



IMPACT ON EQUESTRIAN SPORT DUE TO GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS ENFORCED AT 11:59PM 8 JULY

Updated: FRIDAY 10 JULY 2020

Equestrian Victoria, Pony Club Victoria and the HRCVA are committed to ensuring the health and safety of our members and community.

We are in constant communication with the Victorian Department for Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) and take this opportunity to update the equestrian community. Based on advice of the Chief Health Officer, Stage 3 "Stay at Home" Restrictions were reinstated across **metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire from 11:59pm on Wednesday 8 July**. [Read the Statement from the Premier](#).

For six weeks, if you live in the Melbourne Metropolitan region or Mitchell Shire, the Premier has directed that there be only four reasons to leave your home:

1. Shopping for food and essential items.
2. Care and caregiving.
3. Exercise.
4. Work and study –if you can't do it from home.

Otherwise: Stay home. Stay home. Stay home.

A Restrictions Map can help you find your location and confirm whether or not the restrictions refer to your area. <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19>.

Community Sport

Firstly, we should all be aware of the restrictions on **Community Sport**. The following is an excerpt from the DHHS website (<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/sport-and-exercise-metropolitan-melbourne-and-mitchell-shire-covid-19>) regarding what activities will be restricted:

What activities will be restricted?

From 11:59pm, 8 July in metropolitan Melbourne or the Shire of Mitchell the following activities will be restricted:

- You can only **exercise or undertake sporting activities outside with one other person or household members**. You must be able to keep 1.5 metres distance between yourself and others.
- **Indoor sports centres including gyms, training facilities and pools will be closed.**
- **Community sport training and competition cannot occur within metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire.**
- If you live in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, **you cannot attend or participate in community sport elsewhere.**
- People aged 18 years and **younger are not exempt** from this restriction
- Some outdoor sport facilities will be closed.
- Personal training **outdoors** can occur but with **a limit of two participants, in addition to the instructor.**
- Swimming pools will be closed.

IMPACT ON EQUESTRIAN - RESTRICTED AREAS

Exercising your horse

Riding your horse is considered 'exercise' for mental and physical health and is also permissible on animal welfare grounds. Riding away from the property where the horse is housed should **ONLY** be done if there are no other safe options at the property where the horse is housed. If you can only ride your horse "off property" **please do so locally.**

- If you reside in a restricted area, you may travel outside the restricted zone to care for your horse on an **animal welfare basis.**
- If your horse resides in a restricted zone, **DO NOT** float your horse outside the restricted zone except for necessary travel on **animal welfare grounds.**
- The Government has been clear that you **cannot enter or leave** metropolitan Melbourne or Mitchell Shire for the **purpose of exercise or recreation.**
- The only permitted reason for leaving or entering the restricted zones is for the **WELFARE OF THE HORSE** and not to participate in **ANY ORGANISED COMMUNITY SPORT OR EQUESTRIAN ACTIVITY SUCH AS RIDING LESSONS.** The distinction between essential and non-essential is that animal welfare is regarded as essential, and riding lessons are not.
- You are only permitted to ride with one other person or members of your household and while riding, you should keep at least 1.5 metres between yourself and others. You cannot ride with another person in a manner that would mean you are less than 1.5m apart.

Before you ride:

- If you have tested positive to coronavirus (COVID-19), are living with a diagnosed person or have had close contact with a person who is confirmed to have the virus, you must stay at home.
- If you are feeling unwell you should stay at home. If you have even mild symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) then you should get tested.
- Wash your hands before you ride and after you dismount.
- If you are using shared equipment it should be cleaned and sterilised before you use it.

When you ride:

- Keep 1.5 metres between yourself and others wherever possible.
- Don't share drink bottles, helmets or equipment that touches your face or head. All other equipment such as jump wings, dressage arena fixtures, gates etc should be thoroughly sanitised before and after you use it.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.

After you ride:

- If you are using shared equipment it should be cleaned and sterilised after you use it.
- Wash your hands when you get home.

FOR THE REST OF VICTORIA (NOT UNDER STAGE 3 RESTRICTIONS)

If you live OUTSIDE the restricted areas then the rules implemented at **11:59pm on 21 June apply** (see here: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/sport-and-exercise-restrictions-covid-19>) and remain unchanged, If your horse is agisted or kept within a restricted zone you must comply with the appropriate Stage 3 Restrictions whilst **caring** for your horse.

