



NZTR CIRCULAR No. 33

23 July 2025

NZTR CIRCULAR 2024/25 – No. 33

TO EACH TOTALISATOR CLUB AND SECTOR ORGANISATION

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES OF RACING

NZTR seeks comment on the following proposed amendments to the Rules of Racing. Should you wish to make any comments or provide any other feedback please do so in writing to colin.hall@nztr.co.nz on or before Friday, 22 August 2025.

Words to be added are **in bold and underlined** and words to be deleted are ~~struck out~~.

1. Riders Weighing Out

Background

Rule 618(1)(a) makes it the rider's responsibility to weigh out more than 30 minutes before the starting time of a race in which they are riding. This is not practical and is generally not adhered to as races are usually about 35 minutes apart.

It is therefore proposed that the Rule be amended as follows:

- 618 (1) Subject to sub-Rule (2) below, it is a Rider's responsibility if he is engaged to ride a horse in a Race to ensure that:
- (a) **They are** weighed out for that horse at the appointed place ~~more than thirty minutes before the starting time of the Race, or such other~~ **and** before the time **specified for that purpose** by NZTR ~~the Stewards~~ on Race day; and

2. Horses that have not raced for 12 months.

Background

Research has shown that horses which have not been in training for a lengthy period prior to racing, are at a higher risk of injury, some of which are catastrophic. It is thought that there are two reasons for this; firstly, the lay-off may have been caused by an injury so there may be an underlying problem and secondly, because during extended periods without ridden exercise, the horse's bones may remodel and become less attuned to the action and forces of a gallop. Most horses do go through a period of training after a long lay-off before being entered to race again, however some may not receive adequate training and as such, present a higher risk for injury.

It is proposed that a Rule be introduced which requires that any horse which has not raced for 12 months must be certified fit to race by a veterinarian and must participate in a Trial to the satisfaction of the Stewards.

- 524 (4) A horse which has not raced for 12 months is ineligible to start in a Race. It will only be allowed to start in a Race again if:
- a. the trainer provides the Stewards with a Veterinary Certificate, which is deemed by the Stewards to be satisfactory, in respect of the horse's condition and suitability to race, and any other information, examination or report as required by the Stewards.
 - b. The horse has participated, to the satisfaction of the Stewards, in:
 - i. a Trial, or
 - ii. a jump-out at which a Steward is present, and which has been approved for the purposes of assessing a horse's fitness, by the Stewards.

3. Horses that are older than 12 years.

Background.

Research has also shown that the risk of injury and death of racehorses increases as it gets older. Many racing authorities have recognised this and have introduced age limits above which, horses can no longer race. New Zealand does not have a specified age limit in its Rules and, until now, this has been managed primarily by the Stewards who have placed restrictions on horses which are no longer competitive.

It is proposed that a Rule be introduced which prevents any horse over the age of 12 from taking part in a race other than where the Stewards have given permission for a 12 year old to race until the end of its 12th year of age:

- 524 (5) a horse aged 12 years or older is ineligible to start in a Flat Race. If a horse aged 12 years or older participates in a Flat Race it must be disqualified from that Race.
- (6) a horse is ineligible to start in a Jumping Race after 1 January of the Racing Year that the horse turns 12 years of age.

4. Frequency of Race Starts

Background:

In the interests of a horse's welfare, international best practice limits the number of times that horses may race. Other Racing Authorities have rules which prohibit a horse from racing:

- a. More than once on any Race day,
- b. On consecutive days without the permission of the Stewards,
- c. More than 5 times in any 30 day period.

NZTR is of the view that similar restrictions should be incorporated into the New Zealand Rules of Racing and further, that NZTR have the authority to restrict the frequency with which a horse may race.

It is proposed that a new Rule 524 (8) be added:

- 524 (8) Without derogating from, or limiting, any other provisions in these Rules, a horse must not:**
- (a) start in more than one Race on a Race day;**
 - (b) start in more than one Trial on any day.**
 - (c) start in Races and/or Trials on consecutive days;**
 - (d) start in more than 5 Races in any 30-day period.**
 - (g) Notwithstanding sub-Rules 524(8)(a), (b) (c) and (d), NZTR may, based on considerations of, but not limited to, horse welfare, impose further limitations on the number of Race starts that a particular horse may have over a given period of time.**

5. Exclusion of Breastplate and martingale when weighing out and in.

Background:

The current Rules require that a breastplate and/or martingale be included on the scale when a Rider weighs in and out, for a Race.

NZTR is of the view that breastplates and martingales are important pieces of safety equipment and leaving them off to make the weight creates an unnecessary risk.

