




HARNESS RACING VICTORIA


# EXTREME WEATHER POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1	01 Feb 2017	New Edition	
2	09 Jun 2021	Update to reflect current practice, Renaming and review to incorporate weather conditions in addition to heat.	
3	15 Dec 2021	Update to section 5.1 – Prior to race day	
4	15 Feb 2023	Update definitions to reflect new fire danger ratings	
5	1 May 2024	Update to document risk assessment process for Extreme and Catastrophic fire danger ratings and resources used in the assessment.	

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## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 Harness Racing Victoria (HRV) is committed to ensuring the safety of HRV employees, visitors, contractors, participants, and horses. This commitment ensures that where there are dangers that are due to, or associated with extreme weather conditions, race meetings are either rescheduled or cancelled and outdoor work is ceased. At all times, where safety could be compromised, the risks to people and animals are considered above all else.
- 1.2 Extreme weather events may occur at or before race and trial meetings or may affect employees who work outdoors. The core objective of this procedure is to provide defined guidelines that set out the procedures for events of extreme weather, including:
  - a) The identification of extreme weather events
  - b) The actions and mitigation activities to be carried out by HRV personnel
  - c) Detail regarding the accepted communication processes to be undertaken.

## 2. SCOPE


- 2.1 This procedure applies to all HRV employees and contractors, clubs, participants and horses at scheduled race day or trial meetings. It also applies to HRV employees that conduct outdoor work, outside of race meetings and trials. This procedure does not apply to training or other horse-related activities conducted on the private land of participants.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Defined terms not otherwise defined in this Policy have been defined in and have the meaning given to them, in the AHRR or other HRV Integrity Policies.
- 3.2 In this Policy the following words in the singular include the plural and vice versa and have the corresponding meaning:

**Air quality index meter:** A device that measures air pollutants including particulate matter, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and ozone.

**Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO):** is a planning scheme provision used to guide the development of land in areas of very high to extreme bushfire hazard. The BMO applies to areas where there is potential for extreme bushfire behaviour, such as a crown fire and extreme ember attack and radiant heat.

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**Catastrophic Fire:** if a fire starts and takes hold lives are likely to be lost. Do not enter areas that are bushfire risk areas. Buildings cannot withstand fires in these conditions. You may not be able to leave, and help may not be available.

**Extreme Fire:** Fires will spread quickly and can be extremely dangerous. These are dangerous fire conditions. Expect hot, dry, and windy conditions. Reconsider travel through bushfire risk areas. Leaving bushfire risk areas early in the day is your safest option.

**Extreme weather event:** Includes unexpected, unusual, unpredictable, severe, or unseasonal weather conditions. A weather event such as snow, rain, drought, flood, or storm is rare for the place where it occurs.

**Fire Danger Ratings:** Predicts fire behaviour and how difficult it would be to control, should a fire start. Fire danger ratings are published on Vic Emergency, Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) websites. The fire danger ratings are Catastrophic, Extreme, High, Moderate, and No Rating. Visit <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/total-fire-bans-and-ratings>.

**Flash flooding:** Flash flooding is caused by heavy or excessive rainfall in a short period of time, generally less than 6 hours. Flash floods are usually characterized by raging torrents after heavy rains that rip through riverbeds, mountain valleys and urban streets. They can occur within minutes or a few hours of excessive rainfall.

**Flooding:** Flooding refers to an overflow of water onto normally dry land caused by rising water in an existing waterway, such as a river, stream, or drainage ditch. It may also refer to ponding of water at or near the point where the rain fell. Flooding is a longer-term event than flash flooding: it may last days or weeks.


**Heat Index (HI):** also known as the apparent temperature, is what the temperature feels like to the human body when relative humidity is combined with the air temperature.

**Heat wave:** a period of prolonged abnormally high surface temperatures relative to normally expected temperatures. Heat waves can negatively affect human and equine health and community infrastructure (e.g. power supply)

**Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>):** are very small particles usually found in smoke. They have a diameter of 2.5 micrometres (0.0025 mm) or smaller. PM<sub>2.5</sub> particles are a common air pollutant that can affect a person's health when the particles enter the bloodstream or when inhaled deeply into the lungs.

