

# *Tasracing Animal Welfare*

*Code of Practice for  
Racehorse Welfare*



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*Animal Welfare*

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# Code of Practice for Racehorse Welfare

<b>Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Part 1 – Preliminary</b>	<b>3</b>
Section 1 – Introduction	3
Glossary of terms	6
<b>Part 2 – General care of racehorses</b>	<b>7</b>
Section 1 – General	7
1. Identification and traceability	7
2. Supervision of racehorses	8
3. Natural disasters and emergencies	9
Section 2 – Conditions in which racehorses are kept and transported	11
4. Accommodation and protection of racehorses from weather extremes	11
5. Racehorse transport	13
Section 3 – Racehorse husbandry and health care	14
6. Water requirements	14
7. Feeding of racehorses	16
8. Behavioural needs of racehorses	19
9. Racehorse education and training	20
10. Exercise	22
11. Dental care	23
12. Foot care	25
13. Racehorse health, veterinary procedures and treatments	26
14. Biosecurity and protection from infectious disease	28
15. Breeding and foaling	30
16. Racehorse retirement and rehoming	32
17. Euthanasia or humane destruction	33
Section 4 – Miscellaneous	34
18. Personnel education and training	34
19. Record keeping	35
Appendix 1     Body condition scoring chart	36
Appendix 2     Signs of ill health in racehorses	37
Acknowledgements	41
Document Control	41

## Part 1 – Preliminary

### Section 1 – Introduction

Horses have been domesticated and selectively bred by humans for about 5000 years for transport and work but are now more commonly used as companion animals or in competitive sports, such as racing.

In the now largely urbanised and mechanised society of Australia, the art of horsemanship and the knowledge of husbandry necessary to select, sustain and educate horses are getting rarer.

Racehorses are kept under a variety of husbandry conditions from extensive grazing in paddocks to intensive housing in individual stables.

This Code of Practice sets out the basic needs that must be met to ensure a racehorse's physical and psychological wellbeing is assured, with reference to the Five Domains (Mellor *et al.*, 2020<sup>1</sup>), irrespective of the husbandry system used, including:

- readily accessible food and water to maintain health and vigour (see Chapters 6 & 7);
- suitable living conditions, including appropriate shelter (see Ch. 4);
- regular exercise (see Chapter 10);
- the opportunity to express normal behaviour, including appropriate socialisation (see Ch. 8);
- routine preventative health care and appropriate husbandry (see Section 3);
- rapid identification and treatment of injury and disease (see Ch. 13);
- freedom from confusion and conflict in training (see Ch. 9); and
- a humane end to life (see Ch. 17).

#### The Five Domains of Animal Welfare



<sup>1</sup> Mellor DJ, Beausoleil NJ, Littlewood KE *et al.* The Five Domains Model: Including Human-Animal Interactions in Assessments of Animal Welfare. *Animals (Basel)*. 2020 Oct 14;10(10):1870. doi: 10.3390/ani10101870. PMID: 33066335; PMCID: PMC7602120.

Racehorse ownership is a long-term responsibility, and owners must make provisions for the horse's eventual retirement from racing. Most horses will be suitable for a second career in a competitive discipline (e. g. dressage, show jumping, eventing, showing, endurance, carriage driving) following a period of re-training, while others will make good therapy horses or paddock companions. Where a horse's temperament or physical state preclude successful retraining and rehoming, a humane end to life in accordance with this Code of Practice and all applicable laws, regulations and rules as amended from time to time (where relevant) must be provided.

### **Scope and application**

This document covers key aspects of the care, welfare and health of racehorses kept in Tasmania. The horse welfare Standards and Guidelines contained in this Code of Practice apply to all people with responsibility for the care and management of registered racehorses, in both private and commercial settings and apply equally to Standardbreds and Thoroughbreds (see *Definition of a racehorse* and *Person responsible for a racehorse* below).

The Standards and Guidelines contained in this Code of Practice are to be read and applied in conjunction with all applicable laws, regulations and rules, as amended from time to time. No Standards or Guidelines negate, over-ride or replace any person's responsibilities under the laws, regulations and rules. To the extent of any inconsistency between a Standard or Guideline contained in this Code of Practice any law, regulation or rule, the law, regulation or rule shall prevail. Relevant laws, regulations and rules include (but are not limited to):

- *Animal Welfare Act 1993* (Tas)
- *Animal Welfare (Land Transport of Livestock) Regulations 2013* (Tas)
- *Biosecurity Act 2019* (Tas)
- *Biosecurity Regulations 2022* (Tas)
- *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1987* (Tas)
- *Veterinary Surgeons Regulations 2022* (Tas)
- *Australian Harness Racing Rules* and *Tasmanian Harness Racing Local Rules*
- *Australian Rules of Racing* and *Tasmanian Local Rules of Racing*

For the purposes of this Code of Practice, the *Australian Harness Racing Rules* (including the *Tasmanian Harness Racing Local Rules*) and the *Australian Rules of Racing* (including the *Tasmanian Local Rules of Racing*) are collectively referred to as the "**Rules of Racing**".

This Code of Practice is comprised of Standards, Guidelines and Notes.

**Standards** are the minimum requirements to meet the basic welfare needs of racehorses. Standards that are enforceable (mandatory), are labelled 'Minimum Standards' and use the word 'must'. Failure to meet Standards may be met with sanctions in accordance with the Rules of Racing, or may be referred to other relevant jurisdictions for further investigation.

**Guidelines** are recommended (non-mandatory) practices to achieve desirable animal welfare outcomes and use the word 'should'. Guidelines complement the Standards and aim to encourage improved animal welfare outcomes.

**Notes** are intended to provide supplementary explanation and guidance.

### **Definition of a racehorse**

For the purpose of this Code of Practice, a racehorse is defined as any Thoroughbred or Standardbred horse which is subject to either the *Australian Rules of Racing* or the *Australian Harness Racing Rules*, in addition to any other horse associated with that racehorse as a companion horse.

### **Person responsible for a racehorse**

A 'person responsible for a racehorse' includes:

- a) the owner of the racehorse;
- b) a person who has control, possession, or custody of the racehorse; or
- c) the owner, operator, or manager of the place where the racehorse is at the relevant time.

In accordance with Section 3A of the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* (Tas), there may be more than one person responsible for the racehorse at any one time.

Elements of responsibility for each person in charge of racehorse welfare include:

- a) obtaining knowledge and understanding of relevant animal welfare laws, policies and the Rules of Racing;
- b) understanding racehorse behaviour, including handling techniques that minimise stress and reduce the risk of injury to animals and handlers;
- c) identifying and providing appropriate housing conditions;
- d) identifying and providing appropriate husbandry practices; and
- e) identifying signs of ill health and abnormality and facilitating rapid diagnosis and providing appropriate treatment.

### **Monitoring and Compliance**

This Code of Practice is, without limitation, a Code of Practice for the purposes of *Tasmanian Local Rules of Racing* and *Tasmanian Harness Local Racing Rules*.

The Standards contained within this Code of Practice are adopted and enforceable under Rule 27 of the *Tasmanian Local Rules of Racing* and Rule 1 of the *Tasmanian Harness Local Racing Rules*.

Compliance with the Standards within this Code of Practice will be the subject of regulatory activities and monitoring. The Stewards, through the Rules of Racing, may investigate allegations of non-compliance.

Ultimate responsibility for the investigation of alleged breaches and enforcement of the Standards contained within this Code of Practice rests with the Tasracing Chief Racing Integrity Officer (CRIO), who has authority to take disciplinary action if breaches are substantiated. The Tasracing CRIO may act on the advice of the Tasracing Chief Veterinary and Animal Welfare Officer in making such a determination.

Persons found guilty of breaching the Standards within the Code of Practice may be the subject to penalties and provisions to safeguard the welfare of racehorses, including, but not limited to, fines, official animal welfare directions, suspensions or disqualifications of licences, and may also incorporate directions to disburse registered animals under the care of the licensed person back to their owners, or orders for seizure of such registered animals.

Further, any matters that are identified that lie outside of the jurisdiction conferred to the Tasracing CRIO under the respective rules of racing may, where appropriate, be referred to other authorities,

including the Tasmanian Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE), Tasmania Police and/or the Royal Society for the Protection of Animals Tasmania (RSPCA Tasmania), for further investigation.

## Glossary of terms

**Aged horse** – means a horse over 16 years of age.

**Appropriate** – means suitable or proper in the circumstances.

**Aversive training techniques** – means techniques that use pain or intimidation to achieve the desired results.

**Competent person** – means a person who has the knowledge, skills and experience to carry out the task using the method by which the task is to be carried out.

**Direct supervision** – A type of supervision in which a supervisor is present at all times and has control over and professional knowledge of the work being performed.

