



The Return to Standardbred Horse Racing in Canada A Blueprint

Prepared by SC Management

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1. Purpose:

Standardbred Canada has been asked by the Board of Directors to provide a document to address how the harness racing industry can begin planning for the return of horse racing in Canada.

The association has taken into account all facets and areas in order to successfully launch the return of standardbred horse racing in this country.

The overall direction is wide in scope including; developing a communication strategy for all relevant stakeholders including government (federal and provincial), public health, racetracks, provincial regulators, horse associations, horsepeople, SC members, race fans and the general public.

Other areas of focus include; identifying minimum internal controls that industry can implement and provide an outline of policies, procedures, and protocols for best practices and standards going forward.

2. Overview

A SC Task Force was struck consisting of board directors, horse trainers/driver and SC management.

During the meetings, ideas were tabled on what the key components of the proposed blueprint would include with Task Force members providing insight of areas that should be included in the plan.

With information provided, SC embarked on preparing the *Return to Standardbred Horse Racing in Canada Blueprint*; a cohesive detailed plan for industry consideration.



3. Executive Summary

In creating a comprehensive report that reviews all available considerations and details, the following priorities were identified:

- The importance of getting the standardbred horse racing industry back in operation
- Ensure the safety, health and welfare of standardbreds
- A strong focus and emphasis on risk mitigation to assure the safety of all participants
- Commitment to work with and follow government and public health direction

This report has three main components:

- 1. Stakeholder Engagement**
- 2. COVID-19 and the Resumption of Racing**
- 3. Communication Strategy and Public Relations**



4. Social and Economic Impact Considerations

Every standardbred horse born in Canada must be recorded in the SC registry including pedigree, registration, and identification as mandated through the Ministry of Agriculture–Agri Food Canada’s Animal Pedigree Act.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created critical circumstances for the health and welfare of our equine athletes, as well as the people who work in the horse racing industry across the country. The closure of all race tracks due to the pandemic has put significant stress on an already volatile industry. Unlike motorsport racing we cannot just put our horses in the garage and ride out this crisis.

The proper care and maintenance of our horses is an immediate concern and priority as many people in our industry are losing their jobs or are having work hours reduced, coupled with the loss of revenues to horsepeople across the country.

Horses require feed, training and attending to seven days a week. Without money coming into the industry, owners and trainers are in an extremely precarious situation as not only are they trying to put food on their own tables, but also have to provide for their horses.

Standardbred Canada’s primary and immediate concern is the welfare of the horse and the fear that as this pandemic continues we will begin to have race horses being neglected as owners and trainers are forced to choose between supporting their families and supporting their horses.

Standardbred Canada believes that horsepeople can kick start the industry early, exercising the precautions and guidelines that government and public health officials are requesting of Canadians.

This can be done with agreed to minimum internal controls, policies, procedures and protocols that are widely accepted and practiced by the industry across the country. Through consultation, support and input from all stakeholders a detailed plan incorporating government and public health guidelines has been created that will support an early return of live standardbred horse racing in Canada.

Standardbred Canada believes this is a win-win for all involved which will:

- Put this industry sector of the economy back to work
- Assist an already challenged industry with a plan to get industry employees working again
- Ensure the health and welfare of the equine athletes and the people working with them
- Create a safe, practical and viable plan that will not put people at risk
- Build confidence with Canadians that business is slowly returning to the “new normal”

The reason the standardbred horse racing industry can reset its business early is due in part to the fact that horse racing does not require a live fan base at the tracks for racing to commence. This is a result of the large percentage of revenue that is generated through broadcasting and video streaming of races and online wagering which occurs seven days a week.

Therefore, with no fans allowed at the racetracks, the industry can focus on COVID-19 restrictions for all participants including physical distancing, personal protective equipment, policies and procedures along with protocols for the industry to follow while preparing for and conducting live racing.



The *Return of Standardbred Horseracing in Canada Blueprint* provides guidance to racetracks, horse associations, horsepeople, members of Standardbred Canada and internal/external stakeholders that will adjust restrictive mitigation measures in a controlled manner to support the safe re-opening of horseracing when appropriate, while supporting Canadian standardbred horsepeople reentering the industry.

Why Is the Plan Important to the Canadian Horse Racing Community?

Returning to Standardbred Racing requires a coordinated effort for all industry stakeholders with consistent accepted policies and procedures for all participants. Because of the nature of the industry, including transportation of horses to the racetracks, and overlap of horsepeople working at different facilities and racetracks, it is critical that the industry have a plan that all participants can follow. This plan facilitates the coordination and execution of a nationwide effort with robust monitoring systems identified that are critical to navigating the COVID-19 pandemic and how it evolves.

The return to racing will be on a racetrack by racetrack basis as determined by government and health agencies, and this plan incorporates different steps and options available depending on the characteristics of the racetrack and the racing community.

