



27 October 2026

OFFICIAL NOTICE

AMENDMENT TO HARNESS RACING NEW ZEALAND REGULATIONS - DRIVERS' LICENCES REGULATION - TRIALS DRIVER

On 10 October 2026, the HRNZ Board considered and approved an amendment to the Drivers' Licence Regulation – Trials Driver – to reduce the minimum period a person must hold a Stablehand Licence before progressing to a Trials Driver Licence from 12 months to six months, effective from 1 November 2026. The background and details are as follows.

This amendment was recommended by the New Zealand Harness Racing Trainers & Drivers Association and is supported by the National Forum and Racing Integrity Board. The amendment seeks to move the emphasis from time served to demonstrated competency, practical experience and readiness, and is intended to provide a clearer and more achievable pathway for capable young participants to progress, supporting their development and retention within the industry.

Applicants seeking to progress before 12 months must provide written employer endorsement confirming they have sufficient practical experience, ability and maturity. The RIB will consult with the employer before the application is considered. The six-month period must represent genuine employment or active engagement within a stable, providing meaningful practical experience. All existing eligibility, practical and oral assessment, and Licensing Committee requirements will remain unchanged. The Licensing Committee will retain discretion regarding an applicant's competency, maturity, experience and suitability. Requirements for progression to a Junior Driver Licence remain unchanged.

The amended pathway will be formally reviewed after 12 months.

Accordingly, clause 1(b) of the Drivers' Licence Regulations will now read as follows:

"1. Trials Driver

The applicant must:

- (a) Be at least 16 years of age; and
- (b) Hold a current Stablehand's Licence for at least 6 months; and ..." (emphasis added)

This change will take effect from 1 November 2026.

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Interim Commercial Director