

8 July 2026

Subject: Strangles Final Version

HRNZ Directive for Strangles disease management

Effective Date: 8 July 2026

This Directive relates to all standardbred breeding, training, trialling and racing activities. This Directive replaces all directives relating to Strangles Disease Management issued by HRNZ previously.

Purpose

Harness Racing New Zealand (HRNZ) has issued this Directive to reduce the risk of Strangles spreading within the harness racing industry while aiming to allow racing and trialling to continue with minimal disruptions.

This Directive reflects the current disease situation, where Strangles is known to be present within the Waikato region. The measures contained in this Directive are precautionary, evidence-based and intended to minimise the risk of disease transmission between horses at racecourses, training facilities and trial venues.

This Directive may be updated by HRNZ from time to time as necessary to reflect changing circumstances and best practice in the prevention, detection, and management of Strangles.

This Directive takes effect on 8 July 2026 and remains in force until amended or revoked by HRNZ.

Enforceability

This Directive (and the protocols set out below) are binding on all Trainers, Breeders and Clubs, licensed persons, owners, and all other persons to whom the Rules of Racing apply.

The possible consequences of a failure to adhere to this Directive are detailed in Section 3 of this Directive.

Background

Cases of Strangles have reinforced the need for disease control measures to protect the health and welfare of horses racing and trialling in New Zealand.

Strangles is a highly contagious bacterial disease capable of spreading rapidly through direct horse-to-horse contact and indirectly through contaminated equipment, vehicles, clothing and other objects. The disease may be transmitted before clinical signs develop, and horses

exposed to infection may appear clinically normal while incubating the disease or shedding the bacteria.

Race meetings, trials and training centres present an increased biosecurity risk because horses from multiple training establishments are brought together, often sharing transport, stabling and other infrastructure. Early identification of potentially infected horses, combined with timely reporting and appropriate movement controls, is therefore essential to minimise the risk of disease transmission and the resulting impacts on horse welfare and racing operations.

New Zealand has a strong record of industry-led biosecurity practices. However, effective disease management depends upon prompt reporting, consistent health monitoring and appropriate veterinary assessment. Trainers, breeders, owners and veterinarians are the first line of defence in identifying suspected cases and preventing wider spread within the standardbred population.

Accordingly, HRNZ has determined that additional temporary biosecurity measures are necessary. These measures are intended to be practical, proportionate and evidence-based, enabling racing and trialling to continue while appropriately managing the current disease risk.

HRNZ will continue to review these measures in consultation with the Racing Integrity Board, the Equine Veterinary Branch of the New Zealand Veterinary Association, the NZ Equine Health Association and other industry stakeholders.

1. Definitions

1.1 For the purpose of this Directive:

Meeting means a Race or Trial meeting and includes Work Outs that are timed over set distances. For the purposes of this Directive, a Meeting is in progress from 7:30 am on the morning of the Meeting until 30 minutes after the finish of the last race or trial conducted at that Meeting.

Strangles Red Zone means any geographic area or areas within which Strangles has recently been detected within the population of horses that are active in racing or training.

Currently, the entire Waikato Local Government Region is a Strangles Red Zone. There have been no cases of Strangles detected within harness racing and/or the Standardbred industry.

Horse means any horse including a horse used as a travelling companion horse or a Clerk of Course horse.

Strangles means the equine disease caused by *Streptococcus equi* subsp. *equi*.

1.2 Any other term used in this Directive shall have the meaning given to it in the Rules of Racing unless the context requires otherwise.

2. Trainer obligations

[Note: horse health monitoring and recording requirements upon Trainers are also requirements for Clerks of Course with respect to their horses]

A Trainer who has a horse which is engaged to participate in any Meeting, or any person who transports, or brings, a horse to a Meeting must comply with the requirements listed below, in accordance with the following:

- For meetings held after 8 July 2026 and before 13 July 2026, the requirements of section 2.2 (relating to the HRNZ Strangles Temperature Monitoring and Health Declaration) must be fulfilled according to the following minimum requirements:
 - Auckland (Friday) – two days plus raceday morning
 - Addington (Friday) - two days plus raceday morning
 - Addington and Invercargill (Sunday)- four days plus raceday morning
- For all meetings after 13 July 2026 the requirements of section 2.2 (relating to the HRNZ Strangles Temperature Monitoring and Health Declaration) must be fulfilled for five days immediately prior to the Meeting and the morning of the Meeting
- Trainers of horses that are not permanently or temporarily stabled within the Strangles Red Zone are not required to undertake the requirement of section 2.3 (relating to Serum Amyloid A testing) unless the horse has recorded an elevated temperature or exhibits clinical signs consistent with Strangles.

