

Overview

Racing Queensland with support from the QRIC and guidance from the Queensland Government has implemented a range of bio-security measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and protect racing participants and the broader community.

This document provides clubs and participants with detailed protocols and bio-security measures necessary for the continuity of racing. It is essential that anyone permitted to participate in the Queensland harness racing industry or attend race meetings or training venues understand the protocols and abide by them until further notice.

Included in this document are protocols relating to:

- Attendance - Essential Raceday Personnel
- Separation (social distancing) and Hygiene
 - o Reduced field sizes
 - o Participant Sign In
 - o Race color/silks restrictions
 - o On-course Catering
- Temperature Testing on Arrival On-course
- Interstate/Overseas participants and horse transportation for racing purposes

Attendance - Essential Raceday Personnel

Race meetings

To help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, attendance is strictly restricted to essential raceday 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. Maximum of one stable hand per three horses with trainers asked to minimise the number of 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;
- Raceday 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.

No on-course wagering facilities will be available, including TAB and bookmakers, and essential personnel will be required to leave the racecourse after their horses have run or duties are completed. Additionally, children will not be granted access (unless licenced).

Training

Only licensed trainers, registered stable hands, licensed drivers, RQ officials, club staff and essential personnel (vets, farriers, medical staff) will be permitted to attend trackwork and/or training centres within Queensland.

Separation and Hygiene

Race 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 social 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.

The intent of the patron-free racing is to assist the community obligation to uphold social distancing principles where at all possible. Personal actions to assist include:

- Participants to leave immediately after their racing commitments once cleared by stewards;
- Face-to-face media interviews cancelled;
- 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're 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; and
- Supporting social distancing enhancements introduced by QRIC, RQ, and Club officials at race meetings.
- Not attending race venues if feeling unwell.

In addition to the standard requirements for social distancing and hygiene the following also applies.

Reduced field sizes

Until further notice, RQ has advised of the following amendments to Queensland field sizes to assist with the appropriate spacing of horses at race meetings and ensure stables are not reused:

- Redcliffe and Marburg field sizes reduced to 8 with a maximum of 80 horses per meeting including trials (excluding Clerks Of Course); and
- Albion Park field sizes to be reduced to 10 with a maximum of 100 horses per meeting including trials (excluding Clerks of Course).

Participant Sign in

RQ has now implemented new sign-in practices at all harness racing meetings in Queensland.

Trainers and Drivers will need to present themselves to the Acceptance Office at the host race club and advise the club staff member of 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.

Race colour restrictions

Until notified otherwise RQ has implemented new restrictions on race colours.

The same set of racing colours are not permitted to be shared amongst drivers to avoid cross contamination. As such, a decision has been made that drivers shall compete in their own racing colours for each drive at any specific race meeting.

The only exception to above is - Drivers can wear owners colours only if driving for just that owner on the day and no other set of colours are required.

Drivers who do not have a registered set of race colours - or do not have their registered set of race colours available - are asked to contact the Racing Queensland Harness Racing Office to discuss alternative arrangements.

Club colours will not be available for use whilst the restrictions are in place.

Drivers must wash their colours between each race meeting to ensure adequate hygiene standards during the restriction period.

On-course Catering

No food or drink will be available for sale on-course. This permitted to attend race meetings are encouraged to bring their own catering.

Temperature Testing

Mandatory temperature testing has been implemented across all harness race meetings.

Upon entering each racecourse, permitted on-course personnel must immediately undergo a temperature check with those displaying a temperature of 37.5 or above not be permitted to enter and/or compete.

Anyone experiencing an elevated temperature will be given the opportunity to have a secondary temperature test up to 15 minutes following the first assessment, but if the person's temperature remains elevated, they shall be required to leave the venue and are advised to seek medical advice through 13HEALTH.

For participants who fail a temperature test, a medical clearance to the satisfaction of the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission may be required before attending a race meeting again.

