

GREYHOUND RACING

VICTORIA

Attending and Training Greyhounds

Booklet 3 – At the Race Track – Kennelling, Preparing for Racing, Boxing and Catching



Greyhound Racing Victoria
Attendant and Trainer Education Pack

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

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Kennelling, preparing for racing, boxing and catching

3.1 Arriving at the track

Once you have arrived at the track, you will need to get everything organised for presentation of the greyhound (**GAR 31 Presentation of greyhound for racing and kennelling time**). It is important to give your greyhound(s) a chance to stretch their legs and empty out. This is especially important if your greyhound is drawn to race in one of the later races as they will be kennelled for up to a few hours. Each greyhound should also be offered a drink of water.



Whether you are at the track to trial your greyhound(s) or for a race meet, you will need to be able to adequately control them. The rules of racing state that for a race meeting, there needs to be at least one person for every four greyhounds to be presented and raced, and that when parading, boxing or catching, that there is only one greyhound under the control of each person.

It is not uncommon for trainers to start queuing up as kennelling time approaches. Unless your greyhound is

especially calm or you have a number of greyhounds to kennel, it is probably better to wait until the initial rush is over, and then head over to the kennels.

Handling a greyhound at the track can often pose some new problems. There are lots of other greyhounds, many of which are excited. These greyhounds are all unfamiliar to your dog and may be intimidating (especially if your dog is nervous or shy). There are a lot of people moving about and making noise, many of whom are oblivious to what is happening around them or what their dogs are doing. It is important that you monitor the situation for any signs of stress in your greyhound that may be due to being in this environment. This means that you can then act to try and things to calm your greyhound down.

Often the biggest excitement is the sound of the lure going around. Many dogs will jump up and down, lunge forward, bark and carry on at the sound of the lure passing by. For this reason, it is best that you do not just stand around near the track unless you need to. Some dogs perform better if they are allowed to see and hear the lure prior to a race (“stir-up”), but this is the only time that you want the dog excited – not whilst you are waiting for it to be kennelled.

Dogs that are going to run a trial can be kept away from the track until it is their turn to run. You can walk them around the carpark. A greyhound **must not** be left unattended in a stationary vehicle or trailer for any period exceeding 20 minutes, except on a hot weather affected day where greyhounds must not be left unattended for more than 5 minutes. Unattended is defined as the greyhound not being visually checked to ascertain its physical state.

The kennelling procedure



The kennelling procedure is very regimented – every step is done in a particular order, according to the National Rules (GAR 26-42)

- (1) On arrival at the kennel block your first stop will normally be at the window or booth at the entrance to the kennels. Here you often pay the Club admission fee and collect your starter's fee and travel subsidy. You can do this after you kennel the greyhound (s).*
- (2) You may need to present your trainer's or attendant's License Card to the kennel staff so they will allow you to enter the kennel area and they may take your greyhound's bedding or alternatively you can place it in an area within the kennel control area.*
- (3) You will then proceed to the vet check area. You will have to walk the greyhound up the ramp or lift it up onto the top of the ramp so that the track veterinarian can check that the dog is fit to race, and in the case of a bitch, that she is not in season.*

- (4) You must then proceed to the weighing area where you will need to present the greyhound along with its registration card and weight card to the Stewards. You will also have to produce your trainer's/attendant's License card. If you are acting on behalf of the trainer of a greyhound, you will have to hand the stewards a written letter of authority signed by the trainer that requests that you be allowed to handle the greyhound for the day.*
- (5) The Stewards will then check the identity of the dog and scan the microchip against those on the registration card and within Fasttrack.*



- (6) You will then have to place the greyhound into the weighing scales cage. Greyhounds are weighed with their muzzle on, but you will have to remove the collar and lead. The Stewards will then record the weight of the greyhound on the dog's weight card and within Fasttrack.*

Under the rules it is your responsibility to ensure the correct weight is entered in the weight card, so make sure you check what has been written down.

(7) At this point, you will be allocated a kennel number on the printed kennel ticket for that greyhound. Each greyhound is given its own kennel within a row containing all the starters for that particular race. The kennels are assigned randomly, so no one knows which kennel will house each dog. Your kennel ticket will be marked with the dog's kennel number on it, and this will need to be presented to the kennel supervisor/staff so that they can escort you to the correct kennel. Stewards check all kennels prior to the start of race day, and after this each individual kennel is locked, and nobody is allowed to enter the kennelling area unsupervised.

