

**To: Stewarding Team**  
**From: Raceday Operations**  
**Subject: Raceday procedures for inspections, race delays or abandonments due to concerns raised over the conditions at a racecourse.**

### **Purpose**

Raceday procedures for inspections, race delays or abandonments due to concerns raised over conditions at a racecourse.

The priority of all decisions made shall be the well-being and safety of all persons and horses.

Participant representatives:

1. During the pre-race Stewards briefing, Stewards should have a general awareness of which individuals should be identified for any relevant enquiry that may arise. Representatives for an Inspecting Group should include:
  1. Racecourse representative(s)
  2. Trainer representative(s)
  3. Jockey representative(s)
  4. Veterinary/Medical representative(s)
2. Representatives will be determined based of the criteria in ANNEX B.
3. The Inspecting Group should comprise of no more than 3 representatives from each participant group.
4. Stewards reserve the right to call upon any other individuals that may be able to offer further evidence to aid in decision making (i.e.: Course inspectors, officials, etc).
5. The individuals outlined above, and the stewarding team will collectively be called the Inspection Group.

*Note: All representatives must act objectively and free from conflict. Evidence given during any enquiry should be related to their area of expertise and weighted as such.*

6. Stewards should review and consider any concern raised during the day and determine if an enquiry should be held. Concerns can be raised by any Participant or Official.
7. Reasons to hold an enquiry may include but are not limited to:
  - a. Surface condition – including concerns over slipping, fallers, general condition of the course, etc.
  - b. Adverse weather conditions including lightning, visibility (fog or sun), excessive precipitation/temperatures, etc.
  - c. Structural/Facilities issues – rails, fences, stables, weighing room, etc.
8. The Chief Steward will manage any enquiry with the assistance of other BHA Officials and racecourse staff as necessary to provide appropriate levels of privacy.
9. The Stewards should utilise the Abandonment Decision Form for documenting any abandonment enquiry regardless of the outcome.

### **Surface Condition Enquiry**

10. Any enquiry related to the surface condition should begin in the Stewards' Room to review any relevant evidence prior to physical inspection on course. This may include video and/or oral evidence. All aspects should be documented.
11. During the entire enquiry process, the nominated representatives set out in para 1 above, who form the Inspection Group should be allowed to review the areas of the surface of concern without the pressure of media or outside influence. All members will be under strict instruction not to relay any information to anyone outside of the Inspection Group.

12. If during the on-course inspection, there is unanimous agreement from the stewards having heard evidence from the inspecting group that racing can continue, it shall be documented, at the least, via audio recording device. This can be done to mitigate any delays to racing.
13. If further discussion is required, the Inspection Group must return to the Steward's Room.
14. Evidence will be considered by the Stewards enabling a decision to be made which may result in the racecourse undertaking any remedial work with re-evaluation/inspection as necessary, abandoning the race(s), switching surface or course, or abandoning the remainder of the meeting.
15. After all evidence is gathered, the Stewards will ask all representatives to wait outside while deliberating. Representatives of the Inspecting Group are not to discuss the enquiry process or evidence with anyone outside of the Inspecting Group.
16. The Raceday Assistant (or other appropriate BHA Official) shall ensure the representative group stays within the weighing room area and is monitored to ensure confidentiality of the process.
17. All representatives will then be invited back into the Stewards' Room for the outcome of the enquiry and should follow the communications procedure as outlined below in the Communications section.

