

# Hot Weather Policy Thoroughbred and Harness Racing



<b>Department</b>	Integrity
<b>Responsible RWAA Manager</b>	Chief Steward Thoroughbred/Harness
<b>Date of Approval</b>	1 November, 2020
<b>Effective Date</b>	1 November, 2020
<b>Review</b>	This policy will be reviewed bi-annually, or earlier as need arises.

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>To outline when the RWAA Thoroughbred/Harness Stewards will declare that a venue is 'hot weather affected'.</p> <p>The primary objective of this policy is to protect the safety and welfare of racing industry participants and racing horses.</p> <p>This policy details how Racing and Wagering Western Australia will manage the safety and welfare of racing participants and racehorses during periods of hot weather experienced at race meetings and official trials.</p> <p>Controls outlined aim at reducing the heat related risks present during hot weather and provide guidance on race meeting scheduling and/ or abandonment in specific circumstances.</p>
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<b>Scope</b>	All participants, RWAA and racing club officials must comply with the requirements in this policy.
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<b>Key Risks of Racing in Hot Weather</b>	While heat stress is occasionally seen in racehorses in hot weather conditions, most fit racehorses cope well with hot weather. Thoroughbred and Harness races are conducted over relatively short distances, so maximal exertion in the heat only occurs for a short period. The amount of heat generated, and body water lost is relatively low compared to many other horse sports.
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Many factors must be considered when deciding upon the safety of racing in hot weather conditions:

Ambient temperature

Humidity

Air movement

Individual horse factors

Transport distances

Racecourse facilities and micro-climate

Duration of the race

Time of year and opportunity for horses to adapt to hot weather conditions

The safety of personnel and horses are most likely to be compromised when both the ambient temperature and relative humidity are high, and wind speeds are low or absent.

A day with high ambient temperatures, low humidity and a breeze is generally not a particularly high-risk day but a warm day with very high humidity and no breeze may well be high risk day.

Horses cool themselves efficiently by evaporative cooling, but high ambient temperature and high humidity will slow the rate of transfer of heat from the horse's body to the environment.

It should be noted that equine heat stress can occasionally be seen during the cooler months, especially in spring when the days can be quite warm, but horses might still be carrying a winter coat, are trained in the cooler hours of the morning, and may not have adapted to the warmer daytime temperatures.

## Policy

### Policy Principles

The welfare of the horse always comes before travelling, racing and trialling endeavours. Adherence to the requirements in this policy will assist in minimising the potential for heat stress in horses transported, raced or trialled on 'hot weather affected' days.

For the purpose of this policy the:

- **venue** is the location where a race meeting or official trial is scheduled to be held.
- **scheduled day** is the day that the race meeting is scheduled to be held.
- **forecast maximum temperature** is the highest temperature forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) for the venue at any time within the **duration of the scheduled race meeting**.
- **duration of the scheduled race meeting** is the time which altogether covers the period from 1 hour prior to the advertised start time of the first race, until 30 minutes after the last race.

### Pre-race day risk assessment

1. The Steward in Charge of any upcoming race meeting has primary responsibility to manage the risks of hot weather conditions by monitoring the regional weather forecasts using the most detailed BOM data.
2. Detailed forecast data can be found at <http://www.bom.gov.au/places/wa/>
3. The location of the race meeting and "Detailed 3 hourly forecast" should be used for accurate weather forecast information.
4. The forecast weather should be monitored from at least 7 days prior to the scheduled day.
5. Management options that will be applied by RWWA where the forecast maximum temperature is 38°C or higher include:
  - a. Modifying the start time of the race meeting to avoid peak hot weather conditions; or
  - b. Change the venue of the meeting; or
  - c. Re-schedule the meeting to another day; or
  - d. Abandoning the scheduled race meeting where no alternative mitigating actions can be taken.
6. At or around 9am on the day prior to a race day on which the temperature is forecast to be 38°C or higher, the Steward in Charge will convene a discussion with relevant personnel to assess the risks associated with proceeding with the race meeting at the particular racecourse.