Horse racing industry leaders at all levels will need to prepare the horse racing communities for occasionally returning to stricter mitigation measures for brief periods as needed to continue containing the virus. This plan also describes the conditions in which it may be considered appropriate to lift the phased steps to reduce mitigation measures, and using key indicators to rigorously monitor and adjust mitigation measures of the industry.

Indicators and Thresholds

The Blueprint includes guidance and tools to help stakeholders assess the readiness to reopen standardbred horse racing. By evaluating a variety of indicators, including community transmission, public health capacity and community characteristics, local horse racing industry officials can assist external stakeholders in making an informed decision about when it is appropriate to begin to ease mitigation measures while continuing to protect the most at-risk individuals.

Prioritization and Timing

The plan incorporates the Public Health Agency of Canada's risk assessment framework and additional provincial health resources to prepare the industry for re-opening. It outlines guidance for the phased relaxation of mitigation measures implemented to reduce COVID-19 spread and to begin the economic recovery of the industry. The first priority is to reopen horse racing to allow the workforce to return to work. Other stages will follow with careful monitoring of the public health and health care systems. Throughout this phased reopening, it is critical for everyone to continue to strictly follow the recommended non-pharmaceutical interventions, including hand-washing, wearing face coverings in congregate settings, and maintaining physical distance.



5. Phase One - Stakeholder Engagement

A Framework for Re-Opening Horse Racing

The framework recognizes that the reopening may increase the risk of resurgence of the virus. Reopening is therefore conditional on:

- Confidence that incidence of infection is genuinely low within each horse racing community
- A system process that is well functioning and capable of promptly monitoring any increase in incidence
- Working with public health officials

Stakeholder Communication

National Communication Campaign

- Emphasize continued physical distancing
- Emphasize different readiness across the provinces and local racetracks
- Identify each participant's role in returning to work responsibly
- Criteria for readiness to lift strict mitigation
- Establish suggested policies and procedures, minimum internal controls; create educational and awareness tools for all participants
- Coordination facilitated across geographic areas by province in order to coordinate adjusted mitigation approaches

Standardbred Canada's Role

- Common messaging, vision, guidance for provinces and local horsepeople
- Establish platforms for monitoring the Blueprint at the national, regional, provincial and local levels
- Assist in programs, staffing and infrastructure needs as requested
- Technical assistance · coordination across regions, provinces and racetrack communities for information sharing, and decision making as required



Provincial Role

- Sharing of data and information with SC and adjoining provinces and horse racing communities
- Communicate to industry about the current situation, decisions under consideration and clear guidance for adhering to mitigation levels
- Coordinate resource allocation with neighboring horse racing communities in the region
- Adaption of the SC Blueprint

Local Horse Racing Communities Role

- Sharing of data and information with province and national association
- Tailor mitigation strategies to address unique community characteristics and protect older adults and those at highest risk for severe illness (underlying health conditions)
- Communicate to industry about the current situation, decisions under consideration and clear guidance for adhering to mitigation levels
- Address violations that place the industry at risk as needed



a. Provincial Regulation

Standardbred Canada recognizes each provincial regulator as having the power to govern, control and regulate horse racing in any or all its forms throughout the country.

Understanding the regulator's authority in each horse racing jurisdiction SC respectfully requests that each provincial regulating body work with the standardbred horse racing industry to assist in the return of standardbred horse racing in Canada.

This may include but is not limited to:

- Meet with stakeholders to discuss the minimum internal controls being proposed in this document for input and direction
- Work with provincial racetracks and provincial standardbred horse associations to implement agreed upon protocols that are acceptable to the regulator
- Provide support and assistance to ensure the agreed to protocols are enforced and supported by the provincial regulating body
- Promote and advocate for the return of standardbred horse racing in each respective province
- Notify the jurisdictional racetracks or associations of any concerns with regards to adherence to the minimum internal controls
- Support and discuss the initiative with relevant stakeholders
- Communicate to provincial government to ensure understanding and acceptance of the initiative
- Regularly review and revise minimum internal controls and adjust accordingly to mitigate risk of the proposed plan



b. CPMA

The Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency (CPMA) is a special operating agency within Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada that regulates and supervises pari-mutuel betting in Canada on horse races, to ensure that pari-mutuel betting is conducted in a way that is fair to the public. The CPMA protects the betting public by ensuring that a modern and effective regulatory framework is in place.

The CPMA provides the following services:

- Provides permits, licenses and authorizations to Canadian racetracks and betting theatre operators to conduct pari-mutuel betting on horse races.
- Audits and monitors pari-mutuel betting activities.
- Enforces pari-mutuel betting regulations.
- Tests horses to deter the use of prohibited substances through the Equine Drug Control Program.
- Provides information on the use of approved medications.

