



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations**

# **RGRPSH304A Identify factors that affect racehorse performance**

**Release: 1**

## **RGRPSH304A Identify factors that affect racehorse performance**

### **Modification History**

Not Applicable

## Unit Descriptor

### Unit descriptor

This unit of competency specifies the outcomes required to work safely using independent judgement to recognise signs of fitness in horses, identify abnormalities, recognise problems and communicate options to improve horse performance.

To undertake this unit the candidate will be able to apply safe horse handling skills and workplace OHS standards. It is recommended that RGRPSH201A Handle horses be delivered in conjunction with or before this unit of competency.

This unit of competency operates in work environments of racing stables, racecourses and public areas.

Licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements may apply to this unit. Check with your State Principal Racing Authority for current license or registration requirements.

## Application of the Unit

### Application of the unit

This unit of competency supports trackwork riders, senior stablehands, horse trainers, harness drivers, apprentice jockeys and others to identify the factors that affect racehorse performance.

Competencies attained in this unit apply to the harness and thoroughbred codes of the industry. Consequently when performance criteria are applied they will relate to the harness or thoroughbred code and statements of attainment will reflect this distinction.

This unit can be contextualised for other industries while also maintaining the integrity of the unit.

## Licensing/Regulatory Information

Refer to Unit Descriptor

## Pre-Requisites

### Prerequisite units

## Employability Skills Information

**Employability skills**      This unit contains employability skills.

## Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

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Elements describe the essential outcomes of a unit of competency.

Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element. Where bold italicised text is used, further information is detailed in the required skills and knowledge section and the range statement. Assessment of performance is to be consistent with the evidence guide.

## Elements and Performance Criteria

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
Understand factors that affect horse movement.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Features of racehorse <i>conformation</i> are identified.</li> <li>2. <i>Gaits</i> of racehorses are identified and described.</li> <li>3. Lameness and other abnormalities are identified and reported.</li> <li>4. Reasons for use of <i>corrective gear</i> are identified and options to improve horse performance evaluated.</li> <li>5. Factors that influence speed and strength are explained.</li> </ol>
Recognise signs of fitness in racehorses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Behavioural and physical indicators of fitness are identified.</li> <li>7. Signs and symptoms of distress in working horses are recognised and reported.</li> <li>8. Horses' post-exercise recovery is observed and reported.</li> </ol>

## Required Skills and Knowledge

### REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

This section describes the skills and knowledge required for this unit.

#### Required skills

- applying safe work practices when handling, and driving or riding horses
- checking signs and symptoms of distress when handling or working horses
- communicating with employer, supervisor, co-workers and others using assertive communication techniques to gather, interpret and relay information related to identifying factors that affect racehorse performance
- completing duties in accordance with safe operating procedures and nominated time frame
- following instructions
- identifying behavioural or physical indicators of horse fitness
- identifying signs and symptoms of distress in working horses
- identifying different items of corrective gear
- identifying and describing normal and abnormal gaits
- observing and reporting horses' post-exercise recovery
- relating to people from a range of social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds and with varying physical and mental abilities
- recognising factors that influence speed and strength in racehorses
- reporting problems promptly

**REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

- taking action in a safe manner should horses suffer distress when being exercised.

**Required knowledge**

- communication procedures within stable and wider racing industry
- common horse behaviour, social traits and vices
- corrective gear
- features of racehorse conformation
- gaits of a horse
- horse fitness indicators
- lameness in horses
- racing industry animal welfare requirements
- racing industry safety requirements, including safe operating procedures
- relevant rules of racing
- signs and symptoms of distress in working horses.

# Evidence Guide

## EVIDENCE GUIDE

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The evidence guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria, required skills and knowledge, range statement and the Assessment Guidelines for the Training Package.

### **Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit**

The evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit must be relevant to workplace operations and satisfy all of the requirements of the performance criteria, required skills and knowledge and the range statement of this unit and include evidence of the following:

- knowledge of the requirements, procedures and instructions that are to apply when identifying factors that affect racehorse performance
- implementation of procedures and timely techniques to safely, effectively and efficiently complete identification of factors that affect racehorse performance
- working with others to undertake and complete tasks related to the identification of factors that affect racehorse performance that meet required outcomes.

Evidence should be collected over a period of time using a range of well-educated thoroughbred horses of different ages and sexes in racing stable and track environments.

### **Context of and specific resources for assessment**

Competency must be assessed in a racing workplace that provides access to the required resources or simulated environment approved by the relevant State Principal Racing Authority. Assessment is to occur under standard and authorised work practices, safety requirements and environmental constraints. It is to comply with relevant regulatory requirements or Australian Standards requirements.

Assessment of the practical components of this unit will be by observation of relevant skills.

The following resources must be available:

- a variety of harness or thoroughbred horses
- materials and equipment relevant to assessing candidate's ability to identify factors that affect racehorse performance
- safe handling and driving or riding areas, such as racing stables, and training and racetracks
- work instructions and related documentation.

