

LICENSED VENUE STANDARDS – HARNESS



1. About these Standards

These Standards outline the minimum requirements applicable to harness licensed venues in Queensland. They are intended to ensure licensed venues provide safe, functional and suitable infrastructure for harness racing and, where applicable, training activities.

The Standards should be read together with *The Standard Required of Licensed Venues Policy* (the **Policy**).

Compliance with these Standards does not limit or replace any obligation of a club to comply with applicable laws, regulatory approvals, workplace health and safety requirements, building requirements, local government requirements or any other statutory obligations. Clubs are responsible for obtaining their own advice about those obligations.

RQ may impose additional requirements, approve alternative means of compliance or grant exemptions from these Standards, in whole or in part, having regard to the nature and frequency of racing or training activities conducted at the venue, the condition and configuration of the relevant asset, and any safety, welfare, integrity or operational risk. Any additional requirement, approved alternative means of compliance or exemption must be notified by RQ in writing and may be subject to conditions.

2. Definitions & Interpretation

In these Standards, unless the context otherwise requires, the terms in the table below have the meanings given to them in this section.

Term	Meaning
Horse Precinct	Designated enclosed areas within the licensed venue that are separated from general public access and prescribed for the training, racing, handling and welfare of horses. These areas include, but are not limited to, tracks, saddling enclosures, mounting yards, parade rings, tie up stalls, stable precincts, swab and veterinary areas, float carparks and loading areas.
Licensed Participants	Any individual or participant licensed by the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission to care for, train, handle or perform duties associated with horses registered for racing.
Licensed Venue/s	The areas or venue set out in the licence, including all public facilities, racing facilities and training facilities in relation to which RQ has granted the relevant licence to stage, host or conduct racing and/or training activities.
Officials	Means any Stewards, Swabbing Attendant, Veterinarian, Mobile Starting Gate Operators, Starters, assistant starters, Judges, assistant judges, Photo Finish, Clerk of the Course, Shoeing Inspector, Farrier, Gate Attendants and Ambulance Officers taking part in the operation of the current race meeting or training activity.
Roadworthy	In suitable operating condition or meeting acceptable standards for safe driving and transport of people on public roads. Any vehicle driven on a road, as defined by Queensland Transport, must be registered.
Training and Exercise Equipment	Any equipment that supports the training of horses, including, but not limited to, gigs, walkers, pools, treadmills, aqua treadmills, round yards and sand rolls.

3. Standards

3.1. Track Surface

Purpose: Tracks provide a uniform surface that enables safe and professional harness racing and training activities.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Track materials	All track materials must be approved by RQ before application.
Surface evenness and consistency	All track surfaces must be even, and the physical properties of the surface, including moisture and compaction, must be consistent for the entirety of the track.
Objects, debris and obstructions	All tracks must be clear of objects and debris and free from obstructions, encroachments and overhanging foliage.
Edges and drainage	Inside and outside edges of the track must be free from weeds and debris and provide adequate drainage.
Surface material stockpile	A stockpile of track surface material must be maintained onsite.
Dual purpose tracks	For grass and/or sand tracks that are dual purpose and facilitate both thoroughbred and harness events, the track standards for the primary racing code apply.

3.2. Irrigation Management

Purpose: Tracks must be able to have water delivered consistently and uniformly in preparation for racing, trialling and throughout a race meeting.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Water truck, cart or trailer	Clubs must have access to a water truck, cart or trailer that can deliver water to the track surface evenly with minimum disruption to track surface material.
Roadworthiness	Water trucks must be in roadworthy condition.

3.3. Pegs & Identifiers

Purpose: Pegs and identifiers define the surveyed inside circumference and other key positions on the track and are essential for racing integrity and safety.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Marker pegs	Pegs must be between 650mm and 750mm in height and remain upright while being able to fold or move on impact to avoid injury to horse or driver.
Safety lane	A safety lane of approximately 2m inside the marker pegs must be available for horses and drivers to use in the event of an incident.
Start and position identifiers	A candy-striped pole must be positioned 50m before the start for mobile events. Each starting position must be surveyed, and starting position pegs must be distinct from other pegs.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Sprint lane and ease-out markers	A red sprint lane guider post must be positioned at the top of the straight. Marker pegs must use blue for the start of the sprint lane, yellow for the remainder of the sprint lane and red at the ease-out position on the entrance to the back straight.