Standardbred Canada believes that there is an opportunity to work with the CPMA and identify agreed upon processes and procedures that will assist in mitigating risk with regards to relaxing processes through the use of physical distancing, personal protective equipment and testing.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Meet to discuss the minimum internal controls being proposed in this document for input and direction
- CPMA to work with provincial racetracks and provincial regulators to implement agreed upon protocols that are deemed acceptable to the CPMA
- Provide support and assistance to ensure the agreed to protocols are enforced and supported by the individual racetracks
- Notify the jurisdictional racetracks of any concern with regards to adherence to the minimum internal controls outlined by the CPMA
- Support and discuss the initiative with relevant stakeholders
- Communicate to the Ministry of Agriculture-Agri Food Canada and related federal government bodies to ensure understanding and acceptability of the initiative
- Regularly review and revise minimum internal controls and adjust accordingly to mitigate risk of the proposed plan



c. Government Relations

The industry will work with government to develop a plan for how racing will resume when it is determined by the appropriate government bodies that it is safe to do so. It is critical that those within the sport can look forward to and plan for a positive future. The industry should engage with the appropriate Federal and Provincial government ministries and agencies, and reference the *Return to Standardbred Horse Racing in Canada Blueprint*.

It is critical that the plan be presented to the Federal and Provincial Government in a timely fashion so that the industry can prepare, and adjust to any mandated requirements.

Objectives

- To receive approval from the appropriate Provincial Government bodies to have racetracks and horse racing identified as one of the first industries that can return to work.
- Communicate to the Ministry of Agriculture-Agri Food Canada and related federal government bodies (CPMA) to ensure understanding and acceptability of the initiative, and for the respective Ministers to approve a return to work for the CPMA racetrack officials.

Key Messages to Government

- The industry has prepared a comprehensive plan that is endorsed by stakeholders.
- The primary focus is the health and welfare of the horses.
- A phased in approach to the return of standardbred racing will be executed with no fans at the racetracks to reduce the risk of COVID-19.
- A return to racing will support those working in racing and alleviate some of the financial burden to government from the industry.
- The industry will implement protocols and best practices under the guidelines of the Public Health Agency of Canada to protect the health of racing participants.
- Horse racing is currently being conducted successfully around the world in Australia, Hong Kong, and the United States, without spectators and under strict protocol from their Governments and Health agencies.
- The plan will be flexible and offer a range of options that can be adapted as required, including a contingency plan for stoppage of racing in the event that COVID-19 resurfaces.



Working with Provincial Government

In advance of racing resuming in some form, the *Return to Standardbred Horse Racing in Canada Blueprint* can be submitted to Provincial Government officials by the provincial racing stakeholders.

Provincial Stakeholders may consider scheduling meetings with respective government officials, if required. (e.g. Provincial Minister responsible for Harness Racing)

Standardbred Canada will engage with the Minister of Agriculture-Agri Food Canada and the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency.

Who

The *Return to Standardbred Horse Racing Blueprint* may be submitted and shared with:

- Provincial Premiers
- Provincial Minister responsible for horse racing
- Provincial Regulatory body
- Federal Minister of Agriculture-Agri Food Canada
- Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency

Support

The Blueprint will seek endorsement from:

- Provincial Regulatory body / commission
- Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency
- Relevant Horseperson's Associations
- Racetrack Operators (or representatives)
- Standardbred Canada Board of Directors

*The Blueprint follows the recommendations of Canada's Public Health Agency and the appropriate provincial Health Ministry.



d. Federal Letter Template - Minister of Agriculture

On behalf of Standardbred Canada's Board of Directors, I am writing on behalf of the Canadian standardbred racing and breeding industry. Standardbred Canada is the national registry for the standardbred horse industry with a mandate to represent, promote and advance all standardbred horse interests and represents members who own, breed and race over 15,000 horses across the country.

I am writing to make you aware of a *Return to Standardbred Horse Racing Blueprint* that has been created by the industry for the industry. This plan has been developed in consultation with stakeholders in the Canadian standardbred industry and may be distributed to Provincial governments across the country, including Premiers, and Ministers responsible for Harness Racing, for their approval.

The industry's objective is to receive approval from the appropriate Government bodies to have racetracks open for standardbred horse racing.

As you are aware, one of the mandatory requirements for racing to return is to have the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency (CPMA) officials at the racetracks. There is a section in the plan proposing how industry would work with the CPMA. SC respectfully requests your support of the return to work for the CPMA officials once the Provincial Governments have given the standardbred industry approval to return to racing.

A return to racing will support those working in the industry, allow horsepeople to continue to provide the proper care for the health and welfare of the horses, and alleviate some of the burden to government funding.

The plan incorporates the following key elements:

- A phased in approach to racing with no fan attendees in the first phase.
- Social and Economic Impact Considerations
- Provincial and Federal Regulatory Requirements
- Minimal requirements for Policies and Procedures for Racetrack Internal controls to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and protect the health of racing participants and the health and welfare of the horse, developed in conjunction with the guidelines and requirements of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Around the world horse racing is taking place in such countries as Australia, Hong Kong, and the United States. They are operating successfully, without spectators and under strict protocol from their Governments and Health agencies.