It is proposed that Rule 619 be deleted and a new Rule 619 added:

~~619—A Rider shall not be weighed out for a ride in a Race:~~

- ~~(a)—where he is carrying more than 3 kg dead weight about his body until any excess weight above 3 kg is removed from about his body; and/or~~
- ~~(b)—with a skull cap, a colours cap, padded whip or any substitute for a whip, bridle, any item or items of Notifiable Gear, saddle number cloths or anything worn on a horse's legs and the weight of such shall not be included in the weight of a Rider for the purposes of weighing out or weighing in,~~

~~and unless a Stipendiary Steward permits otherwise, that Rider (after being weighed out) must not remove or add any article of wearing apparel (including any dead weight about his body) or riding gear with which he did or did not weigh out as the case may be.~~

- 619 (1) A Rider must not carry any additional dead weight on their body, including but not limited to weight vests and non-essential clothing or equipment.**
- (2) When calculating a Rider's weight in weighing-out and weighing-in:**
- (a) The following items must be excluded from the scale:**
 - (i) Helmet**

(ii) Goggles or any other face protection.

(iii) Gloves

(iv) Whip

(v) Bridle

(vi) Any item of Notifiable Gear

(vii) Saddle number cloth

(viii) Anything worn on the horse's legs

(ix) Breastplate

(x) Martingale or Irish martingale

(xi) Neck strap

(b) The following items must be included on the scale:

(i) All items of clothing worn by the Rider except for (i), (ii) and (iii)

(ii) Body Protector (when calculating the weight, an allowance of 1 kg must be made to take into account the weight of the body protector as provided for in Rule 62o (1).)

(iii) Saddle

(iv) Lead bag

(v) All other saddle padding or packing except for the number cloth

(vi) Any other item carried by the Rider or the horse which is not excluded in (a) above.

(3) After weighing out and before weighing in, a Rider must not remove, replace or add any article of wearing apparel or riding gear with which they did or did not weigh out, except with the permission of the Stewards

Weighing-in

648 (1) ~~A muzzle, martingale, breastplate, crupper, suspender or clothing of the horse (other than the articles mentioned in Rule 619(b) hereof) in which a horse runs, shall be put into the scales and included in the Rider's weight.~~

6. Trainer responsible for administration of stable.

Background:

NZTR is of the view that the Rules should make it clear that Trainers are responsible for the administration and conduct of their stable at all times. If a Trainer is to be away from their stable, they must make suitable arrangements for another suitably qualified person to look after the stables and take care of the horses.

It is also proposed that Trainers must notify NZTR of any horse that dies whilst in their care, of any horse which enters their stable and any horse which leaves their stable within 48 hours, as opposed to the 72 hours currently required by the Rules. This will provide better information in relation to the whereabouts of all racehorses.

It is proposed that a new Rule 320A be added, and 320B be amended:

PROVISIONS RELATING TO ALL TRAINERS AND PRE-TRAINERS

Trainers are responsible for the administration of their stables.

- 320A (1) A trainer is at all times responsible for the administration and conduct of their stable.**
- (2) A trainer is at all times responsible for the care, control, and supervision of the horses in his or her stable.**
- (3) If a trainer is to be absent from their stables, for a period of longer than 48 hours, they must, with the Stewards' permission and approval, deputise a licensed person to be in charge of such stables during their absence. Such deputation does not relieve the Trainer in any way from their responsibilities for the care, control, and supervision of his or her horses and the conduct of his or her stables. The person to whom responsibility is delegated does not have the authority to further delegate this responsibility.**

Traceability and other information that must be provided to NZTR

320B A Trainer or Pre-Trainer must:

- (1) within ~~72~~ **24** hours of a horse coming into their care and control, notify NZTR in the prescribed form (if any), and ensure that the horse is correctly identified in that form or other means of notification;
- (2) within ~~72~~ **24** hours of a horse ceasing to be in their care and control, notify NZTR in the prescribed form (if any) and ensure that the horse is correctly identified in that form or other means of notification;
- (3) within ~~72~~ **24** hours of the death of any horse under their care and control, notify NZTR in the prescribed form (if any) of such death.

7. Distances of Races

Background:

The International Federation of Horseracing Authorities recently sent out amendments to Article 2 of the International Agreement on Breeding, Racing and Wagering in which it was proposed that racing authorities standardise the way the distances of races are calculated. The Article recommends that all distances of races around a bend are measured 1 meter from the inside running rail.

