



**Racing  
Victoria**

## RACING VICTORIA

### RACING IN HOT WEATHER GUIDELINES

Applicable to all racing participants, racing officials and contractors.

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## 1. BACKGROUND

### 1.1. Overview

These Racing Victoria (RV) *Racing in Hot Weather Guidelines* are in place to protect the safety of horses, employees, jockeys and industry participants during periods of hot weather.

## 2. SCOPE

The *Racing Victoria Procedure: Racing in Hot Weather* further detail how RV will manage the safety and welfare of its horses, employees, and contractors, jockeys and industry participants during periods of hot weather experienced at race meetings and official trials. Controls outlined aim at reducing the heat related risks present during hot weather and provide guidance on race meeting scheduling and/ or abandonment in specific circumstances. This procedure applies to all RV employees and RV contractors engaged at a race meeting or official trials, and racing participants including jockeys and horses.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

<p>The Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT)</p>	<p>To accurately assess the risk of physical exertion in hot weather conditions the WBGT measurement has been developed and is widely used in human sports, the military and in equine sports.</p> <p>The WBGT system measures ambient temperature, radiant heat, humidity and air movement (breeze) to calculate a safety index for physical exertion. If a risk of heat illness is identified, control measures need to be put in place.</p> <p>RV routinely measures the WBGT on racecourses on hot days and applies the following scientifically validated scale for assessing the safety of racing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. WBGT below 28.0 <b>Low risk conditions.</b> No special precautions are required.</li><li>ii. WBGT of 28.0 to 31.9 <b>Moderate risk conditions.</b> Hot weather racing procedures should be instigated.</li><li>iii. WBGT 32.0 or higher <b>High risk conditions.</b> Consideration in delaying races should <b>be discussed by appropriate personnel</b></li></ul>
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## 4. GUIDELINE

### 4.1. Background

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



ambient temperatures, low humidity and a breeze is generally not a particularly high-risk day but a warm day with very high humidity and no breeze may well be high risk day. Horses cool themselves efficiently by evaporative cooling, but high ambient temperature and high humidity will slow the rate of transfer of heat from the horse's body to the environment.

Thoroughbred races are conducted over relatively short distances, so maximal exertion in the heat only occurs for a short period. The amount of heat generated, and body water lost is relatively low compared to many other horse sports. Nonetheless, the issue is a very serious one, and the welfare of all participants, including the horses, is the first priority.

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

## **4.2. Planning**

RV's Racing Operations Department monitors weather conditions at locations of upcoming race meetings and official trials. The relevant Racing Club is notified of the requirements that should be in place to mitigate the impact of hot weather conditions. If high risk conditions are identified the Racing Operations Department, in consultation with the Veterinary Services Department, Stewards and, the relevant Racing Club, will give consideration to modifying, transferring, or abandoning the race meeting or official trials.

## **4.3. Monitoring Weather Conditions**

At racedays or at an official trial, regular measurements of the ambient temperature and WBGT are made. Qualified raceday medical staff are also in attendance to monitor participant welfare factors.

The standard temperature measurement in degrees Celsius is simply air temperature, measured by a dry bulb thermometer and does not provide a basis for fully assessing the potential risks from heat exposure. A day with high air temperatures, low humidity and a breeze is generally not a particularly high-risk day but a warm day with very high humidity and no breeze may well be high risk day.

Official Raceday Veterinarians are very experienced in assessing the risks of heat stress and monitor the weather conditions and the recovery of horses carefully during race days.

## **4.4. Decision Making on Racedays or at Official Trials**

If high risk conditions are identified the Stewards will give serious consideration is given to delaying or abandoning the race meeting or official trial.

## **5. REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

These Guidelines are reviewed annually and as required. This may occur due to a change of operation, new legislative obligation, government recommendations or recommendations as a result of audits.



Where revisions are required, changes will be tracked in red for review by the relevant Senior Management Team member, and for recommendation to the Executive General Manager or relevant Racing Victoria Committee for approval.

If approved, a tracked, clean (both in Word) and PDF copy of the Guideline be will saved, and then sent to Legal, Risk and Compliance. A copy may also be provided to People & Culture for uploading onto Racing Victoria’s intranet (the Stable).

Any changes to the Guideline is noted in the “version” table at section 4 below.

## 6. VERSION

Version	Nature of Change	Reviewing Party	Approval date
1.1	Original version	EGM - ISD	8 March 2024