SC is confident that we would be able to do the same in Canada at this time. We thank you for your consideration of this request and your support going forward to the *Return to Standardbred Horse Racing Blueprint*

Sincerely,

Standardbred Canada



e. Provincial Letter Template - Premiers, Ministers Responsible for Harness Racing

Dear Minister,

We are writing on behalf of the standardbred racing and breeding industry in (Province). Collectively, we support and represent members who own, breed and race **xxxxx** horses in the province.

We are submitting a *“Return to Standardbred Racing in Canada Blueprint”* for your review. Standardbred Canada, the national breed registry, has prepared this comprehensive plan with the primary focus on the health and welfare of our horses. In addition to the usual seven day a week care, feeding and grooming that horses need, our equine athletes require daily exercise to maintain their health and fitness, and the optimal way for them to achieve this is to be on a training schedule that incorporates racing once a week.

Our objective is to receive approval from the appropriate Government bodies to have racetracks open for standardbred horse racing.

A return to racing will allow horsepeople to continue to provide the proper care and training for the horses, support those working in racing, and alleviate some of the financial burden to government from the industry.

The plan incorporates the following key elements:

- A phased in approach to racing with no fan attendees in the first phase.
- Social and Economic Impact Considerations
- Provincial and Federal Regulatory Requirements
- Minimal requirements for Policies and Procedures for Racetrack Internal controls to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and protect the health of racing participants and the health and welfare of the horse, developed in conjunction with the guidelines and requirements of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Our request is that you review the plan and provide your support to have racetracks open for standardbred horse racing in our province.

Thank you for your consideration and we will be in contact to schedule a call with you.

Regards,

Name
Association

Name
Association

Name
Association



f. Public Health Plan

Resuming racing in Canada successfully is contingent on racetracks, horsepeople, and other industry participants abiding by Public Health protocol and guidelines.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), in collaboration with Canadian public health experts has developed guidance for federal/provincial/territorial (F/P/T) public health authorities (PHA) on the use of public health measures (PHM) to reduce and delay transmission of COVID-19 in the community.

This Blueprint includes using PHAC’s Risk Assessment Framework and other Public Health resources to assist in evaluating the readiness to resume standardbred horse racing across the country. This will be a Provincial decision and therefore in addition to providing guidance and protocol established by PHAC, each jurisdiction will need to abide by Provincial Health Protocol and in some cases Municipal Health Protocol for operating racing under the appropriate requirements.

PHAC’s Risk Assessment Framework

Using PHAC’s Risk Assessment Framework, the industry can develop specific and relevant mitigation strategies.

Risk Factors & Mitigation Strategies

Risk	Mitigation Strategy
Number of people participating	Reduce and minimize number of participants
Are participants coming from affected areas where COVID-19 has been detected?	Plan for information sharing, risk communication, and emergency communications
Is the local community experiencing ongoing transmission of COVID-19?	Consult and involve local Health Agencies.
Will participants be participating in activities that promote transmission?	Horse racing can be broadcasted / video streamed with online wagering and no spectators on track
Will participants be consistently within 2 metres of one another?	Configuration of activities at racetrack will be altered for assurances.
Is the event being held indoors, outdoors, or both?	As many activities as possible will be conducted outside.



Risk	Mitigation Strategy
Will there be restricted points of entrance & exit that force people to be in close proximity and /or pass through high touch areas?	Staggered arrivals and departures, and multiple entrances / exits can be facilitated to ensure physical distancing. Hygiene practices will be followed.
How long will participants be gathered at the event?	The amount of time people are at the racetrack will be reduced.
Will hand hygiene stations be available throughout the venue?	Easy access to hand hygiene stations will be available.
Will high-touch surfaces be cleaned and disinfected frequently during the event?	Frequency of cleaning will increase dramatically on high touch surfaces such as taps, door handles, etc.

6. Phase Two – Return To Racing Rollout

a. COVID-19 Indicators & Resumption of Racing

The status of COVID-19 will dictate and guide when racetracks can resume racing. This may differ from province to province, or sometimes from track to track within provinces. Resources from PHAC, Provincial and Municipal Health agencies will assist the industry for re-opening.

The industry will need to evaluate PHAC’s and the Provincial Health agencies indicators including new cases of COVID-19, incidence or rate of community transmission, and the capacity of area healthcare, to make an informed decision on relaxing protocol during the various stages of the *Return to Standardbred Horse Racing in Canada Blueprint*. This will need to be done on a Provincial, and Regional or Municipal level.

There is a risk of resurgence of the virus with the reopening of any business. Once racing has resumed, the continuance will be dependent on the status of COVID-19 and COVID-19 indicators as directed by PHAC and the Provincial Health agencies.

