A casino bonus can look like extra money in your account. But whether you can withdraw that money—and what happens to your winnings if you do—depends on the bonus rules. One especially important detail is whether the offer is **sticky**.

A sticky bonus is generally bonus money you can use to play but cannot withdraw. If you meet the wagering requirements, you may be able to withdraw eligible winnings, while the original bonus amount stays with the casino. That sounds simple, but the practical value of an offer also depends on game contribution, withdrawal restrictions, max cashout caps, and how much you must bet before you can request a withdrawal.

This guide explains sticky bonus rules in plain English and shows how to estimate their real cost. The aim is not to make a bonus sound better—or worse—than it is. It's to help you understand the terms before you deposit or start playing.



What Does "Sticky Bonus" Mean?

With a sticky bonus, the bonus funds are typically not withdrawable. They may be removed from your balance when you cash out, or the casino may calculate your eligible cashout without including the bonus amount. The exact process varies, so check the offer's bonus terms rather than relying on the label alone.

For example, imagine you deposit $100 and receive a $100 sticky bonus. Your account may show $200 in playable funds, but that does not necessarily mean you can withdraw $200—or even withdraw the $100 bonus after completing the playthrough. You may be able to cash out qualifying winnings, subject to the offer's rules, while the $100 bonus remains unavailable for withdrawal.

That's different from a withdrawable or "non-sticky" bonus, where the bonus amount may become cash once you satisfy the requirements. Some offers use terms such as "cashable," "releasable," or "convertible," but terminology is not https://www.rakeback.com/news/casino-bonuses-how-to-tell-the-good-offers-from-the-noise/ universal. Read the specific offer.



Sticky Versus Non-Sticky Bonuses

Feature Sticky bonus Non-sticky bonus Original bonus amount Usually not withdrawable May become withdrawable after the requirements are met Winnings May be withdrawable if eligible under the rules May be withdrawable after playthrough, subject to limits What to verify How the bonus is removed or excluded at cashout Release conditions, contribution rules, and any cap

Neither format is automatically a good deal. A sticky offer with modest wagering and no restrictive cashout cap might be more usable than a supposedly cashable offer with heavy wagering and narrow game eligibility. Compare the complete terms, not just the bonus percentage.

Wagering Requirements: The One Number You Need

The most useful way to read a wagering requirement is to convert it into one number: **how much you must bet**. A requirement written as "30x" is incomplete until you know what it applies to. It may be the bonus, the deposit, or the deposit plus bonus.

- **Bonus-only:** wagering multiplier × bonus amount.
- **Deposit-plus-bonus:** wagering multiplier × (deposit + bonus).

Suppose you deposit $100 and get a $100 bonus with 30x wagering:

- If the requirement applies to the bonus only: 30 × $100 = **$3,000 in bets**.
- If it applies to deposit plus bonus: 30 × $200 = **$6,000 in bets**.

That is a major difference. A phrase like "30x playthrough" without a clear base amount is not enough. Look for wording that says exactly what is multiplied, whether the requirement applies to all funds, and when the countdown begins. If those details are missing or scattered through general terms, ask support for a clear answer before opting in.

The Real Cost: A Simple Expected-Value Check

Wagering is not a fee charged all at once, but every bet has an expected cost. A rough illustration can help show why a large playthrough is not free money. If you bet $3,000 on a game with a 96% return-to-player (RTP), the theoretical house edge is 4%. The expected loss over that betting volume is approximately:

$3,000 × 4% = $120 in expected losses.

This is an average over a very large number of plays, not a prediction of what will happen to one player. Actual results can be much higher or lower because casino outcomes are volatile. RTP is a long-run theoretical figure, and the game's actual version, rules, and settings matter.

In this example, the expected loss is already greater than the $100 sticky bonus. That does not mean every player will lose $120, or that the bonus has exactly negative $20 value. It means the bonus's face value alone is a poor measure of its practical value. The wagering base, game contribution, restrictions, and cashout cap all matter too.

For a rough comparison, use the total required betting amount, the RTP of eligible games, and the bonus amount you can realistically retain. Don't treat an expected-value estimate as a guarantee or a reason to gamble. If the offer requires more betting than you are comfortable with, skipping it is a valid choice.

Game Contribution and Exclusions

Not every wager necessarily counts equally toward playthrough. A slot might contribute 100%, while a table game or live dealer game contributes less—or nothing. Some offers exclude particular games, game features, or categories altogether. The rules should spell out the contribution rates and excluded titles.

