

**HRNZ ORDER AND DIRECTION**  
**IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**  
**HUSBANDRY OF STANDARDBREDS – ALERT LEVEL 4**

**Explanatory Note**

On Saturday, 21st March 2020, the Prime Minister announced a new alert level system to be used during the COVID-19 response.

From 11.59pm on 25 March 2020, COVID-19 Alert Level 4 protocols will be enforced by the government through its various agencies, included the Police and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

***Alert Level Four: Eliminate***

*This is the top-level, activated if it is "likely" COVID-19 is not contained nationally or at a local level. Under this level, people would need to stay at home, all educational facilities and non-essential businesses remain closed, certain supplies rationed, facilities requisitioned, travel be severely limited, and all healthcare services reprioritised.*

In light of the government's announcement that the country will move to COVID-19 alert level 4 at midnight tonight (25 March) only "essential services" are permitted to operate.

Our advice from the Ministry for Primary Industries confirms that training centres, training stables, agistment properties and stud farms where [horses are in containment](#) are businesses that may register with MPI as an essential service under animal welfare considerations

Businesses with more than five people (including the owner) working at each business site, or who cannot achieve social distancing between staff, are required to register. The criteria and registration form can be found [here](#).

The businesses will need to answer 11 questions to provide assurance they have a plan and process to manage infection risks. Much of this will be covered in the NZTR protocols which will be distributed later today.

MPI has requested that all businesses which need to register do so by **5pm on Friday, 27 March 2020**. HRNZ understands businesses will be able to continue operating while going through the registration process.

**As an industry together, we must continue to prove that we can keep all participants safe and minimise to the greatest possible extent, the risk of transmission of COVID-19.**

A breach of this Order and Directions (Directive) constitutes a breach of the New Zealand Rules of Harness Racing (Rule 1001 - Serious Racing Offences).

This Directive has been issued in consultation with the New Zealand Trainers and Drivers Association.

**Note This directive is subject to any governmental requirement including the requirement Businesses with more than five people (including the owner) working at each business site, or who cannot achieve social distancing between staff, are required to register.**

## **Orders and Directions**

The Board of Harness Racing New Zealand Incorporated (HRNZ) gives the following Order and Direction under clause 14.4.4 of the Constitution of HRNZ to all clubs, combination of clubs, owners, and persons licenced under the New Zealand Rules of Harness Racing.

This Order and Direction (Directive) has immediate effect and remains in force whilst COVID-19 Alert Level remains at Level 4 and may be reviewed from time to time.

## **Definitions**

- 1.0 For the purpose of this Order and Direction:  
**staff** means any person working for a trainer whether paid or unpaid.

## **Exercise of Horses**

- 2.0 Whilst this Directive includes within its provisions the ability to exercise horses, this is permitted only where it is needed to ensure the continued welfare of the horse.
- 3.0 Light exercise of a horse is permitted only when:
- 3.1 The trainer is unable to identify a suitable agistment property or spelling paddock for the horse. Relocation of horses to an agistment property is permitted within clause 12;
  - 3.2 The horse is boxed, or is contained in a small paddock or yard due to there being no suitable yards or paddocks on the trainer's facility; and
  - 3.3 The stable lacks a horse walker or treadmill.
- 4.0 If light exercise is justified to ensure the continued welfare of a horse, the trainer must ensure that fast work is not undertaken.
- 5.0 Breaking, gaiting, and education of young horses is not a permitted activity, unless required to protect the safety of the young horse or staff.

## **Mandatory Obligations on Licenced Persons (Trainers and Stable Employees and Drivers)**

- 6.0 Trainers must roster staff to reduce the numbers of staff at the stable at any one time. This may require the working day to be restructured regarding feed preparation and other daily duties.

### **Health Assessments**

- 7.0 Trainers must maintain assessment of the health of themselves and each of their staff. Matters that must be assessed regularly include:

- 7.1 Has the person been close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19?
- 7.2 Has the person returned from overseas travel in the last 14 days, or has been in contact with another person who has returned from overseas travel in the last 14 days?
- 7.3 Any raised temperature or other indication of illness or fever?
- 7.4 Any indication of a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath?

If any one of the above four questions is a 'yes' then the person should revert to self-isolation, for at least a further 14 days.

### **Personal Responsibility**

- 8.0 A trainer and any staff must self-isolate, and not attend and be refused access to stables or training facilities if:
- 8.1 They have cold or flu symptoms, including coughing, sneezing, runny nose, headache, aches or fever;
  - 8.2 They know or suspect that they have been in contact with a person suspected or confirmed as contracting COVID-19; or
  - 8.3 They or a close contact has returned to NZ from overseas with the previous 14 days.

### **Trainers and Staff**

- 9.0 A trainer and staff engaged in the care of horses, exercising horses, or for work in stable areas must work together to understand and comply with this directive or any measures that the trainer dictates, in order to minimise the risks of transmission of COVID-19. These measures shall include but not be limited to the following:

#### **Contact Tracing**

- 9.1 A daily logbook of all on-site staff to be maintained, with inclusion of any visiting suppliers or contractors (e.g. Vets/Farriers or any other person);

#### **Contractors, suppliers and persons performing essential services**

- 9.2 A trainer must ensure any contractor, supplier, or other person visiting the property to perform an essential service is familiar with and complies with any requirements of MPI and any other governmental requirements.

#### **Hygiene measures.**

- 9.3 When exercising horses, or in stable areas, trainers and staff are required to

maintain strict standards of personal hygiene.