Mitigation for Outbreaks

Should a racing participant test positive for COVID-19, the participant should isolate for 14 days. There will be a protocol established at each racing facility to determine who the infected participant should notify. There will also be a series of questions asked so that the racetrack official can determine any interaction the infected person had with others at the racetrack. Those individuals will also be contacted, requested to conduct self assessments, and will need to self-quarantine for 14 days.

Racing officials have the authority to close racetracks and discontinue racing for a specific time period, should there be a community outbreak, increased incidence of COVID-19 at the racetrack, or if it is deemed in the best interests of the health and welfare of racing participants to do so.



Canadian Standardbred Racetracks - Racing Calendar

Track	Location	Season Start Date	Assumptions
Century Downs	Calgary, Alberta	In progress	On Track Stabling Purse Funding from slots
Century Mile	Edmonton, Alberta	September 6	On Track Stabling Purse Funding from slots
Clinton Raceway	Clinton, Ontario	May 17	Horses ship in primarily from southwestern Ontario Paddock size
Dresden Raceway	Dresden, Ontario	May 24	Horses ship in primarily from southwestern Ontario Paddock size Use of additional barns.
Exhibition Park Raceway	Saint John, New Brunswick	June 6	Paddock size
Flamboro Downs	Dundas, Ontario	In progress	Horses ship in from primarily central southern Ontario. Use of additional barns. Is racing tied to slot opening?
Fraser Downs	Surrey British Columbia	September 17	On Track Stabling Is racing tied to slot opening?
Georgian Downs	Innisfil, Ontario	June 2	Horses ship in from Central & Eastern Ontario Is racing tied to slot opening?



Track	Location	Season Start Date	Assumptions
Grand River Raceway	Elora, Ontario	June 3	Horses ship in from central southern Ontario
Great Western Fair Circuit	Manitoba	TBC	No Simulcast Revenue
Hanover Raceway	Hanover, Ontario	June 6	Horses ship in from southwestern Ontario.
Hiawatha Horse Park	Sarnia, Ontario	May 2	Horses ship in from southwestern Ontario & US
Hippodrome 3R	Trois Rivieres, Quebec	May 2	Ottawa / Quebec Circuit
Inverness Raceway	Inverness, Nova Scotia	June 7	No Simulcast Revenue
Kawartha Downs	Peterborough, Ontario	May 9	Horses ship in from Durham Region, York Region & eastern Ontario Use of additional barns
Leamington Raceway	Leamington, Ontario	August 9	Horses ship in from southwestern Ontario No simulcast revenue Use of additional barns
Northside Downs	North Sydney, Nova Scotia	June 6	No Simulcast Revenue
Red Shores Racetrack at CDP	Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island	June 4	On Track Stabling Horse population ALC partnership



Track	Location	Season Start Date	Assumptions
Red Shores Racetrack Summerside	Summerside, Prince Edward Island	June 5	On Track Stabling Horse population ALC partnership
Rideau Carleton Raceway	Ottawa, Ontario	Would be underway	On Track Stabling Horses ship in from Ontario & Quebec
The Raceway at Western Fair	London, Ontario	Would be underway	Horses ship in from primarily central southern Ontario & southwest Ontario
The Track On 2	Lacombe, Alberta	July 10	On Track Stabling Horses ship in from Calgary & Edmonton
Truro Raceway	Truro, Nova Scotia	May 8	On Track Stabling Horse Population Regional shipping
Woodbine Mohawk Park	Campbellville, Ontario	Would be underway	Two Paddocks Horses ship in from primarily central southern Ontario Additional backstretch stabling



b. Race Paddock – Minimum Internal Controls / Limited Interaction

The first stage of the plan proposes that racing resumes, but with no fans allowed at the racetracks. This will allow the industry to focus on COVID-19 preventative measures with the racing participants which will include physical distancing, personal protective equipment, proper hygiene such as hand washing and respiratory etiquette, proper cleaning methods, and travel restrictions in preparation for and during the first phase of racing.

Communication informing racetrack employees and horsepeople of proper protocol will be distributed in advance of the resumption of racing and posters, flyers, etc. will be posted in prominent and relevant places in the race paddock.

The measures and precautions that will be undertaken by the racing community during the resumption of racing will include:

Physical (social) distancing

The spread of COVID-19 can be slowed down by making a conscious effort to keep a physical distance between each other. [Physical \(social\) distancing](#) is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak and may include the following:

In The Race Paddock

- Physical distancing must be practiced.
- Horsepeople should not congregate or gather in groups.
- Horsepeople are advised to keep a distance of at least 2 arms-lengths (approx. 2 metres) from others.
- Limited number of people caring for horses. (e.g., one per horse)
- Minimal number of staff and personnel to run the race card.