**Metabolic disorder** – means a condition that affect any aspect of metabolism, such as breaking down food or producing energy.

**Nutritional disorders** – any of the nutrient-related diseases and conditions, including nutrient deficiencies or excesses.

**Paddock** – a fenced area of land typically used for grazing animals.

**Stable** (also called **loosebox**) – means a small enclosure generally contained in a building or covered by a roof, large enough for the horse to turn around, lie down and stretch, but not large enough to allow free exercise.

**Shelter** – means any natural landscape feature or manmade structure that affords the horse protection from the elements.

**Stereotypic behaviour** (often termed a ‘vice’) – means an abnormal behaviour pattern serving no apparent function, that is performed in a repetitive manner.

**Suitably qualified** – refers to someone who has the abilities, formal qualifications, relevant experience or potential to acquire, within a reasonable time, the skills and competencies necessary to perform a particular job.

**Under the supervision of** – where the supervisor provides general guidance and support to the person being supervised, but does not actively oversee or participate in the individual's work. The supervisor allows the person to work independently and trusts them to complete tasks and make decisions on their own, providing assistance only when needed.

**Waterlogged** – means ground that is saturated with water to the extent that free-standing water on the surface, other than immediate rainfall, will not drain away.

**Yard** – means an enclosure used to house horses, large enough to allow horses to turn around, lie down, roll and stretch, but not large enough to allow free exercise; may be attached to a stable, and may be covered by a roof.

## **Part 2 – General care of racehorses**

### **Section 1 – General**

#### **1. Identification and traceability**

##### **Objective**

To ensure horses are identified and traceable in a way that complies with the rules of racing and other regulatory requirements and supports their health and welfare.

##### **Minimum Standards**

- S1.1** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that it is permanently identified by such means as prescribed under the respective Rules of Racing.
- S1.2** Only three methods of permanently identifying racehorses are permitted:
- 1.** implanting of a microchip into the nuchal ligament on the near side crest of the neck, which must be performed by a registered veterinary practitioner or authorised implanter.
  - 2.** freeze branding, which must be carried out by a suitably experienced operator.
  - 3.** DNA profiling, which must be performed by a registered veterinary practitioner.
- S1.3** Fire-branding and other forms of permanent identification are not permitted to be applied to registered racehorses.
- S1.4** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that the racehorse's ownership details and location information are kept up to date on the relevant racing code's database by lodging a stable return in the prescribed timeframes up to and including the first retirement to a non-racing participant member of the public.
- S1.5** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that in case of the death of a racehorse, the prescribed forms are lodged with the relevant authority in the prescribed time frame.
- S1.6** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that an appropriate record is kept for all movements of that racehorse from one property to another, regardless of property ownership or length of stay.

##### **Guidelines**

- G1.1** Where racehorses are kept at unoccupied premises, the contact details of the person in charge of the racehorse should be clearly displayed or readily accessible.
- G1.2** An owner of a racehorse that has been retired from racing should register that racehorse with the Tasracing off-the-track program.

## 2. Supervision of racehorses

### Objective

To ensure horses are supervised, in accordance with requirements to protect and promote their health, safety and welfare.

### Minimum Standards

- S2.1** A person responsible for a horse must ensure the horse is inspected at intervals appropriate to the housing system and risk to the welfare of the horse.
- S2.2** A person responsible for a horse confined in a stable or yard must ensure the horse is inspected at least once daily to check for signs of good health and welfare.
- S2.3** A person responsible for a horse that is left unsupervised while wearing equipment (such as rugs, hoods, halters and fly veils) must ensure the horse is inspected at least once daily to check the equipment is correctly in place and is appropriate for the circumstances.

### Guidelines

- G2.1** A person supervising a horse should be capable of recognising signs of abnormality and have access to veterinary advice in a timely manner.
- G2.2** Where possible, all horses should be inspected daily to monitor their health and welfare.
- G2.3** Aged horses, mares in the last month of pregnancy and horses suffering from injury or disease may require inspection more frequently than once daily.

### Notes

Horses are prone to injury, and their health and welfare should be checked regularly. The frequency and thoroughness of supervision should be related to the potential risk to the horse's welfare. By providing regular inspection, potential problems are picked up and dealt with promptly.

All horses should be inspected daily. Some horses may need to be inspected more frequently than once a day depending on their physiological requirements.

For horses kept in paddocks, steps should be taken to ensure adequate feed and water is freely available and to mitigate any health and welfare risks, for example in relation to fencing and natural hazards.

### **3. Natural disasters and emergencies**

#### **Objective**

To ensure the health, safety and welfare of horses in natural disasters and emergencies is considered and protected.

#### **Minimum Standards**

- S3.1** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that the racehorse is attended to as soon as reasonably practicable after a natural disaster or emergency in which the racehorse is involved.
- S3.2** Any racehorse suffering significant injuries after a natural disaster or other emergency must be assessed by a registered veterinarian and provided with appropriate treatment or euthanased, as appropriate, without delay.
- S3.3** Owners of properties at which racehorses are kept must have in place a prominently displayed emergency plan that includes arrangements for the management of all horses on the property in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency. These emergency plans must be reviewed regularly (annually) and updated as required. All personnel must be inducted to the emergency plan on commencement of employment, with regular (annual) refresher training.
- S3.4** The emergency management plan must include the following as a minimum requirement:
- location and maintenance of emergency equipment;
  - identification of key personnel in the event of an emergency, including identification of first aid officers;
  - communication protocols during an emergency;
  - warning methods and alerts/signals for evacuation or emergency;
  - evacuation processes, including for humans and animals (taking into consideration safety for humans); and
  - evacuation assembly points.

#### **Guidelines**

- G3.1** Emergency plans may be audited by Tasracing.

#### **Notes**

##### **Natural disasters**

Tasmania experiences a wide range of emergency threats including fire, extreme weather and floods, which may endanger the welfare of racehorses. It is the responsibility of owners and carers of racehorses to properly plan for emergencies in order to keep them safe. Every property where racehorses are kept should have an emergency plan in place in the event of an emergency such as a bushfire or flood.

Proper planning can greatly assist owners or carers in providing for the welfare of their racehorses without putting at risk the safety of both them and emergency responders. Planning can ensure good decision-making instead of risky behaviours such as refusal to evacuate, attempts at re-entry into unsafe areas, or unsafe rescue attempts. Having a plan of action that can be implemented when an

incident occurs is the foundation for emergency preparedness. To best prepare for an emergency situation, develop an emergency plan, assemble an emergency kit, remove hazards around the property, and ensure the racehorses are identified.

An emergency kit should include essentials to take with you in case you must evacuate, including at least three days of feed, halters and leads, and a first aid kit with any medications.

### **Other emergencies**

Horses may become involved in other emergencies such as being trapped inside a vehicle after an accident, trapped in dams or mud, or caught on a gate. Horses can become dangerous to themselves and rescuers when they are distressed, injured or feel trapped.

### **Emergency rescue**

In the event of an emergency rescue, it is preferable that people who are specially trained in large animal rescue skills are consulted or called to attend. Often, a veterinarian will be required to sedate the horse before the rescue is attempted. As an incorrect rescue attempt may result in injury to the horse and/or handler, it is better to assess the situation, prepare appropriately, and wait for assistance before attempting a serious rescue.

## **Section 2 – Conditions in which racehorses are kept and transported**

### **4. Accommodation and protection of racehorses from weather extremes**

#### **Objective**

To ensure the housing and environment of racehorses are of a standard that promotes and protects their welfare, safety and health.

