

Updated and effective 19 February 2021

Purpose

The objectives of the Thoroughbred Code Protocols are to:

- Protect racing industry stakeholders (e.g., licensed persons, officials etc), licensed racing venues and training centres from the potential spread of COVID-19; and
- Continue to give guidance and structure to the core racing operations of a race meeting.

Background

The Queensland racing industry has continued to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic, subject to operational restrictions and protocols, with the approval of the Chief Health Officer. Race meetings were originally conducted without Patrons and only racing industry participants deemed as Essential Racing Personnel were permitted to attend. The core functions of racing continued under the COVID-19 Racing Code Protocols adopted by RQ.

With the easing of previous restrictions by Government, and as racing clubs transitioned to racing with Patrons, identification of Core Racing Areas for the conduct of racing operations and Patron Areas for public attendance was of principal importance.

As restrictions have continued to ease, full segregation of Patrons and Essential Racing Personnel has not been required, albeit Core Racing Areas are generally restricted to licensed participants and officials. This means the Core Racing Area for Essential Racing Personnel and racing operations have largely remained separate from Patron Areas.

Industry COVID Safe Plan

The Industry COVID Safe Plan for the Queensland Racing Industry and Racing Clubs (the Plan) was approved by the Queensland Government's Chief Health Officer in June 2020. The purpose of the Plan is to provide an overarching plan with guidance and structure to facilitate the return of Patrons to race meetings in a staged approach. The Plan deals primarily with requirements for the Patron Areas. The Plan is continually reviewed and updated in line with the Government Roadmap to easing restrictions and any directions issued by Government.

Racing clubs are required to operate under the Industry COVID Safe Plan for the Queensland Racing Industry and Racing Clubs and must publicly display the COVID Safe Statement of Compliance.

Thoroughbred Code Protocols

Included in this document are protocols and guidance relating to the core functions of a race meeting (i.e., those that relate to the Core Racing Area of the venue and Essential Racing Personnel):

- Restriction of entry to Queensland / Declared COVID-19 Hotspots (when applicable);
- Attendance – Core Racing Area Access;
- Temperature testing on arrival;
- Food and beverage service;
- Separation and hygiene:
 - Stewards;
 - Jockeys;
 - Trainers/stable staff;

- Barrier staff;
- Other officials;
- Parade ring;
- Training venues and stables; and
- Animal care providers.

Racing clubs conducting race meetings are required to meet the requirements of this document and any additional instruction, direction or advice provided by RQ, as well as any requirements of the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) that may be imposed at a race meeting.

Racing clubs may provide additional information specific to their venue to assist essential racing personnel in adhering to these protocols and all relevant requirements.

Restriction of entry to Queensland / Declared COVID-19 Hotspots (when applicable)

The following links provide details of Queensland Government Border restrictions information and Directions, health advice and declared COVID-19 hotspots (if there are any declared). All industry participants are required to ensure they are aware of, and comply with, any requirements contained therein.

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/border-restrictions>

[Border restrictions | Health and wellbeing | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](#)

[COVID-19 update | Health and wellbeing | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](#)

[COVID-19 hotspots | Health and wellbeing | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](#)

- In line with Queensland Government Border restrictions Directions issued by Queensland's Chief Health Officer, persons who have been in a declared COVID-19 hotspot in the 14 days prior to proposed entry into Queensland or since the start date identified for the COVID-19 hotspot (whichever is shorter), are not permitted to enter Queensland except through an exemption available under the Direction.
- From 1am AEST Saturday 13 February 2021, 36 Victoria local government areas (LGAs) that make up Greater Melbourne are declared a [COVID-19 hotspot](#). Anyone who enters Queensland who has been in any of those LGAs on or since 7 February 2021, will have to:
 - complete a [border pass](#);
 - enter Queensland by air; and
 - quarantine in government-arranged accommodation for 14 days.
- From 1am AEST Saturday 13 February 2021, anyone who enters Queensland who has been anywhere in Victoria in the last 14 days will need to [apply for a border pass](#) before entering Queensland.
- If you arrived in Queensland before 1am AEST Saturday 13 February 2021, and:
 - if you have been in any venue on this [list of venues](#) in Greater Melbourne as determined by the Victorian Government, you should get tested immediately, isolate for 14 days, and call 13HEALTH; or
 - if you have been in Greater Melbourne in the last 14 days, but have not been to one of the listed venues, you should get tested immediately and isolate until you receive a negative result.
- Notwithstanding any of the above, RQ may require any person to undergo and provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test post arrival into Queensland and prior to entering any racing or training venue.
- Any person who enters Queensland and develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19 within 14 days after entry, must present for a COVID-19 test.

