

# Free drinks – not for all gamblers

By Andrea Sachs, Washington Post

The free drinks at casinos make everyone feel like a winner. However, two casino behemoths are killing the buzz: At select properties, MGM Resorts and Caesars Entertainment are no longer providing gratis cocktails to bar patrons who are drinking and yakking more than drinking and gambling. The new mantra: must play for a cocktail.

“We are making a concerted effort to reward our larger-spending customers,” said Rich Broome, executive vice president of communications at Caesars. “This discourages people who are just looking for a free drink.”

At the moment, the new policy applies only to casino bars with video-poker machines. (To clear up any misunderstandings, the bars never provided complimentary drinks to non-gambling guests, though the rule was not always enforced.) After a short trial in late 2015, Caesars introduced the comp notification system at nine properties throughout Nevada, including those in Lake Tahoe, Las Vegas, Laughlin and Reno. Within the last year, MGM has rolled out a similar program at MGM Grand and TopGolf, an entertainment venue on the Strip. A company executive said that MGM could expand the program to its casinos in New Jersey and Mississippi. (Gamblers in Michigan and Maryland don’t have to worry; by law, they were never allowed free alcohol.)

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