#### **Minimum Standards**

**S4.1 A person responsible for a racehorse must take all reasonable steps to ensure that an area in which racehorses are kept:**

- a) is appropriately designed, maintained and cleaned to minimise the risk of injury and disease to the racehorse;**
- b) provides access to ground that is not waterlogged or unsanitary, sufficient for each racehorse to access at the same time;**
- c) provides access to proper and sufficient shade (particularly during the hours of noon to 4pm between December and March), shelter and other reasonable protection from the elements (heat, wind, rain), including the appropriate use of rugs, for every horse, with due regard to prevention of bullying by dominant horses;**
- d) where natural shelter from the elements is absent or insufficient, has constructed shelter with a solid roof and one or more solid sides to provide shade and shelter from rain, snow and prevailing winds, as directed to be adequate by the Tasracing Chief Racing Integrity Officer with due regard to the terrain/topography and existing vegetation (minimum floor area: 16 square metres per horse, minimum height: 3 metres);**
- e) provides adequate number of paddocks or yards to permit animals of similar age, sex, size and compatible temperament to be grouped together and self-exercise safely; and**
- f) prevents overcrowding likely to lead to increased risk of injury due to bullying.**

**S4.2 A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that stables and looseboxes for a racehorse:**

- a) provide a minimum of 12 square metres of floor area and a sufficient vertical clearance immediately above the racehorse to enable the racehorse to stand freely in the normal position with the head fully raised, walk forward and turn, lie down with all limbs extended, roll, stretch and groom itself without restriction or risk of injury;**
- b) contain appropriate clean bedding for warmth, insulation and protection from abrasion, and to minimise dust and maximise absorption and drainage. Dirty bedding and stale or contaminated feed and water must be removed at least twice daily; and**
- c) are designed, constructed and maintained in a manner that:**
  - a. allows a racehorse visual contact with other horses, humans and activities in the stable surroundings;**
  - b. provides adequate lighting (minimum of 200 lux) that:**
    - i. enables inspection of the horses; and**

- ii. includes natural light, so that the horses experience natural light and dark periods as determined by the local diurnal cycle (i.e. day and night);
- c. provides adequate natural ventilation to ensure year-round thermal comfort for the horses and the removal of air-borne dust particles and prevention of build-up of ammonia (minimum of four air changes per hour);
- d. provides adequate drainage to prevent horses slipping and allow for rapid removal of waste;

**S4.3** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that, if the racehorse is stabled for any period of time, provision of exercise, turn out to pasture, a high fibre diet, social interaction (such as visual contact with other horses), and stimulation through environmental enrichment must be provided to the racehorse to reduce stress, boredom and the risk of stereotypic behaviour, as full-time accommodation of racehorses in stables is not likely to meet the full spectrum of their behavioural and social needs.

**S4.4** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that:

- a) racehorses are provided with properly fitted rugs that are applied and removed as appropriate for the time of year and prevailing weather conditions;
- b) racehorses wearing rugs are inspected twice daily for any injury or entanglement caused by the rug;
- c) rugs are removed at least every 48 hours to allow horse inspection;
- d) rugs are not the sole form of shelter from the elements available to the horse.

#### **Guidelines**

**G4.1** In temperate areas where permanent pastures are fertilised annually, a stocking density of about 1 hectare (2.5 acres) of pasture for each grazing racehorse should provide maintenance requirements during years with normal rainfall. Paddock management will be needed to ensure that sufficient grazing is available year-round.

**G4.2** Healthy racehorses can tolerate a wide variation of temperature if they are acclimatised and have access to adequate feed and water. However, steps should be taken to minimise the effects of climatic extremes and other factors producing either cold or heat stress. Young foals, old or sick racehorses are more susceptible.

#### **Notes**

Overstocking risks soil erosion, parasitic worm infestation, weed infestation, loss of pasture and native vegetation, land degradation, and bullying activity between horses competing for resources. When racehorses are kept in paddocks, appropriate stocking density will vary depending on factors including land type and productivity, pasture improvements, time of year, pasture and food availability, stabling and yarding facilities and fencing. Good quality pastures, containing suitable grasses and legumes, can provide the maintenance requirements for most horses. Feed in addition to pasture will need to be provided for racehorses in work, those with compromised teeth, aged horses or lactating mares.

## 5. Racehorse transport

### Objective

To ensure that racehorses are fit and adequately prepared for the intended journey, and transported in a manner that minimises risks to their welfare, safety and health.

### Minimum Standards

- S5.1** A person transporting a racehorse must do so in accordance with the *Animal Welfare Act 1993 (Tas)* and the *Animal Welfare (Land Transport of Livestock) Regulations 2013 (Tas)* as amended from time to time.
- S5.2** A person transporting a racehorse must ensure that stress and welfare risks associated with transport are minimised. This includes ensuring that time spent by a racehorse on the transport vehicle is minimised.
- S5.3** A person must not transport a racehorse displaying lameness at rest or walk, or if that horse has any signs of compromised health (e.g. an elevated rectal temperature or signs of respiratory disease), or a body condition score of 1 or less out of 5 unless:
- a) The transport is for the purpose of obtaining veterinary diagnosis/treatment; or
  - b) The transport is in accordance with advice from a registered veterinary practitioner.
- S5.4** A person transporting a racehorse must ensure that the horse transport vehicle (horse truck or float) and tow vehicle, if required:
- a) Is/are in a road-worthy condition.
  - b) Is specifically designed for equine transport.
  - c) Does not exceed the manufacturer-intended load capacity or the approved number of horses (one horse per loading bay).
  - d) Is designed to permit sufficient fresh air ventilation throughout the horse loading area at all times during transport.
  - e) Has non-slip flooring, or low-dust, absorbent bedding.
  - f) Is designed to permit visual inspection of the horse(s) from outside the vehicle, or has functional cameras installed within.
  - g) Is regularly cleaned, remains hygienic and does not pose a risk to the horse's safety or welfare.
- S5.5** A person transporting a racehorse must comply with the relevant road traffic laws, including maximum speed limits, maximum specified towing limits, towbar and safety chain attachments, and fully operational braking systems appropriate for the loads transported.

### Guidelines

- G5.1** Appropriate training and conditioning of racehorses for transport should be employed to minimise horse injury and welfare risks. The loading area should permit for the safe and calm loading and unloading of horses.
- G5.2** Persons engaged in the transport of racehorses should be experienced or trained in the handling and transport of racehorses and the vehicle(s) used.

## Section 3 – Racehorse husbandry and health care

### 6. Water requirements

#### Objective

To ensure racehorses are provided with water of sufficient quality and quantity to protect and promote their health, safety and welfare.

#### Minimum Standards

- S6.1** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure the horse is provided with *ad lib* drinking water of a sufficient quality to maintain good health and meet its physiological requirements.<sup>2</sup>
- S6.2** Water supplies must be checked and, if necessary, topped up, at least every 12 hours, and the water container must have sufficient capacity to ensure the racehorse has uninterrupted access to water over the 12-hour period.
- S6.3** A person responsible for a racehorse must not deliberately withhold water from the racehorse in contravention of S3.2, unless under veterinary advice.
- S6.4** Water containers provided for racehorses must be:
- of a design that does not pose an unreasonable risk to the welfare of the racehorse;
  - safe and free of sharp edges and protrusions;
  - inspected at least twice daily for functionality, cleanliness and freedom from contamination and to ensure they are sufficiently filled; and
  - readily accessible to all horses within a housing area taking account of horse behaviour and social structure and positioned to avoid unintended spillage and contamination.

#### Guidelines

- G6.1** Regular assessments should be made of the quality and quantity of water supply, including inspection of the mechanical equipment controlling the delivery of water (including windmills, bores, valves and taps, and automatic waterers).
- G6.2** If a racehorse has access to water in a dam, the dam should:
- provide safe access for the horse, including unimpeded access to water and no risk of becoming stuck or otherwise trapped;
  - be free from rubbish and contaminants;
  - be regularly inspected to ensure dam levels and water quality are adequate, especially during periods of low rainfall; and
  - if deemed unsafe, be fenced off and an alternative water source provided.

#### Notes

Water provided to horses should be clean and free of visible contaminants.

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<sup>2</sup> Also refer to the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* (Tas), Section 8.

Water volume requirements of racehorses vary widely depending on age, bodyweight, air temperature and humidity, the work, state of health and type of diet of the racehorse. The basic maintenance requirement of water for horses is estimated to be approximately 52 ml/kg body weight per day. For maintenance, a 450-500 kg bodyweight racehorse requires a minimum of 25-30 litres per day. Water requirement is also closely related to the dry matter intake of feed. Racehorses need 2-4 litres of water per kilogram of dry matter intake.

As air temperatures or humidity rises, or in cases of illness associated with bowel disease, such as obstructive bowel disease or severe diarrhoea, substantial amounts of water and essential electrolytes (in addition to maintenance requirements) may need to be provided (50-70 litres per day).

If a horse fails to consume water at *appropriate* levels (as per the above recommendations), further investigations should be undertaken, including the water quality and the horse's health status.

## 7. Feeding of racehorses

### Objective

To ensure racehorses are provided with food of sufficient quality and quantity to protect and promote their health, safety and welfare.