(8) The kennel supervisor/staff will take you to the kennel that has been allocated for your greyhound and unlock it for you. It is your responsibility to make sure your greyhound is placed in the correct kennel as well as the kennel staff. You have the opportunity to inspect the kennel and place your greyhound's bedding into it before placing the greyhound in it, and the individual kennel being locked. When all of the greyhounds for the race have been kennelled, the row of kennels is also locked and sealed. The seal will only be broken once the handlers are present prior to the actual race.

(9) Depending on the time of the race, you may now have some time to relax. You will need to be back at the kennels to prepare your dog for its race no later than 20 minutes before the scheduled race time.

It is important that you ensure your greyhounds are presented fit to race and are free of injury and illness, and females are not in season.

Remember that if your female greyhound is in season, she will be stood down for 28 days. In the event of being withdrawn due to injury or illness, a greyhound shall be prohibited from competing for 10 days.

For more information, refer to the relevant rules:

GAR 23 Withdrawal after box draw

GAR 24 Greyhound in season

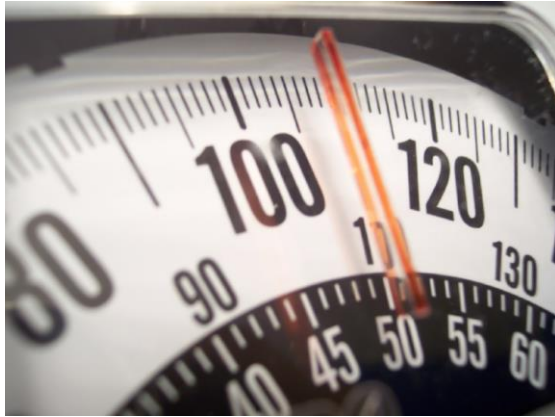


Understanding the weight requirements

The rules of racing state that each greyhound must be weighed prior to racing and its weight is to be recorded in the greyhound's own weight card. The weight card must be produced each time the greyhound is to race, along with the greyhound's registration card. It is your responsibility to ensure the correct weight is recorded in the weight card by the Stewards.

A weight variation of only 1 kilogram from the last race or satisfactory weight trial is permitted otherwise the greyhound will not be permitted to race. The exception to this is where the greyhound has not competed for more than 28 days, and written notification of the reason for the weight variation is given to the Stewards

at the time of kennelling. In this case a variation of up to 2 kilograms is permitted.



If the greyhound is prohibited from racing due to a weight variation, the greyhound will receive a 'stand down' period of 10 days, and the trainer will be guilty of an 'offence' under the rules. This means the Stewards will impose a penalty, generally a fine.

If the trainer wants a weight variation of more than 2 kilograms, they can apply to the Stewards for a 'Satisfactory Weight Trial'. This means the dog is trialled in the presence of a Steward. This cannot occur before 28 days have elapsed since the greyhound's last race. The Steward will record the dog's weight in the weight record card and will also record whether or not the trial was satisfactory. If the trial is deemed satisfactory, then the greyhound can race again, with the new weight recorded at the trial being taken as its last start weight.

Rules relating to weight

The relevant rules relating to weight are:

GAR 38 Weighing

GAR 39 Weight variation

GAR 40 Satisfactory weight trial

3.2 Preparation for racing

When the time comes for the greyhounds to race, you will need to return to the kennel area to collect and prepare your dog. You will have to show your kennel ticket to the gate attendant, otherwise you will not be allowed to enter the kennel area.



Once the trainers or attendants are present, the Steward or kennel staff member responsible will break the seal on the kennel row in your presence. The individual kennels are then unlocked so you can collect your greyhound. You may need to fit the greyhound's racing muzzle and put on its collar and leash.

From here you can take your greyhound out to the toileting area for a chance to empty out. This is very important as no dog will race well if it is uncomfortable with a full bladder.

The next step is to fit your greyhound with a racing rug. Make sure you have the correct racing rug for your greyhound's box. The rugs come in small, medium, large and extra-large sizes to accommodate the different sized greyhounds, so you will have to know which size to ask for. They are a one-piece

lycra design that is slipped over the dog's head, before gently feeding the dog's front legs through the leg holes.

