

# Veterinary Standards

The following standards are a reference for race track veterinarians. The standards are complementary to the overarching regulatory framework established in The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Act (the Act), regulations, terms and conditions, and rules of racing to regulate horse racing in Manitoba. These standards have been developed to guide and support veterinarians' decisions in alignment with best practices within the established regulatory framework, horse welfare and in the public interest. As such, these standards are subject to change at any time by the Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba (LGCA), when necessary for regulatory or industry needs.

## Section 1 – Race Day Veterinary Examinations

The race day veterinary examination is an important part of ensuring that welfare and integrity standards are maintained in horse racing. The race day veterinary examination may result in the scratch of a horse if it is determined to be unsound, unfit to race or with an unacceptable risk of injury.

### 1.1 Procedure

- i) The trainer of each horse or a representative of the trainer must present the horse for examination when required to the examining veterinarian. Horses presented for examination must have bandages removed and the legs must be clean. Prior to examination, horses may not have ice treatments, or any device or substance applied that impedes veterinary clinical assessment.
- ii) The assessment of a horse's racing condition shall include:
  - proper identification of each horse by tattoo or microchip,
  - manual palpation and passive flexion of both forelimbs and hind limbs\*,
  - visual inspection of the entire horse and assessment of overall condition, and
  - any additional evaluation as warranted.
  - *Thoroughbred only*: Observation of each horse in an uninhibited free forward trot on an outdoor flat surface. The handler of the horse may not alter the horse's head position and the horse must have the ability to move their head/neck at will while trotting.

*NOTE: Weather permitting, horses should not be trotted in barns and are to be trotted on a flat, groomed outdoor area. They must be trotted in hand of their trainer or representative.*

- iii) The veterinarian will document the health and racing soundness of each horse examined. Information must be provided to the LGCA if the horse is scratched and put on the veterinarians list.

*\*Fractious horses deemed not to be safe for manual palpation or passive flexion may require additional methods or tests to determine soundness.*



In addition to the pre-race examination conducted in the backstretch area of the race track, the veterinarian will continue to monitor to ensure the horse is fit to race. This includes clinical observation in the paddock, during the parade and at the starting gate, during the running of the race, and following the race until the horse has exited the race track. Veterinarians will re-assess a horse if concerns are observed at any time and make necessary decisions on the horse's suitability to race and/or placement on a veterinarian's list.

## Section 2 – Veterinary Scratches

Horses can be veterinary scratched for a variety of reasons, all of which are based upon horse welfare and protecting the betting public.

If a horse is found not to be sound and fit to race or deemed to have an unacceptable risk of injury upon completion of race day veterinary examinations, a horse will be scratched by the regulatory veterinarian or race track veterinarian. Any horse scratched by a regulatory or race track veterinarian must be reported to race administration officials for confirmation and reporting to the race track operator to inform the betting public.

### 2.1 Medical Scratches

If a treatment veterinarian has concerns regarding a horse that is entered to race (medical reason or lameness that was diagnosed after entries), the trainer must provide medical records with an explanation of findings to [vet@LGCamb.ca](mailto:vet@LGCamb.ca) for review prior to morning checks.

Treatment records for medications administered that will result in a scratch (in case of fever, colic, etc.) requires submission of the Veterinary Treatment Record on the LGCA form, signed by the treatment veterinarian. All medication administered to horses entered to race must be prescribed and administered by a licensed veterinary professional. If medical records are not available, race administration officials (stewards and judges) will be notified, and a fine may be implemented.

### 2.2 Scratches During Live Racing

Horses may be scratched any time during a live race day for any subjective reason, but the following occurrences will automatically result in a scratch and the horse not being allowed to participate in racing:

- Any horse that flips, goes down to the ground, or contacts any hard surface with force;
- Any horse that becomes loose, uncontrolled or runs off the racetrack during post parade or while loading;
- Any horse that becomes entrapped in or under the starting gate during loading (thoroughbred only);
- Any concerns that pose immediate safety risks to horses or jockeys.

