



HARNESS RACING VICTORIA ANIMAL WELFARE FRAMEWORK



HARNESS RACING VICTORIA



Background

This framework was implemented in order to set animal welfare standards for horses in the Victorian harness racing industry. It is expected that licensed participants, breeders, veterinarians, farriers, and other stakeholders involved in the harness racing industry read this document with associated policies and guidelines in order to familiarise themselves with industry expectations.

Equine welfare best practice is an evolving journey, and this framework builds on past work in the animal welfare area. This framework also includes Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) Welfare Guidelines for Trainers to assist them to serve to guide us into the future, setting clear priorities and objectives. Any breaches of these expectations in animal welfare standards will be referred to the HRV Integrity Department for investigation.

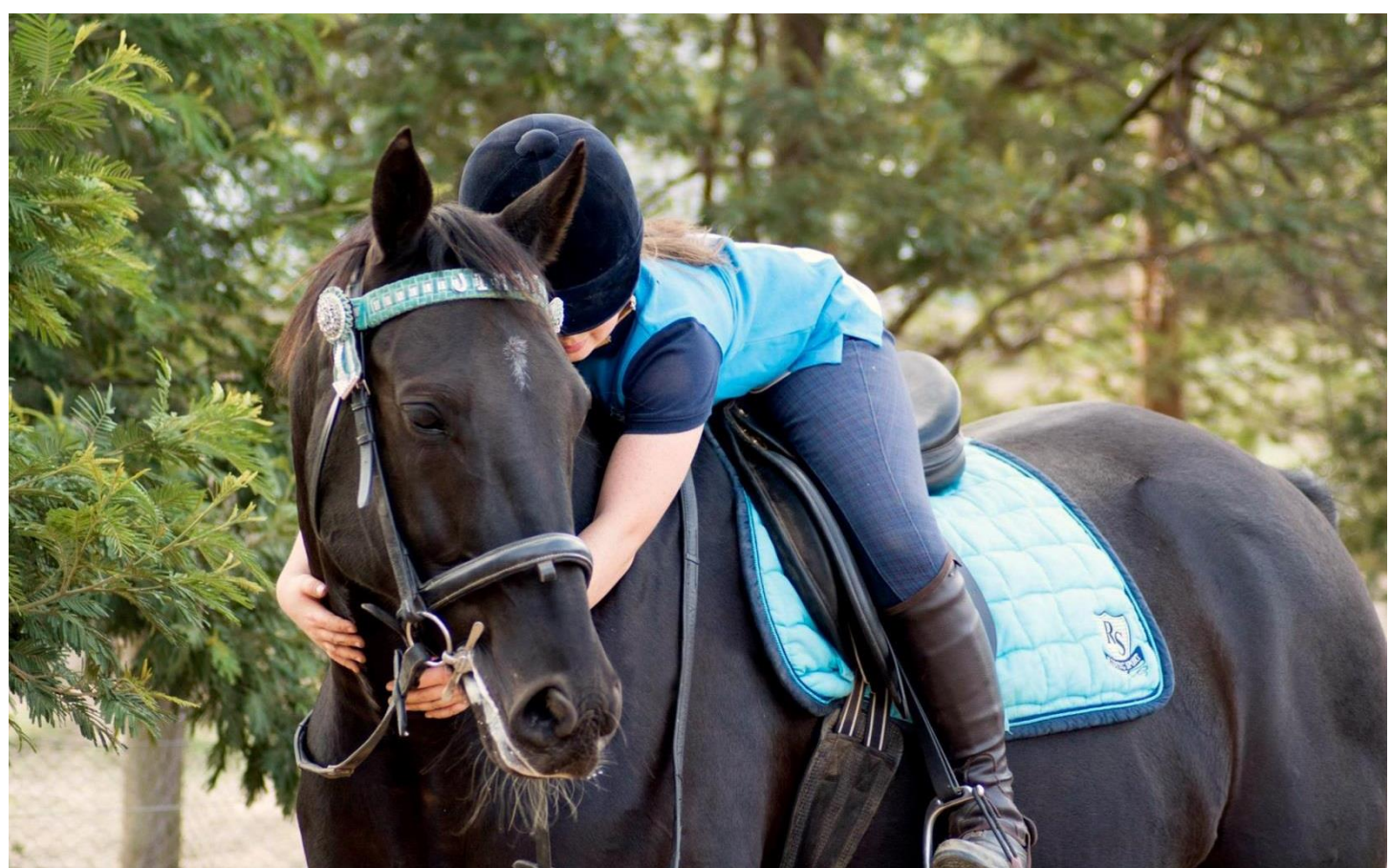
The HRV Integrity Department will not accept compromising welfare of a horse under any circumstances and will be responsible for taking immediate action once notified or made aware of any animal welfare concern.

