



27 March 2020

(Update to NZTR Directive Issued on March 2020)

## COVID-19 EMERGENCY REGULATIONS

### HUSBANDRY AND STABLING OF THOROUGHBREDS – ALERT LEVEL 4

On Saturday, 21st March 2020, the Prime Minister announced a new alert level system to be used during the COVID-19 response. From 11.59pm on 25 March 2020, COVID-19 Alert Level 4 protocols will be enforced by the government through its various agencies, included the Police and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

#### **Alert Level Four: Eliminate**

*This is the top-level, activated if it is "likely" COVID-19 is not contained nationally or at a local level. Under this level, people would need to stay at home, all educational facilities and non-essential businesses remain closed, certain supplies rationed, facilities requisitioned, travel be severely limited, and all healthcare services reprioritised.*

In light of the government's announcement that the country will move to COVID-19 alert level 4 at 11.59pm last night (25 March) only "essential services" are permitted to operate.

Our advice from the Ministry for Primary Industries confirms that training centres, training stables, agistment properties and stud farms where [horses are in containment](#) are businesses that may register with MPI as an essential service under animal welfare considerations.

Businesses with more than five people (including the owner) working at each business site, or who cannot achieve physical distancing between staff, are required to register. The criteria and registration form can be found [here](#).

The businesses will need to answer 11 questions to provide assurance they have a plan and process to manage infection risks. Much of this will be covered in the NZTR protocols which will be distributed later today.

MPI has requested that all businesses which need to register do so by 5pm on Friday, 27 March 2020. NZTR understands businesses will be able to continue operating while going through the registration process.

**As an industry together, we must continue to prove that we can keep all participants safe and minimise to the greatest possible extent, the risk of transmission of COVID-19.**

This Directive provided below has been issued in consultation with the New Zealand Trainer's Association, a Racing Club Advisory Group, and the NZ Racecourse Managers Association.

**Note: This directive is subject to any governmental requirement including the requirement Businesses with more than five people (including the owner) working at each business site, or who cannot achieve physical distancing between staff, are required to register.**

## **NZTR DIRECTIVE – HUSBANDRY AND STABLING OF THOROUGHBREDS – ALERT LEVEL 4**

These protocols are issued as a Directive as a component of the NZTR Coronavirus Emergency Regulations as issued by NZTR on 17 March 2020 and their subsequent amendments.

Failure to adhere to this Directive constitutes a breach of the Rules of Racing (Rule 801 - Serious Racing Offences).

### **Definitions**

- 1.0 For the purpose of this Directive **staff** means any person working for a trainer whether paid or unpaid.

### **Exercise of Horses**

- 2.0 This Directive includes provisions enabling exercise of horses under COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL 4, restrictions where needed to ensure the continued welfare of the horse. The welfare of the horse is encompassed by both its mental and physical wellbeing, and NZTR recognises that:
- 2.1 The mental wellbeing of some horses may be negatively impacted by monotony if only exercised on treadmills or horse walkers.
  - 2.2 Some horses require light ridden exercise to avoid becoming overweight.
  - 2.3 The continuation of pre-training practices that provide graduated learning of young horses is important to their development.
- 3.0 Light ridden exercise of a horse under COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL 4 restrictions is permitted if the Trainer considers that it is necessary for the horse's wellbeing and alternatives would not be effective, if the exercise is conducted:
- 3.1 At a private property; and
  - 3.2 The horse and staff and/or Trainer are resident on the same property, and all persons remain fully compliant to the government's requirements under COVID ALERT LEVEL-4; and
  - 3.3 The property includes suitable areas or an existing circuit upon which light ridden exercise can be safely conducted.
- 4.0 If light ridden exercise is justified and permitted under paragraphs 2.0 and 3.0, the following prohibitions are stipulated on the grounds of personal safety at a time when the public health system is dedicating to combatting COVID-19:
- 4.1 Galloping or fastwork is prohibited.
  - 4.2 Education through jump-out starting gates is prohibited
  - 4.3 The horse may be ridden only at a trot, canter or up to half-pace.
  - 4.4 Horses may only be ridden at a distance of 50 metres or more from other ridden horses.
  - 4.5 A very cautious approach must be taken to a decision to ride a very inexperienced horse or a potentially fractious horse.

## **Mandatory Obligations on Licenced Persons (Trainers and Stable Employees) and Officials**

- 5.0 Trainers must roster staff to reduce the numbers of staff at the stable at any one time. This may require the working day to be restructured regarding feed preparation and other daily duties.

