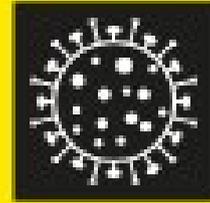


# Coronavirus COVID-19



Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice

# Coronavirus Supports

The logo for the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board, featuring the text 'IRISH HORSERACING REGULATORY BOARD' in white, uppercase letters inside a dark blue oval with a gold border.

IRISH  
HORSERACING  
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# Guidance To Licensed Participants During COVID-19 Restrictions

March 2020

On 28th March, the Irish Government published further restrictions to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19. These restrictions are currently due to be in place until 12th April.

This document provides guidance to assist trainers and their staff working within racing to interpret these requirements, following advice issued by the Chief Medical Officer on 27th March. We ask all participants to support one another at this difficult time. Your health and well-being are paramount and critical to the welfare of the horses in your care.

The full Government guidance can be read here but the key requirements as they relate to trainers/their staff are to:

1. Stay at home except to buy food, take brief exercise, attend medical appointments/ obtain medicines for a vulnerable person or undertake essential work.
2. As essential work includes the care of animals, continue to look after the racehorses in your care but make certain that safe working conditions are in place in line with the current government guidance.
3. Stop all gatherings with anyone you do not live with, going outside the home must only be for buying essential supplies such as food or medicines or to take brief exercise within 2 km and you must observe strict social distancing.

# Coronavirus Medical Advice

## Symptoms

- Fever/high temperature and cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Other flu-like symptoms may be present: aches and pains, sore throat, headache, fatigue/malaise

## If you feel unwell with any of the above symptoms:

- **YOU NEED TO GO HOME AND SELF-ISOLATE IMMEDIATELY**
- [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie) has information videos on how to self-isolate at home
- Call your GP by phone, do not go to your GP Surgery
- Testing for Covid-19, at present, is limited to those deemed at high risk due to underlying health conditions, your GP will advise if you meet these criteria.
- Treatment includes rest, fluids, paracetamol
- Self-isolation is for 14 days from onset of symptoms and until fever free for 5 days in all cases

## If someone in your yard is unwell with symptoms of Covid-19 or tests positive:

- Close contacts also need to self-isolate, even if the index case does not meet the criteria for testing, they will be presumed to have Covid-19
- Close contacts include all household members or someone who has been more than 15 minutes within 1 metre of a person who is having symptoms of the infection, or more than 2 hours within a confined space

**Please consider this when looking at your yard duties, and who might be deemed a close contact among your staff, if one were to test positive**

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Can staff working at racing yards still go to work?

**Yes.** The guidance stipulates people can leave home to travel to and from work where the work is an essential service – farmers, farm labourers and others involved in animal production and related activities (including veterinary services) are considered essential services. Note that strict adherence to social distancing and hygiene measures as published must be adhered to.

These include:

- remaining at least two metres apart
- not touching your face
- frequent handwashing
- coughing/sneezing into your elbow
- not coming to work if ill
- isolating/going home immediately should you become unwell whilst at work
- those over 70 years of age and those with underlying health conditions should shield or cocoon, as per the direction of An Taoiseach on Friday 27th March 2020.
- **Non-essential duties within the yard should be discontinued and only the minimal number of staff required should be brought in at any one time.**
- **When travelling to and from work, staff should at all times bring with them either work identification or a letter from their employer indicating that they are an essential employee as well as one other form of identification.**

### Can horses continue to be trained?

**Yes.** Exercise is an essential element of Thoroughbred horse care, particularly when horses are at a level of fitness. They can continue to be exercised, provided guidance on social distancing and hygiene is given, facilitated and strictly adhered to. Staff at yards **MUST** follow Government advice relating to social distancing and hygiene.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## How can I adapt my routine?