Any person suspected to be in breach of compromising animal welfare standards may be referred to the HRV Racing and Appeals Disciplinary Board and the RSPCA for official notification.

To highlight the importance of animal welfare in harness racing in Victoria, some key initiatives are proposed to be introduced in 2017 and beyond.

Key Initiatives

1. Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) has developed an Animal Welfare Framework which outlines its strategy and expectations for the care of Standardbred horses. This framework also includes Welfare Guidelines for Trainers, Raceday heat policy and Raceday Veterinary which will assist trainers and industry participants.
2. A compulsory online education module on equine welfare is proposed to be introduced for all HRV licensed trainers. It will become mandatory as part of HRV licensing renewal to have completed this training package in relation to animal welfare.
3. HRV has finalised an information sharing agreement with RSPCA Victoria to work collaboratively on initiatives that benefit the welfare of standard-bred horses and to ensure an appropriate exchange of information.



Industry Standards

Welfare guidelines for horse racing

It is expected that at all stages during the preparation and presentation of Standardbred horses at Victorian race meetings, trials, for racing that their welfare must take precedence over all other demands.

AHRR 218:

A person having responsibility for the welfare of a horse shall not fail to care for it properly.

Good horsemanship

The housing, feeding and training of harness horses in Victoria should be compatible with good horsemanship and must not compromise horse welfare. Any practice which causes physical or mental suffering, whether in stables, training or racing, will not be tolerated under any circumstances. HRV Integrity Department will investigate such matters seriously and take immediate action.

AHRR 90 (2.10):

- a) *A trainer is at all times responsible for the administration and conduct of his stables.*
- b) *A trainer is at all times responsible for the care, control and supervision of the horses in his stables.*

Training methods

A document detailing Welfare Guidelines for Trainers is appended to this framework.

Horses should only be given training schedules which match their physical capabilities and level of maturity. They should not be subjected to training programmes without being properly prepared.

AHRR 225:

A trainer shall adequately condition, prepare and supervise horses trained by that trainer.

The housing, feeding and training of harness horses in Victoria should be compatible with good horsemanship and must not compromise horse welfare

Shoeing

Horse shoes should be designed and fitted to minimise the risk of injury. It is also expected that horse feet at all times shall be adequately cared for whether that be on agistment, in paddocks, stables and/or in training.

Transport

During transport to and from training grounds, racetracks, agistment paddocks, full attention should be paid to protecting horses against injuries and other health risks. Vehicles should be well ventilated and regularly maintained and disinfected.

Rest periods

Long journeys should be planned carefully and horses allowed regular rest periods with access to water. Respiratory problems can often be reduced if horses are able to lower their heads to floor level during rest periods.

Horses are expected to be fit and in a healthy condition prior to racing or trialling.

Immaturity

Horses mature at widely different rates. Training and racing schedules should be carefully planned to minimise the risk of musculoskeletal injuries.

Pregnant mares

Mares should not be raced beyond 120 days of pregnancy.

AHRR 103B:

A mare or filly shall not race or perform track work after day 120 of its pregnancy.

Condition at race meetings should not prejudice horse welfare

Harness race tracks and race surfaces shall be inspected as part of race day Stewards policy and procedure to ensure tracks are safe and to reduce risk factors which lead to injuries.

Misuse of the whip

Abuse of the whip cannot be condoned, for example, to make a beaten horse run faster, or if a horse is clearly winning. The use and misuse of the whip must be read in accordance with any National or Local Rules.

Racecourse Stabling

Racecourse stabling should be safe, hygienic, comfortable and well ventilated. Fresh drinking water, and washing down water should always be available. A horse shall be supervised at all times where practicable.

AHRR 211:

A trainer or other licensed person for the time being in charge of a horse shall not leave the horse unattended at a racecourse whether in a stable or elsewhere.

Veterinary treatment

When a horse is injured during a race, veterinary expertise should be sought as soon as possible and injured horses should be given full supportive treatment before transport, but if required the horse should be transported to the nearest referral centre.

Racing injuries

The incidence of injuries sustained in harness racing and training are monitored. Track conditions, frequency of racing, immaturity, and any other risk factors, are carefully examined to indicate ways to minimise severe injuries.

Euthanasia

If injuries are sufficiently severe the horse may need to be destroyed on humane grounds. Euthanasia should be undertaken as soon as possible with the sole aim of minimising suffering. Veterinary guidance should be obtained to achieve this objective, whilst being cognisant of the importance of minimising suffering.

Retirement

Owners should make every effort to ensure that their horses are sympathetically and humanely treated when they leave racing. Racehorses should be deregistered when they are retired, but their welfare should continually be monitored throughout the life of the Standardbred from cradle to grave.

