

Effective July 14, 2020

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;
- Limit the unnecessary movement of licensed persons and racing animals, as well as other relevant persons into and throughout Queensland to avoid 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 with racing at a restricted number of racing venues throughout Queensland in recent months during the COVID-19 pandemic, subject to operational restrictions and protocols, with the approval of the Chief Health Officer. These race meetings have been conducted without Patrons and only racing industry participants deemed as Essential Racing Personnel have been permitted to attend. The core functions of racing have continued under the COVID-19 Racing Code Protocols adopted by RQ. These will continue to operate for the Core Racing Areas used by Essential Racing Personnel.

Re-introduction of Patrons to Race Meetings

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

During Stage 2 of easing the restrictions, racing clubs hosting Patrons operated two distinct and clearly separated areas at the racing venue to ensure minimised risk of contact between Patrons and Essential Racing Personnel.

1. **Core Racing Areas** – areas critical to the conduct of racing and Essential Racing Personnel (as detailed in this document); and
2. **Patron Areas** – includes all areas not critical to the conduct of racing and is accessible to patrons (refer to the Industry COVID Safe Plan).



From Stage 3, segregation of Patrons and Essential Racing Personnel is not required, albeit Core Racing Areas are generally restricted to licensed participants and officials, meaning the Core Racing Area for Essential Racing Personnel and racing operations will remain separate from Patron Areas and Patrons.

The Industry COVID Safe Plan for the Queensland Racing Industry and Racing Clubs (the Plan) has been approved by the Queensland Government's Chief Health Officer. 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.

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 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):

- 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/mounting yard;
- Training venues and stables
- Travel restrictions for licensed persons and other essential service providers;
- Animal care providers;
- Inter-state horse transportation for racing purposes; and
- Further advice for those involved in horse transport and collection.

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.

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.

Further to the above, a racing club may choose to offer restricted catering services and oncourse wagering services within the Core Racing Area to service the Essential Racing Personnel. Where a racing club wishes to offer these services within the Core Racing Area, they should engage in prior discussions with RQ and/or QRIC.

Leaving the Racecourse

After arriving on the racecourse and completing the temperature testing process (outlined above), a licensed participant is not permitted to leave the racecourse unless:

- A. The person has completed their work commitments (and in the case of a jockey has been released by the QRIC stewards); or
- B. The person has a reason to the satisfaction and approval of the QRIC stewards to leave the racecourse and return in order to carry out their work functions (e.g., to take a horse back to home stables and return with another).

In the circumstances provided by point 'B' above, the licensed participant will be subject to the temperature test process when they re-enter the racecourse.

Temperature testing on arrival

Essential Racing Personnel attending a race meeting will be subject to temperature check/s on arrival and prior to entry to the racecourse being allowed.

It is the responsibility of each race club to ensure Essential Racing Personnel entering the Core Racing Area of a racecourse have passed the temperature testing process.

The testing process and requirements will be as outlined:

- Each person is tested upon arrival at the racecourse by a Medical Officer;
- A verified test within the normal parameter (under 37.6) is required before the person can enter the racecourse;
- If a person records an elevated temperature, the person will be given the opportunity to have a further temperature test up to 15 minutes following the first test; and
- If the person's temperature remains elevated the person is not permitted to enter the racecourse. The person is required to leave the racecourse and should be advised to seek medical advice through 13HEALTH. For jockeys, a medical clearance to the satisfaction of the QRIC may be required before riding again.

To facilitate the temperature testing process, access to the Core Racing Area should be via a single-entry point. Where this is not possible, there should be no more than two separate entry points:

- A separate entry point for people only with 1.5 metres between persons (including between entry and exit paths); and
- A separate entry point for vehicular and equine movement only.

Food and beverage service

If the racing club offers food and beverage services 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 physical distancing requirements of remaining 1.5 metres apart and avoiding physical contact, having no more than one person per four square metres in an indoor space, 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 also 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 possible, racing clubs should use alternate raceday stalls to increase space between each trainers' horses, and therefore space between trainers and stable staff etc.

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

Trainers' interactions with jockeys should always be maintained at the 1.5 metres physical distancing requirement.

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 four square metres space requirements, as applicable.

Parade ring/mounting yard

To limit the number of people in the parade ring/mounting yard 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;
- QRIC stewards and race club official/s; and
- Clerks of the Course.

Trainers are not permitted to enter the parade ring/mounting yard (except if leading the horse) and jockeys are to be legged-up by race club official/s.