**Total fire ban:** A Total Fire Ban sets legal restrictions on what activities can or cannot occur in a particular district for that day. It aims to reduce the activities that may start a fire.

**Wet bulb globe temperature (WBGT):** is a measure of heat stress that considers temperature, humidity, wind speed, sun angle and cloud cover (solar

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radiation). Although WBGT is commonly measured in direct sunlight, BOM also publishes a WBGT shade temperature.

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

### 4.1 HRV Management shall:

- a) Provide necessary provisions and arrangements to support the implementation of this policy and procedure;
- b) Participate in consultation (including TCV and/or affected Clubs) and decision-making undertaken prior to race meetings where extreme weather conditions have been forecasted;
- c) Support Steward's/Veterinarian's decision to modify or cancel a race meeting on the day due to extreme or changing weather conditions;
- d) Provide HRV staff with suitable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for use in hot weather including sunscreen and hats.

### 4.2 The Racing Office:


- a) Monitor weather forecasts before race meetings by accessing BOM, Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and CFA websites;
- b) Initiate consultation with HRV Management;
- c) Make any required alterations to race times, number of races, field sizes or venue based on the outcome of the consultation.

### 4.3 Chief Steward/Stewards should:

- a) Monitor weather forecasts before race meetings by accessing BOM, EPA and CFA websites and WBGT temperatures during race meetings;
- b) Take part in assessments to verify the need for modifications or cancellations to race meetings;
- c) Communicate with Club Officials where modifications or cancellations are required;
- d) Take reasonable care of individual health and safety when working in extreme weather conditions;
- e) Immediately report any signs of difficulty, to gain immediate medical assistance.

### 4.4 General Manager Media and Communications should:

- a) Provide advice to the Victorian Harness Racing Industry where extreme weather conditions are anticipated or when race meetings are modified or cancelled.

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#### 4.5 Veterinarians should:

- a) Monitor horse's health during extreme weather conditions and provide and/or administer necessary treatments;
- b) Take part in assessments to verify the need for modifications or cancellations to race meetings;
- c) Have an adequate supply of relevant treatments on hand for emergency use;
- d) Take reasonable care of their health and safety when working in extreme weather conditions;
- e) Immediately report any signs of difficulty, to gain immediate medical assistance.

#### 4.6 Clubs should:

- a) Take reasonable care of health, safety and well-being of humans and horses by assessing weather conditions before running trials;
- b) Follow directions provided by HRV Steward to help reduce the risk of extreme weather conditions at race meetings.

#### 4.7 Managers should:

- a) Advise employees about extreme weather conditions and appropriate actions to be taken.


#### 4.8 Employees should:

- a) Be responsible for their own health and safety by following the precautionary measures mentioned in this procedure;
- b) In the event of an extreme weather condition, use sound judgement in evaluating potential risks to health and safety, including individual health factors;
- c) Inform their manager of changing work plans in the face of extreme weather conditions;
- d) Report immediately any signs of difficulty, to gain immediate medical assistance.


## 5. EXTREME HEAT PROCEDURE

5.1 In recognition of the risks associated with extreme weather, including heat waves, HRV will ensure that the health, safety and well-being of staff, participants and horses is given priority. When assessing the impact of extreme heat on the continuation of harness racing activities, a risk assessment may be conducted based on the following factors:

- a) Ambient temperature forecast;
- b) Actual WBGT, visit [Bureau of Meteorology](#).

