

HOT WEATHER POLICY

GREYHOUND RACING AND ANIMAL WELFARE

Every year, somewhere in Australia, animals die from Heatstroke. In humans, it is called Sunstroke. No matter what you call it, the cause of death is the same – high body temperature for a prolonged time causing a collapse of the blood circulatory system and respiratory failure.

Strangely enough, humans can survive relatively longer than canines because they sweat freely, and the evaporation of the sweat has a cooling effect on the body surface. Canines, on the other hand, sweat only through the pads of the feet and the pores on the tip of the nose – not much evaporative cooling from these regions! Canines rely for their cooling on the evaporation of fluid from the lung when panting – which is reasonably efficient provided the humidity is not so high as to prevent effective evaporative cooling. So even in relatively low heat, a greyhound will still die from Heatstroke if the surrounding air remains still, and then becomes very humid.

GREYHOUND RACING

Trainers, who have greyhounds engaged for racing on days with predicted hot weather may, under specified conditions, choose to scratch their greyhounds, (especially if they do not have air-conditioned transport facilities). The following conditions apply:

1. Each morning during summer, the scratching staff will log onto the 'Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)' website, which gives the most up-to-date temperature forecasts for each provincial centre in the State e.g. Shepparton 32°, Horsham 34°.
2. The forecasted temperature is then ascertained for each racing venue that day.
3. Applications for scratchings due to the heat will only be considered if the predicted temperature is 32° or above at the venue where the meeting will be conducted (as determined by the 'BOM' website).

4. The application to scratch a greyhound under the heat policy must be made before the official scratching time. If a greyhound becomes distressed after the official scratching time, it should be scratched for 'Illness' and the normal 10 day penalty applied.

5. Trainers cannot pick and choose greyhounds to scratch (i.e. all of a trainer's greyhounds are scratched or none are scratched). It is anticipated that a trainer can rotate the travelling arrangements during the journey to avoid one or two greyhounds remaining in the hottest part of the trailer/car for too long.

6. While such decisions are not taken lightly, GRV insists that the health and welfare of the greyhound is paramount.

7. GRV will keep records of greyhounds scratched due to heat.

IN CASES OF EXTREME WEATHER **Transferring Meetings/Cancellations**

In the case of a predicted temperature at a racing venue being **40° or more**, an attempt will be made to transfer all Day and Twilight meetings scheduled for those venues to more suitable timeslots. If it is not possible to facilitate such a transfer(s) within a reasonable timeframe, then Day and Twilight meetings scheduled for those venues will be cancelled. Morning and Night meetings on these days will continue as scheduled but may be called off, delayed, cancelled or abandoned at the discretion of the Steward In Charge who will take into account the advice of the On-Track Veterinarian.

The Steward In Charge also has the discretion to alter, cancel, or defer meetings in the case of other extreme weather conditions such as the effect that follows a series of days in a row of hot weather.

Notification

If a meeting is to be transferred or cancelled due to predicted extreme weather, GRV will notify participants of this occurrence via the GRV website (www.grv.org.au) by the normal scratching time of the meeting, if not earlier. Therefore, during periods of extreme weather, Trainers are advised to visit the GRV website at the appropriate scratching time and check the 'Latest News' section for information about the race meeting in which they are engaged.

NOTE: No stake money payments or travel/starters payments will be made for meetings abandoned due to extreme weather at or before the official scratching time.

Travelling in the heat

Not all vehicles are air-conditioned, so when travelling to a race meeting on hot days, other forms of coping with the heat will be required. Trainers are advised to utilize common sense by:

- Keeping a good air flow through the vehicle, even though it may be a hot breeze. This ensures that the humidity does not build up to dangerous levels that would happen in an enclosed vehicle.

- Call into a garage and purchase two bags of ice – one to be emptied into a clean plastic bucket to which the greyhound has access to lick and breathe cool air over the melting ice. The other bag of ice should be emptied into another plastic bucket and every 20-30 minutes the cool ice water can be used to wipe over or sponge down the trunk and limbs of the greyhound. In effect, this creates a cool artificial sweat that assists in the lowering of body temperature and reduces the heavy panting that would otherwise unduly distress the greyhound. The ice can be replenished cheaply and easily if, or as required.

- If you feel your greyhound(s) would be adversely affected by travel in the heat, it is recommended that you seek to scratch your greyhound(s) under the Heat Policy.

At the race meeting

Upon arrival at the track, the greyhounds are housed in air-conditioned kennels until called up for their race. All preparation for racing is completed in the air-conditioned area, including the pre-race parading. The greyhounds are taken to the boxes immediately prior to the commencement of the race. Within 3-5 minutes the greyhound would have raced, been hosed down, lapped water, and be returned to the comfort of the air-conditioning – where they will be more comfortable than their trainer!

Trainers are encouraged to pay extra attention to the 'cool down' period after the race and to make use of all cooling facilities available to them to ensure their greyhound is comfortable. The return journey home may well require the same consideration for the welfare of the greyhound as outlined above in the transportation section.

Cooling Vests

With the onset of warmer weather, a number of questions usually arise in relation to the optional use of cooling vests for greyhounds. Following discussions with the GOTBA, the stewards have now approved the use of canine cooling vests on race day.

Therefore, Trainers / Attendants will be permitted to use their own canine cooling vests at all times with their greyhounds, including when parading greyhounds to the boxes. The decision of whether or not to use a canine cooling vest will rest solely with the Trainer / Attendant, who will also be responsible for the vest at all times.