



## ***Fraud in the Workplace – Is An Employee Addicted to Gambling?***

**For Immediate Release**

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(Green Bay, WI) – The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners estimates that the average business loses five percent of its annual revenue to fraud. Across the U.S., that fraud is often linked to an employee who is dealing with a gambling addiction.

“A compulsive gambler is much like a drug addict, always looking for that next fix,” said Rose Gruber, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling. “They’ll do just about anything to get more money to gamble, including stealing from family, friends and their place of employment.”

Experts in fraud investigation note that small to midsize firms – churches, doctors’ offices and non-profits that have a small staff where one person does most of the record keeping – are particularly vulnerable to fraud.

“No business is immune from possible embezzlement,” Gruber adds. “We deal with and hear about cases that impact very small non-profit organizations to Fortune 500 companies. A lot of the cases don’t get to court, however. Business owners are often embarrassed and don’t want the public and clients or customers to know about it.”

Forensic accountants advise companies to take a preventive approach that includes staff training and regular audits as well as creating an atmosphere where employees are encouraged to come forward if they notice something taking place. When a discrepancy is discovered, a face-to-face interview with the suspect is recommended as a first step to see if there’s something they might want to get off their chest.

Gruber says it’s also important to know the signs that might point to a gambling problem for an employee, including:

- Deteriorating work performance
- Employee is preoccupied, has trouble concentrating, is absent or late for meetings and misses deadlines
- Excessive use of the Internet or telephones (to contact bookmakers, stockbrokers or to obtain credit)
- False claims are made against expense accounts
- Parking tickets for company vehicles parked near gaming operations
- Vacation days taken on isolated days rather than in weeks
- Organizing office pools and gambling junkets
- Borrowing money from co-workers or arguing with co-workers over failure to pay debts

“If you think someone in your office may have a problem with gambling, contact the Problem Gambling Helpline at 800-GAMBLE-5 to find community resources to deal with the problem,” Gruber said. “WCPG also has informational brochures to distribute in the workplace.”

***If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLE-5 for confidential help.***

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*The **Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling** is funded by a public awareness grant from the State of Wisconsin and additional funding from donors, including Wisconsin Native American Tribes. The Council operates a 24-hour Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLE-5, distributes informational brochures, organizes an annual statewide conference, makes presentations on problem gambling and conducts training sessions for treatment providers interested in the special requirements for working with compulsive gamblers and their families.*

*For more information, visit [Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling](http://www.wisconsin.gov/councilonproblemgambling) or visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/WisconsinCouncilonProblemGambling](https://www.facebook.com/WisconsinCouncilonProblemGambling).*

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