## EVIDENCE GUIDE

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### Method of assessment

Assessment methods must satisfy the endorsed Assessment Guidelines of the Racing Training Package.

The suggested strategies for the assessment of this unit are:

- written and/or oral assessment of candidate's required knowledge
- observed, documented and firsthand testimonial evidence of candidate's application of practical tasks
- simulation exercises conducted in a State Principal Racing Authority approved simulated environment.

Evidence is required to be demonstrated over a period of time, therefore where performance is not directly observed any evidence should be authenticated by supervisors or other appropriate persons.

This unit may be assessed in a holistic way with other units of competency relevant to the industry sector, workplace and job role.

Holistic assessment with other units relevant to the industry sector, workplace and job role is recommended, for example:

- RGRCMN201A Follow OHS procedures and observe environmental work practices.

### Guidance information for assessment

Assessment methods should reflect workplace demands (e.g. literacy and numeracy demands) and the needs of particular target groups (e.g. people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women, people with a language background other than English, youth and people from low socioeconomic backgrounds).

## Range Statement

### RANGE STATEMENT

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The range statement relates to the unit of competency as a whole. It allows for different work environments and situations that may affect performance. Bold italicised wording in the performance criteria is detailed below.

The range statement provides details of how this competency can be used in the



## RANGE STATEMENT

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workplaces of the racing industry to identify factors that affect racehorse performance. Workplaces include harness and thoroughbred stables and racecourses, training tracks and public areas.

Features of racehorse  
*conformation* may include:

- balance and proportion
- body type
- front leg features that may impact on performance
- hind leg features that may impact on performance
- shoulder and pastern angle.

*Gaits* of racehorse may include:

- abnormal gait:
  - brushing
  - cross firing
  - forging
  - getting down on bumpers
  - over reaching
  - plaiting
  - speedy cutting
  - stumbling
  - winging
- footfalls at each gait
- normal gait:
  - walking or trotting on loose rein towards, past or away from observer
  - cantering and galloping action.

*Lameness and other  
abnormalities* will include:

- bone chips
- bone spavin
- bowed tendon
- heat or swelling in limbs
- muscle strain or sprain
- navicular disease
- pelvic, back and neck injuries
- sesamoiditis
- shin soreness
- splints
- stifle joint lameness
- suspensory ligament injury
- tendonitis.

*Corrective gear* may include:

- approved gear, including:

## RANGE STATEMENT

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- bits
- blinkers
- boots
- head checks
- hobbles
- lugging poles
- nosebands
- rings
- shadow rolls
- shoeing techniques
- tongue ties
- winkers.

***Factors that influence speed and strength*** may include:

- basic structure and function of muscle
- body type, for example:
  - fast twitch or slow twitch muscle fibre proportions
  - sprinter
  - stayer
- climatic conditions
- hydration status
- individual horse's action
- overheating
- track conditions and surface
- training programs
- turns or jumping from barriers
- warm up and cool down.

***Behavioural and physical indicators of fitness*** will include:

- behavioural:
  - alert manner
  - good appetite
  - keen to work
- physical:
  - bright eye
  - good exercise recovery
  - less or clearer sweat
  - muscle development
  - rib and hindquarters well-defined
  - shoulders and hindquarters more bulky (sprinters)

## RANGE STATEMENT

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- shiny coat
- sound action:
  - noise of uneven footfall (lameness)
  - vision of sound action
  - feel of sound action.
- *Signs and symptoms of distress in working horses* may include:
  - circulatory distress:
    - bleeding
    - prolonged increased heart rate
  - metabolic distress:
    - colic
    - exertional rhabdomyolysis (tying up)
    - thumps
  - musculo-skeletal distress:
    - heat in limbs
    - lameness
    - reluctance to bear weight on all legs
    - swelling
    - wounds
  - nervous distress:
    - colic
    - dehydration
    - diarrhoea
    - kicking
    - muscle cramps
    - overheating
    - shivering
    - twitching
    - exertional rhabdomyolysis (tying up)
  - respiratory distress:
    - bleeding (lung)
    - chronic coughing
    - dry coat
    - prolonged blowing of nostrils and heaving of flanks post-exercise
    - slow recovery time post-exercise
    - roaring
  - signs of unfit horses may include:
    - blowing up

## RANGE STATEMENT

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- dull coat
  - inappetence
  - listlessness
  - overly fat or thin
  - poor exercise recovery
  - swollen joints.
- Horses' post-exercise recovery* may include:
- indicators of health and fitness return to normal range:
    - breathing pattern
    - horse's interest in eating and drinking
    - temperature of legs
    - ease of movement of horse around stable or yard
  - indicators of poor recovery:
    - inappetence
    - colic
    - heat, swelling or blood on legs
    - reluctance to move or bear weight
    - timing of checks post-exercise according to trainer instructions.

## Unit Sector(s)

**Unit Sector**                      Harness and thoroughbred racing codes

## Co-requisite units

**Co-requisite units**

## **Functional Area**

**Functional Area**            Racing performance services