<p><b>Declaring a 'hot weather affected' day</b></p>	<p>7. RWVA Stewards will declare a venue to be 'hot weather affected' if the <b>forecast maximum temperature</b> is 35°C or higher for the venue at any time within the <b>duration of the scheduled race meeting</b>.</p>
<p><b>RWVA options on 'hot weather affected' days:</b></p> <p><b>35-37.9°C</b></p>	<p>8. Where the <b>forecast maximum temperature</b> for the venue at any time within the <b>duration of the scheduled race meeting</b> is between <b>35-37.9°C</b>, RWVA may:</p> <p>a. continue with the meeting consistent with requirements set out in this policy, ensuring all safety recommendations for racing in hot weather, as detailed within this policy, are observed.</p>
<p><b>RWVA options on 'hot weather affected' days:</b></p> <p><b>38°C or higher</b></p>	<p>9. Where the <b>forecast maximum temperature</b> for any venue at any time within the <b>duration of the scheduled race meeting</b> is forecast to be 38°C or higher RWVA will apply one or more of the following options;</p> <p>a. Modifying the start time of the race meeting to avoid peak hot weather conditions; or</p> <p>b. Change the venue of the meeting; or</p> <p>c. Re-schedule the meeting to another day; or</p> <p>d. Abandoning the scheduled race meeting where no alternative mitigating actions can be taken.</p>
<p><b>Steward requirements and decisions prior to the race meeting</b></p>	<p>10. In the week prior to the Hot Weather affected race meeting the Steward in Charge will contact the Race Club to discuss requirements for the day.</p> <p>11. The Steward in Charge will send an email to the Club Manager and Track Manager to outline Club requirements for racing on 'hot weather affected' days and provide a copy of the "Racing in Hot Weather Check List" (Appendix A).</p> <p>12. Where a trainer has a horse engaged at a race meeting where the forecast maximum temperature at the venue, or at the location of the trainers registered stables, on the day of the scheduled race meeting, is 35°C or higher, a trainer may, before the prescribed race day scratching deadline, seek permission from the Stewards to withdraw the horse from its engagement without a scratching penalty applied (Harness). A rider's fee will still be applicable (Thoroughbred). (04/03/21)</p>
<p><b>Steward requirements and decisions during the race meeting</b></p>	<p>13. Notify participants that race day hot weather protocols are to be in place for the race meeting either prior to the first race, or at the point during the race meeting that protocols are implemented. This may include announcements relating to parading directions to keep participants informed.</p> <p>14. The minimum period prior to the races that horses are required to be on-course may be reduced.</p>

	<p>15. The time that horses are required to parade or to be held in the mounting yard both pre-and post-race or behind the starting barriers should be minimized.</p> <p>16. Depending on the conditions and set up of the mounting yard, horses may enter just before they are ready to go out onto the track so that they can be kept in the shade for as long as possible pre-race, and leave the mounting yard as soon as the jockey dismounts and unsaddles post-race. Alternatively Stewards permission can be provided for horses to proceed to the barriers directly from, and after the race return to, the first mounting yard only.</p> <p>17. Advise Riders or Drivers, should they become concerned with the condition of their horse at any time, they should proceed directly to the ORV in the mounting yard or at the barriers.</p> <p>18. Regularly liaise with the ORV during the race meeting to discuss ambient weather conditions and the post-race recovery of horses</p> <p>19. The ORV will closely monitor all horses and at any time the ORV can make recommendations to the Stewards that the meeting be abandoned, if in their opinion the welfare of the horses competing is likely to be adversely affected by changing or unexpected extreme conditions.</p> <p>20. Where the actual temperature after the commencement of a hot weather affected race meeting falls below 35°C, the Steward in Charge may at their discretion, relax or dispense with any of the additional race meeting requirements for hot weather affected days set out in this policy.</p> <p>21. Stewards may not permit Harness horses to engage in a pre-race warm up on hot weather affected days.</p>
<p><b>Race Club Requirements</b></p>	<p>22. In the week prior to a Hot Weather affected race meeting the Stewards will contact the Club Manager or Track Manager to outline the requirements for 'hot weather affected' race meetings, including providing a copy of the "Racing in Hot Weather Check List" (Appendix A)</p> <p>23. The "Racing in Hot weather check list" (Appendix A) must be completed and returned to the Steward in Charge prior to the race day.</p> <p>24. Horse stalls should be designed and maintained to be as cool as possible and may include the use of roof sprinklers and/or stall misting systems.</p> <p>25. All horse stall sprinklers or misting systems must be functional and serviced at least annually before the month of October.</p> <p>26. An adequate number of wash bays and hoses should be available to enable rapid post-race cooling of horses.</p> <p>27. Adequate cool drinking water should be available.</p> <p>28. Large containers of ice water in mobile containers and smaller buckets and scrapers should be available at appropriate locations including the mounting yard, hosing bays and sample collection areas. The Club should have a designated staff member replenishing the ice water supply during the race meeting.</p>

