

Race Day Hydration and Hot Weather Policy

Policy number: WEL02

Date policy was originally made

April 2005

Commencement date of this version

5 January 2017

Application

This policy applies to all persons involved in greyhound racing.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect the health, comfort and safety of greyhounds with respect to their race day hydration and muzzling, and during hot weather, while ensuring the integrity of greyhound racing.

Background

It is clear that heat stress affects canines more severely than both humans and some other animals. Canines do not sweat freely like humans and their main form of cooling is through panting. Greyhounds not allowed access to water suffer from dehydration which is a serious health and welfare concern for racing greyhounds. Dehydration is also a risk factor for conditions including hyperthermia, muscle cramping and acidosis (rhabdomyolysis).

It is not uncommon for greyhounds to die from heat stress and GRNSW has developed this policy to assist industry participants to ensure that greyhounds are properly cared for, especially in hot weather conditions.

Policy statement: Race day hydration

(Commenced: 5 January 2017)

TRANSITIONAL PROVISION:

For the period 16 January 2017 to 17 February 2017, provision of water during race day confinement will be permitted but not mandatory for all greyhounds kennelled at a race meeting, including greyhounds kennelled following completion of a performance trial.

From 18 February 2017 the provision of water during race day confinement will be mandatory for all greyhounds kennelled at a race meeting, including greyhounds kennelled following completion of a performance trial.

Subject to any direction from an authorised person, water must be provided during race day confinement to all greyhounds kennelled for the race meeting

During race day confinement greyhounds are at risk of dehydration depending on the period of travel they have undertaken to attend the race meeting, the ambient temperature and the period which they will spend in kennelling. Providing water to the greyhounds for the confinement period allows them freedom from thirst and a reduced risk of dehydration and the subsequent health risks.

The procedure for providing water during race day confinement is as follows (subject to any direction from an authorised person):

1. Greyhound handler presents a clean bowl at weigh-in to the relevant official (usually an attendant or steward). The official must visually inspect the bowl to ensure it is clean and capable of holding a minimum of 250ml of water.
2. Club officials are responsible for providing a sealed bottle of water to be used by a greyhound during kennelling. The quantity of water provided by the Club must be between 250ml and 500 ml.
3. The on track veterinarian must conduct a pre-kennelling examination of the greyhound.
4. The handler must kennel the greyhound under supervision of the relevant official, placing the water bowl inside the kennel. On leaving the kennel, the handler is to take the empty bottle with them.
5. When the greyhound is collected from the kennel to race, the bowl must be left locked in the kennel for the return of the greyhound after the race.
6. After racing, handlers may offer greyhounds water at the wash bay from a hose.
7. Any greyhound not undergoing swabbing must be returned to its kennel after racing. The water bowl that remains in the kennel from before the race may be refilled by the handler using their bottle of water.
8. Any greyhound undergoing swabbing must be placed in the swab kennel (the handler of the greyhound must retrieve the water bowl from the original racing kennel, and must move the water bowl to the swab kennel).

Requirements for greyhounds that participate in a race day performance trial

Where a greyhound participates in a performance trial at a race meeting (but does not race at the same meeting) and is subsequently confined to the kennels, the greyhound must be provided with water.

Policy statement: Weighing

(Commenced: 5 January 2017)

TRANSITIONAL PROVISION:

For the period 16 January 2017 to 17 February 2017, where water is provided to a greyhound during race day confinement the 'Weighing' provisions of this policy will apply.

From 18 February 2017, the 'Weighing' provisions of this policy will apply for all greyhounds kennelled at a race meeting.

Greyhounds dehydrate during kennelling, with greater fluid loss associated with increasing race number (that is, with increased time in kennelling).

In accordance with GAR38, all greyhounds are weighed at the entry into the kennels and the weight recorded by the controlling body.

Each greyhound must also be weighed on retrieval from the kennel by the handler prior to its race. A record of the weight is to be made by the controlling body.

The greyhound shall be weighed without its lead or collar but with its racing muzzle.

Any greyhound with a weight variation of greater than 1.5% (0.45kg in a 30kg greyhound) should be directed to the on-course veterinarian to establish whether it is appropriate to race.

Policy statement: Barking muzzling at race tracks prohibited

(Commenced: 2 December 2016)

The use of barking muzzles at race tracks is strictly prohibited.

In addition, on leaving a race track barking muzzles must never be used on greyhounds immediately after a race, as they can prevent the greyhound from panting and cooling down.

