



RACINGSA

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
RACETRACKS
&
RACING SURFACE PREPARATION GUIDELINES

Effective From: 1st August 2026

PART 1: MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR RACETRACKS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

1. Objectives

Racing SA, in partnership with Country Racing SA (CRSA), has established these Minimum Standards to support the safe, consistent, and sustainable delivery of racing across South Australian race clubs.

These Standards are designed to:

- Protect the safety of participants;
- Ensure equine welfare;
- Support consistent and fair racing outcomes; and
- Assist Clubs in maintaining high-quality racing and training facilities.

Racing SA is committed to working collaboratively with Clubs to achieve these outcomes. These Standards are not only a compliance framework but a tool to guide continuous improvement across all venues.

Where strict compliance is not reasonably practicable, Racing SA will work with Clubs to identify practical, fit-for-purpose solutions that achieve equivalent safety and welfare outcomes.

2. Club Responsibilities

Clubs are responsible for ensuring their facilities are safe, functional, and suitable for racing and training.

Each Club must:

- Host race meetings safely and professionally;
- Maintain all infrastructure in accordance with these Standards;
- Provide appropriate resources to support operations;
- Comply with all applicable laws and regulations; and
- Provide Racing SA reasonable access for inspections and support.

Racing SA will support Clubs through advice, guidance, and practical assistance where required.

3. Club Categories

The highlights in the table below identify the race meeting status a club hosts. This is determined by Racing SA in accordance with under the Local Rules of Racing and prizemoney offered at a race meeting.

Club	Metropolitan	Provincial	Country
Balaklava			
Bordertown			
Ceduna			
Clare			
Gawler & Barossa			
Hawker			
Jamestown			
Kangaroo Island			
Kimba			
Lock			
Millicent			
Mindarie - Halidon			
Morphettville			
Mount Gambier			
Murray Bridge			
Naracoorte			
Oakbank			
Penola			
Penong			
Port Augusta			
Port Lincoln			
Quorn			
Roxby Downs			
Strathalbyn			
Streaky Bay			

4. Internal Audit - Minimum Standards Reporting

All Clubs must complete an internal audit (using a Racing SA supplied template) to show they meet the minimum standards and identify any required works, based on the following:

- Metropolitan & Provincial: Semi Annually
- Country: Annually

Racing SA will communicate the timeline for completing these audits.

5. Racing SA Audit – Minimum Standards Reporting

In conjunction with the Club's own audits, Racing SA will also undertake an annual (yearly) inspection of each venue to ensure it meets the minimum standards, confirm the Club's reports, and review any issues or non-compliance.

Racing SA will review each audit report in consultation with the relevant Club as soon as practicable following the audit. Findings will be communicated to the Club and Country Racing SA.

Racing SA will also provide advice and support to assist the Club in meeting the audit requirements.

6. Racing SA Minimum Standards

Item	Detail	Minimum Standard
Turf Tracks	Presentation	Uniform, dense mat of turf capable of withstanding the rigors of the Club's training and racing schedules, subject to normal climactic conditions
	Length	Turf length on race day should be at a minimum length of 100mm (approx. 4 inches) to a maximum length of 200mm (approx. 8 inches)
Sand Tracks	Presentation	Sand tracks should be uniform and harrowed / levelled prior to racing or training, free from large objects >5mm such as stones or dirt clumps or undulations
	Surface and Particle Size	Must consist of sand particle sizes that will provide stability and retain moisture. Particle size must be between 0.15mm to 3mm. The foundation of the sand track requires a base course that is uniformly compacted using a product such as road base, crusher dust or existing site subgrade
	Depth	The track must have a depth of sand of between 80mm to 150mm (depending on material type and properties) that restricts horse hoof access to the base
	Maintenance	Tracks are to be harrowed and groomed at the conclusion of training each day. Prior to each training session, sufficient irrigation should be applied to consolidate the surface, relieve jarring, provide secure footing and ensure a dust free environment
Synthetic or Fibre Sand	Presentation	Synthetic tracks should be uniform and harrowed / levelled prior to racing or training, free from large objects such as stones or dirt clumps.
	Depth	A consistent proprietary surface layer (PSL) depth of 150mm (+10mm tolerance) throughout the profile. A consistent proprietary intermediate fibre layer (PIFL) and underlying gravel drainage layer thickness in accordance with manufacturer's specifications
	Surface Compaction	Clegg Hammer readings in a range conforming to manufacturer's specifications at all test locations (typically CIV range of 60-90 on third drop)
Crossings and Gaps	Presentation	Uniform, consistent surface free of ridges and depressions caused by vehicular traffic. No exposed pins or ends. No joint protrusion
	Surface	Must not be heavily compacted, allowing a degree of resistance to horses traversing. Any materials added to the crossing must encompass the entire width of track

