



# FORT ERIE LIVE RACING CONSORTIUM

CHAPTER: HEALTH & SAFETY  
POLICIES & PROCEDURES  
SECTION: Section 18  
SUBJECT: COVID -19 RACING PROTOCOL  
ISSUE TO: FORT ERIE LIVE RACING CONSORTIUM  
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APPROVED BY: Fort Erie Live Racing Consortium

SIGNATURE:

SHOULD ANY STATEMENT OF GENERAL POLICY OR APPLICATION THEREOF BE IN CONFLICT WITH ANY FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL OR LOCAL LAWS OR AGREEMENTS, SUCH LAWS OR AGREEMENTS MUST BE OBSERVED.

## PURPOSE

### ***Standard Operating Procedure***

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Fort Erie Live Racing Consortium has put in increased race day policies and procedures in order to safely and securely fulfil our race day operations with minimal risk of spread of COVID-19. This policy and procedure guide is to cover any and all persons as it relates to COVID-19 and similar viruses, and the precautions that need to be taken to ensure the safety of our employees, stakeholders and horses, and to reduce the risk of a COVID-19 virus outbreak at Fort Erie Race Track. This is a particularly concerning time given the situation globally. Considering the potential risks associated with the COVID-19 outbreak, Fort Erie Race Track must implement measures to protect racing operations and livelihood for key stakeholders, as well as the health and safety of all individuals at our facility.

This COVID-19 Racing Protocol document is to be observed in conjunction with Fort Erie Live Racing Consortium's *Approved COVID-19 Monitoring Protocol*, dated March 30, 2020.

**Beginning July 12, Fort Erie Race Track will be allowing a limited number of spectators to attend live racing. Guest registration is mandatory. All guests wishing to attend live racing must register online through [www.forterieracing.com](http://www.forterieracing.com) or at the main entrance with security.**

**As of September 22, under provincial regulations all spectators must be fully vaccinated in order to attend horse racing venues across Ontario. FELRC will require all employees, horsepeople and contractors to be fully vaccinated or participate in the weekly antigen rapid testing program.**

Access to Fort Erie's backstretch will be restricted to essential personnel only. Essential staff may include racing officials such as safety staff and medical personnel, track maintenance crew, outriders, pony crew, starting-gate operators, janitorial staff to sanitize the facility, and security. Essential personnel involved with the care, training, and racing of horses include grooms, hot-walkers, trainers and their assistants, jockeys, blacksmiths, and veterinarians. Essential personnel licensed by the commission to ensure horse racing is held in compliance with provincial and federal regulations include but are not limited to stewards, placing judges, official chart-caller, photo-finish operator, clocker, clerk of scales, Racing Forensics staff, and International Sound TV production staff.

## SCOPE

The protocols and procedures herein will apply to all persons who are approved for access or who work/race in any area at Fort Erie Race Track, including Stable Areas, Paddock, Clubhouse and Administration Building. *The protocols and procedures herein will also apply to spectators who are attending live racing.*

## WORKPLACE AND LOCATION PROTOCOLS

### ***Stable Area***

This COVID-19 Racing Protocol document is to be observed in conjunction with Fort Erie Live Racing Consortium's *Approved COVID-19 Monitoring Protocol*, dated March 30, 2020. Access to the backstretch stable area will continue to operate under our COVID-19 backstretch policy and procedures. In summary:

