



Introduction

Racing Victoria's (RV) Thoroughbred Racehorse Welfare Policy (TRWP) defines the minimum standards and best practice guidelines for caring for and interacting with thoroughbred racehorses in Victoria.

Commencement Date

The TRWP is effective from 1 May 2024 and is enforceable under the Australian Rule of Racing 233 (a) – a person must not breach a policy, regulation or code of practice published by Racing Australia or a Principal Racing Authority.

What does the TRWP consider?

The TRWP promotes good welfare and considers each horse's:

- mental and physical health;
- supervision;
- housing;
- exercise and training;
- transport; and
- retirement and rehoming.

How do I use the TRWP?

The TRWP is made up of a series of care standards that RV considers essential for thoroughbred racehorse welfare. The standards establish a minimum acceptable standard for thoroughbred racehorses whilst under the care of Victorian participants.

The TRWP contains a brief outline under each care requirement that supports participants to understand the purpose of the Victorian Thoroughbred Racing Industry standards they must comply with.

The TRWP also includes best practice guidelines underneath the Victorian Thoroughbred Racing Industry standards for Victorian participants to use as benchmarks to work towards.

SUPERVISION

- Suitably qualified persons caring for a horse
- Access to a registered veterinarian
- Horses to be inspected twice per day (stabled/yard)
- Horses to be inspected once per day (paddock)
- Develop emergency plan for the training operation/property
- Contact details available for owner of a horse

MENTAL HEALTH

- Horses not to be isolated, except in temporary circumstances
- Horses to always see other horses, humans and stable activities
- Persons actions to not have punitive impacts
- Horses to be provided the opportunities for spontaneous interactions/free movement

PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Sufficient water available for horses that is suitable for drinking
- Horses to be a minimum body condition score of 2 out of 5
- Horses to be provided with and ingest a sufficient quantity and quality of feed
- Horses must be provided with adequate roughage
- Veterinary services provided as immediately practicable when required
- Vet advice sought prior to administering injectables or prescription medications
- Horses feet to be appropriately maintained and protected
- Dental treatment provided to horses at least once per vear
- Rugs used on horses to be correctly fitted and appropriate for housing and weather
- Same care to be provided to race mares when they are covered within a racing preparation.

HOUSING

OUR KEY

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Properties and facilities to be appropriately designed, maintained and cleaned for horses
- Ensure stable and paddock structures do not pose a health and safety risk to a horse
- Areas where horses are kept have sufficient drainage
- Stables and fencing to provide effective security for horses
- Appropriately clean and hygienic bedding used in stables and yards
 Environments to be free of noxious plants, rubbish and debris
- Access to shade, shelter, or other reasonable protection to be provided
- Agistment providers to maintain appropriate care and well-being when horses are spelling

TRANSPORT

- Vehicles specifically designed for equine transport
- Vehicle must provide satisfactory and fresh ventilation throughout the horse area
- Either nonslip flooring or low dust absorbent bedding within the horse area
- Regularly cleaned, hygienic and does not pose a safety or welfare risk
- Horses cannot be transported in excess of 12 hours without a rest period off the vehicle
- Manage welfare risks when traveling horses in extreme weather conditions

EXERCISE & TRAINING

- Safe environments must be provided to riders and horses to exercise
- Persons to seek vet advice about levels of exercise for a horse showing signs of lameness
- Exercise to be appropriate to the horse's physical and mental condition
- Stable or yarded horses to be exercised for at least one hour per day (combining various types of exercise)
- Horses are to be spelled at least once a year if not trained from a large paddock
- Horses must be ridden and cannot be solely trained using mechanical training machines
- Horses to be galloped on a similar surface to which they will compete
- Don't allow excessive strenuous exercise or overtraining to occur
- Only properly maintained, well-fitting and correctly adjusted gear and equipment to be used
- Horses must always be tied to using a breakable tether (e.g. baler twine)

RETIREMENT & REHOMING

- Managing owners and trainers to find suitable homes for retiring horses
- If a suitable home cannot be found, RV's Post Racing Programs must be considered.
- Rehome to a person where the horse's health requirements will be met
- Communicate to the new owner any relevant details about the horse's health and condition

END OF LIFE

- Euthanasia must be humane
- Euthanasia must be performed by a registered vet or suitably qualified person
- Can seek support through RV's Onsite Humane Euthanasia Program
- Handled quietly and with dignity throughout the euthanasia process



The following provides a general overview of Victorian participant's obligations for meeting compliance requirements within each welfare element within the TRWP's framework.



SUPERVISION - By ensuring every racehorse has a suitably qualified person caring for them and checking on their welfare twice per day (once per day required if paddocked).



MENTAL HEALTH - By ensuring every racehorse lives within a stable or paddock environment that allows them to see other horses and by providing the horse with the daily opportunity "to be a horse" (free movement, have a green pick, interact/touch other horses or other animals).



PHYSICAL HEALTH - By ensuring every racehorse is healthy and within a satisfactory body condition (above a Body Condition Score of 2/5) and provided with veterinary assessment / treatment as soon as their health status declines or there are concerns for their health and welfare.



HOUSING - By ensuring every racehorse is housed within a safe environment (e.g. including but not limited to stable, yard or paddock) that is specifically designed to accommodate and enclose horses, that provides each horse with sufficient space, security and shelter.



EXERCISE & TRAINING - By ensuring every racehorse is educated by suitably qualified persons using appropriate and welfare orientated training methods and also ensuring each racehorse receives appropriate and sufficient exercise to promote and protect their welfare whilst racing, which includes training on similar types of surfaces the horse will race on.



TRANSPORT - By ensuring every racehorse is transported in a safe vehicle that is specifically designed for transporting horses and making sure the intended journey will not negatively impact the horse's welfare. Sick and injured horses must not be transported unless under the direction of a veterinarian.



RETIREMENT & REHOMING - By ensuring every racehorse retires in the best condition possible both physically and mentally and is responsibly rehomed at the conclusion of their racing career. Persons responsible for rehoming retired racehorses must provide the new owner/s with all relevant information pertaining to the racehorse to ensure the new owner/s can successfully manage the horse.



END OF LIFE DECISIONS - By ensuring every racehorse is afforded a humane death that is without pain, suffering or distress.

Body Condition Score

The following provides you a general understanding of the Body Condition Score table used when determining if a horse has a satisfactory body condition score (above a two and below a four):

Score	Description
Very poor	 very sunken rump deep cavity under tail skin tight over bones very prominent backbone and pelvis marked U shaped neck
1 Poor	 sunken rump cavity under tail ribs easily visible prominent backbone and croup U shaped neck - narrow and slack
2 Moderate	 flat rump either side of backbone ribs just visible narrow but firm neck backbone well covered
3 Good	 rounded rump ribs just covered but easily felt no crest, firm neck
Fat The state of t	 rump well rounded gutter along back ribs and pelvis hard to feel slight crest
Very fat	 very bulging rump deep gutter along back ribs buried marked crest folds and lumps of fat



Contact

If you have any questions about the TRWP, email the Equine Welfare Team at equinewelfare@racingvictoria.net.au

To view the Policy in full, scan the QR code.

