

NZTR DIRECTIVE FOR STRANGLES DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Effective Date: 8 July 2026

Updated 5 August 2026

This Directive relates to all Thoroughbred breeding, training, trialing and racing activities. This Directive replaces all directives relating to Strangles Disease Management issued by NZTR previously.

Purpose

New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing (NZTR) has issued this Directive to reduce the risk of Strangles spreading within the Thoroughbred racing industry while aiming to allow racing and trialling to continue with minimal disruptions.

This Directive reflects the current disease situation, where Strangles is known to be present within the Waikato region. The measures contained in this Directive are precautionary, evidence-based and intended to minimise the risk of disease transmission between horses at racecourses, training facilities and trial venues.

This Directive may be updated by NZTR from time to time as necessary to reflect changing circumstances and best practice in the prevention, detection, and management of Strangles.

This Directive takes effect on 8 July 2026 and remains in force until amended or revoked by NZTR.

Enforceability

This Directive (and the protocols set out below) are binding on all Trainers, Breeders and Clubs, licensed persons, owners, and all other persons (including agistment operators, pre-trainers and other service providers) to whom the Rules of Racing apply. The possible consequences of a failure to adhere to this Directive are detailed in Section 3 of this Directive.

Background

Cases of Strangles have reinforced the need for disease control measures to protect the health and welfare of horses racing and trialling in New Zealand.

Strangles is a highly contagious bacterial disease capable of spreading rapidly through direct horse-to-horse contact and indirectly through contaminated equipment, vehicles, clothing and other fomites (objects). The disease may be transmitted before clinical signs

develop, and horses exposed to infection may appear clinically normal while incubating the disease or shedding the bacteria.

Race meetings, trials, jumpouts and training centres present an increased biosecurity risk because horses from multiple training establishments are brought together, often sharing transport, stabling and other infrastructure. Early identification of potentially infected horses, combined with timely reporting and appropriate movement controls, is therefore essential to minimise the risk of disease transmission and the resulting impacts on horse welfare and racing operations.

New Zealand has a strong record of industry-led biosecurity practices; however, effective disease management depends upon prompt reporting, consistent health monitoring and appropriate veterinary assessment. Trainers, breeders, owners and veterinarians are the first line of defence in identifying suspected cases and preventing wider spread within the Thoroughbred population.

Accordingly, NZTR has determined that additional temporary biosecurity measures are necessary. These measures are intended to be practical, proportionate and evidence-based, enabling racing and trialling to continue while appropriately managing the current disease risk.

NZTR will continue to review these measures in consultation with the Racing Integrity Board, the Equine Veterinary Branch of the New Zealand Veterinary Association, the NZ Equine Health Association and other industry stakeholders.

1. Definitions

1.1 For the purpose of this Directive:

Meeting means a Race or Trial meeting and includes Jump Outs that are timed over set distances. For the purposes of this Directive, a Meeting is in progress from 7:30 am on the morning of the Meeting until 30 minutes after the finish of the last race or trial conducted at that Meeting.

Strangles Red Zone means any geographic area or areas within which Strangles has recently been detected within the population of horses that are active in racing or training, and which has been defined as a Strangles Red Zone by NZTR.

Currently, the entire Waikato Local Government Region is a Strangles Red Zone.

Horse means any horse including a horse used as a travelling companion horse or a Clerk of Course horse.

Strangles means the equine disease caused by *Streptococcus equi* subsp. *equi*.

- 1.2 Any other term used in this Directive shall have the meaning given to it in the Rules of Racing unless the context requires otherwise.

2. Obligations

[Note: horse health monitoring and recording requirements upon Trainers are also requirements for Clerks of Course with respect to their horses]

A Trainer who has a horse which is engaged to participate in any Meeting, or any person who transports, or brings, a horse to a Meeting must comply with the requirements listed below, in accordance with the following:

- For all meetings the requirements of section 2.2 (relating to the NZTR Strangles Temperature Monitoring and Health Declaration) must be fulfilled for five days immediately prior to the Meeting and the morning of the Meeting.
- For race meetings after 6 August 2026, Trainers of horses that are not permanently or temporarily stabled within the Strangles Red Zone do not need to complete the Strangles Temperature Monitoring and Health Declaration (section 2.2).
- Requirements for the transport of horses (section 2.5) from the North Island to the South Island continue to apply. From 6 August 2026, there are no requirements for the transport of horses from the South Island to the North Island.

2.1 Disease control when Strangles is confirmed

Notification of Strangles cases must be made by email to the RIB Veterinary Services Manager via: vet@rib.org.nz. If Strangles is confirmed by veterinary diagnosis or laboratory testing in any horse in the care of a Trainer, Breeder, Licensed Person, pre-trainer, agistment operator or other service provider or any other person to whom the Rules apply, the person must advise the RIB Veterinary Services Manager (email: vet@rib.org.nz) immediately upon such confirmation being made, or when the person has had a confirmed strangles case in the current 2026 outbreak.

All further training and stable movements must be halted immediately and the stable premises placed in biosecurity restrictions whilst further testing is conducted and the attending veterinarian and the RIB Veterinary Services Manager (or their delegate) jointly assess and confirm biosecurity measures that are necessary to minimise the risk of further transmission of Strangles. Subsequent movement of horses must be coordinated under the direction of the RIB Veterinary Services Manager.