AHRR 96A

- (1) *The Controlling Body may on application **made by the owner of a horse** withdraw the registration certificate of the horse.*
- (3) *Where a registered horse has been retired from racing or a decision has been made to not race the horse, the owner or trainer of the horse at the time of the retirement must, within one month of the horse's retirement, notify the Registrar by lodging the relevant form prescribed by the Registrar.*

HRV would like to acknowledge the International Group of Specialist Racing Veterinarians (IGSRV) for their welfare guidelines to assist in preparation of the HRV Animal Welfare Framework.

HARNESS RACING VICTORIA WELFARE GUIDELINES for TRAINERS



As a minimum these guidelines aim to adapt the overall intentions outlined within the ‘Welfare Guidelines for Horseracing’ published by the International Group of Specialist Racing Veterinarians (IGSRV) and the basic needs of a horse stated within the Victorian Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses.

The Victorian Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses recommends the basic needs of a horse, irrespective of the husbandry system, include:

- Readily accessible food and water to maintain health and vigour;
- Freedom of movement to stand, stretch, turn around, walk forward, lie down and roll;
- Regular exercise;
- Social contact with other horses or people;
- Accommodation that neither harms nor causes undue strain or discomfort;
- Protection from disease, and regular inspections to assess the need for attention to feet, teeth and parasite control;
- Rapid identification and treatment of injury and disease.

These guidelines further intend to assist licensed persons within the Victorian Harness Racing Industry by outlining the minimum training guidelines approved by Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) for a horse covered by the Australian Harness Racing Rules (AHRR).



Trainer's responsibilities

A Trainer is at all times responsible for the administration and conduct of their stables and the care, control and supervision of the horses within that stable. Should a Trainer be absent from their stables for a period longer than 48 hours they must seek approval from the HRV Stewards and nominate a licensed person to be in charge of the stables in their absence. This absence does not remove the Trainer's responsibility of the stable.

AHRR 90A(2.10)

- (a) A trainer is at all times responsible for the administration and conduct of his stables.*
- (b) A trainer is at all times responsible for the care, control and supervision of the horses in his stables.*
- (c) If a trainer is to be absent from his stables for a period exceeding forty eight (48) hours he must after obtaining the approval of the Stewards nominate a licensed or registered person to be in charge of such stables during his absence.*
- (d) If a trainer is unable to attend a race meeting where any horse trained by him is engaged to race:-*
 - (i) He must nominate in writing his licensed stable representative or another licensed trainer to be responsible for such horse at the meeting.*
 - (ii) The nomination must be notified to the Stewards no later than one (1) hour prior to the advertised starting time of the race.*
 - (iii) The nomination must be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee of such nomination.*
 - (iv) The nomination cannot be further delegated.*
- (e) Any nomination by the trainer in accordance with sub-rules (c) and (d) does not relieve the trainer of the responsibilities imposed by sub-rules (a) and (b).*

AHRR 190

- (3) If a person is left in charge of a horse and the horse is presented for a race otherwise than in accordance with sub-rule (1), the trainer of the horse and the person left in charge is each guilty of an offence.*
- (6) Where a trainer intends to leave another person in charge of a horse in the trainer's absence, then prior to doing so, the trainer must notify the Chairman of Stewards, and the notification must be in the manner, within the time, and containing the information determined by the Controlling Body or the Chairman of Stewards.*

Stable returns

A Trainer must lodge a stable return immediately once a horse enters their care with the intention of racing.

A Trainer must notify HRV immediately in writing or via Harnessweb that a horse has left their care.

Victorian Racing Information

I Stable Returns

I.1.1 A Stable Return, with all sections completed, must be lodged with Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) immediately when a horse comes under the control of a trainer with the intention of preparing the horse to participate in racing.

I.1.2 Any trainer relinquishing the training of a horse shall notify HRV in writing, or via HarnessWeb, immediately upon the horse leaving his/her care.

Behavioural needs

A Trainer should provide appropriate intervention therapy based on veterinary advice or accepted practices to horses displaying a pathological behaviour pattern (stereotypies) including but not limited to weaving, crib-biting, wind-sucking, self-mutilation, pawing or kicking.

Supervision

A Trainer should ensure that all horses within the stable are appropriately supervised and should be inspected at a minimum twice daily to ensure that all basic needs are met e.g. food, water and health check.

A Trainer should ensure that any person left in charge of the stable in their absence is able to rapidly identify signs of ill health in a horse.

A Trainer or the person left in charge of the stable should have ready access to a registered veterinary practitioner to diagnose and treat any illness or injury.

