

CONSULTATION NOTICE

Code of Racing	Harness
Rule	n/a
Description	Concussion Protocol - Harness Drivers
Authorised for Consultation	November 24, 2023
Consultation Closes	December 22, 2023
Submissions to	policies@racingqueensland.com.au

Racing Queensland (**RQ**), in conjunction with the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (**QRIC**) is proposing to adopt Concussion Protocols for Harness Drivers.

This follows the introduction of a joint RQ-QRIC Concussion Protocol for Jockeys in the thoroughbred code of racing effective July 1, 2023, which involves a mandatory 12-day stand-down for confirmed cases of concussion.

RQ is also aware that the Harness authorities in New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia have introduced relevant concussion protocols/procedures/policies in their respective jurisdictions.

Concussion in sport is an issue that has become more prevalent in recent years. Various sports – including NRL, AFL, Netball across all levels and ages – have adopted concussion protocols including mandatory stand-downs for confirmed cases of concussion. Concussions that occur during sporting activities can be complex, and symptoms can differ depending on the circumstances of the injury and the person. Some people display more obvious symptoms of concussion, like loss of consciousness, vomiting and confusion. Others may experience problems with their vision, concentration or thought processes. One person suffering from concussion may experience one symptom while others may experience multiple symptoms, with the severity of these symptoms ranging from mild to serious. As such, diagnosing concussion can be difficult.

RQ has sought expert medical advice on the content and suitability of a Head Injury Assessment (**HIA**) Form for the purposes of assessment for clinical signs of concussion following an incident involving head trauma.

RQ and QRIC believe the long-term health and wellbeing of our participants remains paramount, and a mandatory 12-day stand-down period for confirmed cases of concussion is an appropriate and necessary step to ensure our participants can undertake a period of rest and recovery before being cleared to compete again.

The proposed Concussion Protocol will apply to any Driver who incurs head trauma in the course of performing their role, either prior to, during or following a race or trial, and where the incident may result in the Driver being diagnosed with concussion. This includes circumstances where the Driver may incur head trauma in the stabling area, even if the Driver is not driving on that day, but is due to drive in the days ahead.

Overview of Process

1. If a Driver incurs head trauma, they must be assessed by Medical Rescue personnel using the Head Injury Assessment (**HIA**) Form.
2. If the Driver is showing clinical signs of concussion as per the HIA Form:
 - (i) the Driver will be stood down from their work commitments/remaining engagements by the QRIC Stewards and the QRIC Stewards will issue a Notice for Medical Assessment (**NMA**) Form to the Driver; and
 - (ii) the Driver must present to a Medical Practitioner to undertake a formal assessment for concussion with a copy of the completed HIA Form and the NMA Form; and
 - (iii) if the Medical Practitioner subsequently determines that the Driver does not have concussion, the Driver cannot recommence their work duties until a clearance from the Medical Practitioner is provided to the QRIC Stewards (the clearance must state that the Medical Practitioner sighted the completed HIA Form at the time the Medical Practitioner performed the formal assessment).
3. A Driver who is diagnosed to be suffering concussion by a Medical Practitioner at a subsequent assessment:
 - (i) shall be automatically stood down from all driving commitments for a period of at least 12 days; and
 - (ii) must be cleared by a Medical Practitioner to resume driving commitments after the expiration of at least the 12th day following the incident; and
 - (iii) submit an application to resume driving commitments to the QRIC Stewards after the expiration of at least the 12th day following the incident; and
 - (iv) receive approval to resume driving commitments from the QRIC Stewards.
4. Any Driver who does not receive the appropriate medical clearance from a Medical Practitioner at the conclusion of the 12th day cannot resume driving commitments and must continue with the treatment plan prescribed by the treating Medical Practitioner until cleared to resume driving commitments.

Insurance/Loss of Income

RQ has confirmed that Drivers are eligible for loss of income benefit to be paid in the event of an injury and stand-down for concussion.

Under the terms of the policy with V-Insurance, Drivers are eligible to claim 85% of your combined income (i.e., Harness Racing and non-Harness Racing Income) up to a maximum



of \$1,000 per week, whichever is the lesser, and there is no wait period as applies to other injuries.

Driver Obligations

Drivers are required to comply with the Rules of Racing of Racing Queensland – Harness, and any direction given by the QRIC Stewards, at all times.

