

Equine Welfare

RDA Weight Chart

Before entering any competition, please ensure that you consult the RDA Weight Chart to ensure that your equine/rider/driver combination is suitable. This applies to riding and Carriage Driving. We will be monitoring this at the Championships. Please note this applies to none disabled riders in the warm-up as well as competitors.

RDA has created an excel calculator to help groups work out the maximum carrying weight. Please see the Myrda website, Equines in RDA, Health, and Welfare for further information. Carriage Driving weight guidelines can be found on Myrda on the right-hand side of the Carriage Driving Page. The weight chart should be used for any rider/driver whether a participant, volunteer or coach.

RDA reserves the right to check any combination considered not to comply with the limits set out on the weight chart on RDA's website.

Passports & Vaccinations

All equines travelling to competitions must have a valid passport from which the equines identification can be verified. The passport must contain all vaccination details which must be up to date, completely and clearly recorded, signed and stamped by a veterinary surgeon, who is not the owner of the animal. Passports with missing, altered, unclear or incomplete vaccine records will not be accepted and entry to events may be refused. The passport must travel with the equine at all times.

- The equine must receive a primary course of two injections against equine influenza given no less than 21 days and no more than 92 days apart.
- Only these first two injections need to be given before the horse may compete.
- In addition, a FIRST booster injection must be given no less than 150 days and no more than 215 days after the second injection of the primary course.
- Subsequent booster injections must be given at intervals of not more than one year apart, commencing after the first booster injection.
- Equines competing in Regional Qualifiers must have been vaccinated within previous twelve months unless venue requests six months.
- None of these injections can be given within the **seven days** before the day of competing or entry into competition, whichever is sooner.

Due to an unprecedented vaccination shortage, horses whose annual booster vaccinations fell between 1 September 2022 and 1 January 2023 the annual booster may be given up to 15 months, provided that the following vaccination is given within the following 9 months resulting in the horse having 2 boosters in the 24 month period. This must be recorded in the passport and signed/stamped by a Veterinary Surgeon, or accompanied by a signed letter to that effect. E.g., if your annual vaccination is due on 14 November and your vet practice are unable to vaccinate due to a shortage, you can extend the annual vaccination by up to 3 months. Annual vaccination can therefore be administered on or before 14 February, then following the guidance above must be vaccinated with an annual within 9 months. Ensure you have confirmation from the vets this is the case when attending a competition. Annual boosters due on or after 1 January 2023 must revert to the usual 12-month interval.

RDA will continue to strongly recommend a 6-month vaccination when attending RDA qualifiers and championships and maintaining good biosecurity. RDA reserve the right to amend these vaccination rules.

Prohibited Substances

The use of any herbal, natural or chemical product to affect the performance of an equine in a calming (tranquillising) manner is strictly forbidden under RDA rules. The use of such products during competition has important safety and welfare consequences.

The RDA follows the lead of the FEI (Federation Equestre Internationale) and British Equestrian with respect to the medication of horses used in competition. A full list of banned substances can be found on the FEI's Clean Sport website.

The RDA does make certain, specific exceptions to the FEI's list of controlled and banned substances with respect to the population of horses engaging in RDA activities. Some of these medications need to be declared before National Championships to be permitted. You will need to fill in a National Championships Medication Declaration Form which is available on the equine section of the Myrda website. This then needs to be sent to the Championships Secretary before the event begins.

Medication Control Testing may be carried out at the National Championships. If a horse tests positive for a banned or undeclared substance the horse will be disqualified and the cost of the test will be passed onto the RDA Group/Competitor. This cost is approximately £500 + VAT.

It is strongly recommended that you familiarise yourself with the Prohibited Substances Policy under the National Championships section of the RDA website.

Equine Welfare in Competition

All equines must be five years old or over. In the case of lameness, the judge will inform the rider/driver that they are eliminated. There is no appeal against the decision. The judge may ask for a Veterinary opinion before allowing the competitor's score to go forward for judging. Refusal to allow this inspection to take place will result in elimination. If the equine appears to be fatigued or distressed the judge can ask the competitor to retire.

If the judge/steward suspects fresh blood anywhere on the equine during the competition, they will carry out further checks alongside an RDA Vet. If the equine shows fresh blood in the mouth or area of the spurs, it will be eliminated. If the judge/Vet clarifies that the equine has no fresh blood and is fit to continue, the equine may resume and finish the competition. The judge's decision is final.