A Trainer should consider plans in the event of emergency situations such as fire, flood, contagious disease, significant injury or death. These plans should also include the requirement to report the instance of contagious disease and death to Harness Racing Victoria as required by the AHRR.

Horse Identification

A trainer should ensure that upon a horse entering the stable it is appropriately inspected so as to establish its identity.

Licensing

A Trainer must ensure that only licensed persons are performing duties within the stable that are regulated by licence. AHRR 90A(2.9)(a) states:

The holder of a trainer's licence shall ensure that all persons carrying out the activities of a stablehand are licensed as stable hands.

Water

A Trainer should ensure that all horses under their care have access to an adequate supply of good quality water to sufficiently meet their daily needs and maintain the good health of each horse.

Water containers should be a design that does not cause injury, however properly secured and non-spillable.

Water containers and mechanical water sources (automatic watering systems) should be inspected at least daily to ensure they are functioning properly and for cleanliness.

Where water is supplied in buckets the supply should be inspected at least every twelve (12) hours to ensure adequate access to water. The inspections should be increased in times of extreme heat.

Where Dams are utilised horse must have safe and easy access and the Dam should be free of rubbish and contaminants. The level and quality of water within the Dam should be closely monitored during periods of low rainfall and extreme heat.

Should the provision of sufficient water not be able to be met horses must be moved, agisted, sold or Harness Racing Victoria contacted for assistance.

Feed

A Trainer should ensure that each horse under their care is provided with a diet of sufficient quantity and quality to maintain good health and meet the physiological requirements of each individual horse. This may include the provision of protein and mineral supplements when required.

If a horse fails to maintain body condition the quantity, quality and availability of the feed along with the health of the horse should be evaluated. This evaluation could consider the following factors:

- State of the horse's teeth;
- Extent of parasitism (worms etc.);
- Veterinary advice sought

Horses should not be allowed to access feed harmful to their health. Examples include:

- Mouldy feed or hay;
- Lawn mower clippings;
- Poisonous plants

Where provision of sufficient feed for good health cannot be met the horses must be moved, agisted, sold or Harness Racing Victoria contacted for assistance.

Transport

Trainers should ensure that horse floats and trucks used for transport are designed and maintained to minimise risk of injury to all horses in their care. Trainers must also ensure when conveying their horses with a horse truck or float, that these vehicle are appropriate, safe and the welfare of the horse is a priority.

When planning travel Trainers should assess the following requirements:

- Nature of the intended journey (race meeting etc.)

- The weather and road conditions anticipated
- The duration that horses will be without feed and water
- Planned rest stops and breaks

Harness Racing Victoria recommends that horses should be allowed to have rest periods every four to six hours. If horses require travel for more than 24 hours then horses are given rest periods at ten hours. Horses should be offered water/food if travelling for periods longer than four hours. They should also be fed well and well hydrated prior to travel.

Training

A Trainer should ensure that each horse is exercised daily, except where the activity may be detrimental to the health and welfare of the horse.

Horses should not be overworked. The training workload imposed should not exceed a horse's fitness, maturity or strength.

Horses on mechanical exercising devices such as walking machines, jogging machines or treadmills should be closely supervised at all times.

A Trainer should ensure that a "trackwork spotter" is in place prior to any horse entering the 'registered training track' so that all persons and horses are supervised in case of accident.

When introducing new horses or those returning from a spell the workload should be gradually increased to prevent injury or stress.

A Trainer should ensure that they and all persons conducting training activities are wearing the appropriate safety equipment as required by the Australian Harness Racing Rules.

AHRR 159A(1) states: *A driver shall wear a helmet which has been approved and entered in the register of helmets approved by Harness Racing Australia.*

AHRR 159A(2) states: *A driver shall at all times when driving or riding a horse keeps his or her helmet correctly fastened.*

AHRR 159A(7) states: *A person shall at all times when driving or riding a horse wear a body protector which has been approved by Harness Racing Australia.*

AHRR 159A(8) states: *A driver shall not be in possession of a modified body protector.*

Stabling

A Trainer should ensure that the stabling premises are designed and maintained to minimise risk of injury to all horses under their care.

Stables and yards should be of a sufficient space to allow the horse to stand freely with the head fully raised, walk forward, turn, lie down, roll, stretch and groom themselves without restriction.

Appropriate clean bedding should be provided in stables to ensure sufficient warmth, comfort and prevent abrasions.

The flooring of stables, yards and tie-up areas should have surfaces which provide sufficient drainage and firm footing for horses.

Gateways and stable doorways should be designed to provide safe and easy access.

The stabling premises should have adequate natural ventilation and should not be enclosed.

The stabling premises should have sufficient lighting to allow for horses to be attended to in an emergency situation during night hours.