### **Adverse Weather Conditions Enquiry**

18. It is preferred to delay rather than abandon for adverse weather conditions when practical. However, if by the advertised time of the third race racing has not been possible, Stewards should consider abandoning unless improvement appears imminent.
19. The racecourse should monitor all weather-related events and alert Stewards immediately of any impeding concerns – i.e.: lightning, high winds or fog.
  - a. Stewards should request the racecourse facilities lightning protocol to assist with considerations over delays and abandonments and work with Clerk of the Course to action as necessary. The protocol should describe how weather is being monitored and by whom (onsite, real-time weather stations are preferable to track lightning strikes; however, in the absence, a lightning tracking app/website can be used, noting the delay/refresh time); and distance/delay recommendations. For example: *Once lightning is within 8 miles of the racecourse, operations should cease for 20 minutes or until such time that the threat has moved outside of the 8-mile radius.* (Note: Racetech risk assessment is to lower or cease operations when lightning is within 8 miles)
  - b. In the absence of a racecourse lightning protocol the 30:30 rule should be applied (See pages [11-12 here](#) for an example)
  - c. Racetech or other contractors' protocols should also be considered to ensure a consistent approach is being taken for safety.
  - d. Decisions on delays should be made prior to horses leaving the parade ring when possible.
  - e. If horses have already left the Parade Ring, they should return to a safe location and not continue to the Start.
  - f. If already at the Start, the starting stalls and rostrum should be avoided and not be used. Stewards, in consultation with the Starters and Clerk of the Course should determine if it is safe to race (for example: in a straight race) via flag or to move to a safe location until the storm passes. It is preferred to not race at any point with lightning within the designated distance radius in the racecourses lightning protocol.
20. Prior to racing, Stewards should confer with the Clerk of the Course in relation to BHAGI 3.4 para 16 for any potential omissions of obstacles due to the potential of low sun. The applicable fence/hurdle numbers can be communicated on the going app in the comment section, if necessary.
21. If stewards are alerted by Jockeys or Officials about visibility issues (i.e.: fog, sun, dusk), they should determine if action can be taken (bypass) or if racing should be delayed or abandoned. Safety and integrity cover should not be compromised. See reference BHAGI 3.4 para 3.
  - a. Stewards, Judges, Integrity coverage, Medical/Veterinary teams should have visible sight lines of the racecourse and participants while participating in the race.
  - b. Visibility of stop race flag, hazards flag and/or AFO flags must be visible at all times to enable participants to safely effect instruction.

### **Structural or Facilities Concerns**

22. If Stewards are alerted to any structural or facilities concerns that may affect racing or the ability for participants or officials to adequately continue racing (i.e.: flooding in the stables, electrical failure in judges box, running rails damaged) the relevant persons outlined in para 1 and/or Officials will be consulted for any remedies prior to any decision to abandon any races. Convening of a full Inspection Group is not typically relevant for these abandonment or delay enquires unless disagreement between parties is evident.

### **Considerations**

23. Stewards shall consider all the evidence presented including but not limited to:
- All video, oral and physical evidence,
  - Maintenance information on the surface and any remedial work that may be able to be completed within a designated time frame,
  - Time of day in relation to sunlight or conditions unsuitable to continue racing.
24. Stewards reserve the right to conduct a secret ballot, in exceptional circumstances, of the jockeys to gauge the view to continue to race. Jockeys with rides in at least one of the remaining races are eligible to vote.
25. If the surface is deemed suitable to continue,
- Any rider who does not wish to ride over concerns of the surface is permitted to be replaced without penalty. If no jockey is available or willing to accept the ride, the horse will be withdrawn.
  - Any trainer may withdraw their horse without penalty if they have a concern over the surface.

### **Procedures to be adopted for delays affecting race times and race order**

26. If racing cannot start at the advertised time, the principle that should be adopted by the Stewards is to delay racing rather than abandon. Every effort should therefore be made to run all or part of the day's race programme.
27. However, if, at the advertised time of the third race, racing is still impossible, the Stewards should consider abandoning the meeting, unless a sudden improvement appears imminent.
28. When racing becomes possible due to improved conditions, as many races as possible should be run, allowing for the time constraints imposed by intervals between races, the time of sunset and other relevant factors. Intervals between races may be reduced as far as practicable. So far as possible, races scheduled to be shown on terrestrial television should continue to be run at their original programmed times. Subject to the foregoing, and unless otherwise directed by the BHA, with the agreement of the Managing Executive, if time does not permit the full running programme, races of the lowest class, as classified in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule (F)2, should be abandoned first as necessary. In the event that there are two or more races of the same class, the race with the lowest total prize money should be abandoned first as necessary. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES, HOWEVER, SHALL A RACE BE RESCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE ANY EARLIER THAN ITS ORIGINAL PROGRAMMED TIME.** An example of rescheduled timings following the application of such a procedure is provided at Annex C.

### **Communications and Delivery of Outcomes**

29. The Inspection Group shall remain in the Stewards' Room until communication plan is determined.
30. Stewards should work with the Managing Executive to ensure the following is communicated on course and off-course:
- Outcome of the enquiry

- b. Reason for the decision
  - c. Any modification to the remainder of the racecard (times, distances, course layout, etc.)
31. Upon conclusion of announcements, the Inspection Group should review the procedure for any learnings from the process.
  32. The course inspector report should be forward to the racecourse within five business days.
  33. If the meeting or races are abandoned due to failure of BHAGI 1.4, Stewards should contact the Inspector of Courses and refer to BHA office as soon as possible.