- Access to the backstretch will be restricted to essential personnel. Only those on a designated list provided by the Race Office will be granted access each day. This includes race days.
- Each person entering will be required to answer screening questions and a mandatory temperature check. Anyone with a temperature above 100.5F (38C) will not be permitted access.
- Everyone entering the backstretch will be required to wear a mask or face covering at all times. The only exception is for riders while they are on the track and actively galloping or breezing a horse. Anyone who arrives at the backstretch gate without a mask will be denied entry.
- Guests and visitors will not be permitted to enter the stable area at this time. Security will limit horsepeople to essential staff only.
- On race days, all people requiring trackside access for racing operations will be provided with a colour coordinated wristband or a pinnie. Grooms walking horses to the track will be given a pinnie at the gap, which must be worn at all times while trackside, and must be returned at the gap. Trainers will be given a coloured wristband when they pass through security screening. Only those with a wristband or pinnie will be permitted to have trackside access during their designated races.
- Anyone working at multiple barns, such as veterinarians or farriers, must wear masks and must carry and use hand sanitizer between barns. Limit human to human contact as much as safely possible when caring for horses.
- Limit the number of people in stalls, barns, tack rooms and offices. Only one person at a time should be permitted in small spaces, and these areas should be sanitized regularly.
- Trainers should consider assigning equipment to specific barn personnel to limit contact. All items should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- When shipping drivers and any passengers are delivering horses to the stable area, if they have not passed all screening procedures, they will not be allowed to exit the vehicle. In order for horses to be safely escorted off of trailers, drivers will be allowed to drive into the unloading lot in the stable area, however they will be required to remain seated in their vehicles while horses are escorted off the trailers and to the designated barns by other approved personnel. Van drivers should disinfect vans and trailers between every trip.

### ***Race Office***

- Only two people are permitted to enter the Race Office lobby at a time. No person is allowed to enter staff offices.
- Race entries will not be accepted inside the Race Office. Entries can be made over the phone or online.
- Trainers who are shipping horses in for racing will be required to provide the Race Office with a list of staff members in advance of arrival. Only essential personnel who have been pre-approved will be granted access to the backstretch. Limit one groom and one trainer per horse on race days.
- Draw will be done in the Race Office. It will be attended by an AGCO official (if possible) and one trainer, and will be video recorded.
- New entry day procedures will be put in place in order to limit contact and enforce social distancing, such as limited number of staff members in the Race Office at a time, use of gloves and masks, etc.
- Only one staff member will access filing cabinets with foal papers. Drawer handles will be sanitized regularly.
- During racing draws, the pea jug and peas will only be handled by one person, and will be sanitized after use.
- Bookkeeper- No person is permitted to enter the Bookkeepers office. Only 2 people in the hallway at a time outside of the bookkeeper's office, and they must maintain social distancing. Cash will not be accepted at any time by the bookkeeper. Payments can be made by cheque or money transfer. Recommended that horsepeople contact the bookkeeper by phone or email for all other interactions.

### ***Office Space***

- Limit the number of people in an office, and ensure that physical distancing is maintained at all times.
- Limit use of shared items, such as pens, phones, keyboards, etc. Where possible, staff will be assigned their own equipment to use.
- Anything that is shared must be safely sanitized as much as possible, such as printers, fax machines, desks, drawers, countertops, etc.
- Improve fresh air intake and circulation by opening windows or doors, or by using fans to reduce contamination build up.
- Staff who can work from home will continue to do so as much as possible. In person meetings will be limited to 5 people, and physical distancing will be required.

### ***Maintenance***

- As much as possible, work specific tools will be assigned to different employees. Any equipment that must be shared should be disinfected after each use, such as steering wheels on tractors, lawn mowers, power tools, etc.
- To help with physical distancing, workers will be spread out, with fewer workers doing the same task at the same location.
- All laundry items should be washed using the warmest possible setting for each item. Items should be washed between each use. Avoid shaking or disturbing unlaundered items. Laundry bins should be cleaned and disinfected regularly, and any plastic bags used will be disposed of after each use.
- Shift and break times will be adjusted so that staff are not all eating in the break room at the same time.

### **Healthcare Provider**

Fort Erie Race Track has contracted the services of a local healthcare provider to review our policies and procedures and provide guidance related to COVID-19. In the event that someone begins showing symptoms of COVID-19 and does not have their own doctor, they can be referred to this healthcare professional for further assessment and referral for screening.

## **RACE DAY PROTOCOLS**

### **Paperwork**

- All Fort Erie horsepeople will be required to provide the Race Office with all foal papers and silks as early as possible, but at least 24 hours in advance of first race post time.
- For trainers who are shipping in, foal papers and silks must be dropped off at the Race Office at least 2 hours before first race post time. Foal papers and silks will not be accepted at the Jock's Room or in the Paddock.
- After each race, trainers can contact the Clerk of Scales or Assistant Clerk of Scales by phone to request their foal papers and silks. Items will be brought out of the Jock's Room for pickup. After racing ends, foal papers and silks can be collected in the Race Office. Non-essential personnel are not permitted in the Jock's Room.
- Claiming Races: trainers who are not double vaccinated (or enrolled in the enhanced screening program) will not be permitted in the paddock, or in the jock's room to make a claim. A locked drop box will be installed outside of the Jock's Room (along the parking lot entrance). Claim slips can be deposited in this box, and they will be collected 15 minutes before each post time. Claim slips not in the box at that time will not be accepted.
- Pocket programs for trainers will be available for pick up in the Race Office.