Dirty bedding and stale or contaminated feed or water should be removed daily. Disposal of washings, urine and manure should be done in accordance with the requirements of the relevant statutory authorities.

Shoeing

A Trainer should ensure that a horse's hooves are maintained to permit normal mobility and to maintain hoof shape and function.

A Trainer should inspect the hooves and shoes of a horse regularly for signs of injury, loose shoes or impacted stones. Loose shoes with risen clenches (shoe nails) should be removed to prevent possible injury.

Dental care

A Trainer must engage an accredited Equine Dentist or Veterinarian to perform or attempt any dental procedure.

A Trainer should inspect, or have inspected, a horse's teeth at least once a year.

Harness, gear & equipment

A Trainer should ensure that only gear approved by Harness Racing Australia for the use in trials and races is used in training.

A Trainer must ensure that a piece of harness, gear, equipment or other item is not used in a manner which contravenes AHRR 213(a).

AHRR 213(a) states:

A person shall not:-

(a) by use of harness, gear, equipment, device, substance or any other thing inflict suffering on a horse.

A Trainer should ensure that harness, gear, equipment or other items in contravention of AHRR 213(b) are not in their possession.

AHRR 213(b) states:

A person shall not:-

(b) have in his possession any harness, gear, equipment, device, substance or any other thing capable of inflicting suffering on a horse.

A Trainer should ensure that all harness, gear or equipment utilised within the stable is of sufficient quality and strength to cope with the stresses likely to be imposed on it during use.

A Trainer should ensure that only whips which are approved for use in trials or races are utilised during training and are not misused in any way.

Rugging must be appropriate for the weather conditions and not result in heat stress to the animal.

Rugs should be fit for purpose, particularly in extremes of hot, cold or wet weather. Rugs used in wet weather should be weatherproof.

Rugs should be well fitting and in good repair.

Veterinary treatment / injuries

A Trainer should ensure that regular treatment for internal worm parasites is undertaken and treatment of external parasites such as lice is performed. Should a sufficient response to routine treatment not be achieved veterinary advice should be sought.

A Trainer should ensure that a horse which receives veterinary treatment is afforded sufficient time to fully recover prior to competing. A trainer should also report on the incidence of racing injuries within their stable to HRV or any illness which may have affected their performance.

AHRR 89 (1)

After the running of any race and for a period of 7 days thereafter if the owner, trainer, driver, stablehand or any person in charge of the horse is aware of or has knowledge of anything which may have affected the horse's performance in that race, he or she shall report it immediately to the Stewards.

A Trainer should monitor the incidence of racing injuries within their stable to identify risk factors which may include but not limited to; track conditions, frequency of racing and horse immaturity.

Should a horse under a Trainer's care be severely injured requiring euthanasia on humane grounds this should be undertaken as soon as possible with the sole aim of minimising suffering.

