

Fleurieu Equestrian Clubs Incorporated

Hot Weather Policy 1.0

Procedure developed by: Kylie Roesler, Pony Club Secretary and Instructor

Approved by: [FEC committee]

Next review due: [11/4/2020]

Summary	This procedure describes how to keep horse and rider health in mind when the weather is extremely hot.
Policy reference	This procedure supports the EA and PC Hot Weather Policies
Applies to	This procedure applies to Pony Club and YDEC members

Background

Horses working in hot conditions can be affected by heat stress and may require cooling measures. Responsibility for horses competing and exercising during hot weather lies with the rider who must take action to prevent, manage and treat heat stress.

YDEC are responsible for providing adequate facilities (such as shade and fresh water) and information that riders need to safeguard the welfare of horses.

Actions

When the temperature is 33 - 35 Degrees Celcius for Yankalilla on "Willy Weather" or Noarlunga on the BOM website at 9pm on the day before riding. Decision is made by Chief Instructor in consultation with the committee.	Riding times may be moved to earlier or later in the day. Riding will be in the shade where possible. Riding times may be shortened. Riders and horses will be allowed drink and rest stops.
36 -38 Degrees Celcius	Riding times will start before 10am. Riding may be no longer than 30 minutes.

	Riding will be in the shade where possible. Riders will be allowed drink and rest stops.
Over 39 Degrees Celcius	Riding will be cancelled.

Heat Risk Considerations (especially for competition conditions, but important for all ridden work in hot / humid conditions):

- a) The 6 Minute Threshold in any demanding exercise, (not just Cross country exercise), as being pivotal in heat overload: Where the temperature is high, horses which have just performed are at risk of suffering a dangerous temperature hike. When the temperature is high, 6.0 - 6.5 minutes of continuous hard work – the ‘6 Minute Threshold’ is pivotal in causing heat stress. Dressage horses do work extremely hard in both the warm up and in their tests. For Showjumpers the effort is generally under 6 minutes, however for Dressage and Cross Country, horses are at risk in heat, because the effort will exceed the 6 Minute Threshold.
- b) Encourage riders to pre-cool their horses by hosing them to place lower demands on the horses’ cooling systems while they work
- c) Encourage abbreviated warm ups to lighten the load on horses’ cooling systems
- d) Knowledge of aggressive cooling until the horse’s temperature returns to 38° C. See Appendix A.
- e) Encouraging use of ice and a shaded area, to cool horses after exercise.
- f) Encouraging hydration of every horse with cool clean water, salt and electrolytes.
- g) Encourage riders to “house” resting horses in shaded areas and/or on grass surfaces

The Signs of Heat Stress

The signs of heat stress include:

- Rapid shallow breathing (panting)
- Flared nostrils
- Staggering, apparently uncontrollable gait
- Very high body temperature (the skin can be hot to touch)
- Agitated and distressed appearance
- Irrational behaviour such as lashing out with hind limbs
- Occasionally collapse Heat stress can occasionally be seen during the cooler months, especially in spring when the days can be quite warm, but horses might still be carrying a winter coat.

Factors that may contribute to Heat Stress

The susceptibility of a horse to heat stress does not solely seem to be influenced by temperature. Certain factors can adversely affect an individual horse's ability to withstand competition in hot weather and include:

- Travelling long distances prior to competition
- An excitable temperament
- Heavy sweating
- Withholding drinking water

Cooling systems in horses

Evaporative cooling is the most important means of dissipation of body heat for the exercising horse and that the liberal application of cold water in shaded, well ventilated places will greatly assist horses in dissipating excessive body heat on hot days.

- Evaporation & convection – 60% of cooling - horses shed excess heat through sweating and having air moving over them. Horses standing in the sun without shade or wind flow (breeze) in temperatures above 33 C, start to accumulate heat.
- Radiation & conduction – 25% of cooling - once the air temperature is over 3 C, a horse even at rest needs to shed heat – the size & mass of a horse’s body makes this harder than for smaller animals, or even a lighter framed horse.
- Respiratory loss -15% of cooling – for horses during exercise

Appendix A - Aggressive cooling measures

Aggressive cooling should be used where a horse’s temperature is elevated after any demanding exercise such as Dressage, Jumping, Endurance or Cross Country and when the WBGT (Wet Bulb Global Temperature) Index is high. Cooling includes use of high volumes of cold/ice water application, ice boots, repeatedly applying bucketful’s of iced/cold water, and repeatedly hosing & immediately scraping water as it warms on the horse’s body. Key areas to apply cooling/iced water to are the jugular veins (underside of neck), the femoral arteries (between hind legs) and the heat sink (lower abdomen). Aggressive cooling measures should continue until the horse’s body temperature returns to 30 degrees Celcius

Approval

Signature	Original Signed 11.4.17
Name	Denise Dawson
Position	President
Date	11.4.17