Race administration officials (stewards and judges) must be informed immediately when a regulatory or race track veterinarian identifies a situation requiring a scratch. Race administration officials will inform the race track operator to communicate the information to the betting public and adjust the start of live racing, as necessary.

### 2.3 Welfare and Inclement Weather Scratches

In accordance with the race day cancellation guidelines, horses may be scratched by the trainer without penalty within a 10-hour period leading up to live racing when the weather forecast meets thresholds identified in the race day cancellation guide.



## Section 3 – Veterinarian’s List

The LGCA maintains a list of horses considered to be unfit, unsound, or not ready for racing because of an incident during their previous race.

Placement of a horse on a veterinarian’s list is automatic when the following conditions are observed during race day examinations:

- lameness grade 3/5 (AAEP Scale) or higher on any or multiple limbs, i.e., if the lameness is visible on a straight line at a trot, it is equivalent to a grade 3/5,
- neurologic deficits of any grade or severity,
- generalized skin disease,
- any full thickness wounds,
- moderate or severe squinting of either or both eyes, or
- vision impairment of both eyes.

Any horse required to be placed on the veterinarian’s list by a race track veterinarian must be reported to the regulatory veterinarian for placement on the list.

If a trainer has concerns about a horse’s ability to compete (medical reason or lameness) that is identified after the entry process, medical records must be submitted to the regulatory or race track veterinarian for review.

### 3.1 Removal from the Veterinarian’s List

As per the Rules of Racing, any horse placed on the veterinarian’s list requires that the owner or trainer apply to have their horse removed. This includes an assessment by the regulatory or race track veterinarian to conduct an examination of the horse in its stall and observation of the horse at rest and while in motion.

*Thoroughbred only:* All horses placed on a veterinarian’s list will remain there for a minimum of five days, not including the day of placement on the list.

## Section 4 – Reporting to the LGCA

Race track veterinarians are required to report to the LGCA on a regular basis. Reporting includes immediately providing information to race administration officials during live racing, in addition to submitting written documentation to the LGCA for review and administrative oversight. The following items must be reported to the LGCA within 48 hours after the completion of live racing:

- Late scratches – report with the reasoning for the scratch immediately before or during live racing.
- Any horse that bleeds through its nostrils or visibly through endoscopic examination of the horse’s trachea.
- Any incident or accident during the hours of live racing, whether in the paddock, gate, race track or backstretch area that a veterinarian attended or was informed of.
- Emergency treatment or care provided to any horse during or immediately after live racing. If euthanasia is required, a written report of the circumstances and catastrophic injury is required.
- The placement of any horse on the veterinarian’s list during live racing or race day examinations.

Depending upon circumstances, the LGCA may require additional information or reports to be provided for completion.



## Section 5 – Live Racing Paddock and Gate Procedures

The race track/regulatory veterinarian must be continuously available in the race track area from the time horses enter the paddock until the last race is completed. This includes continuously observing horses for injuries and ensuring they are fit to race at the paddock during warm-up/parade to the post, during the race, after the race and any other time considered appropriate.

*Thoroughbred only:* Any horse that flips or contacts any hard surface with force in the paddock or gate will be scratched from the race and must be assessed by the race track veterinarian. The veterinarian is required to inform the race administration officials of the scratch and decide if the horse is required to be placed on the veterinarian's list.

## Section 6 – Accident and Emergency Care

In the case of an accident during a live race card, horses deserve the quickest, most accurate assessment and the best immediate injury management possible. When the injury is severe, the race track veterinarian or race official will attempt to contact the owner/trainer for guidance on further diagnostics versus euthanasia.

In cases of catastrophic injury in which the horse is unable to stand, euthanasia will be performed in a professional and humane manner. Before euthanasia occurs, every effort should be made to load an injured horse into the equine ambulance unless moving the horse would increase or prolong its suffering.

This document is available in other formats, upon request.