Barking muzzles may have serious medical consequences for the greyhounds wearing them during race day confinement (**kennelling**), including by preventing greyhounds from being able to open their mouths properly. This can inhibit the greyhound's panting mechanism, which is used to cool down in hot weather and following racing. Barking muzzles can also reduce a greyhound's ability to open its mouth after coughing or vomiting. This creates a serious safety concern that can lead to compromised welfare and physical injuries.

Investment in the early period of greyhounds' lives is crucial to habituating them to the race track so that they are not stressed by the experience and will, therefore, be less likely to bark.

Policy statement: Hot weather provisions

(Commenced: 1 November 2016)

Stewards may allow a greyhound to be withdrawn from an event without penalty where the Bureau of Meteorology official forecast temperature is 32°C or higher at the track.

Any application for withdrawal without penalty must be made prior to the official scratching time of the race meeting however the stewards may consider late requests.

In exercise of discretion by the stewards the welfare of the greyhound is paramount.

Where the temperature rises above 38°C or the stewards are of the opinion that the temperature is likely to rise above 38°C the stewards may abandon the meeting or a race or races at the meeting.

The Club must abandon any trialling where the temperature rises above 38°C or the Club is of the opinion that the temperature is likely to rise above 38°C.

Kennel/race bay temperatures at tracks

The ideal temperature in the racing kennels is between 19°C and 22°C.

If the temperature in the race kennels reaches 24°C the veterinarian on duty is to inspect each greyhound after it has been removed from the race kennel and prior to competing in an event.

Any greyhound found to be suffering from any signs of heat stress may be permitted to be scratched without penalty.

If the temperature in the race kennels reaches 26°C, the steward and veterinarian are to consult with club officials and if the temperature cannot be reduced promptly then the upcoming events for that meeting may be abandoned or postponed at the direction of the steward in charge of the meeting.

Trialling and race meetings

When the temperature reaches 22°C or higher, greyhounds must not be kept in vehicles or trailers during race meetings or trialling unless the vehicles or trailers are air-conditioned.

Clubs must provide access to air-conditioned kennels for greyhounds on any occasion that trialling occurs at the race track, unless the greyhounds are housed in an air-conditioned trailer or an air-conditioned vehicle.

To maintain the kennels at the ideal temperature the air-conditioning must be activated several hours in advance of the use of the kennels prior to trialling or a race meeting.

At temperatures below 22°C greyhounds may be kept in well ventilated trailers for reasonable periods of time but must be provided with supervision.

Between the first day of November and the last day of February each year, or on days outside this period where the weather is forecast to reach 32°C or rise above 32°C the following will apply to all race meetings:

1. No reserve trials are to be conducted.
2. All clearance trials are to be booked in by 9am on the day of the relevant race meeting by contacting GRNSW. Any greyhound that is not booked in will not be permitted to trial.
3. For trainers with greyhounds drawn to race at the meeting, the Clubs may take bookings for trialling after the last race only up to the maximum number of kennels available. If no kennels are available, trials must be denied unless the greyhound is housed in an air-conditioned trailer or an air-conditioned vehicle.
4. Any other greyhound trialling after the last race must arrive no more than 20 minutes prior to the end of the race meeting.
5. The car parks will be monitored by integrity and compliance officers for any breach of this policy.

Travelling to the race track and pre-kennelling

Participants must ensure that their car or trailer is sufficiently cool before greyhounds are loaded for transportation. A car can be started and air-conditioned prior to the time of departure. Greyhounds can be hosed or towelled down with water prior to being placed in the car or trailer. When planning transport to the track, participants should plan to arrive as close as possible to the opening time of kennelling.

Participants must provide their greyhounds with adequate water and, if appropriate, ice. Fluids must be given to the greyhound before the journey, and it is essential to carry adequate water and drinking containers, in case of delay or breakdown during the journey and for arrival on course. Electrolyte intake may also assist the greyhound.

Electrolytes can be given to the greyhound prior to kennelling. However, as dogs maintain core body temperature by panting rather than sweating, they have less exercise induced electrolyte loss. If electrolyte products are used they should be specifically formulated for greyhounds as electrolyte products for other animals contain higher concentrations of salt which may be detrimental to the greyhound.

Once on the racetrack, and after the greyhound has been given fluids, the greyhound must be kennelled as quickly as possible. The kennels are the coolest place on course and are usually air-conditioned or cooled through other means.