The following link provides information related to the Quarantine for International Arrivals Direction and quarantine-free flights, with reference to flights and arrivals from New Zealand to Australia:

[Quarantine for International Arrivals Direction | Health and wellbeing | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/public-health-directions/border-restrictions).

Inter-state horse transportation from declared COVID-19 hotspots for racing purposes

Inter-state transport of horses from any declared COVID-19 hotspots by Approved Float Companies only

- Where Government regulations allow, horses will be permitted to travel to Queensland, however any licensed or registered personnel, or essential personnel (being those currently approved for access to race meetings and training centres) are not permitted to travel with such horses, other than employees of the Approved Float Company.
- An “Approved Float Company” is any Float Company which is registered as a transport company, and which has sought and been granted approval by RQ to transport racing thoroughbred horses to Queensland from a declared COVID-19 hotspot.
- The horse’s trainer must make arrangements (notified and approved by the QRIC Stewards) through deployment of approved staff or a designated caretaker trainer within the receiving zone.
- **Trainers will be required to notify the QRIC stewards of arrangements for travel and care of horses prior to each horse’s departure.**
- Transport drivers (freight drivers) are to make prior arrangements with drop-off points and are not to access licensed premises when delivering horses (unless otherwise approved by QRIC stewards). They must remain within their cabin and a designated Queensland staff member of the horse’s trainer or caretaker trainer must be on hand to take delivery of the horse being transported.
- **Horses transported from a declared COVID-19 hotspot for the purposes of racing must have completed their journey by the time designated as 5pm on the day prior to the race meeting.**
- Upon arrival the designated staff member must ensure that any gear attached to the horse is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected to minimize any risk of COVID-19 being spread within the stable environment.
- Prior to, and upon completion, of the journey the Float Company must ensure the vehicle is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected to minimize any risk of COVID-19 being spread on future journeys.
- Transport (freight) drivers undertaking travel from a declared COVID-19 hotspot should refer to the Direction and other guidance from the Queensland Government about additional requirements for entry into, and whilst they are in, Queensland:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/public-health-directions/border-restrictions>

Attendance – Core Racing Area Access

To help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, access to the Core Racing Area is strictly restricted to Essential Racing Personnel, which includes:

- Licensed jockeys (including apprentice Jockeys) engaged to compete at the race meeting;
- Licensed trainers with runners engaged at the race meeting;
- Registered stable staff of the trainers with runners engaged at the race meeting (trainers to minimise the number of stable staff in attendance);

- QRIC stewards, veterinarians and swab officials (and any other QRIC approved raceday officials);
- Barrier attendants, starters and essential track staff;
- Clerks of the Course;
- Judges (including assistant judges where applicable) and photo finish operators;
- Scales / weighing room staff and jockeys' (room) attendants;
- Raceday Event Staff;
- Security / gate attendants including horse stalls, mounting yard and float carpark;
- Ambulance services and/or club doctor;
- Farriers and other essential service providers approved by RQ and the race club;
- Broadcast service providers (SKY Racing, Channel 7, Radio TAB, PSP, On the Bit [Non-TAB]) including race callers;
- Restricted core racing media as approved by RQ and the race club; and
- Restricted operational Race Club management and RQ management.

In addition to those persons detailed above, a racing club may grant Registered Owners who have a runner engaged at the race meeting access to the Core Racing Area (or parts thereof). The number of Owners granted access will be determined by the racing club based on the requirements of the Industry COVID Safe Plan being met.

Temperature testing on arrival

Temperature testing of Essential Racing Personnel on arrival at race meetings has been discontinued.

Notwithstanding the above, Essential Racing Personnel are advised not to enter a racing venue if they are feeling unwell, have been in close contact with a known active case of COVID-19, have any COVID-19 symptoms, have travelled from overseas (except as provided for persons from New Zealand on quarantine-free flights), or been to a declared COVID-19 hotspot in the previous 14 days or since the start date identified for the COVID-19 hotspot (whichever is shorter).