The On-track Veterinarian (OTV) will now again inspect each greyhound to check they are fit to race, and that nothing has happened to the dog during the time in the kennel that would make the dog unsuitable to race.

Now is the time to ensure any requested/necessary bandaging ('strapping' or 'taping') is applied to the dog. Some dogs will have talcum powder or lubricant such as Vaseline applied to certain areas to prevent chafing. The talcum powder and Vaseline are provided by the club for this purpose.

The Stewards will once again check the microchip of each dog, that the muzzle is fitted appropriately and that the correct rug is has been appropriately placed on the greyhound.

By this time the race prior to yours will have finished, and there will be an opportunity to let the greyhound see the lure. This stir-up is helpful for some greyhounds, but can be too exciting for others, so it is your choice whether the dog goes out to watch the lure go around.

Now is the time to perform any massage or stretching necessary to help warm the greyhounds up. Some trainers will want the dog walked around, others will want the dog kept as calm as possible, so it is important to understand what type of warm-up the individual greyhound does best with.

Handling your greyhound on the track

On race day, you are required to parade the greyhound in front of the public to view, and then walk the greyhound to the starting boxes. This is unless the weather is unsuitable (rain, hot, etc), in which case the dogs may be walked directly from the kennels to the boxes. Not only will your handling skills be on display to the public, and other trainers, you may also be shown on the television coverage of the race. You need to have good control of your greyhound at all times.

When parading you are expected to take your place in number order according to the box your greyhound has drawn, so it is important that you know which dog you will be following. Make sure you leave enough space between your dog and the one in front, so that if your greyhound decides to leap forward it will not make contact with the greyhound in front.

If your greyhound is particularly energetic, the first thing to do is ensure that your leash is short, and that you have any excess safely looped so that no one gets tangled. If the dog is still difficult to control, taking it by the collar directly will usually be enough to settle it and make sure that it does not bounce around.

You could also try looping the leash around the chest of the dog or under its belly and holding the loop firmly along with the dog's collar.

If the dog is continually difficult, or you are small or slight in build, then you may find that a nose strap or head check may help, although you will need to seek approval to use these on race day from the Stewards. It may pay to try them at home, or at the trial track before deciding

whether they might help you.

Parading a greyhound

If the weather is cold, you have the option of parading the greyhound in a warm rug. Each race club has a set of these warm rugs for participants to use in a range of sizes. The club supplied rugs are the only ones allowed to be used and help keep all competitors looking the same. This uniformity is considered important especially as there may be many thousands of people watching the parading and race all around the country via the television coverage.



Once each dog leaves the kennel area for the parade ring, you must then follow the instructions of the 'Parade Steward' who is in charge of escorting all of the runners from the kennels, to the parade area, and then onto the starting boxes. Keeping the dog moving during parading also assists with warming up the muscles and maintaining circulation prior to racing.

GAR 49 Preparation for starting

GAR 49(4) states that *the greyhound must not be assisted or carried from the parade area to the starting boxes.*

3.3 Handling a greyhound at the boxes and boxing a greyhound

The Parade Steward will ensure that all of the runners for the race have arrived at the starting boxes in plenty of time. Because of the television coverage, it is very important that the races start on time.

It is essential that you have some experience of boxing a greyhound prior to handling any dog at a race meeting. If you have been involved with training the greyhounds, you will have most likely had to box dogs at the trial track, where it does not matter if you have trouble, and there are people that can help.

This type of handling is a skill that you need to practice, away from the race meeting. The more greyhounds you box and handle manually, the better you will become at the manual art of restraint. Remember you only want to use the least amount of pressure necessary to maintain control. If you handle a dog roughly, or put a lot of pressure on, they will naturally fight the restraint, making them harder to hold.

There is a short period of time between removing the dog's collar and leash and loading them into the starting boxes where the greyhound could potentially escape. This is a very important time to make sure you have adequate control.

Before taking the collar and leash off, make sure that you have walked the greyhound as close to the starting boxes as possible, so you only have to load them, rather than walk any distance to the boxes. Keep your hands on the dog at all times, this way you can feel if the dog

is likely to jump forward or resist. It is recommended that you have one hand on the dog's chest and the other underneath its abdomen. This way if the dog goes to move forward or back, or tries to turn side-ways, you should be able to maintain control.

