

# WASHINGTON STATE GAMBLING COMMISSION

## PAI GOW POKER GAME RULES

### Overview

1. Pai Gow Poker (Pai Gow) is played with one deck of cards including one joker (total of 53 cards). Up to six players can play on one Pai Gow table.
2. The Joker card in Pai Gow may be used as an Ace or to complete a straight or flush. Standard poker hand rankings apply. Exception: In some Pai Gow games the hand A-2-3-4-5 ranks above a king-high straight, but below the ace-high straight A-K-Q-J-10. This exception must be documented in the card room's internal controls.
3. Decks of cards may be shuffled by the dealer or by an approved shuffle machine. Furthermore, card room operators must deal Pai Gow from a dealing shoe or a shuffling device we have approved.
4. The dealer deals seven hands in a line in front of themselves, one card at a time, face down, until seven hands of seven cards each are dealt. If a shuffling device is used, it will dispense seven cards at a time until seven hands are dealt. The remaining four cards will be verified to ensure all cards are present. These four cards are then placed in the discard rack.
5. Betting positions are assigned a number from 1 to 7, starting with the banker (dealer in this case) as "one," then counting counter clockwise to determine the remaining numbers. A number from 1 to 7 is randomly chosen using a random number generator or with dice. The deal begins with the number chosen and proceeds counter clockwise with each player and dealer receiving a packet of seven cards. After all the cards are distributed, the dealer will go back and collect cards from unoccupied betting positions and place them in the discard rack.

When using dice, a dealer typically shakes a cup containing three dice. The numbers on the dice are added. Starting with the banker position as "one," the dealer counts betting positions (including open seats) counter clockwise until reaching the sum of the dice. That player/dealer position receives the first hand. The rest of the hands will be distributed counter clockwise to each betting position (even to unoccupied seats).

6. Each player picks up their hand and arranges it to make two poker hands: a hand of five cards, called the "high" or "back" hand, and a hand of two cards, called the "low" or "front" hand. The hand of five cards must outrank the hand of two cards. When a player is satisfied with their arrangement of the low and high hands, they place them each face down in designated areas on the table layout.

Note: The dealer can assist new players by helping them set their hands. If this occurs, a "house way" button must be placed in front of the player to designate this and the hands will be set according to the house way.

7. Card room operators may allow a player to play an additional hand that was dealt to an open spot at the table. This hand is referred to as a "dragon hand." A player would effectively be playing

two separate hands. Card room operators may require that the dragon hand be set according to the house way. If a card room operator allows dragon hands, it must be documented in their internal controls.

8. After each player sets their hand, the dealer will reveal their seven cards and set their hand according to the “house way.” The house way is a pre-determined setting of the dealer’s hands depending on which cards they have received. The house way can vary from casinos to casino, but must be clearly posted for all players to view. The house way must also be documented in the card room’s internal controls.
9. Each player at the table is responsible for setting their hand, and no one, except the dealer may touch the cards of that player. Furthermore, after the dealer indicates all hands are set (or reveals their face down cards), players may not touch their cards or their wager.
10. The object of the game is to form two winning poker hands from the seven cards that are dealt: To win the bet, both of the player's hands must beat both of the dealer's hands. All winning bets are paid even money (1 to 1). If both hands lose to the dealer, the player loses the bet. If one hand wins and one hand loses, it is a push (neither a win nor a loss),

Note: If a player and the dealer have the exact same hand (i.e. tie), it is considered a winning hand for the dealer. For example, if the player has an Ace-7 in the low hand and the dealer has an Ace-7 in the low hand, the dealer would win the low hand.

Note: A card room may charge up to a 5% commission on all winning player hands. If a commission is charged, it must be clearly posted for all players to view and properly documented in the card room’s internal controls.

## **Banking the game**

In Pai Gow, the house dealer acts as the bank for the game. Players are allowed to bank the game, but at a minimum, the house dealer must bank at least every other hand. When a player banks the game, the house dealer still handles the cards and chips. However, all players and the house dealer are now playing against the player who is banking the game.

If a player banks the game, a “Banker” button will be placed in front of their wagering spot. The player-banker plays against the other players as well as the house dealer (who acts as a player). The house dealer’s wager will be the last amount that the player-banker wagered on the previous hand. The player-banker must have enough chips in front of them to payoff all potential winning wagers (i.e. other players and the house dealer).

## **Irregularities**

Card room operators must document in their internal controls how they will address various irregularities applicable to Pai Gow (e.g. misdeals, cards exposed, players incorrectly setting hands, incorrect number of cards, etc.).

Card room operators may make immaterial modifications to these game rules. However, the changes must be properly documented in their internal controls.