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HARNESS HORSE INJURY OR FATALITY

RACEDAY PLANNING & RACEDAY INCIDENT COMMUNICATIONS

The purpose of this document is to ensure coordinated and professional action in the event of a horse injury or fatality at a race meeting or official trial meeting through proper planning and good incident communications. This document does not provide a full description of veterinary actions or the deployment and operations of the Horse Ambulance.

This has been prepared by HRNZ in consultation with the NZ Horse Ambulance Trust (NZHAT), the Racing Integrity Board, and HRNZ clubs.

For ease of use this document is divided into:

- (1) a planning section, with actions listed for various personnel; and
- (2) a response section.

RACEDAY PLANNING

Horse Ambulance Driver *

-) Per the 'New Zealand Horse Ambulance Operational Guidelines', ensure the Horse Ambulance is in good working order, the battery is charged, and the ambulance has all standard equipment aboard.
-) When the racetrack is rating in the HEAVY to slushy range on raceday morning, contact the racecourse's Track Manager (or another club official) to determine whether the club's tractor should be used to tow the horse ambulance rather than the NZHAT 4WD. If a club's tractor is to be used, then the driver should agree with club whether the driver can use the NZHAT 4WD to get to the scene of an incident or confirm another suitable option.
-) Obtain radio telephone from Chairman of Stewards and test channel/charge.
-) Ensure that the portable screens from the horse ambulance are provided to the veterinarian (and ensure return to ambulance after the last race).
-) Having confirmed in discussion with Track Manager, deploy to the location which enables prompt access to the course proper.
-) Maintain awareness and be prepared to respond while horses are on the course proper including during pre and post-race. Listen to or watch the race via radio or TAB NZ app.

* Note: at some venues/meetings the role of Horse Ambulance Driver may be performed by the racing club's own staff member.

Racing Club

-) If due to anticipated track conditions, the club determines that it doubts the reliable mobility of the horse ambulance and/or risk of turf damage if it is towed by the NZHAT 4WD, then the Track Manager or another club official should contact and advise the horse ambulance driver that one of the club tractors (or one arranged for the meeting for the purpose) will be used to tow the horse ambulance (the ambulance driver will provide a 3-point linkage quick-hitch for this purpose). If the club cannot procure a suitable tractor (noting that ambulance loaded with a racehorse

weighs circa 2,000kg), then the club should confirm a plan to ensure a deceased horse can be removed from the track with a professional manner in the circumstances. If the ambulance is present, then the ambulance's portable screens and horse cover must be used.

-) Confirm in discussion with the horse ambulance driver the location where the horse ambulance should be stationed. While the NZ Horse Ambulance Trust has a preference for a position that is prominent to TV and raceday patrons, this factor is a secondary consideration. The principal consideration is to ensure prompt and safe access to the course proper.
-) Have a planned location (whether the tie-ups or other suitable location) to where an injured horse can be moved by the horse ambulance subsequent to an injury incident.
-) If the club has portable screens, these should be provided to the starting gates crew.
-) Have a plan understood by all track staff identifying a discreet location for the unloading of a deceased horse during the proceedings of a race or trial meeting.
-) Have a plan for either burial on the racetrack or contracted offsite disposal, which ensures that both the reputation of the racing industry and the dignity of the horse are maintained through respectful handling and discreet disposal.
-) Considering that there may be occasion due to breakdown or other logistics issues that the horse ambulance is not available for part or all of a race meeting, have a well understood 'Plan B' for incident screening using the club's own screens and removal of a deceased horse from the course proper.

Raceday Veterinarian

-) Obtain radio telephone from Chairman of Stewards and test channel/charge.
-) Obtain the portable screens from the horse ambulance (remembering to return to the ambulance at the end of the raceday).

RIB Chairman of Stewards

-) Ensure that the horse ambulance driver and the raceday veterinarian each have a fully charged radio telephone.

Commentator (if present)

-) Has on hand a printed copy of suggested 'script' provided by NZHAT for on-course announcements should there be a horse incident.

HORSE INCIDENT RESPONSE

The following are guidelines that should be understood by all parties in advance.

At the time of an incident (injured or collapsed horse):

-) Don't panic. The raceday veterinarian and the Stipendiary Steward who accompanies the veterinarian following the field are trained and experienced.
-) The veterinarian will lead and determine decisions regarding the horse, while the attending Stipendiary Steward (or delegated RIB colleague) will lead radio telephone communications relating to the incident and scene safety.
-) The required track staff and/or barrier attendants should proceed (promptly yet with regard for the safety of themselves and other people or horses) to the incident scene, access the vet's vehicle to uplift and deploy the portable screens and then await further instruction from the vet or Stipendiary Steward.
-) Commentator should refer to suggested 'script' provided by NZHAT for on-course announcements, ensuring that the public are aware that there is a well-planned process for dealing with horse incident, a vet is on the scene tending to the horse, and that the horse ambulance will be at the scene as soon as possible.

-) The horse ambulance driver should prepare to receive instruction to drive the ambulance onto the course proper. This instruction will be provided by a Chairman of Stewards to the driver when s/he is confident that all horses are clear of the ambulance's route to the incident scene.
-) Once the ambulance is at the scene, the veterinarian and driver will coordinate the removal of the injured (sedated and with injury stabilised) or deceased horse in accordance with 'New Zealand Horse Ambulance Operational Guidelines'.
-) An injured horse must not be euthanased inside the horse ambulance.
-) When attending to an injured horse that has fallen or pulled up with apparent injury or resultant lameness, then the horse must be transported off the track by the horse ambulance rather than walked off.
-) If a horse is scratched at the barrier due to lameness, taking into account the severity of the injury and the position of the starting stalls, the veterinarian and Stipendiary Steward must give instruction whether the horse should be:
 - o Transported by horse ambulance to the cross ties for further assessment/treatment (and whether prior to or after the running of the race); or
 - o Led back to the cross ties for further assessment/treatment (and whether prior to or after the running of the race).

Post incident:

-) The ambulance driver and the track staff will coordinate the transport of:
 - o a deceased horse to a discreet location for sample collection and later disposal; or
 - o an injured horse to a tie-up (or other suitable pre-determined location) for further veterinary assessment. Though circumstances may vary, provided that an injured horse is suitably sedated with injury stabilised and provided regular or periodic assessment, then it is preferable that if the injured horse must be transported off course by horse ambulance, that this be done after the last race, thereby ensuring that the horse ambulance remains on-course to attend any further horse incident.
-) If the horse is deceased, the raceday veterinarian will obtain a urine sample from the horse.
-) The ambulance driver should ensure the return of any equipment (portable screens, lead, halter, Kimzey spilt, recovery slide, body cover etc) that may have been used is returned to the ambulance and is subsequently cleaned.
-) The ambulance driver (or club if its own staff were manning it) must complete an incident form and send it to NZHAT Operations Manager (hello@horseambulance.co.nz).

Produced with assistance of:

