

Guidelines for Race Day Cancellations



1. Overview

The health and safety of human and equine athletes is essential to ensure that horse racing is conducted with integrity and in the public interest. The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba (LGCA) recognizes that inclement weather may require temporary postponement or cancellation of racing in the interest of the health and safety of all participants. Each circumstance will be unique: This document is intended to guide the required decision-making by race track operators and horsepersons' groups in situations which are forecasted to meet or do meet conditions to delay or cancel racing. The LGCA's cancellation guidelines are aligned with horse racing regulatory standards across North America and applies standards based on scientific research and best practice established by other horse racing regulators. As such, these standards are subject to change at any time by the LGCA, when necessary for regulatory or industry needs. **APPENDIX A – Cancellation Procedures on page 6** outlines the steps and requirements for notification of race delays or cancellations.

2. Scope

These guidelines apply to race track operators licensed by the LGCA.

3. Duties

Race track operators, licensees, industry horsepersons' group representatives, officials and veterinarians have a responsibility to both the human and equine athletes to make informed decisions in the public interest. Race track operators are also responsible for ensuring and providing adequate facilities and conditions to safeguard the welfare of the equines through evidence-based adjustments to competitions when necessary.

The race track operator is responsible for reviewing race track surface conditions and monitoring any impending inclement weather conditions that could warrant a delay or cancellation of training or racing. This includes using systems provided through [Environment and Climate Change Canada](#) including up-to-date weather forecasts, severe weather tracking lightning maps, and Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) conditions. Race track operators may also consider installing weather instruments such as lightning detectors or an anemometer for onsite tracking of weather conditions.

Live racing may be delayed and/or cancelled as follows:

- Prior to the start of the programmed live race schedule due to current or forecasted weather conditions;
- During the live race card due to a change in weather conditions;
- As a result of race track conditions or facility and equipment malfunctions.

Race administration officials can deny or limit delays of racing based on facility conditions, operational restrictions, or any reason relative to the safety of participants or integrity of racing.

4. Inclement Weather

Inclement weather conditions include, but aren't limited to the following:

- 1. Extreme Temperatures
- 2. High Winds
- 3. Lightning
- 4. Precipitation
- 5. Fog/Visibility
- 6. Air Quality

4.1 Extreme Temperatures

In the event of a forecasted extreme temperature as defined below, the decision to delay or cancel racing will be made by the race track operator, in consultation with a representative of the horsepersons' group, and communicated to the designated LGCA representative or race administration officials. The race track operator is required to monitor weather systems hourly in preparation for any additional measures or adjustments necessary in racing or training. Ongoing communication between the race track operator and horsepersons' group is required to ensure decisions related to equine and participant welfare are informed by current information. Temperature thresholds outlined below include the impact of humidity and overall heat index.

4.1.1 Heat

Level	Forecasted temperature	Additional measures	Weather related scratches permitted without penalty
Level 1	33° C to 41°C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterinarian or veterinary technologist to observe for signs of distress in equines by monitoring temperature, pulse and respiration rate pre-race and post-race; • Ice available in numerous locations; • Access to water at all times; • Race administration officials to minimize post-parade time. 	Yes
Level 2	Exceeding 41° C	Racing should not be conducted at temperatures that exceed 41°C.	Yes

4.1.2 Cold

Level	Forecasted temperature	Additional measures	Weather related scratches permitted without penalty
Level 1	-15° C to -25 °C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterinarian or veterinary technologist to monitor temperature, pulse and respiration rate of equines pre-race and post-race; • Tongues not tied outside of equines' mouths; • Blankets provided to all equines; • Race administration officials to minimize post-parade time. 	Yes
Level 2	Below -26° C	Racing should not be conducted at temperatures colder than -26°C.	Yes

4.2 High Winds

In the event of high winds as defined below, the decision to delay or cancel racing should be made by the race track operator, in consultation with a representative of the jockeys' guild or drivers' representative and the horsepersons' group. The final decision is to be communicated to the designated LGCA representative or race administration officials.

Wind Speeds:

Sustained	Gusts
62 kilometres per hour	Greater than 80 kilometres per hour

4.3 Lightning

The race track operator is required to monitor a lightning detection warning system that provides up-to-date lightning detection services. The system must include strike distance and radius notifications to provide lightning delay decision-making.

When lightning is detected within a 10-kilometre radius of the race track, the following actions must be taken:

- Racing and training are suspended immediately;
- LGCA, horsepersons' group, and jockeys' guild or drivers' representatives are notified;
- Alert participants to seek shelter, if necessary.