	Width	Crossings must be a minimum of 5m wide
	Drainage	All crossings should be able to shed water from their surface in a suitable manner
Drainage	Presentation	Tracks are freely draining and capable for use after heavy rain. Tracks remain usable during light rain.
	Maintenance	Drains must be maintained and free of debris to allow water movement and provide effective drainage during events
	Access	Drains must be railed / fenced to prevent access of horses, persons and machinery
Inside Running Rail	Rail Type	Plastic / PVC construction (Non-TAB venues may be of aluminium) No exposed pins or ends. No joint protrusion
	Rail Height	Between 1100mm and 1400mm measured from the track surface to the top of the rail
	Rail Colour	White (noting final 100m as per below)
	Final 100m to Post	Must be clearly identified in red (first 20 metres) or with Club colour / sponsor logo
	Hazards / Obstructions	Area inside railed course should be free from obstructions and encroachments
Outside Rail	Rail Type	Plastic / PVC construction, aluminium May be fixed in place to a perimeter fence No exposed pins or ends. No joint protrusion
	Rail Height	Between 1100mm and 1400mm measured from the track surface to the top of the rail
	Rail Colour	White
	Hazards / Obstructions	No obstacles within close proximity to rail that may spook or startle horse. Separation must be achieved between track and patron areas, including the use of mesh fencing where required to further restrict access
Raceday Barriers	Front and rear gates	Operational, undamaged, no rust,
	Structure	Sound, no corrosion evident
	Padding	Present with no rips or tears, must be padded in strike zone of head
	Barrier Dividers	Undamaged
	Flashing Lights	Operational
	Electric Start	Battery charged, wiring safe, remote switches operational
	Manual Start	Operational
	False Start Light & Siren	Operational
	Hydraulic Steering	Operational, no leaks
Mounting Enclosure / Yard & Parade Ring	Towing Vehicle	Operational
	Type	Must be completely fenced at a minimum height of 1200mm with steel, post & rail or plastic / PVC construction. No exposed pins or ends. No joint protrusion. Padding on high use areas / high risk joins.
	Surface	Designated surface for horses and strappers to walk unimpeded and for riders to mount safely Surface to be safe and level and capable of supporting the weight of the horse
	Water	Easily accessible tap and running water for hot weather
Track Access Gates	Signage	Clear and prominent to detail authorised personnel only. Advertising signage to be properly secured.
	Type	Plastic / PVC construction (Country and Non-TAB venues may be of aluminium) No exposed pins or ends. No joint protrusion

		Padding / buffer on ends of railing in high use areas
Stewards Towers	Standard	Compliance with Australian Standard AS 1657 - 1992 Structurally safe (sound foundations, structure exhibits no corrosion)
	Stairs / Ladders	Structurally safe. All steps, handrails and platforms intact, free of rust and corrosion
	Platform	Structurally safe. Cages and barriers intact, free of rust and corrosion
	Footings	Structurally safe. Footings clear of grass and organic matter and free of rust and corrosion
Judges Tower	Standard	Compliance with Australian Standard AS 1657 - 1992 Structurally safe (sound foundations, structure exhibits no corrosion)
	Accessibility	Must allow for safe access (stairs / handrail etc) when carrying equipment or provide a winch where applicable
	Size / Capacity	Appropriate size to accommodate minimum of four (4) persons. Must accommodate all necessary race day officials including caller, judge / photo finish operator, camera operator etc.
	Location	Shall be inline (or as close as possible) with the finish post with unimpeded view of the race and finish
	Power	At least two (2) double power outlets (230-240V)
	Elevation	Have a tower elevation of a minimum of six (6) metres (for new builds)
	Stairs / Ladders	Structurally safe. All steps, handrails and platforms intact, free of rust and corrosion
	Photo Finish Camera	Must have an unobstructed, surveyed and secure ledge or mount for photo finish camera
	Platform	Structurally safe. Cages and barriers intact, free of rust and corrosion
	Roofing	Must have functional roofing to provide shelter from elements
	Footings	Structurally safe. Footings clear of grass and organic matter and free of rust and corrosion
Jockeys Rooms	Type	Separate Male and Female Jockeys change facilities and amenities are required for all venues
	Furniture	Gear storage (lockers, cupboards, shelves and/or hooks) Seating for the appropriate number of occupants
	Facilities	Operational fridge of suitable size to store food and drink as necessary (located in both rooms or within a common jockey area if applicable)
	Toilets / Showers	Private toilets and showers - accessible by only the jockeys and contained within the same complex to ensure integrity. Showers to be separated as individual cubicles structurally or by utilising shower curtains
	Medical Room	Private medical treatment area including a bed must be provided at all venues
Scales / Scales Area	Type	Undercover area with good lighting and level, hard, non-slip floor
	Power	Minimum one (1) double power outlet (230-240V)
	Furniture	Table & seating to accommodate race day officials
	Storage	Suitable fittings for storing saddlecloths and strappers jackets in neat and orderly fashion - easily accessible for jockeys when weighing out. Designated gear cubicle for each jockey to securely store gear after being weighed out prior to each race
	Scales	Digital scales to be calibrated as required
Other Equipment & Infrastructure	Photo Finish	Operational and calibrated. Mirror box clean, undamaged and correctly aligned