3.4. Fencing

Purpose: Fencing discourages unauthorised access, restricts access to hazards, contains horses and separates the public from horse precincts, officials areas and other restricted areas.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Perimeter fencing	Venues must have a perimeter fence. Where the venue borders major roads, high public areas or hazards, the perimeter fence must be 1.8m high. Otherwise, perimeter fencing must be a minimum 1.2m high and of panel or mesh construction.
Prohibited fencing materials	Star pickets, barbed wire, ringlock, knotted apron hinge joint, other wire fencing with large spacing and electric fencing must not be used in horse precincts. Barbed wire is permissible only as a top wire above chain-link perimeter security fences that are 1.8m or greater in height.
Gates	Gates must be the same height as the fence or rail to which they are attached.
Public and patron areas	Fencing for public and patron areas must be mesh or solid material.
Horse precincts	All horse precincts must be fenced to a minimum height of 1.2m. Clear and direct signage must be visible indicating that horse precinct areas are restricted to licensed participants and officials only. Pedestrian gates to restricted areas should be self-closing or spring-loaded.
CCTV monitoring	Gateways and access points to stabling and tie up stall precincts require recorded CCTV monitoring.
Drains	Drains must be railed or fenced to prevent access by horses, persons and machinery.

3.5. Track Circumference Fencing

Purpose: Track circumference fencing separates the track from public and patron areas, defines the outside circumference of the track and reduces the risk of contact with hazards.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Separation from public areas	A separation between the track and public or patron areas must be achieved by a complete fence that defines the outside circumference of the track.
Construction material	Track circumference fencing must be constructed of mesh or solid material, such as Colorbond.
Height	Fencing height must be between 1.2m and 1.8m, except for the home straight, where fencing must be between 1.0m and 1.2m to provide clear viewing and broadcast vision.
Alignment and protrusions	Rails and fence panels must be straight, with smooth transitions on bends and no exposed pins, joints or sharp protrusions.
Hazards and encroachments	There must be no overhanging or encroaching obstacles or hazards for horses, drivers or gigs.
Sponsorship signage	The outside fence may contain sponsorship signage but must be clean and maintain an appropriate appearance for broadcast.

3.6. Mobile Starting Gates

Purpose: Mobile starting gates safely contain a full field of horses and drivers and enable a safe and uninhibited start.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Approved mobile	Mobile starting gates must be an RQ-approved vehicle fitted with an AVA integrity mobile barrier unit or other unit approved by RQ.
Barrier arms	Barrier arms must be structurally sound, fully operational and free from cracks, distortions, wear, corrosion and sharp edges.
Operational equipment	The barrier unit must have operational warning lights, false start signal device, barrier arm override, intercom, external PA, speed display, speed throttle, barrier tilt adjust, air conditioning, seatbelts, lockable cabin gate or door, and countdown time display on the primary mobile barrier.
Vehicle condition	The mobile vehicle must be fitted with tyres suitable for wet-weather operation, be roadworthy and be serviced in accordance with manufacturer logbook requirements.

3.7. Animal Ambulance & Privacy Screens

Purpose: An animal ambulance is required for the appropriate transport of injured horses and the dignified and discreet removal of deceased horses.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Animal ambulance	
Availability and roadworthiness	An animal ambulance in roadworthy condition and registered for use on roads must be available for all race meetings.
Loading	The animal ambulance must have a loading ramp or self-lowering floor.
Winch and skid	The animal ambulance must have an appropriately fitted winch and skid, or removable mat with winch anchor points, to enable the loading of a deceased horse.
Chest bar and divider	A chest bar and removable centre divider must be provided for an injured horse to brace against.
Recovery straps	Two recovery straps, such as 4WD recovery straps or slings, and shackles must be stored in the animal ambulance.
Privacy screens	
Availability	All venues must have access to two privacy screens to block public viewing of an injured horse.