Racing and training may resume 15 minutes after the last lightning strike within a 10-kilometre radius of the race track, as indicated by the lightning detection service.

4.4 Precipitation

When precipitation is forecasted, the race track operator is to record and analyze the following:

- Total amount of precipitation;
- Duration of precipitation;
- Predicted timing relative to training or racing.

The race track operator is required to continually monitor the race track surface to determine the condition of the race track and what interventions (harrowing, packing, sealing, floating) are used to make the race track surface safe for equine and human participants. The race track operator is responsible, in consultation with the horsepersons' group, to deem if a race track is unsafe to use and delay or cancel racing and training.

4.5 Fog/Visibility

In the event of impaired visibility, the race track operator and representative of the jockeys' guild or drivers' representative and horsepersons' group determine if the races or training should be delayed or cancelled. If any entity believes that the visibility is compromised such that racing would be unsafe, then racing or training should be cancelled or postponed. If weather monitoring systems indicate that visibility will improve, the races may be delayed, and the parties will meet again to decide if the races or training can safely continue.

4.6 Air Quality

In the event of poor air quality as defined below, the race track operator is required to conduct regular reviews of the current and forecasted air quality when considering a delay or cancellation of racing or training. Any decision made by the race track operator related to live racing should be made in consultation with a representative of the jockeys' guild or drivers' representative and horsepersons' group. The final decision is to be communicated to the designated LGCA representative or race administration officials.

The race track operator is required to monitor air quality conditions and implement any additional measures or adjustments necessary in racing and training in the event of current or forecasted air quality levels as outlined below.

Health risk	Air quality health risk	Recommended for competition	Air quality scratch permitted without penalty
Low	1-3	No need to change the competition format or timing.	No
Moderate	4-6	Competitors with high-risk equines* should monitor their equines closely and retire from competition if symptoms of respiratory distress occur.	Yes
High	7-10	Reduce exertional effort or reschedule strenuous activities when the AQHI is lower.	Yes
Very High	Above 10	Cancel all activities that require any strenuous exertion.	Yes

**High-risk equines include older and younger equines and equines with pre-existing respiratory conditions.*

These recommendations are based on the Environment and Climate Change Canada's Air Quality Index for human activity, with minor modifications to adapt to equine athletes. There are scientific findings that suggest equine respiratory systems can be more sensitive than those of humans, and guidelines will be updated as more research is available for equine athletes.

References

- Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario Temperature Standards-Based Rule Cancellation
- Association of Racing Commissioners International – Model Rules
- California Horse Racing Commission Extreme Temperature Guide
- Equestrian Canada Guidelines (2021)
- HISA Racetrack Safety Program
- New York State Gaming Commission – Air Quality Protocol

APPENDIX A – Cancellation Procedures

Live racing may be cancelled prior to the start of live racing or during the live race card due to a change in conditions such as weather, race track conditions, or facility or equipment malfunctions. Live racing may also be postponed for any of the above listed reasons; however, race administration officials can deny or limit postponements of racing based on facility conditions, operational restrictions, or any reason relative to the safety of participants or integrity of racing.

Procedure

1. In keeping with the rules of racing, the race track operator may delay or cancel live racing in circumstances of inclement weather, track conditions or facility or equipment malfunctions.
2. The race track operator is responsible for initiating the consultation between the horsepersons' group and jockeys' guild or drivers' representatives as soon as possible when contemplating a delay or cancellation of live racing.
3. The decision to cancel or postpone racing may be made remotely or require an onsite meeting.
4. The LGCA should be contacted by the race track operator as soon as the decision is made to delay or cancel racing.
5. Communication of the decision should be provided as soon as practical by each organization to their members.
6. The race track operator is responsible to inform the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency of their race day cancellation via email to mary.bui@AGR.GC.CA and joyce.adam@AGR.GC.CA.
7. The LGCA will inform all regulatory supporting staff including race administration officials, equine drug control program (standardbred only), and the regulatory veterinarian (thoroughbred only).
8. The horseperson's representative will be responsible to contact their membership and inform of the cancellation. With agreement from the race track operator, draws for stakes may continue as scheduled with or without an LGCA representative.
9. The race track operator will be responsible to provide requests for amendments or changes to the approved race days for review by the Executive Director.

Exceptions

1. Live racing delays based on anticipated improvement of conditions such as weather, track conditions or unmet Terms and Conditions, such as an ambulance being removed from the track, equipment failure, etc.
2. Race administration officials and regulatory veterinarians retain authority to unilaterally intervene as they determine circumstances warrant.

This document is available in alternate formats, upon request.