

## **COVID-19 Protocol changes from 17 May 2021**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

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#### **Why do we will still need to be using BCD protocols?**

The changes coming into effect from 17 May are an interim step before the removal of limits on racegoers and mandatory restrictions on racecourses, which we hope should follow on 21 June.

The Government has made clear it is taking a cautious approach and events will be monitored carefully by local and national public health authorities. What they see may inform their decisions about what happens after 21 June.

The Government produced guidelines for events with spectators last year, and sporting event organisers are required to follow these from 17 May. The guidelines recognise that at sporting events, competitors and support staff may not be able to maintain social distancing and so specific measures are required to manage the risk of infection being spread.

Handling horses during a race-meeting does, at times, require jockeys, staff and others to come within two metres of one another so racing has had to find its own ways to reduce the risks.

Other sports have introduced compulsory testing for their players and coaches and in some cases a 'bubble' which they cannot leave during the competition. As racing takes place outdoors and is generally lower risk, compulsory testing has not been required. Our alternative was to create the 'green zone' for participants, including jockeys, trainers, racing staff and officials. All entrants have been required to carry out screening, maintain social distancing, and wear face coverings, except in certain situations.

This approach has been very successful, with no evidence that COVID has spread at meetings where these protocols have been followed. Because of this approach, national and local authorities have been willing to allow owners to attend race meetings behind closed doors, provided they did not enter the green zone and increase the risk to participants and themselves.

From May 17<sup>th</sup>, the authorities are prepared to allow owners to enter the parade ring, but they are still concerned about the risk of infection spreading, including new variants of COVID . As a result, the guidelines dictate that social distancing and other protective measures must be maintained in this interim period. Government and its advisors are considering how and when the measures will be removed, from 21 June at the earliest.

#### **Why do racecourses still need a Green Zone restricting access to certain areas?**

The risk to participants has diminished due to the vaccination programme and the reduction in the number of COVID cases and deaths. The prevalence of COVID is lower and so it is less likely that someone who is COVID-positive attends a meeting which could lead to the infection spreading.

However, the risk remains higher in indoor areas where some participants spend significant periods of time and where many of those present may currently be unvaccinated.

Moreover, due to the legal requirement to self-isolate after close contact with a positive case, there is a risk that a number of jockeys, valets and officials with critical roles in running meetings, could be required to self-isolate for 10 days in the event of a positive case of a Green Zone attendee.

To protect their health and their livelihoods (and align with national guidelines), the Green Zone protocols, including the screening process, will stay in place from 17 May.

### **Why do some racing staff no longer need to be in the Green Zone?**

Trainers and racing staff are only required to use the indoors areas within the Green Zone on rare occasions, which will be managed on a case-by-case basis (see below). As a group, they are therefore at a lower risk than jockeys, valets and officials.

This has enabled racecourses to redesignate parade-rings and other areas used by trainers and racing staff as 'amber' and, where possible, ease the COVID measures that apply.

It will therefore be possible to admit owners into the parade ring, provided they follow the same COVID measures as trainers and racing staff when in the ring.

### **Why do we still need social distancing and face coverings in parade and pre-parade rings, saddling and unsaddling areas, and horse walks?**

[Government guidance](#) requires that social distancing continues to apply in workplaces, businesses, and public venues. In addition, the rules on close contact, which are now written into law, require people to self-isolate if they come into close contact with a positive case.

In the event of a positive case amongst someone present in the areas listed above, all those deemed to have been in close contact with that person will be required by NHS Test & Trace to self-isolate. This could affect a number of jockeys, staff, trainers and now owners, and may impact both their health and their livelihood.

Moreover, handling horses can, of course, mean that jockeys, staff and trainers DO need to come within close proximity, increasing the risk that the virus may pass from one person to another.

By requiring all those in the parade-ring to maintain social distancing – at 2m for Green Zone attendees (i.e., jockeys) and 1m+ for trainers and owners – the risk of people having to self-isolate is significantly reduced.

To further mitigate the risk, all those present in the parade ring are asked to wear face coverings.

### **When will Amber Zone staff be able to go into the Green Zone?**

If a trainer or a member of racing staff is required to enter the Green Zone, for example, for a Stewards' Enquiry, they will be contacted by a BHA official, who may escort them into the indoor area, where extra precautions will be in place to minimise close contact and keep everyone safe.

### **Do staff limits still apply?**

There is no change to the numbers of racing staff permitted to attend in the interim period from 17 May.

### **Why am I still required to meet screening requirements if I'm no longer in the Green Zone?**

The on-course check-in process will not change for participants signed into the venue using the BHA App, who are required to complete the on-course screening only, which consists of a temperature check and on-site health questions.

This ensures consistency with the current approach and is part of British racing's managed transition towards 21 June, in line with the cautious approach being taken by government and local and national public health authorities.

Local public health authorities are still concerned about the risk of infection spreading, so maintaining the on-course screening will help provide reassurance and confidence in racing's continued effort to minimise risk.

### **Why are these requirements different for trainers and owners?**

Amber Zone attendees are asked to continue checking in through the same systems they have used to date – this ensures continuity and supports British racing's phased approach to easing restrictions.

Trainers will continue to be checked in via the BHA app, which requires a short entry screening process, and owners through an ID check on arrival.

### **How many owners will be able to go into the parade ring?**

Each racecourse will publish their capacity limits and the numbers of owners they expect to be able to enter the ring at any one time. These figures will always be a guide, rather than definitive, so that racecourse and BHA officials can manage the situations that may arise with some discretion.

As the number of Owners able to access the parade ring will vary in line with the number of runners in each race, Parade Ring access will be race specific. To ensure social distancing can be maintained in most circumstances the number of owners able to access the Parade Ring will be fewer than the total number of owners in attendance.

To help manage the transition between races and avoid any cross-over, unless advised otherwise, owners and trainers will be asked to leave the parade ring as soon as their horse has made its way down to the start.

### **Will winning connections be able to access the Winners' Enclosure?**

Where possible, yes, but as with parade ring access, this will largely depend on safety and capacity limitations.

Again, to help avoid any cross-over issues between races, winning connections will be asked to leave the area once the presentations have concluded.

### **What do I do if my question is not answered here?**

The BHA has published detailed protocols [here](#), which have been updated to include the changes from 17 May. Please review this document to see if it answers your questions.

The BHA Helpdesk is on hand to support participants with the raceday processes, including registration and screening. The helpdesk is staffed from 8am to 5pm Monday-Saturday, and 8am to 4pm on Sundays. On weekdays and Saturdays when there is no evening racing, Sunday opening times will apply.

- Phone: 0207 152 0110
- Email: [covidhelpdesk@britishhorseracing.com](mailto:covidhelpdesk@britishhorseracing.com)



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Owners with specific questions about registering to attend a fixture should contact the racecourse in questions. For specific questions about the RCA's PASS please contact the PASS Helpdesk on 01933 270333 or via [pass@weatherbys.co.uk](mailto:pass@weatherbys.co.uk). The PASS helpdesk is contactable 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.