It is proposed that Rule 508 be amended as follows:

508 A Club's programme of Races for each Race Meeting shall:

- (a) be approved by NZTR. NZTR shall appoint persons (including the regional representatives of the Clubs) to assist it with the consideration and approval of such programmes; and
- (b) only contain Races of a type prescribed in accordance with the Racing Policy.
- (c) **where a Race is run around one or more bends, show the distances of the Race as measured 1 metre from the inside running rail.**

8. Screening Limit – Testosterone in plasma

Background:

The International Agreement on Breeding, Racing and Wagering recommends that a screening limit of 100 ng/l for testosterone, be applied to all plasma samples from geldings, fillies and mares. This screening limit has not yet been incorporated into the NZTR Prohibited Substance Regulations.

It is recommended that the Prohibited Substance Regulations be amended to include the Screening Limit as follows:

Testosterone

3.10.4 at a mass concentration of 100 nanograms per litre in plasma in geldings, fillies, and mares.

9. Bisphosphonates.

Background

The administration of bisphosphonates to any horse younger than 4 years is prohibited. For horses older than 4 years, bisphosphonate may not be given within 30 days of racing.

The Rules require that the administration of bisphosphonates to horses under four years old must be reported to the Stewards

The International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA) has signalled that from 1 January 2027, it will recommend a total ban on the use of bisphosphonates in racehorses.

If NZTR follows the IFHA recommendation, should a horse tests positive after 1 January 2027, the trainer will have to be able to provide evidence of a compliant administration. To assist with the collection of such evidence, NZTR recommends that all administration of Bisphosphonate be reported.

NZTR proposes that Rule 804 (12) (g) be amended to require that any administration of a bisphosphonate to horses aged four years and over must be reported to Stewards, accompanied by supporting veterinary records:

804 (12) (g) If a horse to which this Rule applies is subjected to an administration of any bisphosphonate the Trainer, Racing Manager or Owner of the horse must, as soon as is practicable after such administration, notify NZTR.

10. Administration of Veterinary treatment at Racecourses

Background:

Allowing private Veterinarians to treat horses during a race meeting presents several risks, including potential harm to the horses, contamination, and health and safety concerns. These risks should be mitigated whenever possible. It also compromises the veterinary information collected on a race day through the veterinary app.

Rule 804(5) prohibits any person other than a veterinarian, who is an official, from administering anything other than a Permitted Substance to a horse from the 1 Clear Day prior to the day of the Race until prior to the start of the Race, unless it is given with the written consent of the Stewards.

NZTR proposes that the Official Race day veterinarian be defined so as to differentiate them from other veterinarians who may be on-course, and that new Rules be introduced which prohibits a Trainer from allowing a veterinarian who is not the Official veterinarian, from treating their horses on course, without the permission of the Stewards.

It is proposed that the following new definition be added:

Official Veterinarian means the Veterinarian who is employed by the RIB or a Race Club to perform official veterinary duties at a Race Meeting or a Trial.

It is recommended that the time frame for the prohibition of the administration of anything except Permitted Substances be extended until the horse leaves the Racecourse by amending Rule 804(5):

804 (5) Notwithstanding (and without limiting) any other provision of this Rule, no person, other than ~~a Veterinarian who is an Official~~ **the Official Veterinarian** shall administer or cause to be administered, in any manner whatsoever, any substance other than a Permitted Substance to a horse entered in a Race, a Trial to which the Third Appendix applies or a jump out, at any time during:

- (a) the one Clear Day, being the twenty-four hour period before 12.01 am on the day the horse is to race; or
- (b) the day of that Race, Trial or jump out (which, for the avoidance of doubt, commences at 12:01 am on the day the Race, Trial or jump out takes place) ~~and prior to the start of~~ **until the horse leaves the Racecourse following** such Race, Trial or jump out,

unless the substance was administered with the written consent of a Stipendiary Steward ~~or Investigator~~ and the Stipendiary Steward ~~or Investigator~~ was satisfied on reasonable grounds that the substance was being administered, and was necessary, solely for horse welfare reasons. [Amended 7 September 2020]

It is recommended that new Rules 650(7) and 650(8) be added:

650 (7) On a Race Day, when a horse is on the Racecourse for the purposes of participating in a Race, the Trainer must not engage, or allow any other person to engage, a

Veterinarian who is not the Official Veterinarian, to inspect, assess or treat the horse, unless prior permission has been granted by a Stipendiary Steward, an Investigator or the Official Veterinarian.

- (8) Notwithstanding Rules 650(3) and 650(5), a Trainer must report any treatment provided by a Veterinarian who is not the Official Veterinarian, to any horse which is on a Racecourse on a Race day for the purposes of participating in a Race, as provided for in Rule 650(7), to the Stipendiary Stewards as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours after the Race Day.

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