When boxing a greyhound, you must first walk the dog up to the area immediately behind the boxes, before taking off the dog's collar and leash. You do not want the dog to get away from you at this point, so you must always have the dog securely held. Most handlers will straddle the dog as they remove the collar and leash, placing one hand on the dog's chest to prevent it moving forward, and placing the other hand under the dog's abdomen.

Make sure that you place the collar and lead safely away from the greyhound as you do not want to get the dog's legs tangled in it as the dog is boxed. It is also important not to throw the lead behind you as you could hit another trainer or dog in the process.



When it is time to load the greyhound, you need to lift it forwards as far as possible into the box, and then gently push the dog forward using a hand on the dog's rump. As you close the door, make sure that the dog's tail and legs don't get caught.

It is important not to injure the dog whilst boxing. Some people dig their hands into

the dog's abdomen which can cause discomfort, others are rough and put so much pressure on the dog that it is forced into an unnatural position and there is the potential to do muscle damage. If a part of the dog gets caught in the door of the box a lot of damage can be done – especially if the dog is released whilst part of it is still trapped. As a result, the greyhound may become difficult to box as it associates the pain it felt with being in the confines of the starting box.

Continual difficulty in loading the greyhound in the starting box may result in a Box First requirement being placed on the greyhound by the Steward. This will be outside the normal box order. The 'starter' is the person responsible for ensuring the start of the race is undertaken in accordance with the rules. When the greyhounds arrive at the starting boxes for an event they are deemed to be "in the starter's hands".

The starter will order the removal of any parade rugs, nose straps, head checks, along with the greyhound's leash and collar. Muzzles are kept on. Once ordered to box their greyhound, each handler must quickly place their greyhound in their assigned box and then move out of the way to avoid delaying the start of the race.

Greyhounds are placed in the starting boxes in the following order:

1-3-5-7 are placed in first, followed by 2-4-6-8.

The starter will then ensure that all of the doors to the boxes have been securely fastened, and make sure that no part of any greyhound is visibly held or caught by the doors. The green light is then given and the race can be started.

The lure driver will start the lure, and the boxes will automatically open as the lure passes a certain point.

3.4 Catching and the role of the Catcher

Each race track has an area called the 'Catching Pen' where the dogs are caught after the race. There is a large catching pen gate in front of them that blocks access for them to follow the lure further around the track. In the catching pen gate there is a small door that allows the lure to pass through, and this is quickly closed to ensure no greyhound tries to follow the lure. As the last greyhound comes into the catching pen, a second gate ('Run Back Gate') is closed behind the field to stop them turning around and heading back the other way. To help encourage the greyhounds into the catching pen a decoy lure (usually a squeaker on a rope) is thrown into the catching pen to attract the dogs.

The role of the catcher is an important one on race night. They are the person who must safely catch and control your greyhound after the race is finished. Every greyhound must have an assigned catcher who is in charge of catching that greyhound.



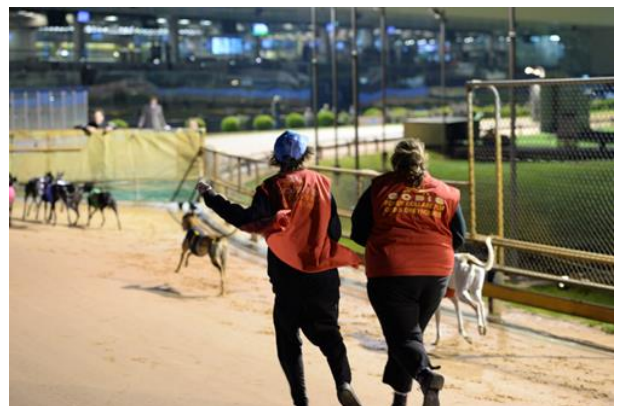
GAR 48 Catcher to be available

The handler of a greyhound engaged to compete in an event shall ensure that a

registered person or a person authorised by the stewards is in attendance at the catching pen prior to the commencement of the event for the purpose of catching the greyhound.

It is impossible to be in two places at once (the starting boxes and the catching pen), so in most cases the catcher must be someone who is not going to be parading and boxing the greyhound. Only registered catchers, attendants or trainers are allowed to catch a greyhound, unless approved by the Stewards, and you will have to organise the person to act as catcher well before your race.

Once the greyhounds are enclosed in the catching pen, the catchers enter and must quickly catch the greyhound they have been assigned. Each catcher must have a collar and lead or a 'catching leash' (a form of slip leash) and may only catch and handle the greyhound they have been assigned.



