



HARNESS RACING VICTORIA

## ELEVATED TCO2 LEVEL POLICY

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GM Integrity		1/01/2024
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## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 HRV is committed to protecting the integrity of harness racing in Victoria by strengthening integrity measures associated with elevated Total Carbon Dioxide (TCO2) results. The purpose of the Elevated TCO2 Levels Policy (This Policy) is to act as a deterrent for participants and it is envisaged that these measures are a further step to ensure transparency and fairness for harness participants.
- 1.2 This Policy is an updated initiative from the HRV Integrity Department regarding the presentation or retention of horses on course where the analysis of a previous blood sample taken from that trainer's horse or horses has revealed an elevated TCO2 level.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Where a term is not defined in this Policy but is otherwise defined or given a meaning in the Australian Harness Racing Rules (AHRR) or Victorian Local Rules (VLR), the definition or meaning given in the AHRR or VLR shall apply to this Policy.
- 2.2 In this Policy the following words in the singular include the plural and vice versa and have the corresponding meaning:

**Alkalinising Agents** means any substance that may elevate the plasma Total Carbon Dioxide (TCO2) of a horse when administered by any route. This includes but is not limited to substances that are bicarbonates, citrates, succinates, propionates, maleates, lactates and trometamol and also include products marked as urinary alkalinises and hindgut buffers.

**Controlling Body** means

- (a) Save and except for paragraph (b) an organisation that by convention, recognition or law is or is deemed to be in control of harness racing in a State or Territory of Australia or in part of or the whole of the country; and,
- (b) In respect of the State of Queensland, the Racing Queensland Board unless a rule provides for the Controlling Body to perform a function that is a function of the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission under the Racing Integrity Act 2016 (QLD\_ in which case the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission must perform the function.

**RASL** means Racing Analytical Services Ltd.

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### 3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The presence of Alkalinising Agents in horses is prohibited when evidenced by TCO2 present at a concentration of above 36.0 millimoles per litre (mmol/L) in plasma.

3.2 Accordingly, for there to be a breach of a rule which requires a prohibited substance to be detected, TCO2 must be detected in excess of 36.0mmol/L in plasma. This includes AHRR 190(1).

3.3 AHRR 190(1) states:

*A horse shall be presented to race free of a prohibited substance.*

3.4 Further, there are rules relating to the administration of alkalinising agents that do not require TCO2 to be detected in excess of 36.0mmol/L.

3.5 In this regard, AHRR 196C (1) states:

*A person must not administer an alkalinising agent in any manner to a horse which is engaged to run in a race:*

*(a) at any time on the day of the scheduled race and prior to the start of the race;*

*(b) at any time within (1) clear day of the commencement of the race.*

3.6 As per the definition in the AHRR, “one clear day” means the twenty-four (24) hour period from 12.01 a.m. to midnight. Results of blood samples that reveal elevated TCO2 levels that fall just below the permissible threshold of 36.0mmol/L will not constitute a breach of AHRR 190(1). However, such readings may indicate that an alkalinising agent has been administered to a horse, potentially in breach of AHRR 196C.

3.7 The HRV Integrity Department intends for the below requirements in this Policy to act as a deterrent to trainers who are administering Alkalinising Agents not in accordance with AHRR.

### 4. PROCEDURE

4.2 Where HRV receives notification, either from RASL or another Controlling Body, that a recent blood sample has returned a plasma TCO2 level of 35.0 mmol/L or greater, the HRV Stewards will implement one of the below options for a minimum of thirty (30) days and/or a minimum of that horse’s next six (6) race starts.

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4.3 In determining which of the options is chosen, HRV Stewards may take into consideration the following factors, including, but not limited to, current intelligence, venue of the race meeting and other options that may have been utilised in respect of the horse(s) and/or licensed trainer.

4.4 The HRV Stewards have complete discretion to enact any of the options that have been outlined within this Policy in respect of the horse(s) for each race start during the stipulated period.

## 5. OPTION 1 – 4 HOURS PRIOR

5.2 The trainer of the relevant horse(s) shall ensure the horse(s) is present on course no less than four (4) hours prior to the scheduled start time in which the horse(s) is entered at all Victorian harness racing meetings.

5.3 Should a trainer fail to present the horse by the required time, the horse shall be withdrawn from the race in which it was entered, and the trainer may be subject to penalty.

## 6. OPTION 2 – 2.5 HOURS AFTER

6.2 The relevant horse(s) shall remain on course for a minimum of two and a half (2.5) hours after the horse has completed its scheduled race at a Victorian harness racing meeting.

6.3 Should a trainer fail to abide by this requirement, the trainer may be subject to a penalty.

## 7. TRANSFER OF TRAINER

7.2 In the event that a horse that is subject to this Policy is transferred to a new trainer, the new trainer can apply to HRV's Chief Steward to have the horse removed from this Policy.

7.3 The application will be evaluated, and the decision will be made by the Chief Steward and/or their delegate which will be considered final. The HRV Stewards have the discretion to accept or reject any application.

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## 8. PUBLICATION

- 8.2 HRV will publish a list of all horses subject to this Policy on its Elevated TCO2 Levels List on the Integrity Matters website (<https://integrity.thetrots.com.au/>). The name of the trainer of the horse with a confirmed plasma TCO2 level of 35.0 mmol/L or greater, will also be published on the Elevated TCO2 Levels List, which will specify the date and race meeting where the elevated TCO2 level occurred.
- 8.3 Where no previous sampling history exists for a horse, a reference sample may be obtained by HRV Stewards and a registered Veterinarian from that horse prior to the horse being placed on the Elevated TCO2 Levels List. This is to provide a safeguard for the rare circumstance of any horse having an organic elevated TCO2 reading.

## 9. MUTUAL RECOGNITION

- 9.2 When a horse is placed on the Elevated TCO2 List (or equivalent) of another Controlling Body and HRV is notified, the horse will be subject to this Policy if it races in Victoria. It will remain subject to this Policy until it has been removed from the Elevated TCO2 List (or equivalent) of the other Controlling Body or at the discretion of HRV's Chief Steward.
- 9.3 When a horse is placed on the HRV Elevated TCO2 Policy, this information will be conveyed to the integrity departments of other Controlling Bodies.

## 10. INTERPRETATION AND OTHER INFORMATION

- 10.2 This Policy is approved by Harness Racing Victoria's General Manager Integrity.
- 10.3 This Policy commenced on the date outlined.
- 10.4 Amendments to this Policy will be effective on the date specified.
- 10.5 The following rules of interpretation apply to this Policy:
- a) Headings are for convenience only and shall not be deemed part of the substance of the document or to affect in any way the language of the provisions to which they refer.
  - b) Words in the singular include the plural and vice versa.
  - c) Reference to 'including' and similar words are not words of limitation.

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- d) A reference to a clause is a reference to a clause or subclause of this Policy.
- e) Where a word or phrase is given a particular meaning, other parts of speech and grammatical forms of that word or phrase have corresponding meanings.
- f) In the event any provision of this Policy is determined invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall not be affected, and the document shall not fail because any part of it is held invalid, and
- g) Except as otherwise stated herein, failure to exercise or enforce any right conferred by this Policy shall not be deemed to be a waiver of any such right nor operate to bar the exercise or enforcement thereof or of any other right on any other occasion.