Proper Hygiene & Respiratory Etiquette

Proper hygiene and respiratory etiquette can help reduce the risk of infection or spreading infection to others. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the washroom and when preparing food

- use alcohol-based [hand sanitizer](#) if soap and water are not available
- when coughing or sneezing:
 - cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your arm, not your hand
 - dispose of any tissues you have used as soon as possible in a lined waste basket and wash your hands afterwards
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands



Proper Cleaning & Disinfecting Equipment, etc.

Corona viruses are one of the easiest types of viruses to kill with the appropriate disinfectant product when used according to the label directions. Health Canada has published a [list of hard surface disinfectants](#) that are likely to be effective for use against COVID-19.

Surfaces in the Race Paddock that will require constant cleaning will include:

- Crossties
- Door handles, doorknobs
- Light switches
- Faucets & Taps (everyone uses to bathe their horses)

Refer to the [guidance on cleaning and disinfecting public spaces](#) for more information.

Wearing Masks or Face Coverings

Wearing a non-medical mask or face covering is an additional measure that horsepeople and racing employees can take to protect people around them, even if they have no symptoms. It can be useful for short periods of time, when physical distancing is not possible in the race paddock.

Key Messages

- The horse racing industry will follow all requirements and guidelines mandated by Federal and Provincial Health agencies to reduce the risk of COVID-19 when racing resumes.
- The Public Health requirements will be communicated to all horse racing participants in advance of the return of horse racing, and reinforced on an ongoing basis.
- The horse racing industry will adjust to new, elevated or relaxed guidelines as mandated by the Federal and Provincial Health agencies.
- Horse racing participants will sign a document that confirms they will abide by all precautionary requirements in order to participate in racing.
- Failure to comply with Public Health requirements will result in the removal of a participant from the grounds.

c. Closing the grandstand and publicly accessible areas

In the early stages, this measure should be a serious consideration for every racetrack.

At minimum, the closures will affect public areas, allowing employees to work in the building, with strict physical distancing precautions. Non essential personnel and members of the general public would be strictly prohibited.

At maximum, closures could apply not only to the public, but to the entire Grandstand building, which could also have implications for judges, announcers, security, camera operators etc. If this is the case,



alternate arrangements would have to be made to handle certain duties remotely or from external locations around the racetrack.

d. Racing

Policies & Procedures

In order for the *Return of Standardbred Racing in Canada*, each racetrack will need to institute a number of measures that will provide a safe environment for participants, and maintain extremely high standards.

The following list offers a number of considerations that each racetrack in Canada should take into account when developing and refining their respective procedures:

Earlier post time and extra time between races

Because of the logistics of physical distancing, racetracks should consider altering post times and extending the time between races. Getting horsepeople in and out of racetrack facilities, and limiting the number of horsepeople that gather at any time would be much easier to achieve if race cards are spread out.

Tracks may consider implementing unique measures of dividing racecards into two or three mini race cards. This measure is sometimes done during busy qualifying days. It could allow horsepeople to warm-up, race and leave, and then allow a new group of horsepeople to arrive, warm up, race and leave.

Limiting staff on site

Each racetrack will be tasked with limiting the number of people on site to essential staff required to conduct racing. Some considerations should be made for limiting or reducing any, or all, of the following people from each site:

- No admittance to non-essential personnel
- Maximum 1 person per horse in the paddock
- No extra warm-up personnel in the paddock (trainers must warm up their own horses)
- Starting gate staff kept to an absolute minimum
- Paddock staff reduced to the minimum required
- Testing and identification staff reduced to a minimum
- Separate entrances designated for camera operators and any other required personnel

Using off site locations when possible



In these unique circumstances, off site measures may be implemented to reduce the number of individuals on site. Each track and jurisdiction would need to decide how many of the following measures are feasible.

- All registration, eligibility, licensing and membership activities could take place prior to racing and completed on-line, or by phone/fax with Standardbred Canada and regulatory bodies.
- The announcer could call races from a remote location, using the video feed
- Judges could adjudicate from a remote location, using video feeds.
- Charter/timer, if required on site, could send images of charts to offsite SC reps.

Using outdoor spaces whenever possible and when feasible

In many cases, certain tasks usually done within the paddock can be accomplished in outdoor areas. Some of the following are potential examples:

- Identification of horses
- Delivery and pickup of saddle pads
- At certain tracks, temporary outdoor paddocks could be utilized.
- In cases where backstretches exist, horses could avoid being taken to the paddock completely
- Old barns, in some cases, may be repurposed
- Horsepeople, when feasible, could warm up horses prior to arriving at the track

Additional precautions for participants

All those racing will be asked to take extra precautions while on site, including any of the following:

- Participants only allowed into the paddock one hour (or a designated time) prior to their horse's scheduled post time
- Participants must have all horses leave the paddock within 30 minutes following their race, or within 45 minutes for race winners
- Mandatory questions asked at the stable gate as to the health of participants
- Temperatures taken at the stable gate. Those with temperatures of 37.6 or above will not be admitted
- Mandatory masks or face coverings for all participants when inside the paddock
- Trainers racing multiple horses should bring minimum amount of caretakers to race horses