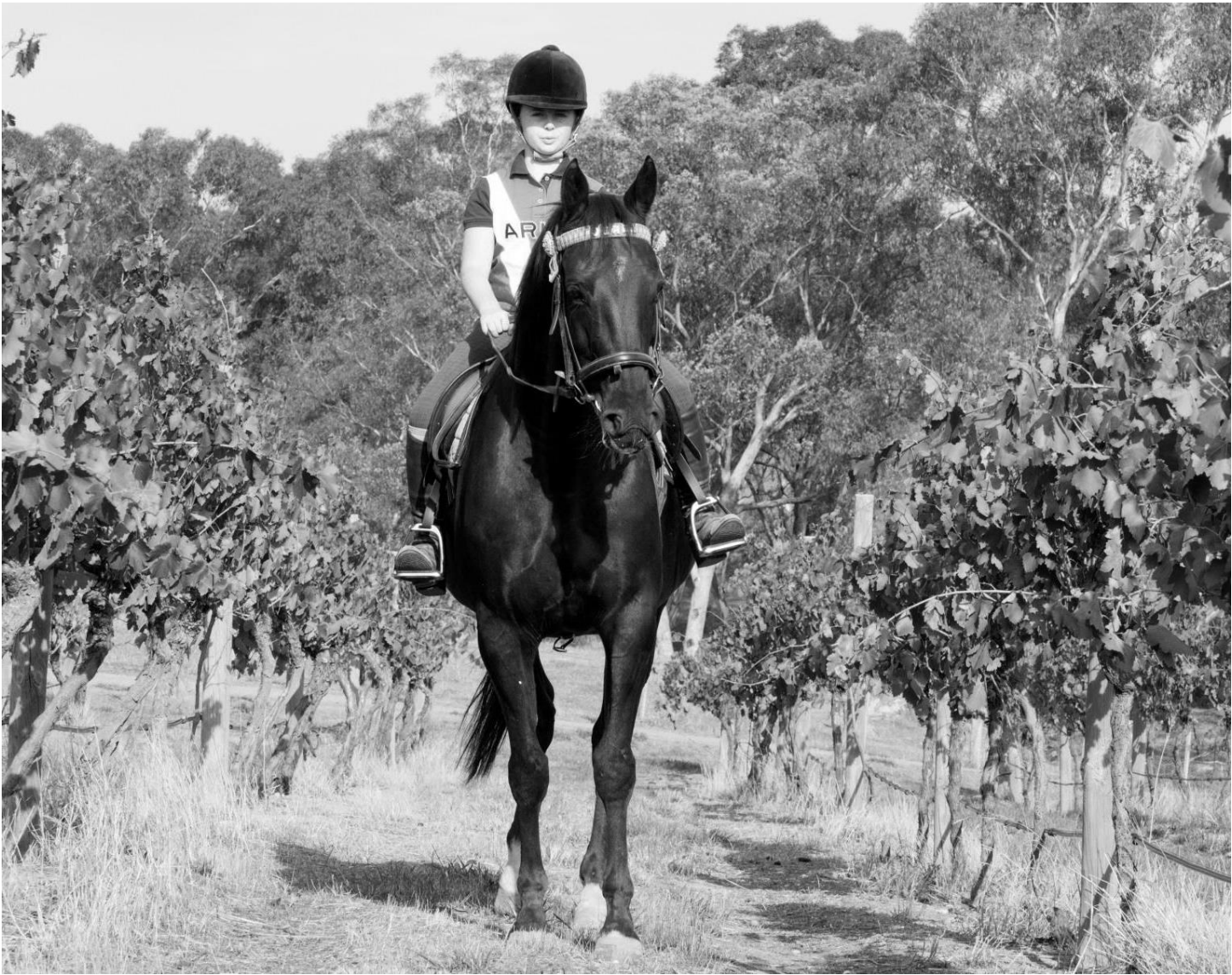
Substances

A Trainer must ensure that all Australian Harness Racing Rules relating to the administration of substances, prohibited or otherwise are adhered. The applicable AHRR are 188; 188A; 190; 190A; 190AA; 190B; 192; 193; 196A; and 196B.

A trainer should ensure that a horse under their care is not administered any substance which has not been registered, labelled, prescribed, dispensed or obtained in compliance with relevant State or Commonwealth legislation, unless directed to do so by a registered veterinarian. Should this occur this may be an offence under the provisions of AHRR 194.

AHRR 194 states:

A person who procures or attempts to procure or who has in his possession or on his premises or under his control any substance or preparation that has not been registered, labelled, prescribed, dispensed or obtained in compliance with relevant State and Commonwealth legislation is guilty of an offence.



Retirement

A trainer should encourage owners of a horse being retired from the harness racing industry to appropriately rehome such horse should the owner not be retaining ownership of the horse. Should the owner be encountering difficulty Harness Racing Victoria may be contacted for assistance.

A trainer must ensure that any horse which is retired is deregistered in accordance with the Australian Harness Racing Rules.

AHRR 96A (3) states:

Where a registered horse has been retired from racing or a decision has been made to not race the horse, the owner or trainer of the horse at the time of its retirement must, within one month of the horse's retirement, notify the Registrar by lodging the relevant form prescribed by the Registrar.

RACEDAY VETERINARY EXAMINATION POLICY



Purpose

To ensure the safety and welfare of horses which have attained an extended age, had a large number of lifetime race starts, not started in a race for an extended period, horses which have raced the day prior, at the same race meeting or are engaged to compete the following day. This is to be achieved through the conduct of race day examinations, both pre- and post-race by the official on-course veterinarian. This policy further strives to ensure the safety of participants, particularly those drivers driving or competing against the horses covered by this policy.

Background

After consultation with highly experienced equine veterinarians Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) Stewards have formulated this policy as horse welfare is of paramount importance to HRV, the wider industry and a fundamental expectation of the general public.

The Australian Harness Racing Rules (AHRR) provides the necessary powers for Stewards to order a horse to be examined in any manner in which they deem appropriate.

AHRR 15(1)(k) states:

15(1) Stewards are empowered (k) to inspect, examine or test in such manner as they consider appropriate any person, horse, racetrack, stable, stud, artificial breeding station or other place, item, document, equipment, vehicle or substance.