2.1 Notification of Strangles

Notification of Strangles cases must be made by email to the RIB Veterinary Services Manager via: vet@rib.org.nz

If Strangles is confirmed by veterinary diagnosis or laboratory testing in any horse in the care of a Trainer, Breeder, Licensed Person or any other person to whom the Rules apply, the Trainer, Breeder or such other person must advise the RIB Veterinary Services Manager immediately upon such confirmation being made.

A Trainer of a horse which is diagnosed with Strangles or which a veterinarian has diagnosed symptoms consistent with Strangles must notify the RIB Veterinary Services

Manager immediately and withdraw or scratch all stable runners entered at upcoming Meetings.

All further training and stable movements must be halted immediately and the stable premise placed in biosecurity restrictions. Subsequent movement of horses must be coordinated under the direction of the RIB Veterinary Services Manager.

The Trainer, Breeder or other person to whom the Rules apply, must comply with all instructions or directions issued by HRNZ or the Racing Integrity Board (RIB) concerning testing, isolation, movement restrictions or other disease control measures.

The biosecurity restrictions may be lifted if the RIB Veterinary Services Manager is satisfied that the affected horses have been isolated and managed with evidenced effective stable biosecurity measures under veterinary guidance. A clearance will be issued by the RIB Veterinary Services Manager with reliance on written advice of the stable veterinarian and, the stable may be permitted to resume training and racing activities with health monitoring and recording as detailed under this Directive.

2.2 HRNZ Strangles Temperature Monitoring and Health Declaration

For every horse engaged to participate in or be present at a Meeting, the Trainer must complete the [HRNZ Strangles Temperature Monitoring and Health Declaration](#) (the "Declaration").

The completed Declaration must accompany the horse to the Meeting and must be retained by the Trainer.

At a Meeting, the completed Declaration must be produced immediately upon request by a Steward or a Club employee.

This Declaration requires:

- the monitoring of the horse while at rest in its normal environment, commencing 5 days immediately prior to the Meeting date and including the morning of the Meeting;
- the recording of the horse's rectal temperature twice daily, once in the morning and once in the evening with a minimum of 8 hours elapsing between consecutive readings; and
- that the Trainer must immediately consult their veterinarian if the horse records a resting temperature greater than 38.5°C.

Temperature measurements must be accurately recorded on the Declaration, detailing:

- the date;
- the time each temperature is taken;
- the recorded temperature; and
- any relevant observations regarding the horse's health.

The Trainer must certify on this form that:

- the recorded temperature records are accurate;
- the horse has been monitored in accordance with HRNZ's Strangles requirements;

- the horse has appeared to be clinically well and has not shown signs consistent with Strangles, including fever, nasal discharge, coughing or enlarged lymph nodes; and
- where required, a Serum Amyloid A (SAA) blood test has been completed within the 2 days prior to the Meeting, and the laboratory report is attached.

2.3 Serum Amyloid A (SAA) testing

An SAA blood test is required for all horses stabled within the Strangles Red Zone that are nominated for a Meeting.

Where an SAA test is required:

- The SAA blood sample must be collected within the 2 days prior to the Meeting.
- the laboratory report must accompany the Declaration for that horse;

Any horse that records an elevated Serum Amyloid A (SAA) blood test must immediately be withdrawn or scratched from any upcoming Meetings.

The horse will not be permitted to participate in any further Meetings until any testing, veterinary assessment or clearance requirements imposed by HRNZ and the RIB have been satisfied.

2.4 Health monitoring

The Trainer must monitor all horses under their control for signs of illness. A horse must not race, train or trial if it appears to be unwell, with symptoms including but not limited to:

- fever;
- nasal discharge;
- coughing; or
- enlarged lymph nodes.

2.5 Transport of horses

Horses may be transported to race from the South Island to the North Island in accordance with the general requirements set out in this Directive and as may be required by the relevant racing venue(s).

Horses (including South Island racehorses or broodmares and any companion horses returning from a North Island visit) that are to be transported from any location in the North Island to any South Island location must have their health status monitored as detailed in sections 2.1-2.4 of this Directive and undergo an endoscopically guided guttural pouch lavage performed by a registered veterinarian. Samples collected from the guttural pouch(s) must be submitted to an accredited diagnostic laboratory for PCR testing for Strangles. The

horse must not travel until a negative PCR test result is received and written permission is granted by the RIB Veterinary Services Manager.

Compliance

Failure to adhere to this Directive (and the requirements set out above) constitutes a breach of the Rules of Racing (Rule 801 - Serious Racing Offences)

Failure to comply with this Directive will result in the horse being scratched from the Meeting, and may result in:

- refusal of permission for any horses from the Trainer's stable to race or trial;
- the issue of further directions by HRNZ or the Racing Integrity Board; and
- disciplinary action under the Rules of Racing.

Providing false or misleading information in any declaration or record required under this Directive may constitute a Serious Racing Offence.

Please direct all enquiries to welfare@hrnz.co.nz