

PROCEDURE - VENUE SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT (THOROUGHBRED)

1. Purpose & Scope

- (a) The purpose of this Procedure is to outline the process that will be followed if any issues arise in the lead up to or during a race meeting that may render the venue unsuitable for racing (including with reference to safety).
- (b) This Procedure is a joint Racing Queensland (**RQ**) and Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (**QRIC**) Procedure. Any future versions, updates or amendments will be managed jointly between RQ and the QRIC.
- (c) While the power to cancel, abandon or postpone a race meeting rests with RQ prior to official scratching time, and with the QRIC thereafter, both parties will work collaboratively and in a transparent and timely manner to ensure decisions are made based on all available information, and in the best interests of participants and animals.
- (d) Nothing in this Procedure will override the application of the Rules of Racing. If there is any inconsistency between this Procedure and the Rules of Racing, the Rules of Racing will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

2. Procedure

2.1. RQ as the Decision-Maker (before official scratching time)

- (a) **Giving notice to RQ:** If, prior to official scratching time for a race meeting, the Club, the QRIC or a participant identifies an issue that may render the venue unsuitable for racing, they must immediately notify RQ. Upon being notified of the issue, RQ will attempt to gather all relevant information from the party that raised it.
- (b) **RQ will undertake initial enquiries:** If, prior to official scratching time for a race meeting, RQ becomes aware of an issue that it believes may render the venue unsuitable for racing (whether notified in accordance with clause 2.1(a) or otherwise), RQ will undertake initial enquiries with the Club, the QRIC, and all other relevant parties, to:
 - (i) ascertain the nature and extent of the issue (including any history relevant to the issue or similar issues at the venue); and
 - (ii) determine whether any remedial actions should be undertaken to address the issue.

All parties involved in these initial enquiries must ensure that they are aware of and working toward the standard required for the venue to be deemed suitable for racing by RQ and, subsequently, by the Stewards on race day.

- (c) **RQ may require remedial actions:** Where RQ determines that remedial actions are appropriate (and where time permits), RQ will instruct the Club to carry out such actions to ensure the venue is suitable for racing.
- (d) **RQ may require track gallop:** Where deemed necessary, RQ may require that a track gallop involving at least one horse and an experienced rider be undertaken, to test the condition of the racing surface.
- (e) **RQ may decide conduct of race meeting:** Once RQ is satisfied that all appropriate actions and deliberations have taken place, RQ may decide (in its sole discretion) whether the race meeting will proceed as scheduled, or whether to cancel, abandon or postpone the meeting in accordance with its powers under AR 155(1). In making its decision, RQ will consider the opinions of the Club and the QRIC, and may also take into account the opinions of other relevant parties.

- (f) **RQ may alter timing of races:** RQ may choose to alter the scheduled timing of races at any time and for any reason, including to allow for works, actions or deliberations to be undertaken and, in doing so, will engage with other relevant parties as appropriate.
- (g) **Notification by RQ:** Once a decision has been made, RQ will notify the Club, the QRIC and all other relevant parties of the decision. If the decision is made to cancel, abandon, or postpone the meeting, or to alter the scheduled timing of races, RQ will:
- (i) issue an SMS communication to all participants engaged to take part in the meeting;
 - (ii) liaise with the QJA and the ATA QLD to ensure all participants engaged to take part in the meeting are made aware of the decision as soon as practicable (particularly any who may be enroute to the meeting);
 - (iii) contact the TAB/SKY to inform it of the decision; and
 - (iv) issue a media statement/tweet to inform the public of the decision, giving reasons.
- (h) **QRIC assistance:** To assist with achieving the intent of this Procedure, where RQ becomes aware of an issue that it believes may render a relevant venue unsuitable for racing, RQ may request the QRIC's assistance and, where possible, the QRIC will endeavour to schedule Stewards to undertake an inspection of the venue:
- (i) on a day prior to the race meeting; and/or
 - (ii) prior to official scratching time on the day of the race meeting,
- as the case may require.

Regarding any such inspection, RQ will:

- (iii) liaise with the Stewards and the QJA as necessary; and
- (iv) ensure that a representative of RQ's tracks team attends to take part (where possible).

2.2. QRIC as the Decision-Maker (from official scratching time)

- (a) **Giving notice to the Stewards:** If, after official scratching time on the day of a race meeting (including during the conduct of a meeting), the Club, RQ or a participant identifies an issue that may render the venue unsuitable for racing, they must immediately notify the Stewards. Upon being notified of the issue, the Stewards will attempt to gather all relevant information from the party that raised it.
- (b) **Stewards will undertake initial enquiries:** If, after official scratching time on the day of a race meeting (including during the conduct of a meeting), the Stewards become aware of an issue that they believe may render the venue unsuitable for racing (whether notified in accordance with clause 2.2(a) or otherwise), the Stewards will undertake initial enquiries with the Club and all other relevant parties to ascertain the nature and extent of the issue (including any history relevant to the issue or similar issues at the venue).
- (c) **Inspection may take place:** Thereafter, unless the Stewards decide otherwise (based on their initial enquiries), an inspection of the areas of concern will take place, involving:
- (i) the Stewards;
 - (ii) the Club's racecourse manager (or other appropriate Club official);
 - (iii) up to four jockeys selected by the Stewards (the **jockey delegates**); and
 - (iv) any other parties the Stewards deem appropriate.