**ANNEX A**

Inspecting Group Identified and Meets in Stewards Enquiry Room



Stewards Open Enquiry

- Outline objectives and expectations of the enquiry
- Review any relevant footage, if available



Inspecting Group Proceeds on Course to affected area

**Issues to Resolve**



Inspecting Group to return to Stewards' Room



Stewards' to conduct enquiry and gather all evidence on the record



Inspecting Group to wait in weighing room during Stewards' Deliberations under supervision of Raceday Assistant or other BHA official



Inspecting Group to return to Stewards' Room for outcome of enquiry



Operation plan determined by racecourse prior to Inspecting Group leaving enquiry room



Communication Plan disseminated to participants and public

**Unanimous to Continue**



Stewards to document outcome (via audio recorder)



Racecourse to communicate continuance of racing

*Upon conclusion of the enquiry, Inspecting Group should review for any feedback regarding the enquiry or inspecting process.*

## ANNEX B

### Representative Selection

General guidance for selecting representatives. These are recommendations not requirements:

1. Racecourse representative(s) should include the Clerk of the Course, Managing Executive and/or groundsperson
2. Jockey Representatives should follow this priority *with those having rides remaining on the card*:
  - a. PJA Safety Officer or NH Deputy
  - b. Senior jockey who has already ridden over the course on the day
  - c. Leading jockey at the racecourse
  - d. Other senior jockeys
  - e. Apprentices/Conditionals, only if necessary
  - f. In the event the race in question is an Apprentice or Amateur race, consider one from that race to be a representative if appropriate.
3. Trainer Representatives should follow this priority *with those who have runners remaining*:
  - a. NTF Council Member
  - b. Leading Trainer at the racecourse by frequency of runners
  - c. Experience of Trainer (numbers of runners/year's training)
4. Veterinary/Medical representatives should include a BHA Veterinary Officer and Senior Medical personnel, where possible.

**ANNEX C****DECISION FORM – REASONS FOR ABANDONING/CONTINUING THE MEETING/RACES**

If there are concerns with the safety of the course the Stewards should, having inspected the course and, having considered the evidence of those persons referred to in BHAOP 2.4, follow the procedure below and list the reasons which need to be taken into account before deciding whether to abandon or continue racing. Having done so, the Panel should ask the questions outlined thereafter, and then list the reasons for its decision. This form is to be attached to the report of the Enquiry and is available through electronic form on the Stewarding System.

*Reasons for abandoning – describe evidence*

*Reasons for continuing – describe evidence*

*Having considered the above, the Panel should ask the following questions:*

- 1. Is there a greater risk than normal by allowing racing to continue? (If 'Yes', go to 2, if 'No' go to 6)*
- 2. If 'Yes', how serious is that risk? Are the safety concerns of the Riders (and/or Trainers) representative of their colleagues and justified?*
- 3. If so, are these concerns sufficiently serious that it would be unreasonable to require the Riders to take the risk?*
- 4. If so, and in the absence of any other means of practically mitigating the risk, the meeting should probably to be abandoned.*
- 5. If the decision taken is to abandon racing, list below the reasons for the Panel's decision.*
- 6. If 'No' and the decision taken is to commence/continue racing, list below the reasons for the Panel's decision.*

*The Panel decided to abandon/continue racing for the following reasons:*

*To be signed by each member of the Panel that sat on the Enquiry:*

**Example of Re-Scheduled Timings****Advertised order of races**

1:00 Race A (non-TV – Class 5)  
1:30 Race B (non-TV – Class 3)  
2:00 Race C (TV – Class 3) 3:05  
2:30 Race D (TV – Class 2) 3:30  
3:00 Race E (TV – Class 1) 4:00  
3:30 Race F (TV – Class 2) 4:15  
4:00 Race G (non-TV – Class 4)  
4:15 Sunset

**Order following delay**

2:15 Race C (TV – Class 3)  
2:40 Race D (TV – Class 2)  
3:05 Race E (TV – Class 1)  
3:30 Race F (TV – Class 2)  
4:00 Race B (non-TV – Class 3)  
4:15 Sunset

Race A and Race G: Abandoned