Drivers are required to report to the QRIC Stewards any racing related (e.g., training, jump-outs and trackwork) concussions or suspected concussions, and any non-racing related concussion or head trauma injuries. Self-reporting should be seen as a responsibility to yourself and your fellow Drivers.

Documents

A copy of the draft Concussion Protocol, together with the HIA Form and NMA Form, are found in the following pages.

Stakeholders are invited to provide feedback as per the details at the top of this document.



PROCEDURE – CONCUSSION PROTOCOL (HARNESS)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is to outline the process to be followed in the event that a *Driver* incurs head trauma in the course of performing their role, either prior to, during or following a race or trial, and where the incident may result in the *Driver* being diagnosed with concussion.

Racing Queensland (**RQ**) and the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (**QRIC** or the **Commission**) note that in the absence of a uniform national approach being adopted by Harness Racing Australia, individual state racing jurisdictions may determine their own concussion protocols including a mandatory stand down for *Drivers* diagnosed with concussion.

RQ has sought expert medical advice on the content and suitability of the Head Injury Assessment (**HIA**) Form (**Appendix 1**) for the purposes of assessment for clinical signs of concussion.

This Procedure is a joint RQ and QRIC Procedure. RQ has prepared the Procedure in consultation with the Commission, and any future versions or updates and amendments to the Procedure will be managed in the same way. The Procedure will be enforced by the Commission and its Stewards.

2. Scope

For the purposes of this Procedure, a *Driver* is defined as a Queensland driver (including trainer/driver) licensed by the Commission, and also includes a visiting driver licensed outside of Queensland who are licensed by the Commission to compete in a race or races in Queensland.

Nothing in this Procedure affects the *Rules of Racing of Racing Queensland – Harness* (constituted by the *Australian Harness Racing Rules* and the *Local Rules of Racing – Harness Racing*) as effective at any time.

3. Process

- (a) If a *Driver* incurs head trauma in the course of performing their role, either prior to, during or following a race or trial, the *Driver* must be assessed by an official oncourse Doctor, or other approved medical person appointed to provide medical services, such as an Advanced Life Support Qualified Paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualification, using the HIA Form (**Appendix 1**).
- (b) If the assessment required in clause 3.(a) above is performed by an Advanced Life Support Qualified Paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualification, and the *Driver* is showing clinical signs of concussion as per the HIA Form:
 - (i) the *Driver* will be stood down from their work commitments/remaining engagements by the QRIC Stewards and the QRIC Stewards will issue a Notice for Medical Assessment (**NMA**) Form (**Appendix 2**) to the *Driver*, and
 - (ii) the *Driver* must present to a Medical Practitioner to undertake a formal assessment for concussion with a copy of the completed HIA Form and the NMA Form; and
 - (iii) if the Medical Practitioner subsequently determines that the *Driver* does not have concussion, the *Driver* cannot recommence their work duties until a certificate of medical clearance from the Medical Practitioner is provided to the QRIC Stewards, and the certificate of medical clearance must state that the Medical Practitioner



PROCEDURE – CONCUSSION PROTOCOL (HARNESS)

sighted the completed HIA Form at the time the Medical Practitioner performed the formal assessment.

- (c) Further to clauses 3.(a) and 3.(b), if a *Driver* incurs head trauma and an official oncourse Doctor, or other approved medical person appointed to provide medical services, such as an Advanced Life Support Qualified Paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualification, determines, without using the HIA Form, that the *Driver* is to be transported to hospital for assessment and treatment, it shall be taken that the *Driver* has showed clinical signs of concussion that require formal assessment for concussion. In these circumstances, the *Driver* shall be subject to the relevant provisions of this Procedure.
- (d) A *Driver* who is diagnosed to be suffering concussion by an official oncourse Doctor, or a Medical Practitioner at a subsequent assessment:
- (i) shall be automatically stood down from all driving commitments for a period of at least 12 days; and
 - (ii) at the direction of the QRIC Stewards, must be cleared with a certificate of medical clearance issued by a Medical Practitioner to resume driving commitments after the expiration of at least the 12th day following the incident; and
 - (iii) submit an application to resume driving commitments to the QRIC Stewards after the expiration of at least the 12th day following the incident; and
 - (iv) receive approval to resume driving commitments from the QRIC Stewards.
- (e) Any *Driver* who does not receive the appropriate medical clearance from a Medical Practitioner at the conclusion of the 12th day cannot resume driving commitments and must continue with the treatment plan prescribed by the treating Medical Practitioner until cleared to resume driving commitments.
- (f) Any *Driver* who comes to Queensland from another jurisdiction having been diagnosed with concussion in circumstances provided for in this Procedure:
- (i) will not be permitted to drive in Queensland by the QRIC Stewards until the expiration of the 12th day after incurring the concussion; and
 - (ii) will be required to provide the relevant certificate of medical clearance issued by a Medical Practitioner and confirmation from the control body of the jurisdiction where the *Driver* is licensed that the *Driver* is cleared to resume driving commitments.