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- 5.2 The Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) website provides information on thermal comfort and heat stress indicators in the form of WBGT. This information is updated throughout the day and includes information for regional areas.
- 5.3 It must be noted that days of extreme heat are often associated with an increased bushfire risk and determination of the progression of a racing event must also be considered in line with section 5.3 of this policy and procedure.
- 5.4 **Prior to Race Day**
- 5.5 Where the ambient temperature is forecasted to be 38°C and above, or WBGT to be 28°C and above, consideration may be given to cancelling or postponing the race meeting, in the interest of the health and safety of both humans and horses.
- 5.6 This initial process will be undertaken by racing office representatives and senior members of the integrity team in consultation with a HRV Veterinarian. Where this is identified at the close of acceptances for a race meeting the total number of races shall be limited to 10. This allows the race times to be altered should the forecast remain above 38°C.
- 5.7 Where a decision is taken to cancel or postpone the meeting, the CEO, and members of the Executive Management Team (EMT) and affected Club shall be informed immediately. The Head of Media and Communications must either be a party to this meeting or advised immediately once the decision has been made, to enable immediate and timely communications to the industry. Where possible, assessment should take place the day prior to the meeting to minimise disruption and inconvenience.
- 5.8 Where very hot weather is forecast, e.g. in the mid to high 30°'s and above, discussions and consultation will also be undertaken as a precautionary measure prior to race day. Such discussion and consultation may centre around:
- a) Protective procedures outlined in 5.5 being enacted, including, but not limited to an additional veterinarian present at race meeting;
  - b) Formulation of plans for modification of race timings as per Veterinarian's recommendations;
  - c) Postponement or cancellation plans that can be implemented quickly if the forecast changes or weather conditions deteriorate.

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### 5.9 Race Day

5.10 The BOM website should be used to assess current or predicted thermal comfort observations and the effect on humans as well as horses. The Stewards officiating the meeting will be responsible for accessing this information from the BOM website and in providing alerts regarding possible modifications/cancellations. In such circumstances, the Chief Steward in charge of the race meeting shall consult with the Chair of Stewards, HRV Veterinarians and the Racing Office when deciding to proceed, modify or cancel a race meeting. The Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing may also be consulted if required. The CEO, members of EMT and the Head of Media and Communications may be involved in this meeting or otherwise must be advised of any decision immediately.

5.11 The Chair of Stewards acting at any race meeting is responsible for obtaining the forecast prior to a meeting and accessing the WBGT temperatures throughout the meeting to monitor any adverse conditions that may impact racing. Where possible, a WBGT thermometer should be used by the Stewards and/or the Official Veterinarian at the racecourse in determining the thermal load.

### 5.12 Outdoor Workers


5.13 Likewise, this information can be accessed by any manager or supervisor in control of employees or contractors who work outside to decide whether outdoor work should cease, and employees redeployed to alternative (indoor) tasks or be sent home. Managers and/or Supervisors can consult with the Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing and the Occupational Health and Safety representatives for the affected working group in taking a decision regarding this matter.

### 5.14 Extreme heat considerations for horses


5.15 A day with high ambient temperature, low humidity and reasonable breeze would not typically cause adverse effects on a Standardbred horse. Standardbreds are most likely to be adversely affected by heat stress on days of high ambient temperature, high relative humidity, and low wind speed. This would be described as a day of high thermal load.

5.16 Although horses cool themselves extremely efficiently through evaporative cooling, this process loses its effectiveness on days of high thermal load (high ambient temperature, high relative humidity, and low wind).




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- 5.17 In hot environments, horses generally cope well, by exercising for up to six minutes and then decompensating. This is called the six-minute threshold.
- 5.18 The following actions should be implemented to mitigate this:
- a) Pre-cool horses by hosing them to place lower demands on the horse's cooling systems;
  - b) Abbreviated parade and warm-ups so total exercise/exposure time is less than six minutes including race time;
  - c) Apply aggressive cooling until the horse's temperature returns to 38°C;
  - d) Encourage the use of ice, misting fans and walking post-race to increase the rate of return to 38°C;
  - e) Ensure all horses are hydrated pre and post-race with cool water and electrolytes where appropriate and permitted under the Australian Harness Racing Rules (AHRR);
  - f) Where possible, ensure all horses are stalled in shaded areas while on course.
- 5.19 The factors listed below can influence an individual horse's failure to handle racing in hot weather:
- a) Travel to a race meeting in a float with low levels of ventilation;
  - b) Horses that are unable to sweat well (anhidrosis or dry coated);
  - c) Excitable temperament;
  - d) Not acclimatised to local conditions. (e.g. recently relocated from interstate/New Zealand);
  - e) Lack of fitness;
  - f) Withholding of water on race day (**not** recommended);
  - g) Exertional Heat Illness.
- 5.20 Signs of heat stress in horses include:
- a) Rapid shallow breathing (panting) with flared nostrils;
  - b) Excessive sweating;
  - c) Elevated body temperature;
  - d) Staggering gait/weakness;
  - e) Agitated and distressed appearance;
  - f) Changes in mentation;
  - g) Impulsive kicking with hind limbs or striking out with front limbs;
  - h) Occasionally collapse.
- 5.21 It should be noted that heat affected horses can be unpredictable and even aggressive, so there is an increased risk of injury to humans.


