



HRNSW Concussion Protocols & Procedures

1. Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to outline the process to be followed in the event that a *Driver or Trainer* incurs a head trauma in the course of performing their role, either prior to, during or following a race, trial or trackwork and where the incident may result in the *Driver or Trainer* being diagnosed with concussion.

Harness Racing NSW note that in the absence of a uniformed national approach having been adopted by Harness Racing Australia, individual State harness racing jurisdictions may choose to adopt their own concussion protocols including a mandatory stand down period for a *Driver or Trainer* diagnosed with concussion.

Harness Racing NSW has sought expert medical advice on the content and suitability of the Head Injury Assessment Tool (Appendix 1) for the purposes of assessment for the clinic signs of concussion following a *Driver or Trainer* head trauma.

This Concussion Protocols & Procedures document has been prepared in consultation with HRNSW's preferred paramedic providers State Medical Assistance (SMA), Harness Racing NSW's Medical Advisory Panel and Harness Racing NSW's Integrity Department, any future versions or updates and amendments to the Protocols & Procedures document will be managed in the same way.

The Protocols & Procedures document will be enforced by Harness Racing NSW Stewards.

2. Scope

For the purposes of this Protocols & Procedures document, a *Driver* is defined as a NSW Grade A, B, C Grade *Driver* or a driving Stablehand licensed by Harness Racing NSW, and also includes visiting *Drivers* licensed outside NSW who are permitted by Harness Racing NSW to drive in races and or trials in NSW. However, any person licensed with HRNSW who incurs head trauma whilst undertaking trackwork may also be considered to be a *Driver* for the purposes of this Protocols and Procedures document

3. Process

- (a) If a *Driver or Trainer* incurs head trauma preceding/during/following a race or trial, the *Driver or Trainer* must be assessed by an approved medical person appointed to provide medical services, such as the oncourse paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualification, using the Head Injury Assessment Tool (Appendix 1).
- (b) If the assessment required in clause 3.(a) is performed by an approved medical person appointed to provide medical services, such as the oncourse paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualification, and the *Driver or Trainer* is showing signs of concussion as per the Head Injury Assessment Form (Appendix 1);
 - i. The *Driver or Trainer* will be stood down from their work commitments/remaining driving engagements including trials and trackwork by the Harness Racing NSW Stewards; and
 - ii. The *Driver or Trainer* must present to a Medical Practitioner to undertake a formal assessment for concussion with a copy of the completed Head Injury Assessment Tool (Appendix 1); and



HRNSW Concussion Protocols & Procedures

- iii. If the Medical Practitioner subsequently determines that the *Driver or Trainer* does not have concussion, the *Driver or Trainer* cannot recommence their work duties including trials and trackwork until a certificate of medical clearance from the Medical Practitioner is provided to the Harness Racing NSW Stewards, and the certificate must state the Medical Practitioner sighted the completed Head Injury Assessment Tool (Appendix 1) at the time the Medical Practitioner performed the formal assessment.
- (c) Further to clauses 3.(a) and 3.(b), if the *Driver or Trainer* incurs head trauma and the oncourse paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualification determines, without using the Head Injury Assessment Tool (Appendix 1) that the *Driver or Trainer* is to be transported to hospital for assessment and treatment for concussion. In these circumstances, the *Driver or Trainer* shall be the subject to the relevant provisions of this Procedure.
- (d) A *Driver or Trainer* who is diagnosed to be suffering concussion by the oncourse paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualification or a Medical Practitioner at a subsequent assessment;
 - i. Shall be automatically stood down from all driving including trackwork for a period of at least 12 days;
 - ii. At the direction of the Harness Racing NSW Stewards, must be cleared with a certificate of medical clearance issued by the Harness Racing NSW Chief Medical Officer or a member of the Harness Racing NSW Doctor's Panel to resume driving after the expiration of at least the 12th day following the incident;
 - iii. Have completed and passed a Cognigram Cognitive Test undertaken with a Harness Racing NSW designated cognitive testing officer; and
 - iv. Submit an application to resume driving to the Harness Racing NSW Stewards after the expiration of at least the 12th day following the incident.
- (e) Any *Driver or Trainer* who does not receive the appropriate medical clearances from the Harness Racing NSW Chief Medical Officer or a member of the Harness Racing NSW Doctor's Panel at the conclusion of the 12th day cannot resume any driving and must continue with the treatment plan prescribed by the treating Medical Practitioner until cleared to resume driving.
- (f) Any *Driver or Trainer* who comes to New South Wales from another jurisdiction having been diagnosed with concussion in circumstances provided for this Procedure;
 - i. Will not be permitted to drive in New South Wales until the expiration of the 12th day after incurring the concussion; and
 - ii. Will be required to provide the relevant certificate of medical clearance issued by a member of the Harness Racing NSW Doctor's Panel and confirmation from Harness Racing NSW Stewards that the *Driver or Trainer* is cleared to resume driving.

For the avoidance of doubt, a *Driver or Trainer* who comes to New South Wales from a jurisdiction that doesn't have a 12-day stand down period for diagnosed concussion, will not be permitted to drive in New South Wales by the Harness Racing NSW Stewards until the expiration of the 12th day after incurring the concussion.

- (g) Whilst primarily for incidents that occur preceding/during/following a race or trial, the provisions of this Procedure shall also apply where the Harness Racing NSW Stewards are aware of a *Driver or Trainer* who has incurred head trauma in a trackwork accident.



HRNSW Concussion Protocols & Procedures

4. Roles & Responsibilities

Harness Racing NSW and Clubs are required to engage the services of appropriately qualified paramedics, first aid personnel or other such approved medical persons to provide medical services, such as an Advanced Life Support Qualified Paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualifications, for all race meetings and trials.

Clubs must ensure, in instances where there is not a Harness Racing NSW Steward present at trackwork or trials, that any *Driver or Trainer* who incurs head trauma in a trackwork accident where medical assistance is sought and provided, the medical person providing medical services, such as an Advanced Life Support Qualified Paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualifications, must undertake an assessment using the Harness Racing NSW Head Assessment Tool (Appendix 1). In these circumstances, the *Club* must report such incidents occurrence to the Harness Racing NSW Stewards immediately.

Drivers and Trainers are required to comply with the Rules of Harness Racing NSW and any direction given by the Harness Racing NSW Stewards at all times.

Drivers or Trainers are required to report any driving related concussions or suspected concussions, and any non-driving related concussion or head trauma injuries to the Harness Racing NSW Stewards within 24 hours of the suspected concussion or head trauma.

Harness Racing NSW Stewards are responsible for ensuring that *Drivers or Trainers* who suffers a fall preceding/during/following a race, trial or trackwork accident (where they are in attendance at trackwork), where a head injury may have occurred, must be assessed by an approved medical person appointed to provide medical services, such as an Advanced Life Support Qualified Paramedic or Registered Nurse with the same qualification or if unavailable qualified *Club's Medical Officer*, using the Head Injury Assessment Tool (Appendix 1).

5. Version History

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