For the avoidance of doubt, a *Driver* who comes to Queensland from a jurisdiction that does not have a 12-day stand down period for diagnosed concussion, will not be permitted to fulfil driving commitments in Queensland by the QRIC Stewards until the expiration of the 12th day after incurring the concussion.

- (g) Whilst primarily for incidents that occur preceding/during/following a race or trial, the provisions of this Procedure shall also apply where the QRIC Stewards are aware of a *Driver* who has incurred head trauma in a training, jump-out or other trackwork accident. If RQ is notified of a *Driver* having incurred head trauma in a training or other trackwork accident, RQ will provide email notification to the QRIC Stewards (Chief Steward and Senior Stewards).



PROCEDURE – CONCUSSION PROTOCOL (HARNESS)

4. Roles & Responsibilities

Clubs are required to engage the services of appropriately qualified paramedics, first aid personnel or other such approved medical persons appointed to provide medical services, such as an Advanced Life Support Qualified Paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualification, for all race meetings, trials and jump-outs.

Clubs must ensure, in instances where there is not a QRIC Steward present at their venue when training is occurring, that any *Driver* who incurs head trauma in a training, jump-out or other trackwork accident, where medical assistance is sought and provided, the medical person providing medical services, such as an Advanced Life Support Qualified Paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualification, must undertake an assessment using the HIA Form. In these circumstances, the Club must report such incident occurrence to the QRIC Stewards immediately.

Drivers are required to comply with the *Rules of Racing of Racing Queensland – Harness* and any direction given by the QRIC Stewards at all times.

Drivers are required to report to the QRIC Stewards any racing related (e.g., training, jump-outs and trackwork) concussions or suspected concussions, and any non-racing related concussion or head trauma injuries.

QRIC Stewards are responsible (when they are in attendance) for ensuring that any *Driver* who suffers a fall preceding/during/following a race, trial, jump-out, or in a training or other trackwork accident, where a head injury may have occurred, must be assessed by an official oncourse Doctor, or other approved medical person appointed to provide medical services, such as an Advanced Life Support Qualified Paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualification, using the HIA Form.

QRIC Stewards are required to issue an NMA Form to any *Driver* who is assessed with clinical signs of concussion on the HIA Form and is stood down and required to present to a Medical Practitioner to undertake a formal assessment for concussion.

5. References & Related Documents

Document	Document
<i>Rules of Racing of Racing Queensland – Harness</i>	Racing Queensland <i>Guideline – Jockey/Driver Incident Response</i>

6. Version History

Current Version:	2023.01	Date Made:	xx/xx/2023	Effective Date:	Xx/xx/2023
Document Owner:	RQ EGM Operations			CEO Approved:	Xx/xx/2023
Enquiries to:	RQ Industry Policy Manager QRIC Chief Steward – Harness			Due for Review:	Xx/xx/2025

Version	Effective	Document Owner	Changes Made
2023.01	Xx/xx/2023	EGM Operations	New Procedure



APPENDIX 1 HEAD INJURY ASSESSMENT FORM

The Head Injury Assessment Form is to be completed by an official oncourse Doctor, or other approved medical person appointed to provide medical services, such as an Advanced Life Support Qualified Paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualification, if a driver incurs head trauma while performing their role, either prior to, during or following a race or trial.

The Head Injury Assessment Form is to be used primarily for the preliminary assessment for clinical signs of concussion to determine if the driver requires formal assessment and diagnosis for concussion by a Medical Practitioner.

This form does not replace the SCAT5 which must be performed in any case of suspected or diagnosed concussion [SCAT5 to be performed by a Medical Practitioner only].