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- 5.22 The Official Veterinarian and the race day stewards should be notified immediately should a horse display any of the above signs. The veterinarian will monitor horses for signs of heat stress while they are on course. If the Veterinarian in charge is concerned about a horse's condition pre-race they will provide appropriate treatment to the horse and report their concerns to the Stewards as soon as possible. Any horse found to be exhibiting signs of heat stress will be given appropriate treatment. Appropriate treatment may include:
- a) Repeated application of cool water to the entire body of the horse,
  - b) walking the horse in a breezy, shaded area between bouts of hosing;
  - c) Oral and/or intravenous fluid therapy if indicated;
  - d) Sedative drugs if indicated;
  - e) Use of air-conditioned stall if available;
  - f) Use of forced ventilation (fans) if available.
- 5.23 The Veterinarian should have an adequate supply of relevant treatments on hand for emergency use.
- 5.24 Trainers and/or Stable hands should follow the advice of the veterinarian with regard to assisting the horse to cool down.
- 5.25 Evaporative cooling, particularly sweating, is the most important means of dissipation of body heat for the exercising horse. The liberal application of cold water in shaded, well-ventilated places will greatly assist the processes by which horses lose excessive body heat on hot days.
- 5.26 Horses can be assisted in cooling down after racing in hot weather by maximising the efficiency of evaporative cooling:
- a) "Wet and Walk" as water evaporates from the skin it removes body heat causing the horse to cool. Increasing air flow over the horse's skin surface, by walking in shady, breezy areas, ensures that heat is dissipated faster;
  - b) To aid in cooling, horses should be regularly hosed in between walking;
  - c) Bucketing or sponging ice cold water over the horse assists in the recovery of heat affected horses;
  - d) Horses should be allowed to drink as much fresh, clean water of ambient temperature as they require before and after racing;
  - e) Horses must be allowed sufficient time to adequately cool down before being floated back to their stables in a well-ventilated float. Horse transport is a high risk activity during high ambient temperatures due to the confined space and limited airflow.

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## 6. EXTREME HEAT CONSIDERATIONS FOR HUMANS

- 6.1 Heat illness can occur in humans during activity on days of extreme heat conditions. Participants, race day staff and outdoor workers should ensure they maintain a regular fluid intake prior to and during the day at race meetings, trials or when working outdoors. Hydration is important to replace fluid losses from excessive sweating. It is preferable to drink cool water, although electrolyte drinks with low sugar can also be beneficial in replenishing mineral content lost during sweating. It is recommended to avoid soft drinks, as these often contain sugar and/or caffeine which further contribute to dehydration through their natural diuretic effects. Any participant or employee experiencing signs of heat illness should immediately report such to the oncourse medical officials, the Stewards conducting the meeting, or their direct manager.
- 6.2 The below factors can increase the risk of heat illness in humans:
- a) High exercise intensity;
  - b) Lack of fitness;
  - c) Previous history of heat illness or heat intolerance;
  - d) High air temperature;
  - e) Low air movement;
  - f) Heavy clothing and protective equipment;
  - g) Lack of acclimatisation;
  - h) Dehydration;
  - i) Illness (including virus, flu, gastro);
  - j) Medical conditions (including asthma, diabetes, overweight etc).
- 6.3 Heat Illness symptoms of heat illness which may not appear obvious may include:
- a) Light headedness, dizziness, or confusion;
  - b) Aggressive or irrational behaviour;
  - c) Nausea;
  - d) Fatigue.
- 6.4 Later symptoms indicating more profound dehydration and/or indications of heat stroke (that requires immediate medical treatment) may include:
- a) Cessation of sweating;
  - b) Collapse;
  - c) Ashen grey, pale skin;
  - d) Altered consciousness;
  - e) Obvious loss of motor skills and coordination/clumsiness or unsteadiness.
  - f) Measures to minimise the risk of heat illness include:
  - g) Reduced clothing;