The person must comply with all instructions or directions issued by NZTR or the

Racing Integrity Board (RIB) concerning testing, isolation, movement restrictions or other disease control measures.

Biosecurity restrictions may be lifted or eased by the RIB Veterinary Services Manager if satisfied that the affected horse has (or horses have) been isolated and managed with evidenced effective stable biosecurity measures under veterinary guidance. If permission is granted for biosecurity restrictions to be lifted or eased, this may allow resumption of training, racing, breeding or other usual activities.

A full clearance will be issued by the RIB Veterinary Services Manager with reliance on written advice of the stable veterinarian. **Upon clearance**, the stable may be permitted to resume training and racing activities. Any such clearance will be subject to compliance with the requirements of this Directive and any additional directives, conditions, or biosecurity measures that may be imposed by the RIB Veterinary Services Manager.

2.2 NZTR Strangles Temperature Monitoring and Health Declaration

For every horse **stabled in the Strangles Red Zone that is** engaged to participate in or be present at a Meeting, the Trainer must complete the NZTR Strangles Temperature Monitoring and Health Declaration (the "Declaration").

The completed Declaration must accompany the horse to the Meeting and must be retained by the Trainer.

At a Meeting, the completed Declaration must be produced immediately upon request by a Steward or a Club employee.

This Declaration requires:

- the monitoring of the horse while at rest in its normal environment, commencing **5 days immediately prior** to the Meeting date and including the morning of the Meeting;
- the recording of the horse's rectal temperature **twice daily**, once in the morning and once in the evening with a minimum of 8 hours elapsing between consecutive readings; and
- that the Trainer must immediately consult their veterinarian if the horse records a resting temperature greater than **38.5°C**.

Temperature measurements must be accurately recorded on the Declaration, detailing:

- the date;
- the time each temperature is taken;
- the recorded temperature; and
- any relevant observations regarding the horse's health.

The Trainer must certify on this form that:

- the recorded temperature records are accurate;
- the horse has been monitored in accordance with NZTR's Strangles requirements; and
- the horse has appeared to be clinically well and has not shown signs consistent with Strangles, including fever, nasal discharge, coughing or enlarged lymph nodes.

2.3 Serum Amyloid A (SAA) testing

Note: not required for race meetings held on or after 30 July 2026.

2.4 Health monitoring

The Trainer must monitor all horses under their control for signs of illness. A horse must not race, train or trial if it appears to be unwell, with symptoms including but not limited to:

- fever;
- nasal discharge;
- coughing; or
- enlarged lymph nodes.

2.5 Transport of horses

(a) Requirements applying to all horses travelling from the North Island to the South Island

All horses transported from the North Island to the South Island must:

- be clinically healthy and not display signs consistent with Strangles, including fever, nasal discharge, enlarged or painful lymph nodes, abscessation, difficulty swallowing or any other suspicious clinical signs;
- have their health monitored for the five days immediately preceding transport;
- have their rectal temperature recorded twice daily, at least eight hours apart, during the five days immediately preceding transport;
- not have recorded a rectal temperature greater than 38.5°C during the monitoring period; and
- immediately notify the RIB Veterinary Services Manager if Strangles is suspected or confirmed before transport.

In addition to the above requirements, horses travelling from any location in the North Island to any location in the South Island, including South Island racehorses, breeding horses and companion horses returning from a North Island visit, must submit the 'RIB North Island to South Island Strangles Travel Declaration' form and obtain the prior written approval of the RIB Veterinary Services Manager before travel.

Where the horse: is not known or reasonably suspected to have contracted Strangles; and has not been located on an affected or suspected property; and has not had any credible exposure to a horse affected by Strangles:

- a registered veterinarian must collect a nasopharyngeal wash or nasal swab;
- the sample must be submitted to an accredited diagnostic laboratory for PCR testing for *Streptococcus equi*; and
- the horse must obtain a negative PCR test result before travel.

Where the horse: is known or reasonably suspected to have contracted Strangles; or has been located on an affected or suspected property; or has had potential exposure to a horse affected by Strangles:

- a registered veterinarian must perform an endoscopically guided guttural pouch lavage;
- samples collected from the guttural pouch(s) must be submitted to an accredited diagnostic laboratory for PCR testing for *Streptococcus equi*; and
- the horse must obtain a negative PCR test result before travel.

(b) Requirements for transport from the South Island to the North Island

From 6 August 2026, no requirements are imposed for the transport of horses from the South Island to the North Island.

3. Compliance

Failure to adhere to this Directive (and the requirements set out above) constitutes a breach of the Rules of Racing (Rule 801 - Serious Racing Offences).

Failure to comply with this Directive **will** result in the horse being scratched from the Meeting, and **may** result in:

- refusal of permission for any horses from the Trainer's stable to race or trial;
- the issue of further directions by NZTR or the Racing Integrity Board; and
- disciplinary action under the Rules of Racing.

Providing false or misleading information in any declaration or record required under

this Directive may constitute a Serious Racing Offence.

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