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Notice to the Industry

Participants are reminded safety vests required October 1

Standardbred participants are reminded that safety vests will be required any time while jogging, training, parading or warming up a horse on racetrack grounds in Ontario starting October 1, 2009. The rule change was first announced as part of the Ontario Racing Commission's (ORC) health, safety and regulatory measures introduced in early 2008.

While no specific design or manufacturer is stipulated under the rules, the Judges will be monitoring all participants to ensure appropriate equipment is worn.

In addition, participants should be aware that beyond 2012, the ORC will be amending the rule to make it a requirement that all safety vests meet the American Society for Testing and Materials International (ASTM) Standard F2681. Through industry efforts, this standard was developed last August and safety vests are currently coming on the market which meet this requirement. In order to avoid having to repurchase vests in the future, participants may wish to purchase vests made to this standard now.

At the request of industry participants, the ASTM was asked to establish a standard for a racing vest, similar to standards that are in place for helmets. One of the largest voluntary standards development organizations in the world, the ASTM is a trusted source for technical standards for materials, products, systems, and services.

Having previously developed standards for the manufacture of vests for horse back riding and other horse sports, the ASTM developed a new standard – the ASTM Standard F2681 Body Protectors for Equine Racing. Those wishing more specific details of the standard, can visit www.astm.org and search the standard code F2681.

The safety of the participant has long been a concern and was one of the key reasons the ORC Board introduced its all-encompassing 2008 Health, Safety and Regulatory Measures. More than 15 years ago, safety vests were made mandatory in thoroughbred racing. The severity of race related and training related injuries was reduced significantly and participants are satisfied with the success of the initiative.

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