Interstate Participants And Horse Transport

Participants

Any licensed participant who arrives in Qld from inter-state will be required to undertake a mandatory 14-day self-isolation period before being permitted onto a Queensland racecourse.

Any participant looking to relocate to Queensland must notify QRIC and advise their date of arrival and their place of residence for the duration of the isolation period.

Horse Travel for Racing (current up until 18 May)

After 15 April 2019 Standardbred horses which meet one or more of the following eligibility criteria are permitted to enter Queensland for racing purposes and contest the following features. They are:

- Horses eligible for 2020 QBRED 2YO TRIAD series (Pacing and Trotting)
- Horses eligible for 2020 QBRED 3YO TRIAD series (Pacing and Trotting)
- Horses eligible for 2020 QBRED 4YO TRIAD series
- Horses eligible for the 2020 Redcliffe Yearling Sale 2YO series
- Horses eligible for the 2020 Redcliffe Yearling Sale 3YO series
- Horses eligible for the 2020 APG Brisbane Sale 2YO Series
- Horses eligible for the 2YO Trotters Springboard Series
- Horses eligible for the 3YO Trotters Springboard Series

Horses currently racing inter-state and in a licenced Queensland trainers name as at April 1, 2020 will be also permitted to return to Queensland to race.

Standardbred horses to arrive into the state of Queensland from interstate that do not meet the above criteria will not be permitted to race in Queensland until further notice.

Any permitted inter-state standardbred entering for racing purposes must adhere to the following transport guidelines. They are:

Inter-state transport of horses by approved float companies

Where Government regulations allow, standardbred 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'.

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 inter-state trainers, 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). 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 must have completed their journey prior to acceptance time of their nominated race;

Upon arrival, the designated staff member/trainer collecting the horse must ensure that any gear attached or floated with the horse is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected to minimize any risk of COVID-19 being spread within the stabling 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; and

Any transport driver undertaking inter-state travel must not enter licensed premises or act in another industry capacity (eg: strapper or stablehand) whereby they enter a racing or training complex in that capacity for a period of 14 days from the date they last entered Queensland from inter-state.

Inter-state transport other than by Approved Float Company

Where Government regulations allow, horses that meet the above eligible race criteria will be permitted to travel from inter-state to Queensland, however, if the transport is other than with an Approved Float Company, the person transporting that horse (and any persons who come into close contact with that person) will not be permitted access to any licensed racing or training facility in Queensland for a period of at least 14 days.

The following conditions also apply:

Transport 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;

Upon arrival the designated staff member must ensure that any gear attached or floated with 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 driver must ensure the vehicle is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected to minimize any risk of COVID-19 being spread on future journeys; and

Any transport driver undertaking inter-state travel must not enter licensed premises or act in another industry capacity (eg: strapper or stablehand) whereby they enter a racing or training complex in that capacity for a period of 14 days from the date they last entered Queensland from inter-state.

Further advice for those involved in Interstate Horse Transport and Collection

1/ Horse pick-up

- Prior to arrival at pick-up location, 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.
- 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.).
- Allocated person at pick-up location to open horse's stable (while maintaining social 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.

2/ Transport

- Stops en-route should be kept to a bare minimum (fuel stop, toilet stop etc.) with close attention paid to social distancing and regular hand hygiene.

- Travel should be planned to follow the most direct route to minimise travel time.
- For longer journeys the legislative requirements for rest and watering stops for land transport of horse will need to be adhered to, ensuring the horse's welfare during the journey.

3/ Horse drop-off

- Prior communication with drop-off location to occur to ensure efficient drop-off of horse at destination.
- Transporter 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).
- Transporter to provide access to horse in the transport bay to allocated drop-off person while maintaining social distancing.
- Allocated drop-off person to undo transporter's head collar and replace with own head collar and lead prior to leading the horse off the truck and into the stable complex.
- Horse to be shampooed in horse wash/detergent before drying off and placing in its allocated stable.
- All head collars and leads (transporter's and drop-off recipient's) to be disinfected prior to next use.
- Transporter and drop-off recipient to undergo hand hygiene.