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New tool helps prevent violence in licensed premises

Privacy Commissioner and AGLC to draft guidelines for collection and use of limited personal information by bar operators

Edmonton... Bar owners and the police will soon have another tool to deal with problem patrons, thanks to changes to a provincial law which will allow the limited collection, use and sharing of information.

“This government believes in creating safer communities and these changes will help prevent violence in licensed establishments, preserve the safety of patrons and disrupt the gang lifestyle,” said Fred Lindsay, Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security. “We want to prevent gang influence from becoming a normal part of life in Alberta’s cities.”

New provisions in the *Gaming and Liquor Act* will help improve public safety in licensed premises by giving licensees the authority to collect, use and share limited information (name, age and picture) about problem patrons with other business operators. This change helps licensees work together to prevent troublesome individuals from moving between bars and nightclubs and creating similar situations in a new venue. The legislation also provides police the ability to exclude and remove suspected gang members and their associates before an offence is committed.

The Office of the Information and Privacy Commission (OIPC) will work with the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission in drafting the guidelines on the collection, use, storage and disposal of this limited information by bar operators. The collection of a patron’s name, age and photograph is seen as reasonable by the OIPC as it does not include the person’s birth date, address or similar identifying information.

Information and Privacy Commissioner Frank Work wants to make sure proper guidelines are in place. “I am pleased that only limited personal information will be collected, but we need very clear guidelines on how the information is collected and more importantly how it is stored and ultimately disposed of. My office will work closely with the AGLC and the industry to develop those guidelines”.

Other minor amendments were made to update the *Act* and ensure it is relevant and effective in its regulation of gaming and liquor activities in the province. The new guidelines should be in place by August 1, 2009.

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Media inquiries may be directed to:

Lynn Hutchings-Mah
Communications Director
Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission
780-447-8741

Wayne Wood
Communications Director
Office of the Information and Privacy
Commissioner
780-644-4015

To call toll-free within Alberta dial 310-0000.