You must be clear on which greyhound to catch – so remember the colour of its race rug and the colour of the dog. The catching pen Steward will give permission for the catchers to enter the pen when it is safe to do so, at which time you must quickly go in and catch your dog. Be very careful of runners who may be entering the catching pen late and be aware of what is happening around you. Some dogs are hard to catch, and they may continue

to run around the pen causing a potential hazard to you and the greyhound you are catching.

Once your greyhound is on leash and under control, you can move it out of the way of other dogs. If there is any concern that another dog might get too close, try to place yourself in between the two dogs, or walk your greyhound quickly away. You are not allowed to touch the other dogs, or push them away, and you are not allowed to catch anyone else's dog.

The greyhounds who have won or been placed in the race will be required to parade to the winner's area, while the other runners will be heading to the wash bay for their cool down. By this time, the greyhound's handler or trainer should have arrived, and will take over.

Catchers can provide important information to the trainer or handler of a dog. They may have noticed a lameness or injury, or may have information about knocks, bumps or even falls that might have occurred towards the end of the race or as the dogs were in the catching pen.

3.5 Rules, roles and responsibilities associated with controlling greyhounds at track

On race day there are a lot of things going on. It is essential that everyone knows what is required of them so that the program can run smoothly and the races can start on time. The 'Steward in Charge' is the Steward responsible for everything

that happens at the race meeting, but there are plenty of other people who all have important roles in the running of the race meeting.

As the person responsible for presenting a greyhound, it is important that you are aware of exactly what you have to do and where you have to be at a particular time. Depending on the number of races on the program, there may be 96 greyhounds arriving at the track kennels in a very short time. These greyhounds need to be individually vet checked, weighed and their identification confirmed by the Stewards all in the short space of 45 minutes.



Rules

GAR 27 Control of greyhound on racecourse

- (1) *The trainer of a greyhound shall be responsible for, and shall make provision for, the proper care and handling of each greyhound from the time the greyhound arrives at a racecourse for an Event or trial until the time the greyhound leaves the racecourse.*
- (2) *Without limiting sub-rule 1, and notwithstanding any other Rule, a trainer shall ensure-*
 - (a) *that for that trainer's greyhounds which are at a racecourse, there is at least 1 handler for every 4 of the trainer's greyhounds so that there is 1*

- person who is generally responsible for no more than 4 greyhounds while they are at the racecourse;*
- (b) *that between kennelling and completion of all the post event or event activities, a handler is in physical control of not more than 1 greyhound at any 1 time; and*
- (c) *compliance with such other directions as the Controlling Body may issue from time to time concerning the handling of greyhounds at a racecourse.*

For the purpose of this Rule a person shall be considered to be in “physical control” of a greyhound where that person is handling the greyhound during pre-Event preparations, Events and post-Event activities. A greyhound which is kennelled does not require a person to be in “physical control” of it.

Roles and responsibilities

There are many roles filled on race day. There are people who are responsible for every aspect of the race meeting, ensuring the meeting runs smoothly and that the greyhounds are given every chance of performing to their best.

Stewards: Responsible for the effective and fair running of race meetings and ensuring that the rules of greyhound racing are adhered to including the drug sampling of greyhounds.

Race Club Staff: Responsible for ensuring that spectators are suitably catered for, ensuring adequate betting facilities are in place, and organising the presentation of any trophies or awards.

Track Staff: Responsible for maintaining the track and equipment for racing.

Kennel Staff: Responsible for the security and welfare of the greyhounds.

On Track Veterinarian: Responsible for the welfare of the greyhounds including pre-race examination of greyhounds to ensure they are fit to race, providing first aid for injured greyhounds, post-race examinations and drug sampling of greyhounds at the request of the Stewards.

Starter: Responsible for ensuring races start on time under the direction of the Stewards.

Lure Driver: Responsible for driving the mechanical lure.

Judge: Responsible for judging the placegetters in each race.

Trainers/Attendants: Responsible for preparing and parading the greyhounds.

Catchers: Responsible for catching the greyhounds at the end of a race.

Expected standards of behaviour

In whichever industry you work, your behaviour and appearance are direct reflections of that industry. The greyhound industry is a multi-billion-dollar industry that attracts a lot of publicity and as such there are expected standards of dress and behaviour for all industry participants, particularly on race day.