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- h) Resting;
- i) Assisting evaporating cooling with fans and water spray;
- j) Wetting/sponging of the skin;
- k) Applying ice packs to groin and armpits;
- l) Increasing fluid intake, including drinking cool water, or drinks high in electrolytes.

6.5 If in the opinion of an employee or participant, the conditions are becoming extreme to the point that it is detrimental to their health and safety, they must immediately approach the oncourse medical officials, the Stewards, or their direct manager.


### 6.6 Standard requirements for club events

6.7 The HRV Stewards may issue directions to race club officials, licensees, or participants to properly give effect to this policy. On days of high temperatures, directions may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Race club officials may be informed to have ice, water, sponges, towels, and extra water hoses available;
- b) Race club staff should provide large bins and ensure that these are continually stocked with bags of ice and water to assist in the cooling of horses;
- c) Consideration of employing an additional official veterinarian to patrol the stable area and monitor recovering horses;
- d) Minimise warm-up times to keep total exercise time to less than six minutes;
- e) Minimise the time that horses are required to enter the parade ring and assemble at the pre-race circle;
- f) Minimising or cancelling horse involvement in post-race presentations.

6.8 The below protective procedures should be implemented when the forecast ambient temperature is 38 degrees Celsius or above, or the WBGT is 28 degrees Celsius or above.


- a) Provide water and shaded areas for participants, staff and contractors. This may be achieved by having bottled water or water dispensers available or providing ice to cool tap water. Where there is not a permanent shade structure available tents, marquees or shade, cloth should be set up to allow periodic respite from the heat;
- b) Where possible, horses should be stabled out of the sun and in areas that are breezy;
- c) Ensure adequate wash bays and hoses are available to enable rapid post-race cooling of horses;
- d) Ensure adequate drinking water is available for horses;

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- e) Ensure sufficient ice, water, sponges, towels and extra water hoses are available;
- f) Race club staff should provide large bins and ensure that these are continually stocked with bags of ice and water to assist in the cooling of horses;
- g) Ensure the swabbing stall interior is as cool as possible, by hosing the roof, allowing adequate ventilation and/or provide fans / air-conditioning;
- h) Tie-up stalls equipped with fans, if possible, to enable horses to cool down throughout the day;
- i) Race clubs must ensure adequate running water is immediately available to thoroughly and repeatedly wet affected horses to maximise evaporative cooling. An adequate number of hoses should be provided for this purpose in the parade ring and the race day stalls by the Club conducting the meeting. The club must ensure that all relevant hoses are connected and have adequate water pressure;
- j) Horse involvement in post-race presentations should be minimised or cancelled. (Seek guidance from officiating Stewards).

### 6.9 Limited Air Quality/Pollution

- 6.10 Any situation in which the air quality is compromised presents a risk to humans and animals, especially if they have a pre-existing medical condition. Airborne containments can come in many forms, but the most common are sand, dust or smoke.
- 6.11 The Air Quality Index ("AQI") is an index for reporting daily and hourly air quality which provides air pollution levels and HRV monitors air quality, utilising the Environmental Protection Authority ("EPA") Victoria website. The AQI utilised by HRV is consistent with the categories defined by EPA Victoria, as defined in Figure 2 1 below. Initial monitoring can commence via the website up to four days before a race meeting to determine areas that may be subjected to compromised air quality or unusually high levels of pollution. Participants and employees are encouraged to access the EPA website to determine if travel routes are subject to compromised air quality.
- 6.12 The EPA categorises the state into several regions which may encompass several hundred kilometres. Therefore, conditions at various locations can vary. Where the PM2.5 air quality index is at or above 100, consideration will be given to modifying or cancelling the race meeting and the CEO, members of EMT as well as the Media & Communications Manager shall be advised immediately.