- If your area is not under Stage 3 Restrictions, you can ride in a group of up to 20 people, plus the person or people required to run the session. Group classes held indoors should be no more than 10 people, plus the person or people taking the lesson. You must maintain physical distancing by keeping at least 1.5 metres between you and other people. Communal showers or change rooms can open at club facilities.
- Horse riding facilities will be required to ask for your contact details to assist in rapid contact tracing if required.
- Using shared equipment should be avoided where practical and there should be no sharing of equipment that touches the face or head (e.g. helmets, goggles or masks). If equipment is shared, then it should be cleaned and sanitised between users.
- Horse-riding competitions can resume, provided participants maintain a distance of 1.5 metres at all times. Please refer to your governing body for additional guidelines.
- Although regions outside the restricted areas remain largely unchanged, all Victorians outside the Metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire are being asked to use common sense.
- If you need to travel **through** the Metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, you can. You should plan your trip so that you don't need to stop in an impacted area unless it is for one of three reasons:
 - Shopping for food and essential items.
 - Care and caregiving.
 - Work and study –if you can't do it from home
- **Exercise and recreation will not be a reason to travel into or out of restricted areas.**

Indoor Facilities

IMPACT ON EQUESTRIAN - RESTRICTED AREAS

- Under Stage 3 Restrictions, all Indoor Sporting Facilities within the metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire must close. This includes indoor riding arenas.
- For the definition of Indoor Riding Arena, please see the following:
<https://www.vic.equestrian.org.au/media-gallery-Covid19-Until-June-22>

FOR ALL OTHER VICTORIANS (NOT UNDER STAGE 3 RESTRICTIONS)

There are no changes to the use of indoor riding arenas for those not under Stage 3 Restrictions.

Outdoor Facilities

Reinstated restrictions regarding outdoor facilities, including club grounds, are centered on members who reside in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell shire.

From 11:59pm, 8 July in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, some outdoor sport facilities will be closed.

- Outdoor sport facilities can open if people can exercise outside, equipment is not shared or rented, no indoor facilities or shared facilities (except toilets) are used, and people must be able to keep 1.5 metres distance between each other.
- Where outdoor facilities can open, these facilities must have a patron cap of 10, unless each group of two can maintain 100 meters distance from all other people. Examples of outdoor facilities which may be able to open under these requirements include golf courses, footy ovals, tennis courts, or outdoor shooting ranges.

IMPACT ON EQUESTRIAN - RESTRICTED AREAS

Outdoor equestrian facilities within the restricted areas, including club grounds, may open if they can comply with Stage 3 Restrictions, plus the following.

- While riding at an outdoor facility, the focus should be on exercise only. **There should be NO organised Equestrian activity** within the restricted areas. You are simply there for exercising your horse on animal welfare grounds.
- There should be no sharing of equipment such as drink bottles, helmets or equipment that touches your face or head.
- All other equipment such as jump wings, dressage arena fixtures, gates etc should be thoroughly sanitised before and after you use it.
- You can only ride your horse outside with one other person or household members. You must be able to keep 1.5 metres distance between yourself and others at all times.
- Activity may only take place with the consent of the facility owner.

FOR ALL OTHER VICTORIANS (NOT UNDER STAGE 3 RESTRICTIONS)

There are no changes to the use of outdoor facilities for those not under Stage 3 Restrictions.

Outdoor Exercise, Recreation Activities

IMPACT ON EQUESTRIAN - RESTRICTED AREAS

For metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire:

- From 11:59pm on 8 July, if you live in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, you can leave home for permitted exercise and recreation activities that are **outdoors and can be done by yourself, members of your household, or with one other person.**
- You may float your horse to a local area to ride (exercise) if you cannot do so safely at the property where the horse is agisted.
- You cannot participate in organised equestrian activities.
- You must be able to maintain a 1.5 metre distance and no equipment should be shared.
- You cannot leave the metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire for sporting or recreational activities.
- **While you can ride in metropolitan Melbourne or Mitchell Shire, you should stay close to home and use common sense and consideration.**

FOR ALL OTHER VICTORIANS (NOT UNDER STAGE 3 RESTRICTIONS)

There are no changes to the current level of restrictions except for the participation of those living and travelling from metropolitan Melbourne or the Mitchell Shire to outside the restricted zone **to exercise**, which is not allowed.