Contribution changes how much you must actually bet. If you need $3,000 in credited wagering and a game contributes 20%, each $1 bet adds only 20 cents toward the requirement. You would need to place **$15,000 in bets** on that game to generate $3,000 of credited playthrough, assuming the contribution rate is applied that way.

That's why vague wording such as "selected games only" is worth treating as a warning sign. Look for a specific game list or a clear explanation of how categories contribute. If you plan to use a particular game or software environment—such as titles accessed through RealTime Gaming (RTG) or SpinLogic—verify that the exact game is eligible under the offer. The platform or software name alone does not establish that every game qualifies.

Pay attention to these common restrictions:

- Slots may count fully while blackjack, roulette, or video poker count partially or not at all.
- Some games may be excluded even if other games from the same provider are allowed.
- Betting on excluded games may fail to advance wagering—or, under some terms, put the bonus at risk.
- Maximum bet limits may apply while a bonus is active.

When the rules are unclear, don't guess by testing a game with bonus funds. Ask the casino to confirm eligibility in writing and keep a copy of the response.

Max Cashout Caps and Withdrawal Restrictions

A max cashout cap limits the amount you may withdraw from a bonus offer, even if your balance is higher. This can sharply reduce the value of a sticky bonus. For instance, if eligible winnings are capped at five times the bonus amount, a $100 bonus could have a maximum bonus-related cashout of $500, depending on how the terms define the cap. The deposit may be treated separately—or it may not. Confirm the calculation.

Check whether the cap applies to:

- All funds in the account or only winnings linked to the bonus.
- The bonus amount, deposit amount, or a fixed dollar limit.
- Each bonus, each withdrawal, or the entire promotion.

Withdrawal restrictions can also include identity checks, minimum withdrawal amounts, payment-method rules, pending periods, and limits on how many withdrawals you can request. Those are not necessarily bonus-specific, but they affect how quickly and easily you can access eligible funds. A casino may also require you to cancel an active bonus before withdrawing, which can forfeit the bonus and possibly affect funds associated with it.

Before opting in, find out what happens at cashout: Is the sticky bonus simply removed? Are winnings calculated separately? Can you withdraw your deposit while the wagering requirement is unfinished? Is there a maximum cashout? These answers are central to understanding sticky bonus rules—not minor details to leave for later.

A Practical Checklist Before You Claim

1. **Find the wagering base.** Is the multiplier applied to the bonus, deposit, or both?
2. **Convert it to a bet total.** Write down the single amount you must wager to complete the requirement.
3. **Check eligible games.** Confirm contribution rates and specific exclusions.
4. **Read the cashout terms.** Identify whether the bonus is non-withdrawable and whether winnings are capped.
5. **Check the maximum bet.** Exceeding it may affect eligibility under the offer's rules.
6. **Review deadlines and withdrawal conditions.** Note the expiry date, verification requirements, and any rules for withdrawing before completion.
7. **Save the terms.** Keep the offer page or a dated copy, especially if the rules are hard to find.

Comparison and information sites such as Rakeback.com and casino.info may be useful starting points when researching promotions. Treat any summary as a guide, not a substitute for the casino's current offer terms. If a key point—especially the wagering base, game eligibility, or max cashout—is missing, verify it with the operator before you deposit.

Is a Sticky Bonus Worth Taking?

It depends on the full offer and on whether you would play those games without the promotion. A sticky bonus may provide extra playing funds, but its value is reduced by the fact that the bonus itself is generally not cashable. High playthrough, progressive-jackpot exclusions, and a low max cashout are three red flags to watch for. Add unclear game contribution or withdrawal restrictions, and the headline offer may be much less attractive than it first appears.

Compare bonuses by asking: How much must I bet? Which bets count? What can I withdraw if I win? What is the maximum cashout? If the casino does not answer those questions clearly in its bonus terms, consider not claiming the offer.

Play Within Your Limits

Bonuses are optional, and wagering requirements can encourage longer or larger play than you intended. Set a budget before playing, don't chase losses, and avoid treating a promotion as a way to make income. If gambling is causing stress or affecting finances or relationships, take a break and seek support. The National Council on Problem Gambling (ncpgambling.org) offers information and resources for people affected by gambling problems.

The short version: a sticky bonus is usually playable but not withdrawable. Its real value depends on the bet total required, eligible games, realistic expected losses, cashout cap, and withdrawal restrictions. Read those details first—and if they are buried or vague, that is a reason to pause rather than a reason to click faster.