- (d) **Stewards' selection of jockey delegates:** In selecting the jockey delegates to take part in this inspection, the Stewards will seek to include:
- (i) a combination of jockeys who rode in the previous race and jockeys engaged to ride in the upcoming race; or
 - (ii) where no race has taken place, a combination of jockeys engaged to ride in the first race and jockeys engaged to ride in the second race.

If there are no jockeys on course at the time of the inspection, the inspection may proceed in the absence of jockey delegates, but the Stewards will contact the QJA to inform it of this fact.

- (e) **Stewards to take advice from jockey delegates:** Upon completion of this inspection, the Stewards will take advice from the jockey delegates on their opinion as to the suitability of the venue for racing (this opinion to be given privately in the absence of any Club officials).
- (f) **Stewards may require remedial actions:** Upon completion of the inspection (or at any other relevant time), the Stewards may determine that remedial actions should be undertaken to address the issue. All parties involved in any such deliberations must ensure that they are aware of and working toward the standard required for the venue to be deemed suitable for racing by the Stewards.
- (g) **Club to carry out remedial actions:** Where the Stewards determine that remedial actions are appropriate (and where time permits), the Stewards will instruct the Club's racecourse manager (or other appropriate Club official) to carry out such actions to ensure the venue is suitable for racing. Upon completion of those actions, the parties involved in the initial inspection will re-inspect the areas of concern.
- (h) **Obtaining the opinion of jockeys in upcoming race:** If, after considering the advice of the jockey delegates, the Stewards decide it is necessary to obtain the opinion of the jockeys riding in the upcoming race, the Stewards will invite those jockeys to the Stewards' room to discuss the status of the meeting. At the conclusion of this discussion, the Stewards will:
- (i) invite those jockeys to inspect the areas of concern, together with the Stewards and the jockey delegates; and
 - (ii) following this inspection, ask the jockeys involved in this inspection to discuss any concerns they may have regarding the suitability of the venue for racing in the upcoming race (this discussion to take place in private in the jockeys' room).
- (i) **Jockeys to give opinion:** Following any such discussions, the jockeys will be invited to give their opinion as to the suitability of the venue for racing in the upcoming race (this opinion to be delivered by a jockey nominated by the jockeys involved in the discussion). If the opinion is divided, that fact and the proportion of jockeys in favour and against is to be conveyed to the Stewards.
- (j) **Stewards may decide conduct of race meeting:** Once the Stewards are satisfied that all appropriate actions and deliberations have taken place, the Stewards may decide (in their sole discretion) whether the race meeting will proceed as scheduled, or whether to postpone the meeting in accordance with their powers under AR 21(f)(i). In making their decision:
- (i) the Stewards will liaise with the Chief Thoroughbred Steward (or, if the Chief Thoroughbred Steward is unavailable, the Deputy Chief Thoroughbred Steward or the relevant Regional Manager); and
 - (ii) the Stewards will consider any advice of the jockey delegates, any opinion of the jockeys given in accordance with clause 2.2(h), and may also take into account the opinions of other relevant parties.



- (k) **Stewards may alter timing of races:** The Stewards may choose to alter the scheduled timing of races at any time and for any reason, including to allow for works, actions or deliberations to be undertaken and, in doing so, will engage with other relevant parties as appropriate.
- (l) **Notification by Stewards:** Once a decision has been made, the Stewards will notify the Club, the jockeys on course and all other relevant parties of the decision. If the decision is made to postpone the meeting, or to alter the scheduled timing of races, the Stewards will:
- (i) inform RQ of the decision;
 - (ii) issue an SMS communication to all participants engaged to take part in the meeting;
 - (iii) (if applicable) arrange the appropriate on course announcements via the relevant broadcasters;
 - (iv) contact the TAB/SKY to inform it of the decision; and
 - (v) issue a media statement/tweet to inform the public of the decision, giving reasons.
- (m) **RQ to liaise with QJA and ATA QLD:** Immediately upon receipt of such notice from the Stewards, RQ will liaise with the QJA and the ATA QLD to ensure all participants engaged to take part in the meeting are made aware of the decision as soon as practicable (particularly any who may be enroute to the meeting).
- (n) **Jockeys unwilling to ride:** Any jockey unwilling to ride following a decision of the Stewards to proceed with the meeting made under clause 2.2(j) must inform the Stewards of that fact and, upon doing so, will be granted permission to forgo further rides on that day and may leave the racecourse without penalty.
- (o) **Replacement jockeys:** Replacement jockeys for such horses may then be engaged by connections from amongst the jockeys who are willing to ride at the meeting, provided that jockey doesn't have an existing engagement to ride in that particular race. If there are no such jockeys available, the horse (or horses) will be withdrawn from the race without penalty.
- (p) **Repeat process:** This process may be repeated after each race throughout the course of a meeting as deemed appropriate by the Stewards.

3. References & Related Documents

Document
Rules of Racing of Racing Queensland - Thoroughbred
Standard Required Of Licensed Venues Policy
Licensed Venue Standards - Thoroughbred

4. Version History

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Version	Effective	Document Owner	Changes Made
1	15/09/2022	EGM Operations (RQ) Deputy Commissioner (QRIC)	New Procedure.
2	01/08/2024	EGM Operations (RQ) Deputy Commissioner (QRIC)	Reviewed and updated.