- 9.4 Provision and use of disinfectant buckets and sprays, or soap and running water located throughout the stable and tie-up stalls for regular washing of hands:
  - 9.4.1 On arrival and before departure from the workplace;
  - 9.4.2 Before and after eating or drinking;
  - 9.4.3 Before and after assisting another person around the horse; and
  - 9.4.4 Before and after handling of tack or equipment that is handled by more than one person.
- 9.5 All persons must wash and wear clean clothes before and after work;
- 9.6 Wearing of gloves for duties for all duties when it is practical to do so;
- 9.7 Use of disinfectant on all gear that is used, particularly regular disinfectant of lead ropes, the reins of horses, and sulkies; and
- 9.8 Assign a staff member to periodically disinfect surfaces that are often used such as toilets, benches, doors, gates, barrows, rakes, brooms, buckets.

### **Physical Distancing**

- 9.9 Person-to-person contact must be minimised, no person should be within 2 metres of another person (unless to ensure safety in attending to the horse);
- 9.10 Segregation of staff into small teams or pairs of workers to minimise contact or overlapping working hours between staff groups so that if one group is required to self-isolate, the other group(s) may continue to work;
- 9.11 If and when non-stable staff (e.g. vets/farriers or any other person) enter stable areas, they must be maintained at a distance at least 2 metres (unless to ensure safety in attending to the horse), and be required to hand wash with soap or disinfectant on arrival and departure;
- 9.12 Other than for personal hygiene needs, access of staff to offices or enclosed spaces must be limited. Such measures must include:
  - 9.12.1 only one person at a time in a tack-room or gear-room;
  - 9.12.2 having a sole person responsible for the feed room, and all feed buckets left outside the feed-room with handles disinfected, and
  - 9.12.3 other similar distancing for recording and administering permitted supplements, medications, or other products.
- 9.13 Where possible, drivers and ground staff should be separated by at least 2 meters (unless to ensure safety in attending to the horse), and it must be ensured that a vacant tie-up stall is in between stalls that are being used to gear up horses.
- 9.14 Trainers and staff must immediately return to residences as soon as work duties are

complete.

- 9.15 Prohibit the socialising of staff either at or away from the workplace.

### **Isolation**

- 9.16 Trainers must stand down from the roster and require self-isolation of any staff member who:
- 9.16.1 Is aged 70 or over; or
  - 9.16.2 May be vulnerable to COVID-19 due to a medical condition; or
  - 9.16.3 Answers 'yes' to any of the 4 Health Assessment questions in (1) above.
  - 9.16.4 Is diagnosed or is suspected of having contracted COVID-19. In such an instance, the employer must ensure that: the staff member immediately self-isolates, follow Ministry of Health advice, and assist in contact tracing.

### **Compliance**

- 9.17 The trainer and their stable staff must comply with any directions or local rules stipulated by the training centre, including:
- 9.17.1 Directions of hours of access to facilities and tracks;
  - 9.17.2 Where horses must be geared up and hosed-down;
  - 9.17.3 Decision to close certain club facilities such as: entrances, trainers huts, swimming pool, shared horse-walkers, sawdust rolls, and the like;
  - 9.17.4 Who may use the facilities, including restrictions on horses being floated to and from the facility; and
  - 9.17.5 Any reduction in the number of training circuits that are open for use.

The trainer and their staff must ensure that all above measures are reviewed regularly to ensure ongoing compliance.

### **Movement of horses under Alert Level 4:**

- 10.0 Trainers must inform horse owners if a horse movement is to occur.
- 11.0 A horse may be moved between properties during COVID-19 Alert Level 4, only if the purpose of the movement is to ensure the welfare of the horse.
- 12.0 For clarity, this means horse may move out of a stable property to a nearby training track for daily exercise, or to an agistment property, or to veterinary surgery; but cannot be moved from agistment property to a training property.

### **Operators of Training venues**

- 13.0 Racing clubs and other operators of training venues must:

- 13.1 Maintain a daily logbook of all person using its facilities;
- 13.2 By agreement with resident trainers, allocate times for trainers to use facility so there are as few people as possible at any given time at the track, and allocate tie-up stalls to ensure appropriate physical distancing;
- 13.3 Gain confidence through discussion with local trainers, that measures required in this Directive are adhered to, or rectify any deficient work practices;
- 13.4 Erect signage to clearly prohibit access of non-authorised persons to the property;
- 13.5 Ensure adequate supervision (noting distancing requirements) of the facility whilst training facilities are utilised;
- 13.6 Ensure that (unless in emergency situations) that club staff can perform duties at a safe physical distance from users of the facility, or at times when users have vacated specific areas;
- 13.7 Minimise the number of staff on the facility, provided that this does not jeopardise health & safety of staff or persons permitted to be on-site;
- 13.8 Prohibit the socialising of staff either at or away from the facility; and
- 13.9 Consider and implement any further local rules that ensure hygiene, physical distancing, and contact tracing that will further limit the potential risk of COVID-19 transmission.

## COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire for Trainers and Stable Staff

Failure to truthfully complete this questionnaire shall be considered a breach of Rule 1001.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / 2020

1. Have had close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19?

**YES / NO (circle one)**

*If you answered yes, please provide details including date and person you have been in contact with*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you returned from overseas travel in the last 14 days?

**YES / NO (circle one)**

*If you answered yes, please provide details of your overseas travel and the date you returned to NZ.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you think you may have a fever?

**YES / NO (circle one)**

4. Do you have a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath?

**YES / NO (circle one)**

**If any of the above questions is answered "YES" the Employer must:**

- Instruct that the staff member, and any persons who have been in close contact within the past 48 hours, that they are immediately stood down and instructed to adhere to strict self-isolation.
- Advise the operator of the training venue.
- Advise HRNZ ([lbishop@hrnz.co.nz](mailto:lbishop@hrnz.co.nz))