	<p>29. Hoses with adequate water pressure should be available in the mounting yard and be of sufficient length to reach all points of the mounting yard.</p> <p>30. The sample collection areas should be kept as cool as possible, for example by the operation of sprinkler systems or hosing the roof, ensuring adequate ventilation and by providing fans or air-conditioning.</p> <p>31. All Club air conditioning systems in sample collection areas must be functional and serviced at least annually before the month of October.</p>
<p><b>Communications</b></p>	<p>32. Decisions to abandon or relocate a race meeting, observing the guidelines within this policy, should be made as early as possible, and where possible prior to the day of the race meeting.</p> <p>33. Where there is a possibility that a race meeting may be at risk of abandonment or relocation due to extreme weather, this information should be communicated in advance to relevant RWWA departments including a time frame when a final decision will be made.</p> <p>34. Following is a guide to relevant communications:</p> <p>a) In the event of extreme heat conditions being forecast at a venue for a race meeting; discussion between Stewards, Racing office and Race Club will occur in the days prior to the scheduled race meeting.</p> <p>b) Notification of any race rescheduling must be communicated by the Stewards to the Executive; Racing department; Wagering Ops; Public Relations team and TABradio. The Racing department are to notify industry directly and the Public Relations team are to communicate externally via the RWWA Media Platforms.</p> <p>c) In the event that a race meeting is at risk of being abandoned and a decision to relocate the meeting hasn't been arrived at; then communication regarding a final decision being made should be shared with the following– Chief Steward; Racing department; Wagering department; Public Relations team; Executive; Industry participants and affected Race Club, advising them when a final decision is to be made. The Racing department are responsible for notifying industry participants directly.</p>
<p><b>Participant requirements on all 'hot weather affected' days</b></p>	<p>35. In preparation for racing on hot weather affected days horses should be well hydrated leading up to the race meeting.</p> <p>36. Where possible horses should be stabled out of the sun and in areas where there is good movement of air.</p> <p>37. Wash bays and hoses will be available to enable rapid post-race cooling of horses. Hoses should be run to remove any hot water that has accumulated within the hose before putting water on the horse.</p> <p>38. Ice water bins will be available for the rapid cooling of heat affected horses and should be utilised accordingly.</p> <p>39. Adequate cool drinking water will be available, and horses should be given free access to drinking water upon return to the stall area post-race.</p>

	<p>40. Horse handlers should monitor horses under their care closely on hot, humid days – particularly in the period following the race. Any concerns should be brought to the attention of the on-course veterinarian.</p> <p>41. Trainers are reminded where they have any concerns a horse may not be coping with the hot weather; they should approach the Stewards to request permission to withdraw the horse. The Stewards may seek the opinion of the on-course veterinarian before considering such an application.</p>
<p><b>Official Raceday Veterinarians (ORV)</b></p>	<p>42. The ORV should monitor all horses on course for signs of being heat affected throughout the day – particularly paying attention to horse’s recovery post racing.</p> <p>43. Any heat affected horse seen prior to racing will be immediately reported to the Stewards, and a decision will be made, in consultation with the ORV, on the suitability of that horse to race.</p> <p>44. Any horse found to be heat affected will be given appropriate treatment and cooling.</p> <p>45. The Veterinary Surgeon should have an adequate supply of appropriate medications to treat a heat affected horse.</p> <p>46. All cases of exertional heat illness will be reported to the Stewards including an assessment of the severity of each case.</p> <p>47. Further information on treating exertional heat illness can be found in the ORV manual.</p> <p>48. The ORV and Sample collection staff will monitor the sampling procedures to ensure that horses are cooling appropriately and adjust the process as required with any heat affected horses.</p>

**APPENDIX A – RWWA RACING IN HOT WEATHER CHECK LIST**

Date	
Race Club	
Club Personnel completing check list	
Signature	
Steward conducting pre-race inspection	
Signature	

**Equine Welfare Requirements**

- Adequate wash bays and hoses must be available to enable rapid post-race cooling of horses
- Adequate drinking water must be available for horses.
- Hoses with adequate water pressure must be available in the mounting yard and be of sufficient length to reach all points of the mounting yard.
- Large containers of ice water in mobile containers must be available at appropriate locations including the mounting yard, hosing bays and sample collection areas. Empty buckets should also be in these locations to allow water to be put on horses.
- Sweat scrapers should be available at the mounting yard to assist in stripping water that has been heated by contact with the horse from its skin to assist in cooling the body.
- The sample collection stalls should be kept as cool as possible for example the operation of sprinkler systems or hosing the roof, ensuring adequate ventilation and by providing operational fans/air-conditioning where fitted.
- Where possible horses should be in tie up stalls out of the sun and in areas where there is good movement of air. Tie up stalls should be kept as cool as possible. Consideration should be given to using sprinkler or misting systems.

**Racing Participants Welfare Requirements**

- Cold drinking water including appropriate drinking receptacles must be made available to all participants or employees at the following locations - starting barriers and horse stalls.
- Cold drinking water including appropriate drinking receptacles must be made available in the vicinity of the horse stalls area to licensed and registered persons who are required to work at the race meeting
- Cold drinking water, sports drinks and ice must be provided in the riders or drivers rooms
- Sunscreen to be made available in either the secretary's office or the scales area
- Ensure air conditioners or fans are operational in the riders or driver's rooms