Clubs must ensure that kennel cooling systems are activated no less than three hours prior to the first race. Club officials must also ensure that their kennels are adequately equipped with cooling or air-conditioning systems and that a responsible equipment maintenance strategy is adopted and observed. A service check of the air-conditioning system should be undertaken no later than October each year.

On days where the temperature may rise above 32°C, clubs must have ice, water and extra water hoses or several dual outlet hoses available and connected that allow all greyhounds quick access to water following a race. Clubs must also closely monitor all greyhounds in the kennels.

Thermometers must be available and visible in a public place to monitor the ambient temperature on the track and within the kennel block.

During summer (December, January and February) regular recordings must be noted in a register with the date, time and location (track/kennel). Placement of the thermometer should be chosen to reflect ambient temperature rather than placed in direct sunlight.

Should any person have concerns for the welfare of a kennelled greyhound, he or she must advise the veterinarian or stewards immediately. The stewards and/or a veterinarian may remove any muzzle at their discretion.

Race time

Club officials and attendants must monitor greyhounds' urine. If the urine is very dark or appears to contain blood then the greyhound should be subject to an immediate veterinary examination and may be scratched without penalty, although the stewards reserve the right to impose a penalty in some circumstances. Thermometers must also be available to race club officials and veterinarians to enable monitoring of the temperature of any greyhound suspected of displaying signs of heat stress.

To prevent unnecessary exposure to the heat, club officials should ensure that greyhounds are only removed from the race kennels when it is time to parade them directly to the starting boxes. At the conclusion of the race the greyhound should be directed immediately to the hosing down/wash bay area. Greyhounds must not be unnecessarily subjected to the heat to take part in a 'Race Presentation' before they are given the opportunity for a drink and to be cooled down.

Post race

After a race, the handler must offer the greyhound water but not attempt to force water intake. The handler should also hose the greyhound down immediately, but do not use very cold or icy water as this leads to a reflex constriction of the blood vessels and delayed evaporative cooling. The greyhound should be hosed until it shows signs of a decrease in its panting. It is important to pay attention to hosing the greyhound's feet, chest, back and groin.

Handlers are urged to take time in this process as it is vital that the greyhound cools. Handlers may take the greyhound for a short walk before re-hosing with water, giving the greyhound a drink and returning the greyhound to the kennels.

Return journey

Participants must ensure that the steps taken to cool their vehicle and trailer for the journey to the track are also taken prior to leaving the course.

Handlers should give their greyhounds water, and electrolytes if desired, and make sure they have ample fluids for the trip home. The greyhound may be hosed or towelled down prior to being placed in its trailer.

Greyhounds may be more affected by heat after racing so it is important to consistently monitor their condition. Barking muzzles should never be used on greyhounds but particularly after a race, as they can prevent greyhounds from panting.

Once at home, ensure greyhounds have sufficient clean water and are again hosed to cool them down. Greyhounds may still be affected by heat once at home, so constant monitoring is advisable.

Consequences of a breach of this policy

If an employee of GRNSW, an authorised person or an official breaches this policy, they may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

A failure of any person to comply with this policy may result in the imposition of a penalty under the GRNSW Greyhound Racing Rules.

Definitions

In this policy:

Authorised person means a person authorised or approved by the Controlling Body or the Stewards from time to time to do certain things, to exercise certain powers, or to deal with certain situations.

GRNSW means Greyhound Racing NSW.

Relevant legislation and rules

Greyhound Racing Act 2009 (NSW)

GRNSW Greyhound Racing Rules

Key related documents

GRNSW Code of Practice for the Keeping of Greyhounds In Training

GRNSW Code of Practice for Breeding, Rearing and Education

Amendments to, and operation of, this policy

GRNSW reserves the right to amend this policy at any time. This policy does not operate contractually and is not intended to be contractual in nature.

Policy information

Effective dates

Date policy was made: April 2005

Commencement date of this version: 5 January 2017

Policy details

Policy number: WEL02

Date for review: As needed

Policy owner: Welfare Unit

Revision history

Version	Date	Description
1.01	1 November 2016	New format, revision of temperatures and trialling
1.02	2 December 2016	Inclusion of new race day hydration provisions and existing barking muzzle provisions.
1.03	5 January 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusion of transitional arrangements for all race meetings in relation to provision of water at race meetings and weighing provisions.• Inclusion of start date for mandatory watering and weighing provisions - 18 February 2017.