### Minimum Standards

- S7.1** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure the horse has daily feed of sufficient quantity and quality<sup>3</sup> to:
- maintain good health;
  - meet its physiological demands; and
  - minimise metabolic and nutritional disorders.
- S7.2** A person responsible for a racehorse that grazes must take all reasonable steps to minimise (or eliminate where possible) in the area that the racehorse has access to for grazing:
- plants that are poisonous or detrimental to horses;
  - physical items that may be injurious to horses;
  - chemicals known to be toxic to horses or present on the pasture whilst still within their designated grazing withholding period; and
  - any other contaminant (physical or chemical) that poses a risk to the health or welfare of a racehorse, or is otherwise prohibited.
- S7.3** A person responsible for a racehorse must not allow its body condition to become less than body condition score 2 out of 5 (see Appendix A to this Code of Practice) unless that horse is under direct veterinary supervision. If racehorse's body condition falls below 2 out of 5, veterinary advice must be sought.
- S7.4** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that it is provided with feed appropriate for its age, body condition, metabolic state and level of work, at least three times in every 24-hour period, with access to appropriate forage throughout the day, unless the horse is under direct veterinary supervision.
- S7.5** A person responsible for a racehorse must regularly observe behaviour patterns and response to feed and take all reasonable steps to minimise bullying or other competition to ensure that all racehorses in a group have access to sufficient feed to meet their needs. A log of abnormal behaviours observed, and remedial actions taken, must be kept for inspection.
- S7.6** Racehorses in work kept in stables and/or yards must be provided with concentrate feed rations appropriate for their level of work and body condition spread over at least three meals per day, in addition to the provision of a minimum daily amount of forage equivalent to between 1 -1.5% of their bodyweight (1-1.5kg/100kg body weight) (see Notes below) provided throughout the day to maintain optimum gut health.
- S7.7** Any incremental changes to a racehorse's diet (amounts or constituents) must be introduced gradually over a period of several days and horses monitored closely during this time.

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<sup>3</sup> Also refer to the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* (Tas), Section 8.

**S7.8** For racehorses in work kept in *paddocks*, paddock management and stocking density of racehorses must be adjusted to ensure:

- a) there is sufficient pasture for racehorses to meet their daily nutritional, social and behavioural requirements, including engaging in grazing activity for a significant part of the day.
- b) where there is insufficient pasture to meet nutritional demands, racehorses must be fed a suitable and sufficient supplementary feed at least twice a day, incorporating a total minimum daily amount of forage equivalent to 1-1.5% of their bodyweight (1-1.5kg/100kg body weight) available throughout the day (see Notes below).

**S7.8** Where provision of sufficient feed cannot be ensured, racehorses must be agisted, sold, leased or otherwise moved to a location or into the care of a person that results in the racehorse having access to sufficient feed to maintain optimum health and does not fall below body condition score 2 out of 5. Where this cannot be achieved, euthanasia should be considered as an option of last resort.

### **Guidelines**

**G7.1** Racehorses should be fed according to metabolic state and body condition. Those that are in lighter condition and those that are subject to constant bullying or other competition related to feed should be segregated from the main group and fed appropriate rations to maintain adequate body condition. A registered veterinary practitioner or qualified equine nutritionist should be consulted for feed advice, where required.

**G7.2** The ideal range of body condition scores for racing horses is between 2 – 3 out of 5. If a racehorse fails to thrive, the quantity, quality and availability of feed, and the health of the racehorse (including the state of its teeth, the extent of parasitism and the horse's age) should be evaluated and any remedial action applied. A registered veterinary practitioner or qualified equine nutritionist should be consulted for advice, where required.

**G7.3** When a racehorse in work is given a 'rest' day, the concentrate part of the ration should be reduced to decrease the risk of metabolic disorders.

**G7.4** Good quality pastures, containing suitable grasses and legumes, can provide the maintenance nutritional requirements for most horses, except for racehorses in work, those with compromised teeth, aged racehorses, or lactating mares. In temperate areas where permanent pastures are fertilised annually, about 1 hectare (2.5 acres) of pasture for each grazing horse should provide maintenance requirements during years with normal rainfall. Pasture management is complex and advice from qualified professionals should be sought where required.

**G7.5** The daily concentrate feed ration for racehorses in work should be divided into several smaller meals (ideally 4 meals per day) fed throughout the day, rather than one large meal. Approximate minimum feed requirements of adult horses are shown in Table 1.

**G7.6** Lactating mares require about 70% more energy than horses with maintenance requirements.

**Table 1 Approximate minimum daily feed requirements for adult racehorses**

Body weight (kg)	Spelling (maintenance only) Hay (kg)	Moderate work	
		Hay* (kg)	Grain (kg)
450	7-8		
500	8-9	5.5-7.5	4-6
550	9-10		

\*Good quality pasture hay rich in clover, or lucerne hay

### Notes

The horse is classified as a hindgut fermenter, having evolved to have a relatively small capacity stomach and small intestine, with a much-expanded large intestine (hindgut). This means that horses have limited capacity to digest and absorb the carbohydrates contained in concentrate feeds. If too much concentrate feed is fed in fewer, larger meals, there is a risk of undigested carbohydrates spilling over into the large intestine (hindgut), where they can cause digestive disturbances. Horses lack gall bladders and produce stomach acid constantly; both of which are evolutionary adaptations that enable them to consume small amounts of mostly fibrous feeds for the majority of the day ('trickle feeders'). Their relatively large hindgut (colon and caecum) contains huge quantities of fibre-digesting microbes, which the horse relies on to extract nutrients from those fibrous feeds.

As a result of these evolutionary adaptations, forages (fibrous feeds such as pasture, hay, haylage, chaff, along with forage pellets and cubes) should form a significant part of a racehorse's diet to provide it with sufficient bulk and fibre to enable its digestive system to function properly.

Racehorses require at least 1-1.5% of their body weight in forage daily, with up to 2% being ideal to maximise horse hindgut health. Forages should therefore be available to the horse for most of its active hours. If feeding processed feeds and grains to provide a racehorse with sufficient energy to meet the demands of its training and racing workload, these should be fed in addition to the minimum amount of forage.

If concerned about a weight disadvantage for racing due to large amounts of forage being carried in the horse's hindgut, the amount of forage being fed can be reduced slightly in the 48-72 hours leading up to a race, provided levels of dietary fibre are returned to 1-1.5% immediately post-race. Levels of forage prior to racing should not be reduced below 1% of bodyweight.

## **8. Behavioural needs of racehorses**

### **Objective**

To support a racehorse's health and welfare by meeting its behavioural and social needs.

### **Minimum Standards**

- S8.1** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure the racehorse is able to express appropriate behaviour by:
- a) providing sufficient space through managing design of facilities and the stocking density;
  - b) managing the composition of groups of racehorses to ensure compatibility and actively altering the composition of a group of racehorses if required; and
  - c) minimising threats and restrictions to allow each racehorse to have an area of its own, appropriately sized for subordinate racehorses to have sufficient access to resources including water, feed and grazing and shelter, and enable them to escape from bullying by dominant animals in the group.
- S8.2** A person responsible for a racehorse displaying stereotypic behaviour such as weaving, crib-biting, windsucking, self-mutilation, excessive pawing, kicking or pacing must provide the racehorse with suitable intervention therapy based on veterinary advice. A veterinary examination is required, if there is no improvement in the abnormal behaviour. The Tasracing Integrity Unit may direct the attendance of an independent registered veterinarian as nominated or approved by them to assess the horse under certain circumstances.
- S8.3** A person responsible for a racehorse must keep records of behaviours identified and adjustments made with regards to meeting the requirements of S8.1 and S8.2.

### **Guidelines**

- G8.1** Horses are social animals that establish a group hierarchy. They may form social bonds with other animals, including humans. For these reasons, racehorses should not be kept in isolation. Prior to providing additional animals for companionship, the person in charge of the racehorse should consider whether they have the means to provide adequate care for more than one animal.
- G8.2** Colts, stallions, weanlings, pregnant and sick racehorses, or those in advanced age, may require segregation from other groups of horses, to reduce the risk of injury and disease.
- G8.3** Introduction of a new racehorse or reintroduction of a segregated racehorse into a group should be supervised.
- G8.4** Strategies should be in place to prevent stereotypic behaviour, and for racehorses that display stereotypic behaviour, to reduce their incidence.
- G8.5** Where a racehorse is displaying stereotypic behaviour, effort should be made to reduce or eliminate the cause of the behaviour as much as possible. Research suggests the most likely cause of stereotypic behaviour in horses is chronic stress resulting from boredom, frustration, confinement, social isolation, limited access to roughage or inadequate exercise.
- G8.6** A racehorse should be provided with opportunities to engage in rewarding activities that are safe and appropriate to the characteristics of the individual racehorse.

## 9. Racehorse education and training

### Objective

To ensure training methods used on racehorses minimise risks to their health and welfare.