Horses covered by this policy

The following horses are covered by this policy and should be examined by the official on-course veterinarian **prior** to competing:

- Horses which have attained an age of twelve (12) years of age or older
- Horses which have started in two hundred (200) or more races
- Horses which have not raced for twelve (12) months or longer
- Horses which raced the day prior

The following horses should be examined **after** competing:

- Horses which have attained an age of twelve (12) years of age or older
- Horses which have started in two hundred (200) or more races
- Horses which have raced more than once at a meeting
- Horses which have not raced for twelve (12) months or longer
- Horses which are engaged to race the day immediately following

Examination type

The type of examination to be conducted is at the sole discretion of the official on-course veterinarian.

Examination should be undertaken both pre and post- race, and at a minimum consist of:

- Auscultation of the cardiac and respiratory system
- Trot up in a straight line (ideally without harness equipment) to assess lameness

If lameness is determined, further assessment of injury or limb as required.

The HRV Stewards will be guided by the advice provided by the official on-course veterinarian as to the suitability of a horse to fulfil any immediate racing engagement.

Licensed persons/registered owners – requirements

A licensed person and/or registered owner shall not hinder or fail to assist the official on-course veterinarian in their examination of a horse.

Any failure to adhere to the requirements of this policy may result in action being taken against that person under the provisions of Australian Harness Racing Rule 238 which states:

A person shall not fail to comply with any order, direction, or requirement of the Controlling Body or the Stewards relating to harness racing or to the harness racing industry.



RACING IN HOT WEATHER POLICY



Purpose

This policy is to assist in the safety and welfare of horses and participants in hot weather conditions at Victorian Harness Racing meetings.

This policy outlines the relevant and appropriate risk factors to be considered when determining whether a meeting should proceed as planned on days of high thermal load and the procedures to be adopted.

Effective date

This policy is effective from 1 February 2017.

Assessing risk factors

Environmental conditions

A day with high ambient temperature, low humidity and a reasonable breeze would not typically cause adverse effects on a Standardbred.

Standardbreds are most likely to be adversely effected by heat stress on days of high ambient temperature, high relative humidity and low wind speed. This would be described as a day of high thermal load.

Although horses cool themselves extremely efficiently through evaporative cooling, this process loses its effectiveness on days of high thermal load (high ambient temperature, high relative humidity and low wind).

Measurement of thermal load

The measurement in degrees Celsius included in weather reports is simply air temperature, measured by a Dry Bulb thermometer. It does not provide a comprehensive measure in assessing the potential risks from heat exposure.

The best available measure is the Wet Bulb Global Temperature (WBGT). The WBGT takes into account ambient temperature, humidity, wind speed and cloud cover.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) is able to provide information on thermal comfort and heat stress indicators on a regional basis through its website, in the form of wet bulb global temperature or WBGT. The Stewards officiating at a meeting are able to access this information from the BOM website as it is updated during the day, and therefore able to monitor for the possibility of adverse conditions for racing in hot weather.

The Chairman of Stewards acting at any race meeting is responsible for obtaining the forecast prior to a meeting and accessing the **WBGT shade** temperature throughout the meeting via the link: <http://www.bom.gov.au/products/IDV65079.shtml>

Where possible a WBGT thermometer should be used by the Stewards and/or the Official Veterinarian at the racecourse in determining the thermal load.

Individual factors - horses

The below factors can possibly influence an individual horse's failure to handle racing in hot weather:

- Travel to a race meeting in a float with low levels of ventilation
- Horses that are unable to sweat well (dry coated)
- Excitable temperament
- Not acclimatised to local conditions (eg. recently relocated from interstate/New Zealand)
- Lack of fitness. (Resuming from a spell)
- Withholding of water of raceday. (Not recommended during hot weather)

Scratching penalty

On a race day where the forecast maximum temperature for the race meeting venue is determined by the Bureau of Meteorology to exceed 38 degrees Celsius, the trainer of a horse engaged at that meeting may scratch the horse free of penalty prior to 8.30am on the day of the meeting. Scratching's effected after 8.30am on race day will attract the normal scratching penalty. Such applications may only be made on the day of the race.

Should a horse be scratched oncourse by the Official Veterinarian due to the hot weather conditions the Stewards will consider any recommendations from the Official Veterinarian in determining an appropriate scratching penalty.

Exertional heat illness - horses

Signs of heat stress include:

- Rapid shallow breathing (panting) with flared nostrils
- Excessive sweating
- Elevated body temperature
- Staggering gait / weakness
- Agitated and distressed appearance
- Impulsive kicking with hind limbs or striking out with front limbs
- Occasionally collapse

Should any of the above signs be identified either pre or post-race this must be immediately reported to the Official Veterinarian and the Stewards.

Protective procedures

The below protective procedures should be implemented when the forecast ambient temperature is 38 degrees Celsius or above, or the WBGT shade is 28 degrees Celsius or above.