Agistment Facilities

IMPACT ON EQUESTRIAN - RESTRICTED AREAS

- If you own or operate an agistment you may continue to operate your facility and treat and care for the animals on your agistment and maintain the facility.
- For agistment facilities with multiple horses, the facility must implement a roster system to ensure social distancing requirements can be maintained and the facility cleaned in accordance with DHHS guidelines.
- If you agist a horse at a property you may continue to treat and care for your horse, **INCLUDING** exercising, ensuring you maintain good physical distancing and hygiene practices. Please note, you should contact your agistment facility who may have enacted specific rules related to their facility. Equally, members may consider spelling their horse(s) at this time.
- If you're caring for your horse directly, only ride your horse close to home where the horse is kept. If you do choose to ride, take necessary precautions to ensure your health and safety. You may float your horse to another area to ride (exercise) if you cannot do so safely at the property where the horse is agisted
- Vets and other professional services (e.g. farriers) are permitted to attend where required, whilst adhering to social distancing and hygiene requirements.

FOR ALL OTHER VICTORIANS (NOT UNDER STAGE 3 RESTRICTIONS)

There are no changes to the current level of restrictions for agistment facilities or to care for your horse for those areas not under Stage 3 Restrictions.

Members should still refer to the Agistment Centre owner for specific restrictions and requirements implemented at the facility.

Travelling to care for your horse(s)

- Travel to **care** for your animals, including horses, is allowed.
- Note: you may also travel in to and out of restricted zones to exercise and care your horse on an **animal welfare basis** only.
- This includes providing your animals with food, water and anything else to meet your animal welfare responsibilities, including exercising.
- If you must leave your house to attend to your horse, take all necessary health measures, and comply with any specific travel measures and government guidelines specified in the Victorian Government's Stage 3 Restrictions.
- Only use your own grooming kit, tack and do not share equipment with other people.
- For horses kept at a facility where feed or equipment may be stored centrally, take care to use good hygiene practices around door handles and other points which other owners may touch.
- Note: If you reside in the restricted areas, you may also travel outside those zones to exercise and care your horse **on an animal welfare basis**.

FOR ALL OTHER VICTORIANS (NOT UNDER STAGE 3 RESTRICTIONS)

There are no changes to the current level of restrictions for travelling to care for your horse for those areas not under Stage 3 Restrictions.

Members should still refer to the Agistment Centre owner for specific restrictions and requirements implemented at the facility. If your horse is kept within a restricted zone and you need to travel to it to care for the horse, you must comply with all Stage 3 Restrictions.

Coaching

Coaching for many is a profession and a livelihood. The Victorian Government has stated that people may travel for their work. Therefore, coaches may continue to coach **OUTDOORS** under the following conditions:

- coaching can only take place at private and/or agistment facilities. There should be no coaching conducted at public grounds.
- with one other person or household members
- you must be able to keep 1.5m distance between yourself and others
- strict hygiene practices must be practiced
- any shared essential equipment such as gates, jump wings, dressage arenas etc should be sanitised before and after use
- sharing of equipment such as helmets gloves and whips is not permitted.
- the floating of horses to coaching facilities for training is considered non-essential travel for those in restricted areas.

FOR ALL OTHER VICTORIANS (NOT UNDER STAGE 3 RESTRICTIONS)

There are no changes to the current level of restrictions for coaching for those areas not under Stage 3 Restrictions.

Professional Equestrians

If you live in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, you may continue to play professional sports.

Currently, professional sports have access to otherwise restricted facilities for the purpose of training and engaging in professional sporting events. Facilities must be used for the exclusive use of a single professional sporting team at a time. Guidelines have been developed for professional sports. Please refer to the SRV (Sports and Recreation Victoria) website: <https://sport.vic.gov.au/our-work/return-to-play/return-to-play-for-high-performance-and-professional-sport>.

Summary

It is important to remember that the purpose of the return to Stage 3 Restrictions is to **stop the community spread of Covid-19** and **ultimately save lives**.

Take care of yourselves, your loved ones and #lovethehorse.

Require Additional Information?

Contact your governing body:

[Equestrian Victoria \(EV\)](#)

[Pony Club Victoria \(PCV\)](#)

[Horse Riding Clubs Association of Victoria \(HRCV\)](#)