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- 6.13 Where air quality for a region is deemed 'very poor' or 'extremely poor' according to EPA criteria, HRV will conduct their own air quality tests at the location. This will be done via the engagement of an Occupational Hygienist with suitable qualifications or by using an approved and appropriate air quality index meter (either owned by HRV or hired for the purpose). Only members trained in the operation of the air quality index meter will carry out the air quality testing.


Pollutant	Measurement	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor	Extremely poor
Ozone	ppb	Less than 50	50–100	100–150	150–300	300 and above
Nitrogen dioxide	ppb	Less than 60	60–120	120–180	180–360	360 and above
Sulfur dioxide	ppb	Less than 100	100–200	200–300	300–600	600 and above
PM <sub>10</sub>	µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Less than 40	40–80	80–120	120–300	300 and above
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Less than 25	25–50	50–100	100–300	300 and above
Carbon monoxide	ppm	Less than 30	N/A	30–70	N/A	70 and above

Figure 1 - EPA Air Quality Index

- 6.14 Outdoor work, unrelated to race or trial meetings, should also cease and staff and contractors should be re-deployed to other duties where possible.


## 7. BUSHFIRES

- 7.1 During summer months most of Victoria experiences hot and dry conditions and a high level of bushfire risk. Fire Danger Ratings are forecast four days ahead and Total Fire Bans are declared on days when fire is likely to spread rapidly and could be difficult to control.

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- 7.2 Weather conditions and Fire Danger Ratings will be monitored by HRV both before and on the day of a race meeting. Fire Danger Ratings are updated twice daily and Total Fire Bans will be declared by 5 pm on the previous day (Country Fire Authority – 4 Day Forecast).
- 7.3 **Extreme Fire Danger Rating**
- 7.4 When an Extreme Fire Danger Rating has been forecast, HRV will undertake a formal assessment of the meeting(s) to evaluate risks and make decisions regarding the progression of race meetings and trial events.
- 7.5 The following personnel or their delegated representative shall be a party to the meeting:
- a) CEO
  - b) General Manager Integrity/Chair of Stewards and/or Chair of Race Meeting
  - c) Chief of Racing and/or Head of Racing
  - d) Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing and,
  - e) Head of Legal, Risk and Compliance
- 7.6 Members of the EMT and Head of Media and Communications may also join this meeting.
- 7.7 Information shall be obtained from the following resources:
- a) Total Fire Bans & Fire Danger Ratings | CFA (Country Fire Authority)
  - b) Incidents and Warnings - VicEmergency
  - c) Victorian Warnings Summary (bom.gov.au)
  - d) Incidents | Environment Protection Authority Victoria (epa.vic.gov.au)
  - e) Thermal Comfort Observations for Victoria (bom.gov.au)
  - f) Vicplan (mapshare.vic.gov.au)
  - g) VicRoads - VicTraffic
- 7.8 As part of the formal risk assessment, HRV will consider several factors, including but not limited to:
- a) Temperature forecast,
  - b) Fire Danger Ratings,
  - c) Vic Emergency website,
  - d) Location(s) of any existing fires,
  - e) VicPlan's Bushfire Management Overlay,
  - f) Participant origin data and likely travel routes, and
  - g) Staff and contractor origin data



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### 7.9 Extreme Fire Danger Ratings - Participants, Staff and Contractors

- 7.10 Participants, staff and contractors should reconsider travel through bushfire risk areas where there is an Extreme Fire Danger Rating. Before driving to participate in a race meeting through areas with an Extreme Fire Danger rating, participants, staff and contractors should undertake their own risk assessment based on the weather conditions and warnings:
- a) at their point of origin
  - b) along their proposed route and
  - c) at their destination
- 7.11 Participants are encouraged to use the resources listed on page 18 of this document when making their assessment to attend a race meeting.
- 7.12 Staff and contractors should consult with their managers using the above resources if they have any concerns related to the fire danger ratings in their area and any impact on their attendance at work.
- 7.13 Where a bushfire threat impacts a site or area of work, employees should follow the emergency plan at the location and report the issue to their direct supervisor or manager.