### Minimum Standards

- S9.1** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that all horse training methods used are appropriate and humane and do not cause unreasonable pain or suffering to the racehorse.<sup>4</sup>
- S9.2** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that any method employed in training the racehorse:
- a) protects both human and horse safety;
  - b) makes appropriate use of equipment and facilities;
  - c) considers the physical and mental characteristics of the racehorse at the time of training;
  - d) uses negative reinforcement in a way that minimises the amount and period of pressure applied to achieve a desired response, ensuring that the timing and release of any pressure is effective for any learning to take place; and
  - e) avoids the use of positive punishment, unless there is a risk to the health and safety of a person or the horse (see Table 2).
- S9.3** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that training methods used are tailored to how the horse learns and must at all times be clear to allow the horse to learn to respond as required to a given signal (cue, aid).
- S9.4** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure persons engaged in the education or training of a racehorse are competent and suitably qualified or under the direct supervision of a suitably qualified or competent person.
- S9.5** Any person involved in training a racehorse must cease any training activity if:
- a) the racehorse does not appear to be progressing or responding as intended;
  - b) any signs of illness or injury develop;
  - c) any equipment being used in the training becomes damaged or faulty; or
  - d) when working with other people, any person in the group is observed not to have the necessary competency to conduct the training activity.
- S9.6** Veterinary advice should be sought if a racehorse continues to display undesirable behaviours during training, to ascertain if such behaviours are attributable to an underlying cause, which, if identified, should be addressed where possible, before training is resumed.

### Guidelines

- G9.1** Most racehorses respond best to firm but gentle techniques and to rewards when the racehorse responds correctly. Training methods should be based on techniques using natural instincts and positive reinforcement (see Table 2).
- G9.2** Negative reinforcement (see Table 2) should involve the use of minimal force. Occasional disciplinary measures may be necessary to discourage bad habits, such as biting, in the

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<sup>4</sup> Also refer to the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* (Tas), Section 8.

racehorse. Discipline has to be administered immediately following the act of misconduct and should employ minimal effective force.

**Table 2 Behavioural training techniques for use in racehorses <sup>5</sup>**

	<b>Reinforcement</b>	<b>Punishment</b>
	<i>Increasing the likelihood or intensity of a behaviour</i>	<i>Decreasing the likelihood or intensity of a behaviour</i>
Negative (Subtraction)	The removal of an aversive stimulus to reward a desired response.	The removal of a desired stimulus to punish an undesired response.
	<i>Example: Rein tension is applied until the horse stops and the removal of the tension rewards the correct response.</i>	<i>Example: The horse paws and so food is withheld</i>
Positive (Addition)	The addition of a pleasant stimulus to reward a desired response.	The addition of an aversive stimulus to punish an undesired response.
	<i>Example: The horse approaches when called for and receives a carrot to reward the response.</i>	<i>Example: The horse bites and receives a slap on the muzzle.</i>

<sup>5</sup> Refer to the International Society for Equitation Science.

## 10. Exercise

### Objective

To ensure that racehorses receive appropriate and sufficient exercise to promote and protect their health and welfare.

### Minimum Standards

- S10.1** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure the racehorse is provided with an opportunity to exercise each day, through structured or free exercise, except where the exercise may be detrimental to the health and welfare of the racehorse.
- S10.2** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that the intensity and duration of the exercise does not exceed the racehorse's ability for its age, maturity, size, strength, conformation, fitness, or level of education.
- S10.3** A person responsible for a racehorse must not use mechanical exercising equipment, such as walking machines or treadmills, or employ swimming exercise, unless the racehorse is under direct and constant supervision.
- S10.4** A person responsible for a racehorse must not exercise a racehorse if it is knowingly suffering from an injury or illness likely to be exacerbated by exercise, unless that racehorse has been inspected and cleared to exercise by a registered veterinary practitioner.

### Guidelines

- G10.1** Racehorses, particularly when immature and/or unconditioned, should not be subjected to excessive strenuous exercise that can result in injury.
- G10.2** Racehorses may be exercised by riding, driving, lunging, swimming, or mechanical device (walker or treadmill), or by releasing them into a large yard or paddock (for at least an hour a day).
- G10.3** A rider's size and weight should be appropriate for the size and condition of the racehorse. As a guide, a rider's weight should not exceed 20% of the weight of the racehorse.
- G10.4** When introducing new or recently spelled racehorses to exercise, their workload should be increased gradually, taking into account the characteristics of the racehorse, to prevent injury and stress.
- G10.5** A racehorse should be warmed-up before, and cooled-down after, strenuous exercise.
- G10.6** Following a spell period, a gradual return to exercise is recommended, with the length of time required to return to maximal workload following a spell being based on at least double the spell duration for up to 10 weeks of training (example 1: following a two-week spell, the horse could return to trialling stage after four weeks of training; example 2: following a six-week spell, the horse may return to trialling stage after 10 weeks of training).
- G10.7** Once fit, racehorses should undergo the minimum amount of fast work required to maintain cardiovascular fitness two to three times a week.
- G10.8** Trainers should keep a digital or written record of the daily exercise/training undertaken by each of the racehorses under their care, including the speed, distance, surface and method of exercise (e.g. ridden trackwork, treadmill, water walker).

## 11. Dental care

### Objective

To protect racehorse welfare and health by the provision of adequate dental care.

### Minimum Standards

- S11.1** A person must not perform equine dental procedures on a racehorse unless they are:
- a) competent to perform the procedure; and
  - b) where required under the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1987 (Tas)* and *Veterinary Surgeons Regulations 2022 (Tas)*, a veterinarian or a person authorised by the Veterinary Board of Tasmania, unless the dental work is confined to the filing or rasping of horse teeth without the use of power tools.
- S11.2** A person, as specified in S11.1, must not perform any equine dental procedure on a racehorse that causes modification, damage or injury, which poses a risk to the welfare of the racehorse.
- S11.3** Where an equine dental procedure is likely to cause pain, a person responsible for a racehorse must ensure the provision of appropriate pain relief, which may include the administration of anaesthesia and sedation, which can only be administered by, or under the direct supervision of, a registered veterinary surgeon.
- S11.4** A person must not perform equine dental procedures on a racehorse using power tools unless they meet the definition contained in S11.1.
- S11.5** A person in charge of a racehorse must ensure that the racehorse receives a dental examination and any necessary prophylaxis and/or treatment by a person, as specified in S11.1, at least once a year.

### Guidelines

- G11.1** Racehorses' teeth should be regularly checked (minimum once a year) by a person suitably skilled and experienced in equine dentistry, who also meets the requirements contained in S10.1. The frequency of dental checks should be increased for young racehorses, stable fed racehorses and aged racehorses.
- G11.2** Any person, as defined in S10.1, performing a dental procedure on a racehorse should have sufficient experience, knowledge and skill to:
- a) handle the racehorse in a safe, humane manner;
  - b) identify relevant anatomy, both normal and abnormal; and
  - c) recognise and understand the complications of the procedure and know when to refer cases to an appropriately qualified person, such as a registered veterinary surgeon with experience in equine dental techniques.
- G11.3** Good practice equine dental service should include:
- a) inquiry into the racehorse's general and dental history;
  - b) full mouth examination with assistance of palpation, illumination, mirror and probe;
  - c) assessment of, and advice on, all detected abnormalities;
  - d) advice on treatment options and further investigative procedures; and

e) completion of the above or referral to other appropriate practitioners where indicated.

**G11.4** The use of motorised tools on a racehorse's teeth by a registered veterinary practitioner should only be performed with the racehorse adequately restrained.

## **12. Foot care**

### **Objective**

To ensure that racehorse's hooves are managed sufficiently to maintain soundness and protect and promote health and welfare.

### **Minimum Standards**

- S12.1** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that horse's hooves are maintained at appropriate intervals (not exceeding 6 weeks) to permit normal mobility and to maintain normal hoof shape and function.
- S12.2** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure the racehorse's hooves are adequately protected or accustomed to the surfaces on which the racehorse is exercised or kept.
- S12.3** A person responsible for a racehorse must seek advice from a veterinarian or farrier if the horse is suffering from overgrown, injured or diseased hooves likely to cause the horse pain. For injured and diseased hooves, the farrier must consult with a registered veterinarian, prior to addressing the conditions.
- S12.4** A person must only shoe or trim a racehorse's hooves if they are competent to do so, or under the supervision of a competent person.

### **Guidelines**

- G12.1** Shoeing or hoof trimming should not cause pain, result in a gait abnormality or in significant changes to the racehorse's conformation, unless otherwise advised by a registered veterinarian.
- G12.2** The hooves of a racehorse should be inspected regularly for signs of injury, loose shoes or impacted stones. This may require daily inspection, especially when racehorses are in work.
- G12.3** Loose shoes and those with risen clenches (shoe nails) should be promptly removed to prevent possible foot injury.
- G12.4** The feet of racehorses should be inspected at least every six weeks and:
- a) in the case of shod horses, replacement or adjustment of shoes by competent persons;  
or
  - b) in the case of unshod horses, trimmed as needed by competent persons.

## 13. Racehorse health, veterinary procedures and treatments

### Objectives

To ensure the provision of appropriate health and veterinary care to protect and promote the health and welfare of racehorses.