3.8. Float Carpark

Purpose: The float carpark is a dedicated area for the safe loading and unloading of horses.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Float carpark	All venues must have a fully fenced float carpark or area that is free from hazards, with clear and direct signage indicating that the area is restricted to licensed participants and officials only.

3.9. Tie Up Stalls

Purpose: Tie up stalls are required for the safe containment of horses, ensuring they are protected from extreme weather conditions and preventing physical conflict with other horses.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Capacity	There must be sufficient tie up stalls to cater to the maximum number of horses at the race meeting.
Roof and overhead height	All tie up stalls must have a roof with a minimum overhead height of 2.6m at the point above the horse's poll.
Base	All tie up stalls must have a level, non-slip base.
Tie up points	All tie up stalls must have a tie up point on each side, two in total.
Back-to-back stalls	Back-to-back stalls must have a solid divider between them to prevent horses kicking each other.
Fencing and signage	The tie up stall area and all horse walkways must be fenced to contain horses and prevent unauthorised access. Clear and direct signage must be visible indicating that the area is restricted to licensed participants and officials only.
Lighting	Venues that conduct twilight or night race meetings must have lighting within the tie up stall area.
Sulky/gig storage	The horse precinct must incorporate an area for drivers to safely and securely store their sulky/gig.

3.10. Washdown Bays & Chiller Bins

Purpose: Washdown bays provide a safe and suitable area for washing and cooling horses.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Washdown bays	
Availability and location	Venues must have a minimum of three washdown bays within the tie up/veterinary area.
Hoses and flooring	Washdown bays must be fitted with hoses and have level, non-slip flooring.
Taps and hose fixtures	Taps and hose fixtures must be external to the bay or recessed into a panel wall or guarded to prevent catching horse leads and halters.
Chiller bins	
Availability and location	There must be a minimum of two chiller bins within the tie up/veterinary area. All chiller bins must have input and output hoses and fittings.

3.11. Veterinary & Swabbing Facilities

Purpose: The veterinary/swabbing facility is an area of restricted and controlled access that supports veterinary examinations and protects the integrity of the sampling process.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Swab facility	
Availability and location	All venues must have a minimum of one lockable swab facility located in or within close proximity to the tie up area.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Layout	The swab facility must be divided into a horse containment area with a minimum area of 12m ² and a separate preparation/observation area. The two areas must be separated by a wall or rail.
Lighting	The swab facility must have sufficient lighting to fully illuminate the area. Lighting fixtures must be flush with the ceiling or appropriately guarded to prevent injury if an animal rears.
Air conditioning	The swab facility must be air-conditioned with a minimum 5kW power. The internal component of the air-conditioning system must be mounted at a high point within the swab box where a horse cannot damage it or be injured by it.
Horse containment area	
Containment area requirements	The horse containment area must have limited visibility to the external environment, non-slip flooring, no sharp edges or protrusions, no glass in viewing windows unless Perspex is used, a minimum ceiling height of 2.6m, and a horse entry/exit doorway at least 1.2m wide with a sliding or outwards-opening door.
Preparation area and sample storage	
Preparation area	The preparation area must have access to a bench and sink with clean running and/or potable water, hand soap dispenser, paper towel, rubbish bin and approved sharps container.
Swab sample refrigerator	There must be a refrigerator for the secure storage of swab samples. The refrigerator must be lockable and contained within the swab facility.
Veterinary examination and urinal area	
Trotting observation area	There must be a trotting observation area near or adjacent to the swab facility for veterinary examinations. It must have a hard, clean and even surface with a minimum length of 20m.
Urinal	There must be a urinal separate from the swab stall, within the tie up/veterinary area, with a non-slip floor space greater than 9m ² .

