



Racing in hot weather (riders)



Purpose

This Policy is intended to provide guidance to the thoroughbred racing industry in order to protect the welfare of and minimize the effects on riders engaged in riding activity at ALL South Australian racecourses and training venues during hot weather conditions.

Preamble

Racing SA recognises that, generally, in sporting activity, exertional heat illness (EHI) is likely to be associated with an increase in ambient/air temperature and/or also in humid conditions. Further, EHI is likely to lead to an increase in discomfort levels and may result in increased sweating.

Vigorous exercise in sport can place participants at risk of EHI, which in hot and humid weather conditions is greater because;

- During high intensity exercise in hot weather people may not be able to produce enough sweat for adequate cooling.
- High humidity may prevent adequate evaporation of sweat.

Extra caution also needs to be taken during unseasonal heat waves or unusually hot or humid weather whereby participants lack acclimatisation.

Application

This Policy applies to all race meetings, official trials and approval to race jump-outs (event) conducted under the control of RSA Limited and the Rules of Racing. The management of this Policy will be supplemented by Protocols as detailed in the Policy.

Date of Effect

This Policy, as amended, shall take effect from 23 November 2020 and may be repealed or amended from time to time by Racing SA Limited.

Measurement of Risk

Measurement in Degrees Celsius by a Dry Bulb thermometer

The measurement in degrees Celsius reflects air temperature, measured by a Dry Bulb thermometer - Ambient Temperature (AT). It does not provide a basis for assessing the potential risks from heat exposure.

Effective Temperature using a Wet Bulb thermometer

The combined effects of temperature, humidity and air movement can be described on a single scale. This is the Effective Temperature. Effective Temperature is calculated using a Wet Bulb thermometer (one whose bulb is cooled by evaporation) - Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT).





Level 1 Protocols

This protocol will apply all days where the forecast/actual temperature is 35°C (AT) or 26°C (WBGT) “sun” or above.

Race-clubs:

1. Jockeys rooms should be air-conditioned or at least have good ventilation and fans which provide evaporative cooling through air flow.
2. An ample supply of fluids including ice, cool water and sports drinks must be available in jockey’s rooms.
3. Must ensure cool water and ice is available to riders behind the barriers.
4. Must ensure ample water and ice is available in the jockey’s room showers.
5. Must turn off the heating elements in spas available for use by riders.

Stewards:

1. Must obtain the forecast weather conditions and monitor the Thermal Comfort Observations as provided by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology on their website and use these observations as guidance during an event, provided that Stewards may also use a measuring device capable of measuring AT and WBGT, on site, at any racing/training venue as an aid to assist in the management of the protocols under this policy.
2. Must ensure that the relevant protocols for racing in hot weather applying to race clubs are in place before the commencement of racing.
3. Must where reasonably and practically possible minimise the time that the riders are required to be away from the jockeys room and in direct sun light by shortening the pre and post-race parades of horses and the period horses are behind the starting barriers.
4. Reserve the right to engage in discretionary checking of riders who have riding engagements at low weights, by observing general symptoms of fatigue, nausea, dizziness and irritability.
5. Must engage the attendant medical personnel to examine any rider where there is a reasonable concern held that the rider may be showing signs/symptoms of EHI.
6. Should consider engaging an additional medical staff member to be on course to monitor the condition of riders.

Riders:

1. Must ensure that riding engagements agreed to do not extend to weights below the rider’s minimum riding weight.
2. Must practice proper weight management in the days leading up to a race meeting and where possible avoid the use of home saunas, spas or other rapid weight loss inducing practices on the day of racing.
3. Must not take extreme “last minute” measures which will result in the rider being unduly dehydrated or relying solely on the use of the race day spa to meet weight loss requirements.
4. Must if feeling unwell or experiencing dizziness or undue dehydration, advise the Stewards without delay who will arrange for a medical assessment to be undertaken.
5. Must, where possible, reduce their core temperature between race/trial/jump-out rides by sponging with cold water, having a cold shower or using a cooling garment/cold pack – i.e. “ice vest”.
6. Must maintain regular fluid intake during an event to replace fluid losses from excessive sweating. Appropriate fluids include water, and sports drink preparations with electrolyte additive/s. The consumption of soft drinks containing sugar or caffeine based energy drinks are to be avoided as they will likely further add to dehydration through their natural diuretic effects.