Temperature testing of Essential Racing Personnel may be reintroduced by RQ in the future dependant on any direction or advice of the Chief Health Officer or the Queensland Government. RQ will reassess these protocols at that time if those circumstances arise.

Food and beverage service

For any food and beverage services provided to Essential Racing Personnel within the Core Racing Area, it is the racing club's responsibility to ensure appropriate protocols are in place with respect to food service as set out in the Industry COVID Safe Plan.

Separation and hygiene

Racing clubs are required to implement satisfactory measures to ensure the principles of the directions issued by the relevant authorities regarding space and distancing are adhered to.

This includes not exceeding the maximum occupancy density of one person per two square metres, avoiding physical contact, as well as regular handwashing, sanitisation and hygiene processes.

Racing clubs should display in areas used by essential racing personnel relevant information sheets about COVID-19 and ways to reduce the spread of the virus.

Stewards

Racing clubs should liaise with QRIC to understand QRIC's resource levels to be in operation at the race meeting and ensure that a room of sufficient size to meet the spacing requirements is available for use.

QRIC will need to be mindful of the number of persons (i.e., jockeys, trainers etc) that then enter the stewards' room at any one time to ensure spacing requirements are adhered to.

Jockeys

Racing clubs should ensure that the rooms available for both female and male jockeys are of sufficient size to meet the spacing requirements. Where required, overflow or alternate rooms should be made available.

Racing clubs should ensure that access to the jockeys' rooms is limited as much as possible in terms of the number of jockeys' room attendants (and scales/weighing room staff).

Due consideration must be given to the operations of the scales area for weigh-out and weigh-in processes, including interaction with clerks of scales and trainers for collection of saddles, to ensure that requirements of physical distancing and spacing are adhered to. This also includes satisfactory measures to clean and/or disinfect any pieces of equipment or gear that become soiled (e.g., gear that is used in a race or equipment that may be touched by a person etc).

Trainers/stable staff

Physical distancing measures of 1.5 metres distancing should be adhered to the extent possible in the performance of work functions/duties (i.e., saddling horses etc.).

Where trainers/stable staff are required to pass or interact with others, racing clubs should endeavour to allow for separation of 1.5 metres on any pathways or thoroughfares.

Barrier staff

In the performance of their work functions/duties, barrier staff should adhere to the 1.5 metres physical distancing requirements to the extent possible.

Racing clubs should ensure that barrier staff are provided with, and encouraged to use, appropriate products for handwashing, sanitisation and hygiene purposes.

Other officials

Racing clubs should ensure that all other officials are able to perform their work functions/duties whilst adhering to the 1.5 metres physical distancing or one person per two square metres space requirements, as applicable.

Parade ring

To limit the number of people in the parade ring for each race, access is restricted to:

- The person leading each horse (the registered stable staff or trainer if applicable);
- The jockey or apprentice jockey riding each horse;
- The Trainer or registered stable representative;
- QRIC stewards and race club official/s; and
- Clerks of the Course.

Race clubs are to ensure that an area is available outside the perimeter of the parade ring to enable trainers, owners and jockeys to interact pre- and post-race, allowing for the 1.5 metre physical distancing or one person per two square metres requirement to be adhered to.

Training venues and stables

Access to all training venues and stables in Queensland during designated trackwork hours is restricted to licensed persons engaged in the training of licensed racing animals, RQ and QRIC officials, race club staff as required, essential personnel (e.g., Vets, Farriers, Medical Officers etc.) and registered owners. Trainers shall assume responsibility for contact tracing of their registered owners.

Members of the public (i.e., non-licensed or non-registered parties) may:

- Visit stables to meet a Trainer (outside of designated trackwork hours if the stables are oncourse at a licensing racing venue) and, if doing so, the Trainer shall assume responsibility for contact tracing; and
- Visit a racing/training venue to watch a trial, jump out or trackwork, in which case they must be positioned in an area designated by the racing club (e.g., section of a grandstand) to enable the racing club to facilitate contact tracing of those members of the public.

Animal care providers

Persons whose primary business is the provision of key animal husbandry and care services (veterinarians, farriers, chiropractors) are permitted to continue to operate and service clients.

RQ recommends these services should be provided:

- To adhere to the strict bio-security requirements of Federal and State Governments, including physical distancing and hygiene; and
- Trainers are required to keep a logbook to record all visits to stables by animal care providers.