Race clubs are to ensure that an area is available to enable trainers and jockeys to interact pre- and post-race, allowing for the 1.5 metre physical distancing 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, and essential personnel (e.g., Vets, Farriers, Medical Officers etc.).

Notwithstanding the above, during Stage 3 of the Government's Roadmap to easing restrictions, non-licensed persons 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 or jumpout, in which case the non-licensed person must be positioned in an area designated by the racing club (e.g., section of a grandstand) segregated from licensed persons, and the racing club shall assume responsibility for contact tracing.

Animal care providers

During this period, 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, wherever possible, these services should be provided:

- Outside of trackwork hours to limit exposure to licensed participants;
- 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.

Restriction of entry for licensed persons and other service providers from COVID-19 hotspots

- In line with the Queensland Government's Roadmap to easing Queensland's restrictions, and the Border restrictions Direction (No. 8) issued by Queensland's Chief Health Officer, effective midday July 10, 2020, persons who have been in a declared COVID-19 hotspot in the 14 days prior to proposed entry into Queensland, are not permitted to enter Queensland except through an exemption available under the Direction.
- Refer to the following links for details of the Direction and exemptions for entry, and the list of current declared COVID-19 hotspots:
<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/public-health-directions/border-restrictions/10july>,
<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/hotspots-covid-19>.

Interstate travel for licensed persons and other service providers

- Licensed persons and other providers who have not been in a declared COVID-19 hotspot in the previous 14 days may enter Queensland in line with the Queensland Government's border entry requirements, and may attend a Queensland racing and training venue for the purposes of carrying out licensed duties (training or racing).
- Further to the above, for attendance to complete work engagements at a race meeting in Queensland:
 - Travel by commercial aircraft to Queensland is permitted, however, the travel must not be on the day of the race meeting; or
 - If the licensed person wishes to travel and arrive on the day of the race meeting, travel must be by road.

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

Inter-state transport of horses from 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 no later than 9am on the day prior to race day;**
- 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/10july>.

Further advice for those involved in horse transport and collection

As any movement of a horse necessarily also involves movement of people who are directly involved in the horse’s transport, it is vital that protocols are in place to prevent unnecessary contact between the people involved in the horse’s transport at either end of the journey.

In order to achieve the desired outcome, horse transport should involve the minimum staff necessary at all stages of the journey (pick-up, transport and drop-off).

Attention must also be drawn towards the potential for gear and other objects (including the animal) that come into contact with a potentially infected person to spread the infection to another person.

Accordingly, the following protocol has been developed by RQ in conjunction with QRIC:

Horse pick-up

- Prior to arrival at pick-up location, the horse transporter should be showered and wearing a clean set of clothing. Hand hygiene should be performed just prior to arrival;
- Prior communication with pick-up location should occur to facilitate efficient pick-up of horse;
- The transporter should be met by one allocated person at the pick-up location who has undergone the same level of personal hygiene and hand sanitisation;
- The truck should be made ready to receive the horse (ramps down, dividers open etc); and
- There shall be an allocated person at the pick-up location to open the horse's stable (while maintaining physical distancing from transporter) allowing the transporter to catch the horse with their own head collar and lead and place it in the transport bay on their truck, secure the gate and drive to the destination.

Transport

- Stops en-route should be kept to a bare minimum (fuel stop, toilet stop etc) with close attention paid to physical distancing and regular hand hygiene;
- Travel should be planned to follow the most direct route to minimise travel time; and
- For longer journeys the legislative requirements for rest and watering stops for land transport of the horse will need to be adhered to, ensuring the horse's welfare during the journey.

Horse Drop-off

- Prior communication with the drop-off location is necessary to ensure the efficient drop-off of the horse at destination;
- The transporter is to be met by a single allocated person at the drop-off destination, who has undergone personal and hand hygiene procedures as previously detailed (shower, clean clothes and hand hygiene);
- The transporter is to provide access to the horse in the transport bay to the allocated drop-off person while maintaining physical distancing;
- The allocated drop-off person is to undo the transporter's head collar and replace it with their own head collar and lead prior to leading the horse off the truck and into the stable complex;
- The horse is to be shampooed in horse wash/detergent before drying off and being placed in its allocated stable;
- All head collars and leads (transporter's and drop-off recipient's) are to be disinfected prior to next use; and
- The transporter and drop-off recipient are to undergo hand hygiene.