	Public Address System	Operational. Wiring and cabling in sound condition
	Distance Markers	Visible and in the correct location
	Saddlecloths and Strapper Jackets	Clean and ready for use
	Horse Ambulance	Fully serviced and operational on race day. Sight reduction screens readily available and strategically placed
	First Aid	Independent contractor (eg. St Johns) to assist with crowd incidents
Swab Stalls & Vet Room	Power	Minimum one (1) double power outlet (230-240V)
	Fan	Minimum one (1) fan per swab stall
	Bedding	Fresh straw with sufficient coverage to prevent slipping
Raceday Stalls	Height & Width	Minimum of 2.5m high, 1.8m wide (bay) & 3m long
	Roof	Must have a roof. Minimum of shade cloth
Hosing Bay	Type	Must be fenced at a minimum height of 1200mm with steel, brick, post & rail or plastic / PVC construction.
	Drainage	Must have suitable and consistent drainage
	Taps	Must be overhead height with a hose attached
Stewards Room	Size / Capacity	Appropriate size to accommodate minimum of four (4) persons. Must accommodate all necessary race day officials including Stewards, Deputy Stewards, Jockey, Trainer, other Officials etc.
	Furniture	One (1) suitable size table to accommodate a minimum of four (4) persons. Minimum of six (6) chairs. One (1) Television mounted with a HDMI port; a minimum of 42 inches
	Power	Minimum two (2) double power outlet (230-240V)

7. Failure to meet a Minimum Standard

If a Club does not, or is unable to, meet a Minimum Standard, it should:

- a) Notify Racing SA as soon as practicable
- b) Work to understand the cause of the issue and take reasonable steps to address it
- c) Provide Racing SA with a summary outlining the cause of the issue and the actions taken to:
 - i. Resolve the matter; and
 - ii. Reduce the likelihood of it occurring again
- d) Keep Racing SA informed of any broader impacts the issue may have on the delivery of Club services

8. Review Process for Non-Conformance

If Racing SA determines a club has not met the Minimum Standards, one or more of the following may apply:

- a) A review with the Club to identify the cause of the issue
- b) A formal notice of non-conformance
- c) Required actions and timelines to fix the issue

If a Club is unable to address a non-conformance within the agreed timeframe, it may request a review in writing to Racing SA.

The submission should outline:

- The reasons for being unable to address the non-conformance; and

- Any request for an extension to the rectification timeframe.

Upon receiving the submission, Racing SA will review the information provided, along with any other relevant material, and may:

- Confirm that the item is to be rectified in accordance with the Minimum Standards;
- Amend the requirements, including agreeing to an adjusted timeframe where appropriate; or
- Withdraw the non-conformance item on appropriate terms.

Unless advised otherwise, Clubs are expected to continue taking reasonable steps to address the non-conformance during this process.

These outcomes will be determined in consultation with the Club and Country Racing SA. Racing SA will confirm its decision in writing.

9. Enforcement Measures for Unresolved Non-Conformance

If a non-conformance remains unresolved following the process in Clause 8, or where there is an immediate safety, animal welfare or operational risk, Racing SA may take one or more of the following actions:

- a) Suspend affected services at the Club or venue
- b) Move race meetings to another Club or venue
- c) Reduce Club funding
- d) Suspend or cancel the Club's ability to host race meetings

10. Finalising an Item of Non-Conformance

Once a Club considers that a non-conformance has been addressed, it should notify Racing SA as soon as reasonably practicable and request the matter be finalised.

