

Gambling operators ready for TV ads

Gambling operators are gearing to advertise on television for the first time when new laws come into force this week.

Casinos, betting shops and gambling websites can place TV commercials from September 1 onwards.

The change is part of the Gambling Act 2005 which brings with it a relaxation of current gambling advertising laws.

Operators remained tight-lipped about which if any firms would launch new publicity campaigns on September 1. But many do intend to start advertising on television at some point.

Their commercials will be subject to advertising rules policed by the Advertising Standards Authority.

In addition, gambling operators recently announced their own code of practice which sets out further restrictions – including a 9pm watershed.

A British Casino Association (BCA) spokesman said he was unaware of any individual casinos planning to advertise on TV in the short term, but added: „The BCA as an association is looking at the possibility of generic advertising in due course.“

Clive Hawkswood, chief executive of the Remote Gambling Association which represents more than 30 website gambling operators, predicted that many of them would advertise on TV soon. „Most of them sponsor TV programmes and most of them will transfer that to television advertising,“ he said.

„Lots of the gambling companies and the broadcasters have been having a look at the advertising. Quite who will be the first to hit TVs and newspapers on September 1, I don't know.“

John Shepherd, director of corporate communications at the website partygaming.com, predicted that some gambling firms would start advertising on TV on September 1 but refused to say when partygaming.com's publicity would launch. „We are going to advertise on TV but as to when and what, we not disclosing. I think that people will start straight away. I think you will probably see a slow build-up, and then you have got big events like the rugby world cup coming up which is where you will probably see a peak in advertising,“ he said.