### 7.14 Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating

- 7.15 When a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating has been forecast and a race meeting has been scheduled within that region, HRV will conduct a formal assessment (Similar to Extreme Fire Danger Rating assessment as above) of the associated risks for the scheduled meeting(s). Based on this assessment, a decision will be made regarding whether to proceed with the race meetings and trial events. Where it is deemed not suitable, HRV will consider rescheduling and/or cancelling the race meeting.
- 7.16 In the event of a Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating forecast for a different region to that of the scheduled race meeting or trial event, HRV will conduct a formal assessment (Similar to Extreme Fire Danger Rating assessment as above) of the associated risks for the scheduled meeting(s). Based on this assessment, a decision will be made regarding whether to proceed with the race meetings and trial events.

### 7.17 Heavy rain, hail, and flooding


- 7.18 Heavy rain may cause a race to be postponed or cancelled if the rain resulted in a safety issue, such as poor visibility, flooding or damage to the track or stables or if it



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resulted in flooding or damage that prevented access to any other significant area (e.g. road access and car parking areas). Postponement or cancellation will also be considered based on the inability to access a racetrack due to road flooding and road closures enroute to a venue.

- 7.19 Hailstorms are generally short in duration and may necessitate the postponement of the race start but are not likely to dramatically impact proceedings. If hail is falling, it is at the discretion of the stewards to delay the start of the next race.
- 7.20 Participants, staff and contractors should not travel through flooded areas to attend race meetings.
- 7.21 HRV staff and contractors should monitor weather conditions in locations where heavy rain is forecast and flooding may occur. Flooding can be categorised into flooding and flash flooding (ref. section 3 Definitions).
- 7.22 Postponement or cancellation of the event or any outdoor work may be required when access roads, venue entry, the track, car-parking or stabling areas are compromised.
- 7.23 If the event has commenced and flash flooding affects the track, making it dangerous for horses and drivers, the remainder of the meeting may be postponed or cancelled based on the opinion of the Chief Steward. The Chief Steward must immediately communicate this decision to attendants at the track, the CEO and the Head of Media and Communications.
- 7.24 **Lightning and Thunderstorms**
- 7.25 Thunderstorms and lightning pose a risk of a strike to a person or animal and to objects such as trees, antennas, flagpoles, and other building protrusions.
- 7.26 The “30/30 Rule” states that when you see lightning, you should count the time until you hear the associated thunder. If this time delay is 30 seconds or less, you should go immediately to a safe location, such as inside a building. Even if you cannot see the lightning, hearing the thunder means you are most likely to already be within striking range and it is time to seek appropriate shelter. After the storm conditions have apparently dissipated or moved on, you should wait a further 30 minutes, after hearing the last thunder before leaving the safe area. If thunder is heard within this period, recount from the last thunder heard. The “30/30 Rule” is best suited for existing thunderstorms moving through an area. However, it cannot predict or protect against a first lightning strike. Thunderstorms can develop overhead with no prior


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notice that a storm is incoming. Be alert to changes in sky conditions that may indicate thunderstorm development directly overhead. When lightning threatens, go immediately to a safer location. Do not hesitate. Even a few extra minutes lead time can be lifesaving.

- 7.27 The Chairman of Stewards should advise participants and staff to take shelter inside buildings and avoid sheltering under trees, near water or metal objects. Horses should be returned to the stalls. Employees engaged in non-racing outdoor work should follow the above guidelines, stop work where indicated, and report to their direct manager or supervisor.

