

6 July 2026

NZTR DIRECTIVE: NEW STRANGLES REQUIREMENTS FOR RACING AND TRIALLING

To help minimise the risk of Strangles spreading while allowing racing and trialling to continue safely, NZTR is introducing additional health requirements for all horses accepted to race or trial.

As the governing body for thoroughbred racing in New Zealand, NZTR considers it necessary to implement these additional precautions given the seriousness of Strangles and the potential impact of an outbreak across the wider industry.

These requirements take effect from the Cambridge Synthetic race meeting being held on Thursday 9 July 2026 and will remain in place until further notice.

Before Racing or Trialling

For every accepted runner:

- Horses must have their temperature taken twice daily, once in the morning and once in the afternoon/evening. A minimum of 8 hours must elapse between tests.
- Trainers must complete a [Strangles Health Declaration Form](#) confirming the horse is clinically well.

Temperature Monitoring Requirements

Recognising the limited lead-in time before these requirements take effect, NZTR acknowledges that it will not be possible to achieve five consecutive days of temperature monitoring for race and trial meetings occurring this week.

Accordingly:

- For race and trial meetings held over the next four days, trainers are expected to use their best endeavours to record temperatures for as many consecutive days as reasonably practicable before racing or trialling.
- At a minimum, horses racing or trialling this week must have temperatures recorded for at least two consecutive days before racing or trialling.
- From Sunday 12 July 2026 onwards, horses must have temperatures recorded for five consecutive days before racing or trialling.

The minimum expectations for meetings this week (8/7/26 – 12/7/26) are:

- Riccarton (Wednesday) – no requirement
- Cambridge (Thursday) – two days plus raceday morning
- Otaki (Friday) – three days plus raceday morning

- Ruakaka and Hawera (Saturday) – four days plus raceday morning
- Tauranga and Woodville (Sunday)- five days plus raceday morning

Serum Amyloid A (SAA) Blood Testing

An SAA blood test is required for:

- Horses stabled within the greater Waikato region (between the Bombay Hills and Taupō);
- Horses that record a temperature above 38.5 degrees Celsius during the temperature reporting period; or
- Horses from any property with a confirmed Strangles case.

The SAA test must be completed within two days prior to the race or trial.

From the time of the SAA test temperatures must be in the normal range.

NZTR encourages trainers to engage with their veterinarian as early as possible to allow sufficient time for SAA testing and to ensure results can be submitted by 7.30am on raceday (where required).

A failed SAA test will be notified by the veterinarian to the Racing Integrity Board.

Health Declaration

[A Strangles Health Declaration Form](#) must be completed and submitted for every accepted runner. The declaration includes:

- Temperature monitoring records
- A health declaration confirming the horse is clinically well; and
- SAA blood test results (where required)

Submission Requirements

The completed declaration, temperature records and any required SAA test results must be provided to the Steward, or a designated raceday official, on the day of the race or trial if requested. This may be presented as either a hard copy or in a digital format.

Failure to provide the required information will result in the horse being scratched for non-compliance. This will be non-negotiable due to the importance of managing the spread of this disease.

Trainers will be advised directly by the raceday Steward if the horse is scratched.

NZTR and the Racing Integrity Board will undertake spot checks to verify SAA test results at race meetings.

Waipa Trials

To allow these measures to be implemented, the Te Awamutu trials scheduled for Tuesday 7 July have been postponed. The trials will instead be conducted on Tuesday 14 July, replacing the Cambridge Synthetic trials scheduled for that date.

Other Industry Activities

To reduce the risk of disease spread, activities such as jump-outs and daily track work activity should be limited to horses that are derived from the pool of regular users of that training facility.

Where these activities continue, participation should be limited to horses that are regular users of that training facility. Horses should not be transported from other training centres or regions to participate.

Next Steps

A further update on these requirements will be provided next week, or earlier if the situation requires.

NZTR are continuing to work closely with the RIB, NZTBA, the Equine Veterinary Branch of the NZVA, the Equine Health Association, Clubs, veterinarians, and other industry partners.

These measures are intended to be practical, proportionate and evidence-based, minimising the risk of disease spread while providing appropriate safeguards to enable racing and trialling to continue safely.

Previous Strangles Updates

For further information on Strangles, including disease management and biosecurity measures, please refer to the previous NZTR Strangles updates issued on [3 July](#) and [12 June](#).