Level 2 Protocols

This protocol will apply to all days that the forecast/actual temperature is 38°C (AT) or 32°C (WBGT) “sun” or above and are in addition to the measures listed in Level 1 of this policy.

Race-clubs:

1. Jockeys rooms should be air-conditioned or at least have good ventilation and fans which provide evaporative cooling through air flow.
2. An ample supply of fluids including ice, cool water and sports drinks must be available in jockey’s rooms.
3. Must ensure cool water and ice is available to riders behind the barriers.
4. Must ensure ample water and ice is available in the jockey’s room showers.
5. Must turn off the heating elements in spas available for use by riders.

Stewards:

1. Will consider whether abandonment of an event (i.e. race meeting) or modification of the racing schedule/program is advisable and practically achievable and will continue to closely monitor conditions throughout the course of the day. Modifications of a race program might include the postponement, advancement or delay in a schedule if it appears likely the extreme conditions might ease or be avoided by invoking the modification.
2. Will, where possible, make arrangements for an additional medical staff member to be available on course to monitor the welfare of riders with such person to be stationed in or close to the jockey’s room.
3. Will take all measures to restrict to a minimum the time a rider is required to be out of the jockeys room and in the direct sunlight by abandoning pre and post-race parades of horses and restrict to a minimum the period horses are held behind the starting barrier.
4. Will, in the event a rider is dehydrated during the course of an event (race day), and particularly if medical advice indicates it is advisable for a rider to rehydrate, take a sympathetic view to any application by a rider to ride to a maximum of 1 kg overweight.
5. Will adopt a sympathetic approach to an application by a rider, on medical grounds, or in circumstances where in the opinion of a rider the conditions are becoming extreme to the point that the rider considers it is detrimental to his/her health and safety, to be permitted to forgo any or all riding engagements on that day.

Riders: (in addition to those protocols under Level 1)

1. Should endeavour to regulate riding engagements so as not to over commit themselves with regard to the overall number and spacing of race rides.
2. Must report to the Stewards or the Clerk of the Scales and/or an attendant medical staff member on duty any symptoms which might indicate EHI.
3. Must report to the official veterinarian positioned on track as designated in the event the rider becomes or is concerned with the condition of his/her horse post-race on return to the mounting yard.
4. Should be mindful that due to extra weight loss caused by sweating during the course of strenuous race riding, they can afford to increase their fluid intake without necessarily increasing their body weight.


Symptoms of Exertional Heat Illness

Symptoms of exertional heat illness (EHI) which may not appear obvious may include:

- (i) light headedness, dizziness
- (ii) confusion, aggression or irrational behaviour
- (iii) nausea & vomiting
- (iv) fatigue, muscle cramps or spasms
- (v) cold, pale and clammy skin
- (vi) headache
- (vii) tiredness or weakness

Symptoms indicating more severe dehydration may include:

- (i) cessation of sweating or heavier than normal sweating
- (ii) collapse

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- (iii) ashen grey pale skin or hot, red, dry or damp skin
 - (iv) altered consciousness
 - (v) obvious loss of skill and coordination, clumsiness or unsteadiness (these symptoms may indicate heat stroke which requires immediate medical treatment. Heat stroke must be treated as a medical emergency).
 - (vi) high body temperature and/or rapid breathing
 - (vii) fast, strong pulse and/or “racing” heart rate

Factors that are likely to increase the risk of exertional heat illness (EHI) may include:

- (a) high exercise intensity
- (b) lack of fitness
- (c) previous history of exertional heat illness or heat intolerance
- (d) high air temperature
- (e) low air movement
- (f) heavy clothing and protective equipment
- (g) lack of acclimatization
- (h) dehydration - illness (including virus, flu, gastro)
- (i) medical conditions (including asthma, diabetes etc.)

Measures to minimize the risk of exertional heat illness during rest periods include:

- (a) reducing clothing and resting
- (b) assisting evaporative cooling with fans and water spray
- (c) wetting/sponging of the skin and/or applying ice packs to the groin and armpits
- (e) wearing an “ice vest”
- (e) drinking cool water or sports drinks or taking ice
- (f) if in the opinion of a rider or riders the conditions are becoming extreme to the point that it is detrimental to their health and safety, the rider/s must immediately approach the Stewards and make that fact known to them.

J. PETZER
CHAIRMAN OF STEWARDS
Policy amended: 23/11/2020

