



Hot Weather Guidance for Event Organisers Welfare Considerations for People and Horses

Guidance for competitions affected by hot weather will always come down to the specific circumstances of the venue, facilities and the extremity of the weather in question. Event Organisers ultimately make the decision on whether to cancel the event and which protocols should be put in place for their event if the decision is to proceed.

This guidance is to provide an overview of the type of issues Event Organisers should take into consideration, but it is not exhaustive. If Event Organisers wish further support, they should contact the BC Office. Ultimately it is the Event Organisers' decision as to whether to go ahead with the event or cancel given the specific circumstances of their event.

General Considerations for Welfare

Input should be sought from the Organising Committee, scorers, ground jury, medical personnel, stable managers and steward organisers. The following actions affecting horse and human welfare should be considered:

- Weather forecasting – check projected temperatures
- Testing the humidity – see note below
- Understand the correct way to cool horses both in and out of competition
- Consider the problems around travelling horses in the heat – make arrangements for horses/lorries to be admitted to show in early morning if travelling overnight – or leaving later, especially after a marathon
- Check adequate water supplies, pipes and bowsers are in place and share the information
- Exercising – ensure exercise arenas are available early and late each day
- Monitor equine temperatures - a horse will use its muscles which generate heat during work so a post-work temperature will be higher than the resting temperature; check this returns to normal after cool down
- Ensure vet cover is available throughout the competition
- Adjust routes and times for marathon well in advance if required; check all competitors and officials informed
- Maintain up to date information on the official noticeboard/via social media on the above topics throughout the event
- Provide shelter for stewards e.g.: temporary gazebos, provide drinking water

Having considered all the above a decision requires to be taken as to whether to proceed or not with the event. If the decision is to proceed consider the appropriate mitigations.

Such mitigations could include some or all of the following:

Dressage

- Start as early as possible
- Could the competition be run in the evening when it cools down?
- Find shade if possible
- Water can still be needed and should be available
- Work with officials and volunteers / stewards

Marathon

- Stewards and volunteers – need as much notice as possible regarding any changes to timing/format/weather conditions
- Check forecast. Maximum heat normally early afternoon until early evening, consider altering schedule e.g. start earlier than originally planned
- Make sure water is available – bowlers on marathon and in the stables
- Consider shortening Section A but still provide enough options for warming up equines
- Consider changing the maximum time for Section B by an additional 3 minutes
- Remove the F gate in some obstacles
- Move the entry gates in 5-10m toward the obstacle
- Create a water break on the marathon – have timed stop between obstacles 3 or 4 depending on how many obstacles. Needs to be 2/3 mins so the horse can cool down but not tighten up
- Try to avoid hilly areas
- Remove an obstacle – pass only in and out of start gate – doesn't affect allowed time for competitors
- Changes may not be required for all classes as the temperature changes during the day
- Decrease passing time between competitors - 3 min intervals = 20 competitors/hour.
- Ensure any route/timing changes are shared with competitors & officials
- Have a vet available after marathon in case fluids needed
- Ensure any media queries are directed to EO.

Cones

- Review on Saturday, if cones to be held on a Sunday
- Same issues should be considered as those for the dressage
- Make sure water is available
- Course can be 500 meters not 800 meters
- Run presentations when horses out of the vehicle and cooled down
- Try to provide an area with shaded area

Suggested guidance from BEF can be found here:

<https://www.britishequestrian.org.uk/equine/health-biosecurity/hot-weather-advice>

Use the Science

The FEI have comprehensive information on hot weather conditions and at what levels mitigation measures have to be put in place. This information is available in their paper PREPARATION FOR AND MANAGEMENT OF HORSES AND ATHLETES DURING EQUESTRIAN EVENTS HELD IN THERMALLY CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENTS found at the following link:

<https://knowledgebase.fei.org/index.php?action=attachment&id=475>

They recommend the use of the device Extech HT30 Heat Stress Meter WBGT. This device was utilised at Sandringham National Driving Trials 2026.

Regular readings can be taken of the air temperature, the black globe temperature (what it feels like without any breeze) and the relative humidity. The device then uses these figures to calculate the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature – the critical number provided determining if the event can proceed.

It is important to take readings throughout the event to confirm that the position has not changed. Do not rely on people's views of the humidity, test it and use the science to help decision making. Ensure you keep a record of any testing and the decisions made and keep the information. This will help with any external questions and review and demonstrates a positive attitude to welfare.



Sample Communication To All Competitors, Officials & Volunteers

As we all know there are several heat warnings. These are in place and need to be taken seriously. Horse and human welfare are paramount. Looking at the daily temperature, we can see the highest temperature is on Friday. The temperature begins to drop on Saturday and Sunday. There is a slight breeze over the period which is helpful.

The temperatures whilst high are only part of the picture with the humidity also being a challenge. We are using two instruments to measure each of the parameter's heat and humidity that produce a score. This technology is standard in the equine world being used to keep horses safe at the last 3 Olympics. We are currently well within the guidelines produced by the FEI and the BEF. This is being monitored on an hourly basis and recorded.

The Organising Committee and Ground Jury, following guidance from all parties has agreed to continue to run the event. As a result of that we will look to mitigate the heat as much as possible to ensure a positive competition and the utmost horse welfare.

1. General

- We are using testing equipment to monitor and record the conditions.
- From Friday there will be additional water bowzers on site to supplement the normal water.
- There are also several small wooden units on site that have clean drinking water they are clearly marked.
- All athletes are encouraged to exercise early or late and avoid the hottest periods of the day.
- Please look after each other as human health is important and should be monitored.

2. Dressage

Friday will be warm so please use common sense and always control your horse welfare.

- We are starting early 07.00 to try to use as much of the cooler time possible.
- No jackets, ties or aprons are required however this is the driver's choice.

- The judges may have their cars running but of course as they are Land Rovers you should not notice.

3. Marathon

We hope the temperature is lower and the breeze will continue but it will still be hot. To mitigate the temperature, we are / have done the following:

- Reduced section A from 6km to 2km – we have retained it as vet advice is it helps the horse / pony prepare for the rest of the marathon. It is now also running in the shade.
- There will be water available at the rest so please make sure you use it to maximise the cooling effect.
- We have vet cover over the weekend who can provide re-hydration for horses if required.
- We are starting early in the morning 07.30am to use the cooler period and start every 4 mins so we can complete the marathon, as much as possible in the cooler part of the day.
- We have opened the window by 3 mins to 6 mins. The minimum time remains the same but you now have a window of 6 minutes to complete the section so you have more time available on section B if you wish to use it.
- We have changed and moved some of the F gates from the original design.
- We have removed an “F” gate to ease the length of an obstacle.
- We have reduced the distance from start of B to the first obstacle.

The only further change we may make will be to remove OBS 5. If we do this, we will inform everyone. You will be asked to go the obstacle go through the flags and then continue the course. **I stress this is not currently happening and we will only use it if we absolutely must.**

After the marathon, please ensure you cool your horse down correctly. There will be a vet available should you have any concerns.

4. Cones

We anticipate the temperature will continue to fall and will run the cones as normal. We hope by taking the above actions we can continue to run the event and ensure horse and human welfare. Please do not press horses if you feel they are tired or have concerns for their health.

Please ensure you are aware of people around you who may be affected by the heat and support accordingly.

POJ