### **Taking horses over for Racing**

- Horses leaving the backstretch for races will need to be escorted over separately, at least six feet apart from each other, and from other people. Grooms are to be cautious of horses that are returning from the previous race as well, and must remain six feet apart from other people.
- Grooms will be provided with numbered pinnies. There will be a new set of clean pinnies provided for each race. At the end of the race, grooms are to leave pinnies at the gap in a bin provided, so they can be washed for the following race day. Pinnies must be worn at all times when trackside.

### **Paddock & Walking Ring**

- Only essential personnel will be permitted in the paddock. This includes essential racing officials, (ex: safety staff, paramedics, blacksmith, horse identifier, valets) and horsepeople (jockeys, grooms and trainers).
- Only two people per horse, including trainer and groom are permitted to come trackside during their designated race(s). *In the case of a safety risk, a third person will be allowed to assist.*
- Every other stall will be used in the paddock for horses to be saddled. Only 6 horses are permitted in the paddock at a time. When one horse comes out, another horse can enter. Horses that can be saddled in the walking ring are encouraged to do so.
- Stalls will be disinfected between races.

- Pony people cannot congregate in the tunnel. They must be spaced out and separated between races, in the tunnel and when they are on the track.
- After each race is posted official, everyone is required to vacate the walking ring and paddock within five minutes.
- Horses finishing the previous race must exit the paddock and tunnel before horses for the next race can enter.

### ***Jockey's Room***

- Clerks Office is restricted to Clerk of Scales, Assistant Clerk of Scales, and one additional person at a time. There is to be no congregating or loitering in the office or any part of the Jock's Room.
- The Clerk of Scales will monitor jockey temperatures when they arrive. All essential personnel in the jockeys' room (including valets and the clerk of the scales) will have their temperatures monitored daily. Anyone showing any signs of illness will be denied access to the premises.
- The use of saunas will not be permitted. The use of showers will be permitted. Jockeys will be required to fill their own water pails and handle their own items.
- In change rooms, jockey lockers will be separated by at least six feet.
- All jockeys will be required to wear riding gloves and a face covering when not in the race.
- Jockeys are prohibited from any physical contact between themselves and others.
- Only Jockeys scheduled to race that day will be permitted in the Jockey's room. Jockeys are required to leave the jockey's room immediately following their last ride.
- Any food available in the jockey's room will be pre-packaged and individually wrapped.
- Jockeys are encouraged to limit travel.
- Gate entrance to the Jockey's room from the parking lot will be locked.

### ***Finish line***

- Only one member of security, the track photographer, the clerk of scales, and required medical and safety personnel are permitted to stand at the finish line, and are required to maintain physical distancing.
- When the race is completed, it is preferred that horses are unsaddled on the track, with as much distance between horses and people as possible. In the event of rain, horses can be unsaddled in the paddock. Only essential personnel are permitted.
- Finish line photos and winner's circle photos will be permitted. Wearing a mask in the photo is mandatory.

### ***Spectators:***

- Spectators can register on-site at the main entrance with security.
- As part of the registration process, they will be asked the following question:  
*Have you or your guest experienced symptoms of COVID-19, or have been issued a positive COVID-19 TEST result in the last 14 days?*  
If they answer yes to either of those questions, they will be denied entry to the track.
- All spectators must enter the track through the main entrance and have their temperature taken in order to gain access to the track.

### ***Clubhouse / Grandstand***

- The Clubhouse is open for spectators.
- Washrooms in the Racebook and Clubhouse will be open, but urinals will be limited to allow for spacing.
- Spectators must wear a mask unless seated. There is a limit of **6 people** per table. No sitting is allowed at the bar.
- Mutuels will be offered in the Racebook.
- Food and beverage offerings will be on the Aprons, at the Paddock Shack and the Turfside Dining Room.
- Security Office will remain open for any assistance during this time.
- All other gates and doors will remain locked and closed.
- Only essential personnel will have access to the press box through the clubhouse.