This should include:

- A summary of the steps taken to address the issue
- Supporting evidence demonstrating compliance with the minimum standards (such as photographs or other documentation, where requested)

Following review, if Racing SA is satisfied the matter has been resolved, it will confirm this in writing to the Club.

Racing SA will provide a reporting template to assist Clubs in submitting these requests.

11. Interim Solution

Racing SA may, at any time, direct the Club to implement an interim solution where an asset does not meet the minimum standards, in order to manage any immediate risk to the safety of persons or the welfare of animals, until the issue is fully rectified in accordance with the standards.

12. Racing SA Right to Create a Non-Conformance Item

For the avoidance of doubt, Racing SA may create an item of nonconformance upon becoming aware of any non-compliance or risk (as determined by Racing SA in its absolute discretion), whether identified as a result of an Internal Audit, Racing SA Audit, venue inspection or otherwise.

13. General

In addition to the minimum standards, Clubs must ensure assets at their venues comply with all applicable Laws, Codes and Standards, including (without limitation):

- Work Health and Safety Laws
- Australian Building Standards
- National Construction Code
- Building Fire Safety Regulation
- Disability Discrimination Act

PART 2: RACING SURFACE PREPARATION GUIDELINES

1. Background

The provision of a racing surface which is safe and consistent for all equine and human participants is paramount to the long-term sustainability of thoroughbred racing in South Australia and is closely linked to commercial outcomes such as wagering.

The preparation of racing and training surfaces is the ultimate responsibility of the Club, operating under the guidance of its Track Manager or Curator.

Racing SA's Industry Track team provide recommendations, advice and support in relation to the preparation of racing and training surfaces and may outline treatment programs and protocols to ensure optimal track presentation.

The Industry Track team also provide periodic reporting and conduct track assessments however it is an expectation that Clubs communicate known or emerging issues to Racing SA as soon as practically possible.

2. Presentation of Racing Surface for Race Day

Turf Tracks

Turf tracks present a uniform dense mat of turf, with consistent leaf growth and a strong root system, capable of withstanding the rigors of horse racing subject to normal climatic conditions.

Tracks should provide a safe and consistent surface at all times. Presence of weeds should be minimal.

Dirt or Sand Tracks

Dirt or sand tracks should be uniform and graded / levelled prior to racing, free from large objects >5mm such as stones or dirt clumps.

Tracks are to be presented to provide an environment that reduces kickback, dust and jarring.

Dirt or sand tracks may be irrigated and graded during meetings to maintain surface consistency and safety, subject to the approval of Stewards.

3. Preparation of Turf Racing Surface

Track Rating / Going

Turf racing surfaces are to be prepared to a GOOD 4 range on race day, weather permitting, with the overarching objective to produce a surface which can maintain a GOOD 4 rating for the *majority* of the race meeting.

Consideration should be given to applying additional irrigation during times of extreme heat to achieve and sustain this rating.

Accordingly, Clubs will be permitted to present a SOFT 5 rating in these circumstances to ensure a safe surface in the interests of animal welfare.

Clubs should never prepare a track that is rated in the FIRM range.

Refer to Appendix 1 for the National Turf Track Ratings.

Turf Length

Turf length on race day should be at a minimum length of 100mm (approx. 4 inches) to a maximum length of 200mm (approx. 8 inches).

Irrigation

Clubs can irrigate as necessary up to 6.00am on the morning of the race meeting.

Permission from Racing SA Stewards will be required to irrigate on the morning of the scheduled race meeting post 6.00am.

Turf Discolouration

In consultation with Racing SA Stewards, grass clippings may be used to complete track preparation in minor instances of uniformity and discolourisation issues and must be used to cover crossings where applicable.

Treatment

Any treatment, other than irrigation and mowing, within 24 hours of a race meeting will require the approval from Racing SA Stewards and Industry Track team.

4. Determining Track Ratings

Track ratings shall be determined by means of visual inspection (walking tracks), penetrometer readings and in accordance with the National Turf Track Ratings (appendix 1).

Track ratings are to be determined and stated at the time of the inspection and not a prediction of the track and conditions.

Track ratings are to be an indication of the prevailing rating of the overall racing surface, noting some minor rating variation may exist between sections of the track.