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Driver's Name:	
Racecourse:	
Date:	
Approximate Time of Incident:	
Race Number:	
Date/Details of Previous Concussion:	
Details of Medication in last 24 hours (name, dosage, timing):	
Examiner's Name:	
Time of Examination:	

B. SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS

<p>When conducting this assessment, the examiner must be aware that the driver's response to routine questioning may not be entirely reliable. This may be due to the effects of the head trauma or because the driver's desire to return to continue competing outweighs their natural inclination to give true and accurate answers.</p> <p>Does the driver complain of any of the following symptoms, or exhibit any signs, that might indicate a diagnosis of concussion?</p>				
Symptoms/Signs	Observed Directly	Reported	Video Review	No
1. Lying motionless (more than 2 seconds)				
2. Possible loss of consciousness				
3. Possible no protective action in fall to ground				
4. Possible impact seizure or tonic posturing				
5. Possible motor incoordination				
6. Possible dazed or blank/vacant stare				
7. Possible behaviour change atypical of the driver, e.g., signs of agitation, anxiety etc.				
8. Unsteady on their feet				
9. Headache				

APPENDIX 1
HEAD INJURY ASSESSMENT FORM

Symptoms/Signs	Observed Directly	Reported	Video Review	No
10. Nausea				
11. Vomiting				
12. Dizziness				
13. Blurred or double vision				
14. Foggy headed or stunned				
15. Any clinical impression or uncertainty from the examiner that the driver is not quite right.				

C. MADDOCKS QUESTIONS

To be administered at least 10 minutes after the estimated time of the injury (in the presence of a Queensland Racing Integrity Commission Steward to verify answers).	Incorrect	Correct
1. Where do you live / what is your address? Answer: _____		
2. What venue you are you at today? Answer: _____		
3. Name of the horse you drove in the race? Answer: _____		
4. Name of the trainer of the horse you drove? Answer: _____		
5. What was the distance of the race? Answer: _____		
6. Name two other drivers competing in the race? Driver 1 name: _____ Driver 2 name: _____		
7. Where and when did you drive in a race prior to today's race meeting? Answer: _____		

D. NEW MEMORY TEST

Please select and administer 1, 2 or 3. Ask the driver to repeat the statement (1, 2 or 3) and advise them they will be asked questions about the statement later (after the "Exercise Challenge Test") – Who? Going Where? When? Why/what race?	Fail	Pass
1. Greg Sugars will be going to Mildura in April to drive in the Mildura Cup.		
2. Luke McCarthy will travel to Gloucester Park in April to drive in The Nullarbor.		
3. Gary Hall Jnr will go to Menangle in March to drive in the Miracle Mile.		

APPENDIX 1

HEAD INJURY ASSESSMENT FORM

E. EXERCISE CHALLENGE TEST

<p>Ask the driver to sit in a chair, arms folded and then stand and sit five times as rapidly as they feel comfortable. Repeat the drill for three attempts with a short rest in between each attempt. The drill should take 10 seconds for each attempt.</p> <p>The driver may falter, slow over the challenge and increase the severity of the concussion symptoms. If the symptoms appear to increase, the challenge should be discontinued.</p>	Fail	Pass
<p>Attempt 1: Time taken: _____</p> <p>Attempt 2: Time taken: _____</p> <p>Attempt 3: Time taken: _____</p>		

F. SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS RE-ASSESSMENT

<p>After completing the “Exercise Challenge Test” and asking the questions from the “New Memory Test”, re-assess the driver to ascertain whether any of the “Symptoms and Signs” (section B) are now evident or more evident than the initial assessment. If showing any symptoms or signs, provide comments/details below.</p>	Fail	Pass

G. OUTCOME AND ACTION

Unless the driver completes all parts of the assessment as negative to symptoms and signs of concussion, the driver will be stood down from their remaining riding engagements on the day by the Stewards of the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission.

The driver must then present to a Medical Practitioner to undertake a formal assessment for concussion with a copy of this completed Head Injury Assessment Form.

If in any doubt, the driver should always be removed from all race driving activity until a formal assessment can be undertaken by a Medical Practitioner.

H. SIGNATURE OF EXAMINER

<p>To be completed by an official oncourse Doctor, or other approved medical person appointed to provide medical services, such as an Advanced Life Support Qualified Paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualification.</p>		
Signed:	Date:	Time:
<p>Examiner’s Final Comments:</p> 		