As advised last week, in the Yard the following is recommended to prevent the congregation of staff in any one area:

- Tack room should be one work rider in, one out, and only to collect tack
- One set of tack per rider, needs to be cleaned at end of each day
- If 'Board' in use: send WhatsApp or similar picture to staff before they arrive for work so that they can go straight to their first horse
- Canteen only for food and drink preparation, only one person at a time, clean surfaces after use and leave
- Take breaks/ lunch outside or in your car
- At all times maintain 2 metres distance from others
- Do not spend time together even in small groups

In addition, and in light of developments over the weekend:

- Consider splitting teams to limit the effect of any cases.
- Keep a clear diary of who is working where and when in the event contact tracing is needed.
- Try to keep people in specific areas of the yard where they can work in relative isolation/in small groups, while maintaining 2 metres distancing.
- Encourage a culture of support – make it clear that staff will be supported and that these measures are to protect both the individual and the team.
- Make it easy to observe good hygiene practices – signage, plenty of soap and water, paper towels.
- Consider marking out what 2 metres looks like on the ground.
- Think about equipment that can spread the virus and limit its use by different people.
- Put in place plenty of cleaning and disinfection equipment. Consider specific instructions to staff on when and how to use it.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Will my main suppliers (e.g. feed, bedding, etc) remain open?

The Government confirmed on Tuesday, 24th March that: 'Retail sales of essential items for the health and welfare of animals, including animal feed and medicines, animal food, pet food and animal supplies including bedding' provide an 'essential retail service'. Some restrictions or staffing/supply chain issues may apply in relation to individual businesses, so you are advised to check directly with your suppliers. Any business encountering disruptions in supply should make their representative body (e.g. IRTA) aware as soon as possible.

### Will vets still be able to attend my yard/should they be asked to?

The Veterinary Council of Ireland recommended on Saturday 28th March 2020 that all veterinary practices confine their services to emergency treatment and care required in the interests of animal welfare 'however, practices and habits must be sharply adapted to current circumstances'. Further clarification was given, 'an urgent or emergency matter is one giving rise to animal welfare concerns, requiring veterinary assistance. Any urgent matter should be interpreted as presenting a significant risk to life or clear risk to welfare if not assessed. A potentially urgent matter should be interpreted as presenting a significant risk to life or clear risk to welfare if not assessed. A potentially urgent matter being one which could develop significant welfare compromise or become life threatening in the current period of restriction. Emergency or urgent matters, and those potentially urgent matters should receive veterinary assistance, as an essential service'.

Please be conscious of these differences when contacting your veterinary surgeon – some veterinary practices may have additional restrictions in place, for example caused by staffing shortages. It is increasingly possible for vets to work with you remotely to assess whether a horse needs to be seen or not – this is something that you should take guidance from your vet about. Non-urgent matters might include investigation of poor performance, chronic lameness investigation, routine dental work. A potentially urgent matter might include an undiagnosed sudden onset lameness or early signs of respiratory disease. If a vet does need to attend, it is very important you keep them, and yourselves, safe. Physical distance must be strictly adhered at all times and the time of the visit and contact minimised. Care should be taken handling equipment which can transfer disease between you, such as lead reins and twitches. Be ready to let the vet hold the horse themselves if possible. Save all paperwork to be done remotely.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Are farriers considered essential and will they be able to visit?

Farriers, like vets, can continue to provide essential services to horses, using their judgement as to matters of priority and/or urgency, with strict observance of hygiene and social distancing.

### Hygiene Measures

All staff should be reminded of health hygiene which should be strictly enforced in the yard at all times:

- Cough etiquette:
  - Cough or sneeze into a tissue, drop it into a bin and wash your hands
  - Cough into elbow if no tissue available and then wash your hands
- Regular hand washing, before and after eating, after coughing or sneezing
  - Hot water and soap for 20 seconds
  - Alcohol based hand gel if available
- Regular washing of all surfaces in shared areas such as tack room and canteen
  - Regular household cleaning detergent is sufficient
  - Wash surfaces regularly throughout the day and tack after riding out
  - Door handles, surfaces in tack rooms and canteens, bathroom facilities to be cleaned regularly throughout the day

## Further updates

This is current guidance, based on published information from the government and in liaison with other relevant bodies. It is likely that Government will update requirements and advice over the coming days, and we will update this document accordingly. You are also strongly advised to keep up to date with developments and to adapt your practices as needed. For more information, please speak to your representative organisation:

[Irish Racehorse Trainers Association \(IRTA\)](#)  
[Association of Irish Racehorse Owners \(AIRO\)](#)  
[Irish Stable Staff Association \(ISSA\)](#)