3.12. Drivers Rooms

Purpose: Separate amenities are required for drivers to afford them privacy to prepare for racing and to comfortably accommodate them between races.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Separate amenities	Separate male and female amenities accessible only to drivers and officials are required.
Capacity	Driver room sizes must be able to accommodate and seat the total number of drivers attending race meetings. Common room areas must be considered when undertaking this assessment.
Showers and toilets	Each driver room must include a minimum of one shower and one toilet.
Air conditioning	Driver rooms must be air conditioned.
Food and drink storage	The driver room area must include a fridge to store food and drink items.
Horse numbers	The driver room area must include an area easily accessible by participants for collecting and returning horse numbers.
Washer and dryer	Drivers must have access to a washer and dryer to clean numbers or race colours between races.
Tracking chiclets	The driver room area must include space to store and recharge tracking chiclets.

3.13. Judges Facilities & Equipment

Purpose: Facilities and towers are required to provide an unimpeded view of racing for judges, the photo finish operator, race caller and camera operators.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Elevation and view	The judges facility must have a minimum elevation of 6m from track level to the cabin area and provide a view of the entire circumference of the track and the finish post.
Enclosure and air conditioning	The judges tower must be enclosed from the elements and fitted with air conditioning.
Structure and capacity	The judges tower must be structurally sound and able to accommodate all essential race day officials, including judges, photo finish operator, race caller and camera operators, being a minimum of four people, together with equipment.
Photo finish camera mount and equipment	The judges tower must have an unobstructed, surveyed and secured ledge or mount for the photo finish camera, a minimum of two GPO outlets, two digital monitors, and communication with the Chief Steward by phone or closed-channel two-way radio system.
Camera and broadcast area	The judges tower must have a separate room or area for the camera operator and broadcast announcer.
Tower access	Towers must allow safe access, including stairs and handrails. If heavy equipment is used in the tower and access is via ladder, a winch or system to lift or carry equipment is required.

3.14. Winning Post & Semaphore Board

Purpose: A dedicated winning post is required to mark the finish line, and a semaphore board displays race results to the patron area.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Winning post	
Surveyed position	The winning post position must be surveyed and identified with a marker peg.
Associated structures	Any associated winning post structure must be located at least 1m from the safety lane.
Semaphore board	
Electronic semaphore board	An electronic semaphore board is required to display race results to the patron area.

3.15. Stewards Room & Towers

Purpose: Stewards rooms and towers are required to allow stewards to perform their duties effectively.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Stewards room	
Size and capacity	A stewards room must be of sufficient size, and have tables and chairs, for six people, with capacity to accommodate up to eight people.
Facilities and equipment	The stewards room must be air conditioned and have two double GPO outlets, two digital TV monitors and a refrigerator.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Security and privacy	The stewards room must be lockable and able to ensure privacy during an enquiry and secure evidence and equipment during the race meeting.
Stewards towers and viewing areas	
Number and visibility	There must be at least four viewing areas or stewards towers, with a minimum elevation of 3m from track level to the cabin or viewing area, enabling a head-on view of the home straight, back straight, home turn and lateral viewing of the entire track.
Roofing and power safety	All stewards towers require roofing to provide protection from the elements. If power is installed, the tower must be earthed.
Night racing access lighting	Towers or viewing areas at venues that conduct night racing must have lighting that provides clear viewing of access pathways and tower access stairs or steps.
Main stewards tower	
Floor area	The main stewards tower must have a floor area that accommodates two people.
Monitors	The main stewards tower must have two TV monitors to monitor broadcast vision and wagering fluctuations.
Communications	The main stewards tower must have an operating communication system, such as phone or closed-channel two-way radio, between the judge/race caller, starter and stewards room.
Recall system	The main stewards tower must include the activation control for a recall system, including lights and siren, with beacons located on the back and front straight.

3.16. Track Lighting Systems

Purpose: Track lighting systems are essential for night broadcast vision and improve participant safety by creating greater visibility.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Illumination	Licensed venues that host twilight or night race meetings must have a lighting system that provides a consistent level of lighting for the entire length of the track, with no variation or black spots.
Backup power	Track lighting must be supported by a backup generator.

