

**Effective 15 April 2021**

## **Purpose**

The objectives of the Harness 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, meaning the Core Racing Area for Essential Racing Personnel and racing operations has 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.

## **Harness 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 (now discontinued);
- Participant sign-in;
- Food and beverages;
- Separation and hygiene; and
- Training venues and stables.

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 (if there are any declared) 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.
- 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 \(www.qld.gov.au\)](#).

### **Inter-state horses from declared COVID-19 hotspots**

*Transport of horses by approved float companies from declared COVID-19 hotspots by Approved Float Companies only*

Where Government regulations allow, standardbred horses will be permitted to travel to Queensland from declared COVID-19 hotspots, 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'.

The following conditions also apply:

- An 'Approved Float Company' is any float company which is registered as a transport company, and which has sought and been granted approval by Racing Queensland to transport racing standardbred horses to Queensland from inter-state;
- For horses currently trained by trainers in a declared COVID-19 hotspot, the trainer must make arrangements (notified and approved by the QRIC Stewards) for a designated caretaker

trainer within Queensland. This arrangement must be made and notified to QRIC prior to transport 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);
- **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;** and
- 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 restricted to Essential Racing Personnel, which includes:

- Licensed drivers engaged to compete at the meeting;
- Licensed trainers with runners engaged at the meeting;
- Licenced stable hands working for trainers engaged at the meeting (trainers to minimise the number of stable staff in attendance);
- QRIC stewards and veterinarians;
- Barrier attendants, starters, mobile barrier drivers and essential track maintenance staff;
- Clerks of the Course;
- Judges and photo finish operators;
- Race meeting event staff including raceday office secretary and security/gate attendants;
- Ambulance services;
- Farriers and other essential service providers approved by Racing Queensland and the race club such as course electrician;
- Broadcast services providers (SKY Racing & PSP) including race caller;
- RQ accredited media as approved by Racing Queensland and the race club including course photographer; and
- Restricted operational race club management and Racing Queensland management.
- Pony Trot participants and officials from the Queensland Junior Harness Racing Association and the Queensland Mini Trotting Sporting Association.\*

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. Owners are not to enter the racecourse via the Core Racing Area (where Essential Racing Personnel enter the racecourse). Owners must enter via the Patron entry point.

\*Pony Trot participants and officials are permitted to access the Core Racing Area solely for the purpose of Pony Trot competition which has been approved by Racing Queensland and the Race Club. A separate stabling area will be made available to minimise contact between Pony Trot participants (and officials) and other Essential Racing Personnel. A register of Pony Trot participants and officials in attendance will need to be provided to the Race Club.

Additionally, children will not be granted access (unless licenced or competing in an approved Pony Trot competition).

### **Temperature testing on arrival (discontinued)**

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 (if there are any declared by the Queensland Government) in the previous 14 days.

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.

### **Participant sign-in**

RQ has implemented new sign-in practices at all harness racing meetings in Queensland during COVID-19.

Trainers and drivers will need to present themselves to the Acceptance Office at the host racing club and advise the club staff member which horses have arrived on course and the names of their stable hands in attendance.

The club staff member will initial the sign-in sheet and enter a check-in time and check-out time. This will avoid multiple people using the same pen and touching the same sign-in sheets.

A similar practice will be adopted when purchasing molasses, with the club staff member signing the molasses sheet.

### **Food and beverages**

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**

All 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.

Personal actions to assist with the community obligation to uphold physical distancing include:

- Participants to leave immediately after their racing commitments once cleared by stewards;
- Covering your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue;
- Disposing of tissues properly;
- Washing your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitisers, including before and after eating, after going to the toilet, and after using shared equipment;
- Cleaning and sanitising frequently used objects such as mobiles, keys and wallets;
- Avoiding large public gatherings if they are not essential;

- Keeping a distance of 1.5 metres between you and other people whenever possible;
- Minimising physical contact, especially with people at higher risk such as older people and people with existing health conditions;
- Supporting physical distancing enhancements introduced by QRIC, RQ, and Club officials at race meetings; and
- Not attending race venues if feeling unwell.

### **Training venues and stables**

Access to all training venues and stables in Queensland during designated training 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.