

# GAME ROOMS

## CURRENT CITY ORDINANCES, COUNTY REGULATIONS, AND PROPOSED INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT



# GAME ROOMS: THE NEED FOR REGULATION

Houston Crime

## Police: Employee killed in game room shooting complied with suspects' demands



by Andrew Horansky / KHOU 11 News

khoul.com  
Posted on August 31, 2013 at 5:28 PM  
Updated Saturday, Aug 31 at 5:40 PM

HOUSTON — It is an act that can only be described as senseless. On Friday night police say two men shot a woman to death while robbing a

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# GALVESTON COUNTY THE DAILY NEWS

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## Police investigate game room as front for money laundering

Posted: Sunday, September 15, 2013 12:09 am  
By ALEX MACON

LA MARQUE — Police are continuing to investigate a La Marque game room authorities believe was used as a front for a criminal organization laundering large amounts of money.

## Game rooms suspected in gambling

2 arrested in Burnet, Llano on gambling charges

By Ignacio Garcia

Posted: Monday, March 25, 2013 9:32 PM CDT  
Updated: Friday, March 22, 2013 6:34 PM CDT



Brandon Reaser's truck and accessory shop on State Highway 29 in Burnet stays pretty busy as the Trojans Games across the street.

## Lubbock Gameroom Owners Face Felony Charges of Organized Crime

01/31/2013 09:21 PM 01/31/2013 09:28 PM

## Armed men rob 8-liner arcade near Alton

by Ashley Custer

Posted: 08.23.2013 at 11:41 AM  
Updated: 08.23.2013 at 5:55 PM

THE MONITOR

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## Sheriff Treviño: 8-liners are crime magnet

1 image

ldefonso Ortiz | The Monitor | Posted 9 months ago

McALLEN — A magnet for criminal activity and a foothold for Mexican cartels into South Texas — that's how authorities from Hidalgo and Cameron counties describe the eight-liner businesses that they're looking to chase from the area.

While the gambling businesses sporadically pop up in Hidalgo County, its neighbor to the east used to be flooded with them, with rows of flashing signs welcoming gamblers as they drove east along U.S. 83 into La Feria and Harlingen.

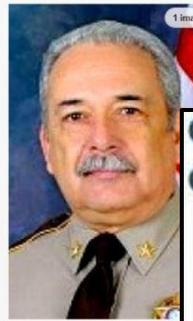
The "open for business" signs were taken down earlier this month after federal, state and local authorities cracked down, seizing the machines.

While eight-liners may seem like a harmless activity, they are against Texas law and act as a magnet for criminality, said Hidalgo County Sheriff Lupe Treviño.

For one thing, large cash businesses are an easy way to launder money, Treviño said.

"These businesses allow drug cartels to gain a foothold in the community," he said. "Everything from robberies, thefts, gambling, extortion, money laundering and other crimes can be traced to these businesses and the people they attract."

"I am glad Cameron County is kicking them out."



Hidalgo County Sheriff Lupe Treviño



## Crime Stoppers Offering Reward To Solve Gameroom Robbery

BEAUMONT - From BPD

This week Beaumont Crime Stoppers needs your help to solve an aggravated robbery.

On Saturday, January 26, 2013 at 3:14am, the manager of a game room located at 3490

Latest News

## Some Residents Fear 8-Liners Attract Crime



Posted: Dec 19, 2011 6:30 PM  
Updated: Dec 19, 2011 7:19 PM

CAMERON COUNTY - Some people in Cameron County fear eight-liners are attracting crime to their neighborhoods.

Law enforcement officers say they're doing what they can. Now much of the fight is in the public's hands.

The yellow tape that wraps La Feria's Fun Time arcade could be proof of the potential dangers. Cameron

# Background

1. State Legislature passed a law authorizing Harris County to regulate the operation of game rooms. Under the law, Harris County may:
  - Restrict the location of game rooms
  - Limit the number of game rooms in a specific area of the County
  - Charge and prosecute violators

*Subchapter E, Chapter 234 Loc. Gov't Code*

2. Harris County Commissioner's Court subsequently adopted game room regulations.
3. Harris County's regulations apply to its:
  - Unincorporated areas
  - Incorporated areas that execute an agreement with the County
4. Harris County and the City would like to cooperate and execute an agreement to authorize enforcement of County game room regulations in the City.

# Benefits of Interlocal Agreement with County

- Deters game rooms with violations in Harris County from relocating to the City
- Allows for uniform regulations and enforcement
- Allows for increased civil penalties and stricter criminal penalties
- Reduces overlapping and redundant laws
- Combines resources for more effective enforcement



# Comparison of Current Requirements: City Ordinances v. County Regulations

City Ordinances	County Regulations
Display “Game Room” sign	Display “Game Room” sign
Keep doors unlocked	Keep doors unlocked
Maintain transparent uncovered windows of a certain height	Maintain transparent uncovered windows of a certain height
Display decal for tax paid on each machine	Display decal for tax paid on each machine
Obtain game room permits	Obtain game room permits
	Limit hours of operation between 8 a.m. – 10 p.m.
	Display game room permit
	Ban employees convicted of gambling related activities
	Membership prohibited
	Prohibit new game rooms from opening within 1500 feet of school, place of religious worship, or residential neighborhood

# Comparison of Penalties: City Ordinances v. County Regulations

Penalties under City Ordinances are pursued and collected by the City. Penalties under County Regulations are pursued and collected by the County.

City Ordinances	County Regulations
Class C misdemeanor	Class A misdemeanor
Up to \$500 civil penalty	Up to \$10,000 civil penalty
Revocation of city license	Revocation of county permit
	Sue for an injunction to prohibit violation of regulations
	Recover attorneys fees, court costs, investigatory costs related to suit for injunction

# Duties Assigned By Interlocal Agreement

City	County
Issue (or deny) Harris County permits	Prosecute violators
Law enforcement (inspection, arrest)	Enforce civil penalty
	Revoke, suspend, or deny permits
	Conduct hearings or contract with outside hearing officer to conduct hearings for denial, suspension, revocation of permits
	Initiate suit to enjoin violators