Race clubs

- Where possible horses should be stabled out of the sun and in areas that are breezy.
- Ensure adequate wash bays and hoses are available to enable rapid post-race cooling of horses.
- Ensure adequate horse drinking water is available.
- Ensure sufficient ice, water, scrapers, sponges, towels and extra water hoses available. Race club staff should provide large bins and ensure that these are continually stocked with bags of ice and water to assist in the cooling of horses.
- Ensure the swabbing stall interior is as cool as possible, by hosing the roof, allowing adequate ventilation and/or provide fans / air-conditioning.
- Tie-up stalls equipped with fans if possible to enable horses to cool down throughout the day.
- Race clubs must ensure adequate running water is immediately available to thoroughly and repeatedly wet affected horses in order to maximise evaporative cooling. An adequate number of hoses should be provided for this purpose in the parade ring and the race day stalls by the Club conducting the meeting. The club must ensure that all relevant hoses are connected and have adequate water pressure.
- Horse involvement in post-race presentations minimised or cancelled. (Seek guidance from officiating Stewards).

HRV Stewards

- Race club officials should be informed to have ice, water, scrapers, sponges, towels and extra water hoses available. Race club staff should provide large bins and ensure that these are continually stocked with bags of ice and water to assist in the cooling of horses.
- Consideration should be given to employing an additional official veterinarian to patrol the stable area and monitor recovering horses.
- Stewards will minimise the time that horses are required to enter the parade ring and assemble at the pre-race circle.
- Horse involvement in post-race presentations minimised or cancelled.
- The Chairman of Stewards may issue directions to race club officials, licensees and the Official Veterinarian to properly give effect to this policy in order to assist the Official Veterinarian in their duties.

Official Veterinarian

Closely monitor horses for signs of heat stress where possible:

- In the tie-up stall area prior to presentation in the mounting yard
- In the parade ring pre-race
- On arrival at the starting point
- On return to the parade ring post-race
- While in the swabbing area (pre- or post-race)

If the official veterinarian is concerned about a horse's condition pre-race, they shall immediately report their concerns to the Stewards.

Any horse found to be exhibiting signs of heat stress will be given appropriate treatment.

Appropriate treatment may include:

- Repeated application of cool water to the entire body of the horse, followed by scraping of excess water from the horse.
- Walking the horse in a breezy, shaded area between bouts of hosing.
- Oral and/or intravenous fluid therapy if indicated.
- Corticosteroid anti-inflammatory treatment if indicated.
- Sedative drugs if indicated.
- Use of air-conditioned stall if available.
- Use of forced ventilation (fans) if available.
- Use of ice-water soaked towels applied to the horse's body and changed frequently as towels heat up.

The official veterinarian should have an adequate supply of relevant treatments on hand for emergency use.

Trainers & stablehands

Evaporative cooling, particularly sweating, is the most important means of dissipation of body heat for the exercising horse. The liberal application of cold water in shaded, well ventilated places will greatly assist the processes which enable horses to lose excessive body heat on hot days.

Horses can be assisted in cooling down after racing in hot weather by maximising the efficiency of evaporative cooling:

- "Wet and Walk" as water evaporates from the skin it removes body heat causing the horse to cool. Increasing air flow over the horse's skin surface, by walking in shady, breezy areas, improves evaporation rates.
- Horses may need to be hosed and scraped several times in between walking. Scraping of excess water from the coat stops the water acting as an insulating barrier and aids evaporation.
- Bucketing or sponging ice cold water over the horse assists in the recovery of heat affected horses.
- In very humid and wind-still conditions, it may be difficult with the above methods for sweat and water to evaporate quickly enough for adequate body cooling. In these circumstances the use of air-conditioned stalls (which provide cool and **dry** air) and/or the use of fans (to improve air flow over the horse's skin surface) should be utilised.
- Horses should be allowed to drink as much fresh, clean water of ambient temperature as they require after racing.
- Horses must be allowed sufficient time to adequately cool down before being floated back to their stables in a well ventilated float.

Industry Participants

Heat illness can occur in humans during activity on days of extreme heat conditions.

Participants and race day staff should ensure they maintain a regular fluid intake prior to and during the race meeting to replace fluid losses from excessive sweating. It is preferable to drink cool water and sports drinks with electrolyte additives rather than soft drinks as these often contain sugar or caffeine which further add to dehydration through their natural diuretic effects.

Any participant experiencing signs of heat illness should immediately report such to the oncourse medical officials and the Stewards conducting the meeting.

Race Meeting Postponement/Race Start Time Alteration

All the above factors should be considered by the Chairman of the race meeting and the officiating Veterinarian in determining whether the meeting is postponed or the race start times altered to a cooler part of the day or night.

