



IFHA Guidelines for the International Movement of Horses for Racing

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Preamble

1. The International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA) publishes the International Agreement on Breeding, Racing and Wagering (IABRW) which brings together a series of articles, appendices and guidelines setting out recommended best practices for racing, breeding, stud book administration and wagering, common to all jurisdictions.
2. The IFHA, in its role of promoting good regulation and best practices internationally, recognises the central role played by the horse and accordingly, regards the health and welfare of horses, in all stages of life, to be of fundamental importance.
3. Horse racing injuries pose safety and welfare issues, and at times these can impact the public perception of racing. As a result, it is the responsibility of Racing Authorities to take all reasonable actions to minimise the occurrence of such injuries. One way to improve horse and rider safety is to prevent horses with pre-existing conditions that may increase the risk of injury during racing from participating in a race.
4. In line with its terms of reference that include promoting best practice, harmonisation and information exchange across racing nations, the IFHA International Movement of Horses Committee (IMHC) has produced this document as guidance for the safe international travel and participation of horses for racing.
5. Racing Authorities should refer to this guidance to establish accepted practices in their jurisdiction and to inform minimum standards based on a risk assessment which addresses their particular circumstances.

IFHA Principles

6. The IFHA is committed to equine welfare and racing safety. In all activities involving Thoroughbreds, optimising the health, safety and welfare of the horse should remain foremost in all decision-making from beginning to end of life.
7. The IFHA also recognises the diversity of climatic, cultural, political, legislative and other perspectives that underpin approaches to animal welfare around the world.

8. Racing Authorities should support efforts to evaluate a horse's suitability for international travel and racing, as well as implement measures that help ensure horse health and racing safety.
9. The responsibility for presenting a horse in a suitable condition for racing ultimately lies with its trainer.

International Travel

10. International travel, especially within Continental Europe, Great Britain and Ireland, may occur frequently and, for a range of race meetings, within a very similar racing culture and regulatory framework. Such movements are of relatively lower risk, both for injury and reputational damage, compared to long distance transportation of horses to compete in high profile races conducted in different regions which often have significantly different environments and regulatory frameworks.
11. Accordingly, these Guidelines are not prescriptive but are provided to assist Racing Authorities in performing risk assessments and designing systems and procedures to address their particular risks, and to provide them with confidence that such systems and procedures are appropriate and consistent with good international practice.

Policy and Procedure Principles

12. When a Racing Authority conducts an international travel risk assessment and decides that it is appropriate to manage health, safety, welfare and reputational risks by requiring pre-travel veterinary inspections, the following principles should be considered:
 - a. providing clear communication to horse owners and trainers about expectations when travelling internationally for racing;
 - b. defining any factors that can affect a horse's eligibility to race, including conditions, practices, substances, or circumstances that may render a horse ineligible to participate;
 - c. providing details of assessments conducted to determine the suitability of horses for travel and racing;
 - d. ensuring that an independent assessment of the suitability of horses for travel and participation is conducted; and
 - e. encouraging collaboration among Racing Authorities and promoting the sharing of information.

Pre-Travel Veterinary Assessments

13. Pre-travel veterinary assessments of horses should be performed by a suitably qualified and experienced veterinarian approved by the host Racing Authority. The examination and the assessment of suitability to travel and compete in an international race should be performed according to the requirements and objectives of the host Racing Authority.
14. The examiner should provide an impartial professional opinion, taking into account all relevant factors and with the health, safety and welfare of the horse being the main priority. Examiners should have no financial or professional relationship with any of the horse's connections or any vested interest in the outcome.

Disclosure of Relevant Veterinary Conditions and Eligibility to Race

15. Any history of significant musculoskeletal or health condition(s) should be disclosed to the host Racing Authority together with evidence of appropriate diagnostic investigation, treatment and management.
16. The host Racing Authority should investigate the horse's veterinary history before travelling to ascertain if the horse has any pre-existing conditions, such as previous occurrences of cardiac arrhythmia, exercise induced pulmonary haemorrhage (EIPH) detectable through epistaxis, partial blindness, or any other condition that may render the horse ineligible to race under the host Racing Authority's rules and/or conditions of racing.

Suitability to Travel and Race

17. Before travel, the host Racing Authority should direct/arrange for a veterinary clinical assessment of the horse to ensure it is in a suitable condition to embark on the required journey and, ultimately, race. It is recommended that an independent veterinary assessment is obtained whenever possible.
18. The veterinary assessment for suitability to travel and race should include the following:
 - a. visual inspection;
 - b. physical examination;
 - c. cardiac auscultation;
 - d. lameness examination;
 - e. palpation of the musculoskeletal system; and
 - f. significant veterinary history.

19. The veterinary assessment for suitability to travel and race may also include any of the following where indicated:
 - a. digital / video gait assessment;
 - b. blood tests;
 - c. endoscopy;
 - d. ultrasonography;
 - e. radiography;
 - f. advanced diagnostic imaging.

Post-Arrival Suitability to Race Examination

20. Following arrival in the host jurisdiction, the host Racing Authority should arrange for an independent/regulatory veterinarian to assess the suitability of horses to race.

Medication Control and Prohibited Practices

21. The IFHA promotes the international harmonisation of regulations relating to equine prohibited substances and practices.
22. Before a horse travels, the host Racing Authority should provide clear eligibility advice when different prohibited substances or practices regulations exist.
23. Before travel and/or racing, medication and treatment records must be submitted to the host Racing Authority upon request.
24. Wherever possible, it is recommended that host Racing Authorities establish a protocol for pre-travel testing of biological samples to help ensure compliance with the relevant Rules of Racing.
25. The host Racing Authority should, where reasonably practicable, make arrangements for the collection and testing of a sample from any horses after arrival and prior to racing.

Collaboration and Information Sharing between Racing Authorities

26. The host Racing Authority should document the results of pre-travel and pre-race veterinary assessments and accurately record horse training and racing conditions, injuries, and fatalities.
27. To provide transparency and promote welfare and safety, best efforts should be made to share all relevant information gathered during pre-travel and pre-race veterinary assessments, as well as details of any injuries, illnesses, or conditions identified with the horse's home Racing Authority – and potentially

other relevant authorities if the intention is to also race the horse in other jurisdictions.

28. The host Racing Authority should obtain written consent for the sharing of information from the connections of the horse at the earliest opportunity.

Supporting Guidance

29. This document should be read in conjunction with the [*IFHA Transportation Welfare Guidelines*](#) and any relevant Regional or National Transportation Welfare Guidelines.