### Minimum Standards

**S13.1 A person in charge of a racehorse must ensure that veterinary services are sought and provided to any racehorse that is sick, injured or diseased in an appropriate timeframe.<sup>6</sup>**

**Examples of conditions that require prompt (as soon as immediately practicable) veterinary attention:**

- acute abdominal pain or colic seen as pawing, kicking at the stomach or rolling, often accompanied by straining, teeth-grinding and patchy or generalised sweating (within 4 to 6 hours);
- serious injuries, including deep wounds, severe or unexplained lameness, or eye injuries (within 2 to 3 hours);
- severe haemorrhage (within 1 hour);
- straining for more than 30 minutes by a mare that has not foaled (within 1 hour);
- retained foetal membranes (within 6 to 8 hours of foaling);
- marked lameness or injuries not responding to treatment (within 12 to 24 hours);
- signs of respiratory disease such as discharges from eyes, nostrils, or swollen glands under the throat, which may be accompanied by a cough, fever, or loss of appetite affecting multiple horses (within 12 to 24 hours);
- diarrhoea, constipation, sudden or persistent weight loss (within 24 to 36 hours);
- signs of laminitis, including lameness, increased pulse to the affected hooves, reluctance to stand on affected feet and reluctance to move (within 8 to 12 hours);
- neurological syndromes (e.g. head pressing, lack of balance, unstable gait) (within 8 to 12 hours);
- inactivity or unresponsiveness (within 4 to 6 hours).

**S13.2 A person in charge of a racehorse must ensure that any sick or injured racehorse that does not respond to veterinary or other appropriate treatment must be promptly (within 24 to 48 hours) examined by a registered veterinary practitioner to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to minimise suffering of the racehorse.**

**S13.3 A person in charge of a racehorse must ensure that any horse undergoing veterinary treatment is provided with a rest period appropriate to the condition being treated, and that treatment response is monitored by a registered veterinary practitioner who must provide a written veterinary clearance before training is recommenced to ensure the condition has sufficiently responded to treatment.**

**S13.4 A person in charge of a racehorse must ensure that any racehorse that loses body condition to below BCS 2 out of 5 must be promptly (within 48 to 72 hours) examined by a registered veterinary practitioner, who may advise further diagnostic procedures and suitable treatments, including advice on special feeding.**

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<sup>4</sup> Also refer to the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* (Tas), Section 8.

**S13.5 A person in charge of a racehorse must ensure that the horse is routinely vaccinated against tetanus and that they seek and comply with veterinary advice about vaccination against other diseases.**

**Guidelines**

**G13.1** It is recommended that all racehorses receive an annual general health examination by a registered veterinary practitioner, including the implementation of appropriate vaccination and parasite control programs.

## 14. Biosecurity and protection from infectious disease

### Objective

To have in place biosecurity protocols to ensure that the incidence of infectious disease and its effect on racehorse health and welfare and business continuity can be minimised.

### Minimum Standards

**S14.1 A person responsible for a racehorse must discharge their general biosecurity duty<sup>7</sup> by taking all reasonable and practicable measures to prevent, eliminate or minimise biosecurity risk when dealing with a racehorse, including by:**

- a) ensuring appropriate hygiene of personnel, animals, equipment and environments;
- b) managing entry and exit of visitors and non-essential personnel to the premises on which racehorses are kept;
- c) ensuring all people involved in the handling, loading, transport and unloading of racehorses follow any biosecurity procedures in place in respect of the premises; and
- d) engaging appropriate veterinary assistance and expertise to address identified biosecurity risks.

**S14.2 A person in charge of a premises at which racehorses are kept must ensure that a written biosecurity plan, endorsed by a registered veterinary surgeon, is prepared and implemented on the premises. The biosecurity plan should address:**

- a) the prevention and control of common infectious diseases and parasites at the premises; and
- b) monitoring and control of movement of animals, staff and equipment on and off the premises.

**S14.3 Where a person responsible for keeping a racehorse employs people or otherwise has the assistance of other people, those people must be given specific guidance and/or training in biosecurity procedures that apply to the premises.**

**S14.4 A person responsible for a racehorse must have the ability to isolate one or more racehorses from the other horses on the premises to observe their health status, including twice daily monitoring of vital signs and the recording of rectal temperature, for an appropriate period of time (minimum 10-14 days), prior to their (re-)introduction to the existing population:**

- a) when introducing a new racehorse to an existing population of horses on the premises; and
- b) if the person suspects that the racehorse is suffering from a notifiable infectious disease (see S14.5 below).

**S14.5 A person responsible for a racehorse must notify Tasracing immediately and by the quickest means of communication available to that person if they are aware, suspect, or should reasonably suspect that a racehorse is infected with a notifiable disease or condition. Notifiable diseases and conditions are:**

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<sup>5</sup> Also refer to the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* (Tas), Section

- African horse sickness
- Borna disease
- contagious equine metritis
- dourine
- epizootic lymphangitis
- equine encephalomyelitis (Eastern and Western)
- equine encephalomyelitis (Venezuelan)
- equine encephalosis
- equine herpesvirus 1 (abortigenic and neurological)
- equine infectious anaemia
- equine influenza
- equine piroplasmosis (babesiosis)
- equine viral arteritis
- Getah virus
- glanders
- Hendra virus
- Japanese encephalitis
- Potomac fever
- screw-worm fly - New World (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*)
- screw-worm fly - Old World (*Chrysomya bezziana*)
- strangles
- surra (*Trypanosoma evansi*)
- trichinellosis
- warble fly myiasis
- West Nile virus infection

**S14.6** A person responsible for a racehorse, who is aware, suspects, or should reasonably suspect that a racehorse is infected with a notifiable disease or condition, must take all steps to keep that horse separate from other horses or animals not infected.

#### **Guidelines**

**G14.1** Signage should be placed in one or more conspicuous positions on a premises detailing:

- a) the name and contact details of the usual veterinary surgeon;
- b) the name and contact details of the person in charge of the premises; and
- c) the phone number for the national Emergency Animal Disease Hotline.

#### **Notes**

Biosecurity and welfare are inextricably linked. Effective biosecurity on premises at which racehorses are kept or handled should be considered basic business practice. Many resources are available to guide people in effective biosecurity practices, along with people and service providers with relevant skills, knowledge and experience.

## **15. Breeding and foaling**

### **Objective**

To ensure breeding practices protect the health and welfare of racehorses, and minimise inherited disorders and the over-production of racehorses.

### **Minimum Standards**

- S15.1** A person who causes a racehorse to breed must ensure that breeding is managed to avoid unnecessary pain, distress or injury and maximises safety for horses and handlers.
- S15.2** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure facilities used for breeding are constructed and maintained to minimise the risk to welfare of the racehorse.
- S15.3** Artificial reproductive procedures are prohibited in registered Thoroughbred racehorses.
- S15.4** In registered Standardbred horses, artificial reproductive procedures may only be performed by a registered veterinarian, or a person otherwise authorised under the Tasmanian Veterinary Surgeons Act 1987.
- S15.4** A person responsible for a racehorse must not cause the horse to be bred with a:
- a) sibling of the racehorse; or
  - b) parent or offspring of the racehorse.
- S15.5** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that rectal examination, which is an inherently risky procedure, is only carried out by a registered veterinary practitioner.
- S15.6** A person responsible for a racehorse that is due to foal must ensure that the racehorse is observed discreetly (so as not to disturb the mare) and as frequently as required to ensure that the racehorse is not experiencing foaling difficulties.
- S15.7** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that they provide prompt and expert assistance to any racehorse experiencing difficulties at any point during, or following, foaling.

### **Guidelines**

- G15.1** Known, or potentially, inherited conditions should be considered when selecting racehorses for breeding.
- G15.2** Indiscriminate breeding of racehorses, including those of a type or temperament unsuitable for racing, should be avoided.
- G15.3** Persons involved in the breeding of racehorses should be experienced and have an understanding of the reproductive systems of both the mare and stallion.
- G15.4** Racehorses should not be bred if their body condition score is below 2 out of 5.
- G15.5** Physical restraints may be used to prevent injury to mares and stallions, and where these are used, it is important to ensure that they are correctly fitted.
- G15.6** Racehorse mares should be provided with specialised appropriate nutritional management during pregnancy and lactation.

- G15.7** A racehorse in the last month of pregnancy should be provided with a safe and suitable foaling environment.
- G15.8** Racehorse mares should be monitored after birth to ensure they pass the placenta within three hours after birth. If the placenta fails to pass, then the mare is considered to have retained foetal membranes, and urgent veterinary advice should be sought.
- G15.9** Racehorse foals should be monitored for the initial 24 hours after birth to ensure the meconium is expelled, urination and suckling are normal, and the foal consumes colostrum. Veterinary advice should be sought if concerns exist regarding quality and quantity of colostrum consumed, meconium retention and problems with urination.
- G15.10** Racehorse foals orphaned at birth should receive colostrum or a substitute within 24 hours of birth. Veterinary advice should be sought to ensure an appropriate health and feeding program is provided for the foal.
- G15.11** Weaning of racehorse foals should:
- a) not be carried out before 4 months of age, unless under veterinary advice;
  - b) be carried out in a safe environment; and
  - c) be carried out in a manner that minimises stress on the foal and mare, which may require a staged approach and the company of other horses.