- All racing participants must sign a document confirming that they agree and will abide by all precautionary policies and procedures

Additional precautions at the facility

Racetracks can take extra steps to ensure the track is a safe space. Potential measures include:

- Reorganization of the paddock floor plan which may include assigning paddock stalls by trainer / training facility / arrival time if space permits
- Disinfecting the paddock following each race card and qualifier
- Utilizing other barns on the property, when available, for overflow horses
- Have horses using every other (or every third) race stall in the Paddock
- Drivers lounge & showers closed
- Paddock Kitchen closed
- Equip starting gates with clear plastic sheets between the driver and the starter
- In the Bookkeeper's office and Race office, install plexi-glass or clear plastic sheets in place between employees and horsepeople
- Limit every work area at the racetrack to under 5 employees (or fewer, if needed)
- Winner's circle procedure simplified or eliminated to prevent additional gathering, and expedite post race procedures
- Multiple entrance and exits for the paddock
- Staggering post parades
- Directional signage for traffic flow to limit physical interaction

Alter regulatory procedures at the racetrack

Where feasible, and upon regulatory approval, certain changes would limit the number of individuals at the track and in close proximity to one another. These include:

- Waiving the Lasix program, which could avoid people being on site for 3+ hours or if Lasix testing continues and there is underused backstretch stabling available, this could be used in lieu of the paddock area
- Temporarily changing testing procedures, which could require only race winners called to test (less test horses possibly fewer test collectors), or a small number of horses chosen to be tested over the duration of the program



- Blood drawn on test horses after 30 minutes (already approved by CPMA)
- Waive breathalyzer and conduct a “fit for duty” assessment
- Eliminate equipment checks

Change qualifying requirements

The shutdown of racing could create a situation where hundreds or thousands of Qualifying races are needed. This backlog could create an impediment to racing, and could create unsafe conditions on qualifying days.

A number of potential solutions could relieve the issue, including any of the following:

- Qualifiers held 2 sessions per week (for example, trotters on Monday and pacers on Thursday)
- Consider changing the qualifying rule to extend the amount of time off a horse needs before qualifying (possibly a regulatory change to 60 days or 90 days from their previous start)
- All horses with a clean charted line as of March 1-2020 shall be deemed eligible to be entered (needs regulatory approval)
- Allow horses to submit qualifying miles from training centres, asking trainers to attest that their horse has gone a required time on a sufficient date

Additional considerations:

- All horses racing for the same claiming price as their last previous start before the COVID-19 shutdown shall not be eligible to be claimed in their first start following their return (needs regulatory approval)
- Horse Racing Victoria (in Australia) implemented the isolation of 21 jockeys racing at the track. Known as the “Green Team,” these individuals are only allowed to compete at race meetings. Members of the “Green Team” do not visit training centres, do not do any morning work, and don’t exercise horses. A “Green Team” of isolated drivers could be implemented with horses only driven by those who self-isolate and agree not to participate in other activities. That could mean racing only with catch drivers in the near future.
- Restrict drivers and caretakers to participating at only one racetrack during a 14 day period

Training Centres

Management of training centres and off track stabling should be a serious consideration when contemplating the return of harness racing. At tracks with stabling on site, the movement of people and horses may be significantly more limited than at tracks that rely on shippers.

For those racetracks that rely on horses from private facilities and training centres to fill their cards, a number of strict protocols can ensure the safety of all participants.



Because there are jurisdictions with multiple racetracks receiving horses from several training facilities, a national approach would be most effective to training centres and off-track facility management. However this may be difficult to implement. Alternatively, a regional approach for locations like the Maritimes, Southwestern Ontario, Eastern Ontario/Quebec, Alberta/BC and Manitoba could be applied.

The reasons for strict off-site facility management are to accomplish the following:

- The flow of individuals from off-track facilities to one track, back to the facility and then to other tracks will occur. Without strict off-site management, if there is a COVID-19 positive at a single track, it could easily spread to other tracks.
- To ensure a safe working environment for all participants, on and off track.
- To provide confidence to the racetrack and government officials that every facility is following the same protocols of physical distancing and extreme caution.

Measures to be implemented at training centres and off track facilities

Any or all of the following measures should be considered.

