

GREYHOUND RACING

VICTORIA

Attending and Training Greyhounds

Booklet 5 – Occupational Health and Safety



Greyhound Racing Victoria
Attendant and Trainer Education Pack

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This is the fifth in a series of booklets that support you in attending and training racing greyhounds.

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Occupational health and safety in the greyhound industry

In Victoria there are rules (laws and regulations) that relate to safety in the workplace. The purpose of these rules is to ensure a hazard-free and safe workplace for all Victorians.

Trainers have a responsibility to provide a safe workplace for themselves and anyone who might help them care for their greyhounds.

Racing Clubs are governed by the same rules and responsibilities and have many items and pieces of equipment that are both fast moving, dangerous, and require specialist training.

The relevant legislation are the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (2017)*. If you are interested in reading these, they can be downloaded from the Worksafe website www.worksafe.vic.gov.au.

The principles of health and safety involve the protection of employees, workers and the public (who may be visiting the facility). The rules make those people responsible for controlling or managing workplaces and responsible for eliminating or reducing risks as far as is reasonable and practicable.

What does this mean for someone in the greyhound industry?

Basically, occupational health and safety legislation relates to everyone and requires you to provide a safe place to work as well as safe ways of working. It also sets minimum standards that need to be met.

To provide a safe workplace, you will need to identify potential hazards and act to minimise their risk or remove the risk completely.

A 'hazard' is anything that may injure or hurt you or the greyhounds in your care

It is essential for the safety of both the greyhounds and the people working in, or visiting greyhound facilities, that careful inspections are made on a regular basis to check for and identify existing and/or potential hazards. Any identified hazards must be rectified before accidents occur.

Even if you have a greyhound facility set up in your backyard and you do not employ anyone to help you, you must still provide a safe working environment for yourself and any visitors you might have.

Owners of a kennel facility have responsibilities to ensure that visitors, staff or unpaid assistants are given any necessary training to help them stay safe, and that you ensure everyone working in the kennels obeys the safety rules and standards.

If you assist someone else with a greyhound, or are present at one of the tracks, you also have the duty to take reasonable care for your own health and

safety.

You are required to co-operate with any instructions given by the owner/manager of the facility regarding safety, or instructions given by Stewards on race days.

You also have a duty to know how to raise issues and to make known any hazards that you identify.

5.1 Occupational health and safety – identifying potential hazards in the kennels

What things are likely to be hazardous in your greyhound facility?

There are many things that may constitute a hazard in a kennel facility, below are some examples):

- Slippery floors;
- Sharp wire or nails protruding from fences and gates;
- Heavy items that need to be lifted;
- Exposure to chemicals;
- Obstructions in walkways and doorways;
- Poor or faulty machinery;
- Unsecured doors and gates;
- Broken or damaged feed and water bowls;
- Contaminated food;
- Poorly lit walkways;
- Electronic tools and electrics;
- Dog waste;
- Zoonoses (diseases that can be transmitted from greyhounds to humans).

This is only a partial list, and the potential hazards will depend on the set up and

level of maintenance of the individual facility.



Performing a 'Health and Safety Audit'

It is suggested that you do a 'Health and Safety Audit' of your facility regularly (after appropriate training). This means walking around your facility and looking for hazards that might exist. For each area of the facility (i.e. walkways, food preparation area, kennels, runs etc) these potential hazards are then written down, and an action plan is developed to try to minimise the risk or remove the risk completely.

If you are not aware or sufficiently trained in performing an audit, you must ensure one has been done recently and make yourself aware of the highlighted hazards and the progress being made to remediate them.

This way you can document that you have identified a problem, have thought about how to fix it, and can document that it has been fixed, or how the risk has been reduced. This way if anything happens, you have written proof that you have been pro-active in preventing injury.

For example, you may identify that the

pathway to your kennels is difficult to walk at night because it is uneven, and there is no lighting. Your action plan may include re-surfacing the path and installing a movement triggered spot light that lights the path. You can document the date that you identified the problem, installed the light, and also when the re-surfacing filled the pot holes.

The new *Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds*, which will commence 1 January 2020, provides information on minimising hazards by setting minimum standards for the operation of greyhound facilities, people and animal management.

How do you prepare for an emergency?