## **16. Racehorse retirement and rehoming**

### **Objective**

To ensure that all racehorses retiring from racing or breeding are assessed for their rehoming potential, and those that are suitable for another career are adequately prepared and responsibly rehomed in a way that maintains a focus on the animal's continuing welfare.

### **Minimum Standards**

- S16.1** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that the horse is retired in accordance with the Rules of Racing, including all relevant notification requirements.
- S16.2** The managing owner of a racehorse or their authorised agent (e.g. Trainer), upon its retirement or earlier, regardless of whether it raced or not, must provide the opportunity for that racehorse to be assessed by a competent person, such as a registered veterinarian, as to its retraining and rehoming potential, and must support the transition of that racehorse into any such identified new career, or retirement.
- S16.3** A person responsible for a racehorse that is being retired must ensure that the racehorse is provided with an appropriate standard of care and that it is maintained in at least body condition score 2 out of 5 until ownership is transferred to the new owner.
- S16.4** A person responsible for selling or rehoming a racehorse must advise any future owner or their authorised agent before the sale/rehoming of all relevant details regarding the temperament and physical condition of the racehorse, including any specific requirements for successfully managing that racehorse.

### **Guidelines**

- G16.1** A person responsible for a racehorses should make all endeavours to ensure that the horse retires from racing physically and mentally suited to a transition to a second career.
- G16.2** The owner(s) of a racehorse should provide opportunities and support efforts for retraining of that racehorse throughout its training and racing career, as well as post-retirement from racing.
- G16.3** Racehorses that have been retired due to injury or illness should be treated and fully rehabilitated prior to rehoming, unless rehabilitation is agreed to be part of the rehoming process.
- G16.4** Racehorses that retire with a chronic injury or illness should be assessed by a registered veterinary practitioner to ascertain the appropriate level of care they require post-racing.
- G16.5** Retiring racehorses should be given the opportunity to spell following their racing career, prior to entering a second career.
- G16.6** Retiring racehorses should have their diet assessed and amended as appropriate for their post-racing activities.
- G16.7** A person responsible for a racehorse that is rehoming or selling that horse should document the physical condition of the horse (through photographs and/or video) prior to the horse leaving their care.

## **17. Euthanasia or humane destruction**

### **Minimum Standards**

**S17.1** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that euthanasia or destruction of a racehorse is performed humanely, and that the method employed results in immediate death, or rapid loss of consciousness, followed by death while unconscious.

Acceptable methods of euthanasia of a racehorse are:

1. rapid intravenous injection of concentrated barbiturate solutions performed by a registered vet;
2. shooting by a licensed person via the frontal method, using a registered firearm (minimum calibre .22 LR) or humane killer; or
3. use of a captive-bolt device by a licensed person via the frontal method followed immediately by exsanguination (bleeding out).

**S17.2** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that euthanasia or humane destruction of a racehorse is performed only by a person competent in the method used and licenced where appropriate. Suitable persons include registered veterinarians and licenced knackery personnel.

**S17.3** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that it is euthanased or humanely destroyed in an environment that it is familiar with, and that pre-slaughter transport is avoided, unless that transport is to a veterinary facility for the purpose of diagnosis or treatment.

**S17.4** A person responsible for a racehorse must ensure that the racehorse is handled quietly before euthanasia or humane destruction to ensure it is not unnecessarily distressed or alarmed.

**S17.5** A person must, after euthanasing or humanely destroying a racehorse, ensure that the racehorse is dead by observing three or more of the following signs:

- a) there is no corneal blink reflex when the eyeball is touched;
- b) the pupils are at maximum dilation and do not respond to light;
- c) there is no heartbeat; or
- d) there are no rhythmic respiratory movements for at least five minutes.

**S17.6** Owners of racehorses or their authorised agents (trainers) must ensure that they meet notification requirements for deceased racehorses under the respective rules of racing.

### **Guidelines**

**G17.1** Wherever possible, a racehorse should not be euthanased or humanely destroyed in view of other horses.

**G17.2** Euthanasia method employed as per S17.1 will dictate appropriate options for carcase processing and/or disposal, with the use of barbiturate limiting disposal options to incineration or deep burial away from water courses (and in accordance with all applicable regulations).

## Section 4 – Miscellaneous

### 18. Personnel education and training

#### Objective

To ensure that horse racing industry participants understand their responsibilities under this Code of Practice so that optimum welfare outcomes for the horses in their care can be achieved.

#### Minimum Standards

- S18.1** A person responsible for a racehorse must be appropriately trained and/or competent, or have the assistance of one or more people who are appropriately trained and/or competent, to care for the racehorse.
- S18.2** A person responsible for a racehorse must keep a record of having read and understood these Standards and Guidelines for themselves and any other person assisting them to care for the racehorse.

#### Guidelines

- G18.1** Areas of training and competency for people who have care of a racehorse should include:
- a) recognising signs of ill health and abnormal behaviour;
  - b) appropriate care and/or treatment of injury, disease or distress;
  - c) maintaining the horse's living environment;
  - d) general horse husbandry and management, including supply and maintenance of feed and water;
  - e) handling and movement of horses, including human safety around horses;
  - f) safe transport of racehorses, including determining fitness for transport and loading/unloading of horse transport equipment; and
  - g) accurate record keeping.
- G18.2** Where a person responsible for keeping a racehorse employs people or otherwise has the assistance of other people, those people should be given appropriate site-specific induction upon first engagement and at any other time when there is a significant change to equipment, practices or procedures on the premises.
- G18.3** Supporting evidence of training and competency should include one or more of the following:
- a) records of on-the-job training;
  - b) relevant experience;
  - c) recognised training and/or qualifications;
  - d) staff training registers;
  - e) induction training; or
  - f) Supervisor sign-off for specific tasks.

## 19. Record keeping

### Objective

To ensure that record-keeping in relation to this Code of Practice complies with the Rules of Racing and regulatory requirements.

### Minimum Standards

**S19.1** Any record required to be kept as a result of these Standards must be:

- a) stored securely for a period not less than five (5) years;
- b) legible;
- c) accessible at any time; and
- d) produced upon lawful request to an authorised person, including a member of the Tasracing Racing Integrity Unit, other officers of Tasracing, the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner, or an officer authorised under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* (Tas), the *Biosecurity Act 2019* (Tas), or the *Animal Welfare (Land Transport of Livestock) Regulations 2013* (Tas).

### Guidelines

**G19.1** Records created for the purpose of adhering to these Standards should be kept on the premises where the racehorse/s is/are located, where practical.

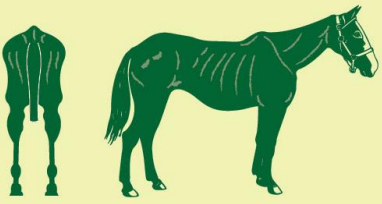
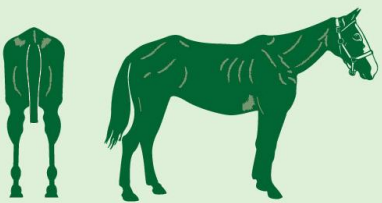
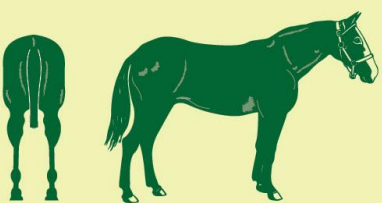
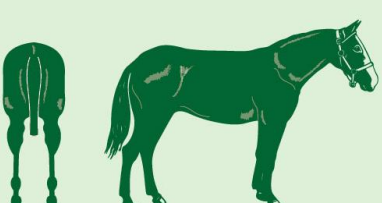
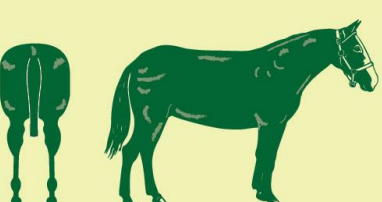
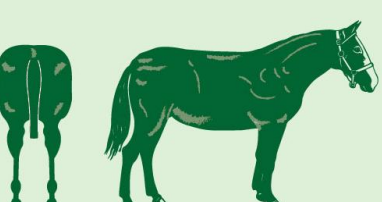
**G19.2** Where possible, records should be kept electronically to enable ease of access, security and longevity.

**G19.3** The types of records to be kept include, amongst others, personnel education and training records, records of treatment and movement for racehorses and records of modifications employed to address stereotypic behaviours in racehorses.