### ***Employees***

- All staff are required to be screened and have their temperature taken upon arrival on race days. Staff need to check in at the frontside Security Office. Once screened all staff will be provided with a colour-coded wristband to verify that they have been screened.
- All employees will be trained on safety protocols, such as requirements to wear masks, gloves, and daily screenings. They will also be trained on new race day safety procedures. All staff will be provided with an information piece on ways to keep themselves protected.

## **PREVENTATIVE**

- As much as possible, people are required to stand six feet apart at all times. Staff will be assigned to provide reminders and ensure that people are following physical distancing requirements.
- All horsepeople and staff are required to wear a mask or face covering on race days. Those who refuse to wear a mask will be trespassed from the property. The only exception is jockeys while they are riding in a race.
- All pony personnel must wear a mask over their nose and mouth and wear gloves when in contact with jockeys while mounted.
- Gate crew personnel must wear a mask over their nose and mouth and wear gloves while loading horses in the starting gate and will have no physical contact with any other personnel unless in the best interest of safety.
- The starting gate crew will disinfect the gate between every race. When training, they will also disinfect the gate in the morning and during breaks, and after training.
- Additional hand sanitation stations will be installed around the venue, including at entrances and in high-traffic areas, and signage will be installed to encouraging people to wash their hands regularly.
- Animal-safe disinfectant will be made available on race days to staff and horsepeople to use on equipment.
- Increased cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and contact areas, such as door handles, countertops, and washrooms during racing.
- Anyone touching horses, pails, or any other communal equipment will be required to wear gloves. Wherever possible, items should be disinfected between uses.

### ***Positive Cases***

- In the event that Fort Erie Race Track becomes aware that a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 has been in attendance at the track, we will notify all employees and participants who may have been exposed. The track will ensure that the infected person does not re-enter the premises until either (i) at least two (2) weeks after the positive test, or (ii) the person is able to provide evidence of a negative test

and clearance from a doctor to return to work. Fort Erie Race Track will encourage any person who may have come into contact with the infected person to be tested for the virus and will follow any guidance provided by public health authorities.

## **PUBLIC ACCESS**

- Fort Erie Race Track is operating at full capacity and will be open to spectators who are fully vaccinated. Proper messaging will be developed and displayed in order to communicate this.
  - Banners will be created and posted at entry ways.
  - Message will be displayed on corner road signs
  - Will be communicated on social media sites and on website
- Barriers will be put up at all race track entrances. A staff member will be stationed at all entrances, however only the main entrance will be open to allow people to enter or exit the venue. Only those with a wrist band or pinnie who have been screened by security and cleared to enter will be permitted.
- Only those who have gone through security screening, and are wearing the appropriate colour-coded wrist band or pinnies for that race day will be permitted access at any of the gates. Horsepeople are only permitted to be trackside during their designated race(s).
- On-track wagering will be available through Fort Erie Race Track.
- Trainers or their responsible personnel are accountable for all their employees to ensure essential personnel are on a pre-approved list for backstretch access.
- Racetrack management is accountable for all FELRC employees to ensure essential personnel have had their temperature monitored and approved.

## **VIOLATIONS**

**Any horseperson, staff member or racing official who refuses to follow this policy, proper safety procedures, and/or acts in a manner that in the opinion of Fort Erie Race Track and it's designated may increase the risk of COVID-19 exposure or spread will be immediately escorted off and trespassed from the property for an undetermined amount of time.**

**There will be zero tolerance for anybody who is lying or breaching the rules.**

Any decision to trespass a visitor will be at the sole discretion of the Security Supervisor or Manager. The CEO will be notified immediately if such situation arises.

**The Fort Erie Live Racing Consortium takes the COVID- 19 outbreak very seriously, and with the best of their ability, has set forth to protect the horsepeople and employees currently employed at the Fort Erie Race Track.**

***These policies and procedures may be altered or updated as the season progresses in order to accommodate any new COVID-19 safety guidelines that may be required.***