## **Health Assessments**

- 6.0 Trainers, staff, and club Officials must maintain assessment of the health of themselves and each of their staff. Matters that must be assessed regularly include:
- 6.1 Has the person been close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19?
  - 6.2 Has the person returned from overseas travel in the last 14 days, or has been in contact with another person who has returned from overseas travel in the last 14 days?
  - 6.3 Any raised temperature or other indication of illness or fever?
  - 6.4 Any indication of a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath?

*(A COVID-19 screening questionnaire is appended to this Directive.)*

If any one of the above four questions is a 'yes' then the person must revert to self-isolation, for at least a further 14 days.

## **Personal Responsibility**

- 7.0 A person must self-isolate, and not attend and be refused access to stables or training facilities if:
- 7.1 They have cold or flu symptoms, including coughing, sneezing, runny nose, headache, aches or fever;
  - 7.2 They know or suspect that they have been in contact with a person suspected or confirmed as contracting COVID-19; or
  - 7.3 They or a close contact has returned to NZ from overseas with the previous 14 days.

Any staff member must report their concern as to the health status of any another person in the workplace.

## **Trainers and Staff**

- 8.0 Employers and staff (which must only include NZTR licenced stablehands and track-riders) engaged in the care of horses, exercising horses, or for work in stable areas must work together to understand and comply with this directive or any measures that the employer dictates, in order to minimise the risks of transmission of COVID-19. These measures shall include but not be limited to the following:

### **Contact Tracing**

- 8.1 A daily logbook of all on-site staff to be maintained by one designated person or digitally, with inclusion of any visiting suppliers or contractors (e.g. Vets/Farriers or any other person).

### **Contractors, suppliers and persons performing essential services**

- 8.2 A trainer must ensure any contractor, supplier, or other person visiting the property to perform an essential service is familiar with and complies with any requirements of MPI and any other governmental requirements.

### **Hygiene measures.**

- 8.3 When exercising horses, or in stable areas, trainers and staff are required to maintain strict standards of personal hygiene:
- 8.4 Provision and use of disinfectant buckets and sprays, or soap and running water located throughout the stable and tie-up stalls for regular washing of hands:
- 8.4.1 On arrival and before departure from the workplace;
  - 8.4.2 Before and after eating or drinking;
  - 8.4.3 Before and after assisting another person around the horse (e.g. legging up a rider); and
  - 8.4.4 Before and after handling of tack or equipment that is handled by more than one person.
- 8.5 All persons must wash and wear clean clothes before and after work;
- 8.6 Wearing of overalls and gloves for duties when it is practical to do so;
- 8.7 Use of disinfectant on all tack or other equipment that is used, particularly regular disinfectant of lead ropes and the reins of horses saddled for track riders; and
- 8.8 Assign a staff member to regularly disinfect surfaces that are often used such as toilets, benches, doors, gates, barrows, rakes, brooms, buckets and high contact areas on vehicles.

### **Physical Distancing**

- 8.9 Person-to-person contact must be minimised, no person should be within 2 metres of another person (unless to ensure safety in attending to the horse);
- 8.10 Segregation of staff into small teams or pairs of workers to minimise contact or overlapping working hours between staff groups so that if one group is required to self-isolate, the other group(s) may continue to work;
- 8.11 If and when non-stable staff (e.g. vets/farriers or any other person) enter stable areas, they must be maintained at a distance at least 2 metres (unless to ensure safety in attending to the horse), and be required to hand wash with soap or disinfectant on arrival and departure;
- 8.12 Other than for personal hygiene needs, access of staff to offices or enclosed spaces must be limited. Such measures must include:
- 8.12.1 only one person at a time in equipment rooms or tack-room;
  - 8.12.2 having a sole person responsible for the feed room, and all feed buckets left outside the feed-room with any high contact areas disinfected,
  - 8.12.3 staff that are feeding horses must also wear protective clothing; and
  - 8.12.4 other similar distancing for recording and administering permitted supplements, medications, or other products.
- 8.13 Where possible, track riders and ground staff should be separated by at least 2 metres (unless to ensure safety in attending to the horse), and it must be ensured that a vacant tie-up stall is in between stalls that are being used to saddle horses.