### Notes

When creating and keeping records, people must be aware of their obligations for privacy where those records might contain a person's Personal Information.

## Appendix 1: Body condition scoring chart

	<h3>0 - EMACIATED</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No fatty tissue can be felt</li> <li>• Skin tight over bones</li> <li>• Shape of individual bones visible</li> <li>• Marked ewe-neck</li> <li>• Very prominent backbone and pelvis</li> <li>• Very sunken rump</li> <li>• Deep cavity under tail</li> <li>• Large gap between thighs</li> </ul>
	<h3>1 - THIN</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barely any fatty tissue</li> <li>• Skin more supple</li> <li>• Shape of bones visible</li> <li>• Narrow ewe-neck</li> <li>• Ribs easily visible</li> <li>• Prominent backbone, croup and tailhead</li> <li>• Sunken rump; cavity under tail</li> <li>• Gap between thighs</li> </ul>
	<h3>2 - LEAN</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A thin layer of fat under the skin</li> <li>• Narrow neck; muscles sharply defined</li> <li>• Backbone covered with a very thin layer of fat but still protruding</li> <li>• Withers, shoulders and neck accentuated</li> <li>• Ribs just visible</li> <li>• Hip bones easily visible but rounded</li> <li>• Rump usually sloping flat from backbone to point of hips, may be rounded if very fit</li> <li>• May be small gap between thighs</li> </ul>
	<h3>3 - MODERATE</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A thin layer of fat under the skin</li> <li>• Top line developing and becoming more rounded</li> <li>• Withers rounded over tips of bones</li> <li>• Shoulders and neck blend smoothly into body</li> <li>• Back is flat or forms only slight ridge</li> <li>• Ribs not visible but easily felt</li> <li>• Thin layer of fat building around tailhead</li> <li>• Rump beginning to appear rounded</li> <li>• Hip bones just visible</li> </ul>
	<h3>4 - FAT</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muscles hard to determine beneath fat layer</li> <li>• Spongy fat developing on crest</li> <li>• Fat deposits along withers, behind shoulders and along neck</li> <li>• Ribs covered by spongy fat</li> <li>• Rump well rounded</li> <li>• Spongy fat around tailhead</li> <li>• Gutter along back</li> <li>• From behind rump looks apple shaped</li> </ul>
	<h3>5 - OBESE</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horse takes on a blocky, bloated look</li> <li>• Muscles not visible as covered by layer of fat</li> <li>• Pronounced crest with hard fat</li> <li>• Pads of fat along withers and behind shoulders</li> <li>• Extremely obvious gutter along back and rump</li> <li>• Flank filled in flush</li> <li>• Lumps of fat around tailhead</li> <li>• Very bulging apple shaped rump</li> <li>• Inner thighs pressing together</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2: Signs of ill health in racehorses

### Signs of pain

As prey animals, horses attempt to hide signs of pain from those around them. As such, signs of pain can be subtle and may be difficult to interpret.

There are many possible causes of pain, from simple problems like muscle soreness to more serious diseases such as laminitis and colic.

It is recommended that people responsible for racehorses seek advice if a horse is suffering from pain. Generally, signs of pain and ill health in horses can include:

- pawing at the ground
- pointing with affected limbs
- flank watching
- rolling on the ground or lying down more than usual
- teeth grinding
- change in appetite or drinking habits
- lack of, or a change in, defecation
- shifting weight regularly and not bearing weight on all legs
- limbs held in an unusual position
- abnormal gait or lameness (see Table 1 below)
- a 'tucked up' or abnormal body posture
- lack of desire to exercise
- excessive sweating
- unexplained weight loss
- muscle tremors
- increased heart and respiratory rate
- reduced reactivity to the environment
- separation from social group
- behavioural changes such as appearing depressed, anxious or restless
- any signs of disease such as discharge from the eye, ear or nose, coughing or breathing difficulty

There are also facial signs that can indicate a horse may be in pain. These signs can include low or asymmetrical ear positions, facial and muzzle tension with 'frowning' or 'lightly puckered eyes', fixed stares and dilated nostrils.

## Lameness

Lameness is a term used to describe an abnormal stance or gait. Table 1 can be used to grade the severity of lameness observed in horses.

**Table 1 Equine lameness assessment**

Score	Equine lameness assessment
0	Lameness not perceptible under any circumstances
1	Lameness difficult to observe, not consistently apparent regardless of circumstances (e.g. weight carrying, circling, inclines, hard surface)
2	Lameness difficult to observe at a walk to trot in a straight line (e.g. weight carrying, circling, inclines, hard surface)
3	Lameness consistently observable at a trot under all circumstances
4	Lameness obvious, marked nodding, hitching and/or shortened stride
5	Lameness obvious, minimal weight bearing in motion or rest, inability to move

Source: American Association of Equine Practitioners Scale of Lameness Grading (1984)

Lameness can be caused by a variety of factors, including skin wounds, muscle pain, joint inflammation, tendon and ligament injury, bone injury or hoof damage. The treatment of lameness will depend on its cause. It is recommended that advice from a farrier or registered veterinarian is sought where a horse is exhibiting lameness.

## Colic

Colic is a term broadly used to describe abdominal pain in horses. Colic is common in horses, but the cause and severity vary greatly. People responsible for horses should be able to recognise signs of colic to enable prompt treatment. Common signs of colic include:

- looking and/or kicking at flank
- frequent rolling
- continuous attempts to lie down
- pawing at the ground
- lack of, or infrequent, defecation
- poor appetite and water intake
- excessive sweating
- lack of normal gut noises
- stretching out as if to urinate
- distention of the abdomen

Where a horse is suspected to be suffering from colic, advice should be sought from a veterinarian at the earliest opportunity.

It may be necessary to take measures to prevent a horse from suffering from colic. Such preventative measures include:

- ensuring the horse has constant access to fresh, clean water
- avoiding placement of hay directly on the ground, especially in sandy areas
- ensuring the horse has unlimited access to roughage
- ensuring the paddock is not likely to be overgrazed, leading to ingestion of sand
- regular control of parasites, such as worms; and
- reducing stress levels in the horse, such as by ensuring their behavioural needs are met and not carrying out activities likely to cause stress.

It is also recommended to increase monitoring for signs of colic following changes in diet, the level of intensity of exercise, duration of stabling, or stress levels.

### Normal vital signs

Below is the normal range of a horse's vital signs at rest. A person responsible for a racehorse should be able to measure a horse's vital signs as these can be important indicators during illness.

#### Horse Vital Signs

Vital sign	Normal range
Heart rate	38-44 beats per minute
Respiratory rate	12-20 breaths per minute
Rectal Temperature	37-38.5°C
Gums (Mucous Membranes)	Should be light pink and moist, and capillary refill time less than 2 seconds
Gut sounds	Sounds of the intestines should be heard on both sides of the abdomen
Excretions	6-10 manures and 3-4 urinations should be passed every 24 hours

Note: Exercise may have a profound (transient) effect on vital signs in racehorses.

## First aid kit

The following items are recommended to keep in a first aid kit for racehorses. The kit should be checked and restocked regularly so that it is always available in the event of an emergency.

- stethoscope
- thermometer
- bandages
- Elastoplast
- cotton wool roll
- non-stick dressing
- gauze swabs
- syringes and needles
- antiseptic
- electrolytes
- poultice
- ice pack
- rubber gloves
- scrub brush
- scissors
- duct tape
- fly spray
- rope
- torch
- marker pen
- notebook
- wire cutters
- vital signs chart
- emergency contacts

## Acknowledgements

The following documents were used as reference when compiling this Code of Practice:

- **Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Revision 1, Animal Welfare Victoria 2019**
- **Code of Welfare: Horses and Donkeys, Minister of Agriculture, Government of New Zealand, in force from 1 October 2018**
- **Minimum Standards and Guidelines of Equine Welfare, Racing NSW**
- **New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing Thoroughbred Welfare Assessment Guidelines, October 2019**
- **Standards and Guidelines for the Health and Welfare of Horses in Western Australia, October 2025, State of Western Australia (Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development)**
- **Tasmanian Equine Welfare Guidelines September 2008, revised July 2021**
- **Thoroughbred Racehorse Welfare Policy, Racing Victoria, effective 1 May 2024.**
- **Various legislation referenced in this Code of Practice**

## Document Control

This Code of Practice will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier, if appropriate.

Date	Version	Author	Approved by
30/10/2024	1.1	Dr Martin Lenz, Chief Veterinary & Animal Welfare Officer Tasracing	Andrew Jenkins, Chief Executive Officer Tasracing
17/11/2025	2.3	Dr Martin Lenz, CV&AWO Tasracing	Andrew Jenkins, CEO Tasracing
Next Review Date	1/10/2027		