7.28 **Cold Weather – Humans**

- 7.29 Due to the predominately outdoor nature of harness racing, there will be times, especially during the winter months, when HRV staff, contractors and participants are subjected to very cold temperatures. The following strategies and risk controls may be implemented to avoid cold related health effects:
- a) Warming up before commencing work by completing simple walking and stretching exercises;
  - b) Wearing several light layers of clothing that can be worn or removed as required, according to temperature, windchill factor, personal comfort, and activity level;
  - c) Provision of protective clothing which is adequate and appropriate for the degree of cold and physical activity to be encountered. Such protective clothing may include gloves/mittens, insulated or vapour barrier boots and face masks as necessary to protect the extremities as well as outerwear such as jackets and coats;
  - d) Ensuring that spare clothing and footwear is carried in the event that clothing becomes wet;
  - e) Seeking respite from cold conditions at regular intervals via access to internal areas of club premises during break times or as work requirements allow;
  - f) Consumption of warm drinks and food. All clubs must provide tea and instant coffee as a minimum, for HRV employees;
  - g) Maintaining body heat through movement, even during quiet times of the shift;
  - h) Issue and use of portable heat sources to be used where facilities can safely accommodate such use. (e.g. where a power supply exists);
  - i) Proper education and close monitoring of new staff or contractors or those returning from leave until they are accustomed to the work conditions.


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## 8. SCRATCHING PENALTY

- 8.1 In certain circumstances, the trainer of a horse may scratch the horse free of penalty prior to 8.30am on the day of the race meeting. Such applications may only be made on the day of the race.
- 8.2 Scratchings effected after 8.30 am on race day will attract the normal scratching penalty.
- 8.3 Horses may be scratched free of penalty when:
- The forecast maximum temperature for the race meeting venue is determined by BOM to exceed 38°C;
  - Air quality is forecast to be very poor or extremely poor;
  - An extreme weather event is predicted for the area of the race meet, the area of origin or the travel route (This includes areas with Extreme and Catastrophic Fire Ratings).
  - Scratching penalties for horses scratched on-course by the officiating Veterinarian will be considered by the Stewards in consultation with the Veterinarian.

## 9. RECORDS

- 9.1 Documents used to manage the Extreme Weather Policy and Procedure will be produced in a format that allows tracking for verification and review purposes. Where records are produced, they will be stored in accordance with the Document Control Procedure QMS-PR-002 and the Records Management Procedure QMS-PR-001.
- 9.2 Information and training will be provided for staff and contractors about their responsibilities during extreme weather events including:
- The appropriate resources to consult and make informed decisions, for example suitable websites to access weather and air quality information;
  - Appropriate communication and consultation channels to follow when making decisions about continuing, postponing, or cancelling race meetings;
  - The instructions for use and care of equipment used, including, but not limited to, air quality index meters.
  - Where training records are produced, they will be stored on the HRV web-based training application or the employee's file.

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## 10. REVIEW

- 10.1 This procedure will be subject to a planned review by the EMT in consultation with departmental representatives from Legal, Risk & Compliance, Health and Safety, People and Culture and Integrity departments in accordance with the requirements outlined in the Document Control procedure QMS-PR-002. Other methods for reviewing and evaluating the performance of this procedure will include:
- a) Inspection and audit activity;
  - b) Review of corrective actions;
  - c) Incident investigations root cause analysis;
  - d) Outcomes from performance reports identifying opportunity for improvement.
- 10.2 The outcome of any review will form part of the management review activity and any identified deficiencies will be managed in accordance with corrective action requirements. Changes to this procedure will be made in consultation with the business and employees.

## 11. RELATED SYSTEM DOCUMENTS

- 11.1 Access to any of the references below shall be via the HRV Group intranet, manager or supervisor in accordance with Document Control Procedure.
- a) QMS-PR-001 Records Management Procedure
  - b) QMS-PR-002 Document Control Procedure

## 12. REFERENCES

- a) Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- b) Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017

## 13. AUDITABLE OUTPUTS

- 13.1 The following examples of records will be used to verify implementation of this procedure:
- a) Calibration records for air quality index meter/s owned by HRV;
  - b) Reports from Occupational Hygienists or other consultants that provide recommended actions;
  - c) Steward's reports documenting actions taken and resources used when making cancellation/postponement decisions;
  - d) Incident reports and investigations related to adverse weather conditions.
  - e) Risk assessment is undertaken when making cancellation/postponement decisions.