Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board trading as Racing Queensland

HOT WEATHER POLICY – HARNESS RACING - DRIVERS

DATE THE POLICY WAS MADE

1 March 2016

COMMENCEMENT DATE:

29 June 2016

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to implement a “hot weather” management strategy that will cater for circumstances that may arise at a race meeting affected by extreme heat and ensure the wellbeing of the drivers competing in races during times of hot weather.

POLICY STATEMENT

In any sporting activity, heat stress increases as air temperature builds.

This is strongly reflected by increased discomfort, but also by increased sweating. Stress also increases with rising absolute humidity which impairs sweat evaporation.

Vigorous exercise in sport places participants at risk of heat illness which in hot and humid weather is greater because;

- During high intensity exercise in hot weather people may not be able to produce enough sweat for adequate cooling.
- High humidity may prevent adequate evaporation of sweat.

Extra caution also needs to be taken during unseasonal heat waves or unusually hot or humid weather whereby participants lack acclimatisation.

APPLICATION

This Policy provides recommendations to all drivers competing in Queensland race meetings as well as Racing Queensland Stewards and the race club staff at any given event.

MEASUREMENT OF RISK

The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) website provides the most reliable temperature readings, which are updated throughout each day.

Ambient temperature is the most easily understood guide available, and is most useful on hot dry days.

Ambient Temperature	Relative Humidity	Risk of heat Illness	Possible management for sustained physical activity
15-20		Low	
21-25	Exceeds 70%	Low - Moderate	
26-30	Exceeds 60%	Moderate	
31-35	Exceeds 50%	High – Very High	Uncomfortable for most competitors, increase vigilance, monitor competitor stress
36-38 **Level 1**	Exceeds 30%	High - Extreme	Very stressful for most people. Consider implementing Hot Weather plans including delaying activity to cooler part of the day
38 > **Level 2**	Exceeds 20%	Very Extreme	Consider at this point whether abandonment or modification of a race meeting is advisable. Continue to closely monitor conditions throughout the course of the day. Modifications of a race program might include the postponement, advancement or delay in a schedule if it appears likely the extreme conditions might ease or be avoided

Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT)

Further guidance might be gained from what is known as the WBGT index. The WBGT is useful when the humidity is high.

WBGT	Risk of thermal injury	Possible modifying action for vigorous sustained activity
< 20	Low	
21-25	Moderate to High	
26-28 **Level 1**	High to Very High	Consider implementing Hot Weather plans
29 > **Level 2**	Extreme	Consider at this point whether abandonment or modification of a race meeting is advisable Modifications of a race program might include the postponement, advancement or delay in a schedule if it appears likely the extreme conditions might ease or be avoided

Level 1

This policy will apply all days where the forecast temperature is above 35°C (ambient temperature) or 26°C (WBGT) “shade”. On these days, the following lists of actions are recommended:

Race Clubs:

1. Driver's room should be air-conditioned or at least have good ventilation and fans which provide evaporative cooling through air flow.
2. An ample supply of fluids including ice, cool water and where possible sports drinks are available in driver's rooms.
3. Cool water to be available to drivers behind the barriers.
4. A trained medical/first-aid person on course is available to monitor the condition of drivers.
5. Ensure ample water is available in the driver's room showers.

Stewards:

1. Obtain the forecast conditions and monitor Thermal Comfort Observation as provided on the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) during the race meeting.

   a) http://www.bom.gov.au/qld/observations/index.shtml (see attachment 1 for guidance)
   b) Land Areas / Thermal Comfort

2. Consider liaising with the race club to ensure that the protocols for racing in the hot weather as required of the race clubs are in place before the commencement of racing.

3. Consider minimising the time that the drivers are required to be drivers are not in driver's room in the direct sun light by shortening the pre and post-race parades of horses and the period horses are behind the starting positions.

4. Consider conducting discretionary checking of drivers looking for general symptoms of fatigue, nausea, dizziness and irritability. Alert medical attendants to review any driver where there is a concern.

Drivers:

1 If feeling unwell or experiencing dizziness or undue dehydration advise the stewards who will arrange medical attention.

2 Between drives reduce their core temperature by sponging with cold water or cold showering. There are a number of cooling garments and cold packs that are commercially available for drivers that can be applied between races.

3 Maintain a regular fluid intake during the race meeting to replace fluid losses from excessive sweating. Appropriate fluids include water, and sports drink preparations with electrolyte additive. The partaking of soft drinks containing sugar or caffeine based energy drinks are to be avoided as they will further add to dehydration through their natural diuretic effects.

Level 2

This policy will apply to all days that the forecast temperature is 38°C (ambient temperature) or 28°C (WBGT shade) or above and are in addition to the measures listed in Level 1 of this policy. On these days, the following lists of actions are recommended:

Stewards:

1. Consider at this point whether abandonment or modification of a race meeting is advisable. Continue to closely monitor conditions throughout the course of the day. Modifications of a race program might include the postponement, advancement or delay in a schedule if it appears likely the extreme conditions might ease or be avoided.
2. Consider contacting the race club at the appropriate time prior to the race meeting to ensure trained medical/first-aid person is available to monitor the welfare of drivers with such person to be stationed in or close to the driver's room.
3. Consider restricting to a minimum the time a driver is required to not be in driver's room and in the direct sunlight by abandoning pre and post-race parades of horses and restrict to a minimum the period horses are held behind the starting point.
4. Consider adopting a sympathetic approach to an application for a driver on medical grounds to be permitted to forgo any or all driving engagements on that day.

Drivers:

1. Drivers should endeavour to regulate driving engagements so as not to over commit themselves with regard to the overall number and spacing of race drives.
2. Report to the Stewards and, medical attendants any symptoms which might indicate heat illness.
3. Report to the official veterinarian if the driver is concerned with the condition of a horse post race on return to the horse stalls.

Symptoms of heat illness which may not appear obvious may include:

- light headedness, dizziness - confusion
- aggression or irrational behaviour - nausea
- fatigue
- later symptoms indicating more profound dehydration include:
- cessation of sweating - collapse
- ashen grey pale skin - altered consciousness
- obvious loss of skill and coordination/clumsiness or unsteadiness

(These symptoms may indicate heat stroke which requires immediate medical

treatment. Heat stroke must be treated as a medical emergency)

Factors that increase the risk of heat illness may include:

- high exercise intensity
- lack of fitness
- previous history of heat illness or heat intolerance
- high air temperature
- low air movement
- heavy clothing and protective equipment
- lack of acclimatization
- dehydration
- illness (including virus, flu, gastro)
- medical conditions (including asthma, diabetes etc)

Measures to minimize the risk of heat illness during rest period include:

- reducing clothing and resting
- assisting evaporating cooling with fans and water spray
- wetting/sponging of the skin
- applying ice packs to groin and armpits
- drinking cool water or sports drinks or taking ice

If in the opinion of a driver the conditions are becoming extreme to the point that it is detrimental to their health and safety immediately approach the stewards.

Review

Next review date will be March 2017.

REVISION HISTORY

Version	**Date**	**Description**
1.00	March 2016	Draft Policy to RQ board for approval for consultation.
1.01	June 2016	Final Policy to RQ board approved.