- 8.14 Site visits by Vets or Farriers must be limited only to urgent situations or matters required immediately to maintain horse welfare, with initial assessment handled by phone (e.g. Facetime, Skype etc.).
- 8.15 When unloading or loading a horse:
  - 8.15.1 Ensure that if possible, the driver and any outside personnel stay in the vehicle.
  - 8.15.2 Always observe safe distancing measures, wear protective clothing and disinfect any equipment travelling with the horse, including head collars, lead ropes and covers.
- 8.16 Any necessary site visitors must understand and adhere to stipulated COVID-19 physical distancing and hygiene measures;
- 8.17 Trainers and staff must immediately return to residences as soon as work duties are complete.
- 8.18 Staff who are employed only for the purposes of office administration, or for maintenance of grounds, fencing and facilities (unless urgently required to attend to an issue that involves a safety or welfare concern to staff or horses); will be required to self-isolate at home.
- 8.19 Site visits by outside Vets or Farriers must be limited to urgent situations only, with initial assessment where possible by phone (e.g. Facetime).
- 8.20 Require home isolation in accordance with Government stipulation and prohibit the socialising of staff either at or away from the workplace.

### **Isolation**

- 8.21 Employers must stand down from the roster and require self-isolation of any staff member who:
  - 8.21.1 Is aged 70 or over; or
  - 8.21.2 May be vulnerable to COVID-19 due to a medical condition; or
  - 8.21.3 Answers 'yes' to any of the 4 Health Assessment questions in (1) above.
  - 8.21.4 Is diagnosed or is suspected of having contracted COVID-19. In such an instance, the employer must ensure that: the staff member immediately self-isolates, follow Ministry of Health advice, and assist in contact tracing.

### **Compliance**

- 8.22 The trainer and their stable staff must comply with any directions or local rules stipulated by the training centre, including:
  - 8.22.1 Directions of hours of access to facilities and tracks;
  - 8.22.2 Where horses must be saddled and hosed-down;
  - 8.22.3 Decision to close certain club facilities such as: entrances, trainers huts, swimming pool, shared horse-walkers, sawdust rolls, and the like;
  - 8.22.4 Who may use the facilities, including restrictions on horses being floated to and from the facility; and
  - 8.22.5 Any reduction in the number of training circuits that are open for use.
  - 8.22.6 The trainer and their staff must ensure that all above measures are reviewed regularly to ensure ongoing compliance.

#### **Movement of horses under Alert Level 4:**

- 9.0 Trainers must inform horse owners if a horse movement is to occur.
- 9.1 A horse may be moved between properties during COVID-19 Alert Level 4, only if the purpose of the movement is to ensure the welfare of the horse.
- 9.2 For clarity, this means horse may move out of a stable property to a nearby training track for daily exercise, or to an agistment property, or to veterinary surgery; but cannot be moved from agistment property to a training property.

#### **Operators of Training venues:**

- 10.0 Racing clubs and other operators of training venues must:
  - 10.1 Request names of all trainers and staff using facilities on a regular basis;
  - 10.2 By agreement with resident trainers, allocate times for trainers to use facility so there are as few people as possible at any given time at the track, and allocate tie-up stalls to ensure appropriate physical distancing;
  - 10.3 Gain confidence through discussion with local trainers, that measures required in this Directive are adhered to, or rectify any deficient work practices;
  - 10.4 Erect signage to clearly prohibit access of non-authorized persons to the property;
  - 10.5 Ensure adequate supervision (noting distancing requirements) of the facility whilst training facilities are utilised;
  - 10.6 Ensure that (unless in emergency situations) that club staff can perform duties at a safe physical distance from users of the facility, or at times when users have vacated specific areas;
  - 10.7 Minimise the number of staff on the facility, provided that this does not jeopardise health & safety of staff or persons permitted to be on-site;
  - 10.8 Require home isolation in accordance with Government stipulation and prohibit the socialising of staff either at or away from the facility; and
  - 10.9 Consider and implement any further local rules that ensure hygiene, physical distancing, and contact tracing that will further limit the potential risk of COVID-19 transmission.



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## COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire for Officials, Trainers and Stable Staff

Failure to truthfully complete this questionnaire shall be considered a breach of Rule 801(1)(k).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / 2020

1. Have had close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19?

**YES / NO (circle one)**

*If you answered yes, please provide details including date and person you have been in contact with*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you returned from overseas travel in the last 14 days?

**YES / NO (circle one)**

*If you answered yes, please provide details of your overseas travel and the date you returned to NZ.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you think you may have a fever?

**YES / NO (circle one)**

4. Do you have a cough, sore throat or shortness of breath?

**YES / NO (circle one)**

If any of the above questions is answered "YES" the Employer must:

- Instruct that the staff member, and any persons who have been in close contact within the past 48 hours, that they are immediately stood down and instructed to adhere to strict self-isolation.
- Advise the operator of the training venue.
- Advise NZTR ([martin.burns@nztr.co.nz](mailto:martin.burns@nztr.co.nz))