3.17. Training & Exercise Equipment

Purpose: Training and exercise equipment supports the safe training, exercise and handling of horses outside of ridden trackwork.

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Sharp edges and protrusions	Training equipment must be free from sharp edges or protrusions. Otherwise, padding, guards or shrouds must be applied.
Doors and gateways	Doors and gateways, if hinged, must open outwards to facilitate safe exit.
Walkway surfaces	Walkway surfaces must be even and non-slip, including under wet conditions.

3.18. General

Asset/description	Standard/requirement
Required condition	Assets, facilities, equipment and surfaces used for racing, training, horse handling or race day operations must be maintained in a condition suitable for their intended use and, where applicable, be fully functional, structurally sound and capable of supporting their anticipated use and loading.
General Hazards	All Animal Precincts, and Official and Participant Areas must be free of hazards from: • uneven or muddy terrain. • excessive manure and other biohazards. • debris, stockpiled building materials. • machinery and/or implements. • sharp edges on equipment and other infrastructure. • electrical exposure.

4. Asset Rectification Process

4.1. Venue Inspection

RQ may inspect a venue from time to time to assess whether it complies with the Standards and remains suitable to be licensed.

Where RQ identifies non-compliance with the Standards, the following process will ordinarily be applied by RQ to notify the club, manage any immediate risks and facilitate rectification.

4.2. Asset Cases

Where RQ identifies non-compliance with the Standards, RQ will create an Asset Case in Race Cube and notify the club by automated email.

In urgent circumstances, RQ may also contact a club representative in person, by phone or voicemail, text message or separate email to notify the club of the Asset Case.

The Asset Case will specify:

- details of the non-compliance;
- the timeframe within which the non-compliance must be rectified (**Rectification Period**); and
- any action required before future race meetings or training activities may proceed at the venue, including rectification or interim risk controls.

A club must take all reasonable steps to rectify the non-compliance, and complete any action required before future race meetings or training activities may proceed at the venue (if applicable), in accordance with the Asset Case.

4.3. Acceptance of an Asset Case

The club must acknowledge the Asset Case within 21 days of notification (or any shorter timeframe if communicated by RQ, in urgent circumstances) by either accepting or objecting to the Asset Case in Race Cube.

By accepting the Asset Case, the club acknowledges the non-compliance and agrees to take all reasonable steps to rectify it within the Rectification Period.

Failure to rectify an accepted Asset Case within the required timeframe may result in RQ taking further action in response to the non-compliance, including action under the Policy, any relevant licence conditions, the Rules of Racing or the Act.

4.4. Objection to an Asset Case

A club may object to an Asset Case where it disputes the existence of the non-compliance, the rectification requirements, the rectification Period or any other aspect of the Asset Case.

The objection must include:

- the reasons for the objection; and
- any requested extension to the Rectification Period.

After considering the objection and any other relevant information, RQ may:

- direct the club to rectify the non-compliance in accordance with the Asset Case;
- amend the Asset Case, including any extension to the Rectification Period; or
- withdraw the Asset Case on any terms RQ considers appropriate.

RQ may make its decision after discussing the matter with the club and will notify the club of the outcome via Race Cube.

Unless RQ directs otherwise, the club must continue to comply with the Asset Case, including implementing any interim risk controls and taking all reasonable steps to rectify the non-compliance.

4.5. Rectification and Finalisation

Once the club considers the non-compliance has been rectified, it must request finalisation of the Asset Case as soon as reasonably practicable by:

- recording the rectification steps taken by the club in the 'Club Notes' section of the Asset Case in Race Cube;
- providing sufficient evidence of compliance, including photographs or any other evidence requested by RQ; and
- changing the status of the Asset Case to "Maintenance Ready for Approval".

RQ may require further information, evidence or an inspection before finalising the Asset Case. If RQ is satisfied that the asset complies with the Standards, RQ will finalise the Asset Case in Race Cube.