It is also necessary to have a think about what you would do if an incident were to happen at your kennel facility. It is recommended that you have emergency phone numbers (doctor, ambulance, veterinarian, power company, etc) clearly displayed in a prominent place close to the telephone.

A well-stocked First Aid Kit (clearly identified and easily accessible) is another good idea. There should also be a record book attached to the First Aid Kit in which any injuries can be noted. Even if someone at your kennel only needs to use a band-aid, this is classified as an injury, and it is important that any hazards that contributed to the injury are identified and addressed.

You should also consider having smoke alarms and possibly a fire extinguisher (for example suited to electrical fires) located where there is a risk of this type of fire (near kitchen facilities or hydrobaths). Locations of Fire extinguishers should be

carefully thought through, together with types of fires and suitable extinguishers.

The new *Code of Practice for the Keeping of Racing Greyhounds* will require you to include protocols for emergency management for both humans and greyhounds, including the display of evacuation procedures for your kennels. This will be included under the Establishment and Health Management Plan (EHMP).

How can you plan for the worst?

All kennel facilities should also have an Evacuation Plan as part of the Emergency Management Plan for times where you might need to evacuate your kennel facility and go to a safe place. This might include assembly areas, a way of making sure all staff and assistants know to evacuate, and a plan for what will need to happen with the greyhounds that need to be evacuated.

Everyone who regularly works at your facility should be aware of the Evacuation Plan and what to do in the case of an emergency.

Do I need to know this, as I just help out at the kennels?

Even if you are not 'employed' to assist a trainer with their greyhounds, you still have some obligations under the law.

You must tell the person responsible for the facility if you are injured, involved in an accident, or have a 'near-miss'.

You should find out what the procedures are for dealing with accidents and injuries that you or other people or greyhounds



may receive and be clear on your responsibilities during an emergency.

Remember, even if you are working voluntarily for a hobby trainer, the responsibilities for providing a safe workplace are the same.

5.2 Occupational health and safety – at the track

How does occupational health and safety apply at the race track?

The rules of Occupational Health and Safety also apply to greyhound race tracks. Racing Clubs are responsible for providing a safe workplace, just as you are responsible for providing a safe kennel environment. Corporations and Associations are required under the law to assess their workplaces for safety and will have safety protocols and procedures to ensure everyone who visits the track – trainers, the public, Stewards and staff – are safe.

The Club will have in place a set of safe operating rules (or procedures) and will have prepared emergency plans for all contingencies. There will be staff who are responsible for ensuring that emergency plans are initiated if need be, and there will be designated first aid staff and

people in charge of different sections/areas in the case of an emergency.

What is my role at the track with respect to health and safety?

As a visitor to a track, you are responsible for reporting any potential hazards to a member of staff.

You must also follow any instructions regarding safe working practices that are given to you by a member of staff or a Steward at a race meeting. You must wear appropriate clothing and footwear as required and be aware of the Track Safety Rules.

If you are injured or have a near miss you must also inform staff at the track. This allows them to meet their requirements of identifying and reporting hazards and ensures that they can act on the information to prevent anyone else suffering a similar injury.

What sort of hazards might be found at the track?

Many of the hazards at the track are like those that you will have identified at your own facility. Lighting, slippery floors, lifting heavy weights (such as lifting a greyhound up onto the OTV's examination table) and fences or gates that might have become broken or damaged are all potential hazards in this environment.

At the track you also have all the machinery and equipment associated with the lure. Starting boxes, running rails and the catching pen area can all pose potential hazards. There are also tractors, gators and other associated mobile equipment moving in confined and at times in dark conditions.

The catching pen can also be a dangerous area on the track if safety protocols are not adhered to. Being in a restricted space with eight greyhounds and eight catchers that are slowing from full speed and are full of the excitement of the chase can be very dangerous. Add to this a high-speed lure passes through the catching pen just before the dogs.

That is why catchers must never enter the pen until told it is safe to do so by an authorised and competent person. Catchers must never enter the track during a race (under any circumstances), and Catchers must wear all appropriate Personal Protective Equipment prescribed by the Racing Club and Stewards.

Who should I report a hazard to?

In the kennelling area or out on the track during a race day hazards should be reported immediately to a Steward. Other hazards on non-race days might be reported to the Kennel Supervisor, the track staff or the Club Manager, depending on what they involve and where they are located.

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