It is the requirement for all Metropolitan and Provincial Clubs to utilise a Racing SA supplied Penetrometer to assist in determining the final track rating on race day. The Penetrometer readings should be included in the track reports provided from acceptance time up until the final track report (race morning).

Clubs should contact Racing SA's Industry Track team should a Penetrometer need to be sourced.

5. Track Reports

Upcoming Race Meeting

Track managers / curators or the Club are to provide an initial track report, rail position and track rating no later than close of nominations prior to the scheduled race meeting by contacting Racing Australia or Racing SA Racing Department in the alternative.

Subsequent daily track reports including rainfall, irrigation, penetrometer reading (from acceptance time) and track rating are to be submitted each day up until the scheduled race meeting by contacting Racing Australia or Racing SA Racing Department in the alternative.

The final track report shall be submitted to Racing Australia no later than 7.00am on the morning of the race meeting.

In the event that the track rating changes after the submission of the final track report, an update must be provided via SNS Raceday / Racing Australia and Racing SA Stewards notified.

	<i>Metropolitan Club</i>	<i>Provincial Club</i>	<i>Country Club</i>
Prior to Meeting			
Initial Track Report (1)	Yes - by close of nomination prior to meeting		
Second Track Report (2)	Yes- by 3pm on the day prior to acceptances closing		
Third Track Report (3)	Yes - by 7am on the day that acceptances close		
Fourth Track Report (4)	Yes - by 3pm on the day prior to the meeting		
Raceday Track Report (5)	Yes - by 7am on morning of meeting		
Penetrometer Reading	Yes - From acceptance time and by 7am on morning of the meeting		Not required

General Track Reporting

Clubs are required to supply Racing SA with ongoing track reports in line with the table below. Racing SA will provide the template and/or platform for this to occur

	<i>Metropolitan Club</i>	<i>Provincial Club</i>	<i>Country Club</i>
<i>Track Reports to Racing SA</i>	Weekly	Fortnightly	- Monthly (TAB only) - From 3 months prior to meeting (Non-TAB) or on request

6. Stewards Inspection

All tracks which hold a TAB race meeting will be inspected by a Racing SA Steward (or an Industry Track team member in lieu of a Steward). This inspection will occur within 48 hours of the race meeting. The track will again be inspected on race day by Racing SA Stewards after arrival on course, usually within 2 hours prior to Race 1.

All non-TAB race meeting tracks will be inspected by the Racing SA Stewards on arrival on-course on race day, prior to race 1.

If a club identifies an issue prior to a Racing SA inspection, they are required to contact either the Stewards or Track team as soon as the issue is identified.

Clubs are required to follow the reasonable directions of the Stewards and/or the Industry Track Team in relation to preparation and presentation of tracks to ensure that a safe and consistent surface is presented in accordance with these guidelines.

Stewards and/or the Industry Track team may direct Clubs and their staff in relation to matters such as:

- Irrigation;
- Mowing or turf length;
- Management of possible hazards on the racing surface;
- Management of wear and discolouration on race day;
- Management of crossings and track access points on race day; and
- Drainage maintenance and clearance

Stewards may, in their ultimate discretion, recommend the transfer or abandonment of a meeting prior to this scheduled inspection.

7. Repairs during a Race Meeting (Turf Tracks only)

Whilst any turf race meeting is being conducted it is strongly recommended the club supplies a minimum of two (2) people to repair the track by replacing or filling divots created following a race. This could play a large role in the meeting proceeding or otherwise and will assist with repairing the track post-race meeting.

Appendix 1: Turf Track Ratings

The following chart represents the official track ratings used by racing jurisdictions across Australia. At no time does Racing SA wish to conduct meetings on a FIRM track.

Rating	Category	Description
1	FIRM	Dry, hard track with minimal give
2	FIRM	Firm track with reasonable grass coverage
3	GOOD	Track with good grass coverage and some cushion
4	GOOD	Track with some give in it
5	SOFT	Track with a reasonable amount of give
6	SOFT	Moist, but not badly affected
7	SOFT	More rain-affected and may "chop out"
8	HEAVY	Rain-affected track that horses will get into
9	HEAVY	Wet track getting into a squelchy heavy surface
10	HEAVY	Very wet, heaviest rating; near saturation

Sand or Dirt Track Ratings

Rating	Description
Fast	Compact/firm and at optimal efficiency
Good	More loosened surface than fast, some kickback may be evident
Soft	Surface looser than good, kickback evident
Wet Fast	Rain affected, track has surface water, but base is solid, and surface is compact (accounting for times similar to a fast track)