These issues are addressed in the:

LR22 Behaviour and Attire at Meetings

Standards of dress

If you are engaged at a race meeting as a Trainer, Attendant or Catcher, you must comply to the following dress code:

- Black or dark blue ankle length trousers;

- A collared white shirt or polo top;
- Black or dark socks; and
- Black shoes, boots or gumboots.

There is also the provision in this rule for:

- Such other or alternate clothing as the Board may determine from time to time.

This section of the rule allows for the requirement that all handlers wear the jackets or coats provided by the race club whilst parading the greyhounds to the start.

The rules also specifically prohibit the wearing of the following items:

- Overalls or track pants of any description;
- Any item of denim clothing;
- Track shoes or high heeled shoes of any description;
- Anything that is in the opinion of the Stewards to be offensive or inappropriate (this extends to head wear / hats); or
- Any other items of clothing that the Board may determine from time to time.

If you do not comply with the dress code, you will not be allowed to parade, handle or act as a catcher of a greyhound for the duration of the meeting unless you can change your attire to meet the requirements. The Stewards may nominate any other person to act as your substitute to parade, handle or catch any greyhound you were engaged to handle.

Punctuality

It is very important that you are on time for a race meeting. Greyhound races run like clockwork, so it is your responsibility to ensure any greyhounds in your care are ready and at the right place at the right

time.

To ensure that you arrive on time, you need to allow adequate travel time to reach the track. If you are travelling long distances, you will also have to factor in any stops that may be necessary for either you or your greyhounds. It is always better to arrive a little early than to be running late.

Kennelling of greyhounds usually starts 75 minutes before the start of the first race (except on hot weather affected days when kennelling opens 30 minutes earlier) and normally finishes 30 minutes before the first race. This gives you a 45-minute window to present your greyhound(s). Remember: if you have to present more than one greyhound you cannot take them all in at the same time, so allow for this when you are deciding what time you plan to arrive.

If you fail to present your greyhound(s) at the correct time, they will not be allowed to compete, and will be 'stood down' for 28 days, meaning they are not allowed to compete in any event for the next 28 days. You will also be guilty of an offence and will be liable to a penalty. For more information, refer to **GAR 31 Presentation of greyhound for racing and kennelling time**.

You must also make sure you are punctual when returning to the kennels to prepare your dog for its race. For more information refer to **GAR 46 Preparation for racing**.

Behaviour

As with any industry, there are minimum standards of behaviour expected. Inappropriate behaviour such as swearing, arguing or being intoxicated is not

tolerated at greyhound race meetings, and the Stewards have the power to hold an inquiry into your behaviour and may penalise you. You can also be removed from the precincts of the racecourse.

Behaviour and dress standards are addressed in the rules of racing:

LR 22 Behaviour and attire at meetings

22.1 *A club shall ensure that all persons at a Meeting are suitably dressed and behave in accordance with a standard commensurate with the ideal of the betterment of greyhound racing as a public entertainment.*

22.2 *The Steward in Charge of a Meeting may require the secretary of a Club to have removed from the Premises of a Club any person who is, in that Steward's opinion, not suitably dressed, or who is intoxicated or behaving improperly.*

Remember you are representing not only yourself and your kennel, but also the sport of greyhound racing. Inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated.

Communication

Working in the greyhound industry as either a trainer or attendant requires you to communicate effectively with a wide range of people and officials. You will need to listen carefully to instructions and questions and be able to reply quickly and politely. In the course of a race day you will need to speak to Stewards, the On-track Veterinarian, kennel staff and catchers. You may also have to report back to the greyhound's owner or trainer. If you have a win, you may have to speak at a trophy presentation, or might be interviewed.

There are also rules relating to communication on race day, restricting

communication in certain instances:

GAR 44 Prohibited use of communication devices

Unless the controlling body determines otherwise, an owner, trainer or attendant shall not use in any way, or have turned on, a mobile telephone, mobile communication device or any unauthorised device whilst parading, handling, or acting as a catcher of a greyhound or whilst participating in a presentation ceremony or while present in the kennel building or parade area.

GAR 47 Parading a greyhound

(1) A person handling a greyhound whilst it is being paraded shall not communicate excessively with any person outside the parade area.

It is very important that you remember to turn off your mobile phone when you arrive at the track, and only turn it on when you are well away from the kennelling area.

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