- The banning of owners and the public from attending training centres, with only essential personnel (trainers, caretakers, vets, and blacksmiths) permitted to be on site.
- Training centres follow strict guidelines pertaining to on-site deliveries, track maintenance, site management etc., to guarantee physical distancing is taking place
- Documentation, signed by every person working at training centres, attesting that they are taking physical distancing measures both off-site and on-site, agreeing that they have read the guidelines provided and will take appropriate measures, including staying home if they are sick, or have come into contact with an individual displaying COVID-19 symptoms.
- Regular disinfecting and cleaning of all facilities.
- The closure of communal areas, like lounges and meeting areas.
- A warning system (training centre management's email address or phone number) for anybody to report individuals at training centres who may be breaking physical distancing rules or is displaying signs of sickness.
- Strict screening of new individuals who are moving onto a site

Attestation

The industry may consider making paperwork available to training centre owners/managers and off-site facility owners/managers. The documentation would require an owner at the facility to attest to the fact that his/her facility is meeting the COVID-19 standards as established by the industry.



Prior to racing, racetracks may require (upon request) that the facility owner/manager has attested that each of the recommended conditions, as described above, has been met and that each person working at the facility has signed off on adhering to the strict measures. Racetracks and regulatory authorities would then have the right to disallow any participant from racing if they have not completed the required paperwork, or if the facility they are located at has not completed the required paperwork and taken the appropriate steps to ensure compliance.

The off-site managers would be responsible for providing an honest assessment of the measures being taken, and would themselves manage the safety at each facility.

It should be noted that some of the measures suggested may already be taking place at some off-site facilities.

7. Phase 3 - Public Relations & Communications Strategy

a. Overall Plan

Public relations is critical for the distribution of consistent information to the government, participants, fans and the general public. Standardbred Canada will ensure that industry stakeholders and industry participants are aware of the industry's "key messages" to communicate.

Standardbred Canada will distribute information as required through its primary communication vehicle, standardbredcanada.ca and also use other online methods for communicating with the membership. (social media, texting, email, etc.)

Standardbred Canada can also facilitate the development of specific templates for associations and racetracks to use to communicate the Blueprint and the key messages to specific audiences.

There are two stages to the Public Relations component of the Blueprint which are dependent on these milestones:

1. Government and Stakeholder engagement for the Return of Standardbred Racing in Canada
2. The resumption of Standardbred Racing

Once the plan is communicated to Government & Stakeholders, and in advance of the return of racing, there will be communication pieces targeted to:

- Stakeholders (racetracks, associations)
- Participants (owners, trainers, drivers, caretakers, breeders)
- Racing Fans



b. Key Messages

- SC has prepared a comprehensive *Return to Standardbred Horse Racing Blueprint* for industry stakeholders and Government.
- The industry supports and protects those working in racing.
- The health and welfare of the horses is a primary focus in the plan.
- All industry participants have a role to play and can contribute to the successful execution of the plan.
- Procedures and precautionary practices are taken very seriously for the health and safety of those working in the industry as well as the horses.
- The industry will provide accurate and timely information to audiences inside and outside the sport.
- The plan will be flexible and offers a range of options that can be adapted as required.

Communication Vehicles

- Web & Social Media announcements
- Press releases
- Short videos
- Web banners
- Eflyers
- Posters for tracks, etc.
- Industry Broadcast Vehicles – FaceTime Live, etc.

Standardbred Canada can facilitate the development of specific templates to communicate the plan and the key messages to these audiences if required and requested.

The Resumption of Racing

Communication to:

- Stakeholders (racetracks, associations)
- Participants (owners, trainers, drivers, caretakers, breeders)
- Racing Fans

a) Key Messages – To Industry

- The success of the *Return to Standardbred Racing Blueprint* relies on all industry participants.
- The industry supports and protects those working in racing.
- The health and welfare of the horses is a primary focus. #thehorsecomesfirst



- Everyone has a role to play and is responsible for the successful execution of the plan.
- Procedures and precautionary practices are taken very seriously for the health and safety of those working in the industry as well as the horses.
- The industry will provide accurate and timely information to audiences inside and outside the sport.
- The Blueprint will be flexible and offer a range of options that can be adapted as required.

b) Key Messages – External (Race fans and General Public)

- The health and welfare of our horses is the primary focus for the industry.
- Racing participants are taking procedures and precautionary practices very seriously for the health and safety of those working in the industry as well as the horses.
- Racing with no fans in attendance during this time is in the best interest of the public.
- The industry is supporting and protecting those working in racing and managing the public health risk.

Communication Vehicles

- Web & Social Media announcements
- Press releases
- Short videos
- Web banners
- Eflyers
- Posters for tracks, etc.
- Public Service Announcements
- Industry Broadcast Vehicles – FaceTime Live, etc.



Conclusion

It is the hope of Standardbred Canada that the blueprint satisfies the overall goals and objectives of a successful return to Standardbred Horse Racing in Canada

The success of the blueprint will be determined by industry participants and stakeholders. SC will continue to offer assistance and consultation as requested and required to assist in the implementation of an effective overall plan for the return of harness racing in Canada. The SC Board of Directors and management team wish everyone involved a timely and safe return to racing in Canada so that the industry can get back to showcasing the passion and thrill of our sport through our equine athletes and champions.

Regards,

Standardbred Canada