than \$600, and costs of prosecution, and in default or payment thereof may be committed by the issuing authority to the Allegheny County Jail in conformity with the Pennsylvania Rules of Criminal Procedure for a period not to exceed 10 days. Each and every day that any machine or device is used and operated in violation hereof shall constitute a separate and distinct offense under this chapter and shall be subject to separate and distinct penalties hereunder.

Section 3. This Ordinance shall become effective immediately upon final passage.