

# Ride Abandonment / Suspension / Termination

## Discussion Paper

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### Introduction

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This document is intended to promote debate and discussion involving the possible introduction of more comprehensive rules and procedures when a ride is seriously affected by an accident or Act of God.

An Endurance Ride may be disrupted for many reasons ranging from an accident to a natural disaster, which in turn, may affect the conduct of the ride ranging from cancelling the ride before pre-ride vetting has even started (abandonment), the ride being delayed after pre-ride vetting has started (suspension) to outright cancellation (termination) of the ride.

The severe storm at Nanango Tom Quilty highlighted the need for such a process. It was evident from the Nanango experience that our current rules do not adequately canvass the prospect of a ride suspension and/or a ride cancellation and the impact these may have on operational aspects of the ride.

In my opinion, the big picture is, that once the ride has commenced then the ride should be given every opportunity to be completed as originally planned. Each event has been months (and in some cases years) in the planning by the ride organisers, the competitors and horses may have travelled hundreds (in some cases thousands) of kilometres and there are ride officials, vets and volunteers who have also travelled to attend the ride.

Some will argue that if any situation arises where one horse has the potential to benefit over another horse, then the ride should be cancelled and in the purest sense, I agree. Whilst a ride suspension has the potential to benefit one horse over another and I will not deny this, I believe the bigger picture should prevail as the benefit (perceived or real) is purely by chance and not by design and if new guidelines are adopted by the AERA they become public knowledge and all competitors will know how the scenario will be played out in the unlikely event of a ride suspension.

### Ride Abandoned

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Suggested Rule:

***The Chief Steward (CS) may in consultation with the Head Vet (HV) and the Ride Organising Committee (ROC) "abandon" a ride at any time prior to the commencement of pre ride vetting.***

There are several possible scenarios where a ride may need to be abandoned before Pre-Ride Vetting has commenced. In this circumstance it is my opinion that the ROC be required to refund 100% of the entry fee paid by riders whilst the refund of the pre-nomination fee (if any) is at the discretion of the individual ROC.

## Ride Suspension

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Suggested Rule:

***The Chief Steward (CS) may in consultation with the Head Vet (HV) and the Ride Organising Committee (ROC) "suspend" a ride at any time after the commencement of pre ride vetting and prior to the last rider completing the course and having been vetted.***

***The ride suspension should not exceed 3 hours but may be extended when there is reasonable expectation that the ride can be re-commenced without undue compromise to the health and welfare of the horses, riders, ride organisers, volunteers, vets and officials.***

***A ride "suspension" may involve closure of the vet ring and/or closure of the course not necessarily simultaneously.***

### Vet Ring closure:

The CS should provide a minimum 5 minute warning for the closure of the vet ring but in some instances this may not be possible. If the Vet ring is closed obviously horses will not be able to present for vetting in the normal course of the ride. In this instance, we need to establish;

1. a "deemed" present time to record in the logbook/Mastersheet.
2. a revised maximum present time to the vet ring - after which they risk disqualification.
3. a revised due time out for the next leg.

ITEM	AERA	VGIH
"DEEMED" Present Time	Arrival time + 30 mins	Arrival time + prior average present time for the ride to date
REVISED Maximum Present Time after which risk disqualification	Arrival time + 30 mins <b>OR</b> VR re-opening + 15 mins whichever is the later time	Arrival time + pre-ride present time <b>OR</b> VR re-opening + 15 mins whichever is the later time
REVISED Due Time Out * Cannot leave prior * Own riding time after	Arrival time + 1 hour <b>OR</b> Course re-opening whichever is the later time	Arrival time + pre-ride hold time <b>OR</b> Course re-opening Whichever is the later time

### Vet Ring re-opens:

The CS must provide a minimum 15 minute warning for the re-opening of the vet ring. Horses must present before their newly revised maximum present time or risk disqualification.

### Course Closure:

In some instances it may be appropriate to close the course for a period of time. In this instance no horses are permitted to leave the ride base until such time as the course re-opens and before their revised due time out.

In almost every instance there will be riders at different points around the course. The CS will attempt to communicate with these riders via radio checkpoints or alternative means providing instructions whether to return to ride base, find temporary shelter or continue onwards. Riders should not be penalised who take actions to minimise the danger to themselves and their horses.

### Course Re-opens:

The CS must provide a minimum 45 minute warning for the re-opening of the course and the course should not re-open until a minimum 45 minutes after the vet ring re-opens. The reason for this is to avoid a situation where there is a backlog in the vet ring resulting in some riders not being able to vet and present to the departure gate before their revised due time out has elapsed. Horses cannot commence their next leg until their revised Due Time Out and horses leaving after their revised due time out are in their own riding time.

## Ride Termination

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Suggested Rule:

***The Chief Steward (CS) may in consultation with the Head Vet (HV) and the Ride Organising Committee (ROC) "terminate" a ride at any time after the commencement of pre ride vetting and prior to the last rider completing the course and having been vetted.***

Obviously the termination of a ride is the last resort and only considered after a ride suspension has failed to alleviate or eliminate the existing danger.

The ride termination may be for a number of factors which will impact on the manner of the ride termination. In the worst case scenario, the ride base may need to be evacuated immediately, horses and riders may need to be floated from the course back to ride base or to an alternative safe area. There are many possible scenarios.

However, where possible the CS should facilitate an orderly termination of the ride including where conditions permit, the requirement for any competitors (already on course) on the last leg to complete the leg and present for vetting. Competitors who are able to do this will be considered to have completed the course prior to the termination.

In the event that a ride is terminated;

1. All ride results, veterinary and rider decisions up to the time of termination will stand and be recorded as such in the ride results, the early warning system and the relevant point scores. (ie. successful completions, vet outs, disqualifications and rider withdrawals). For the purposes of the point score, the number of riders will be deemed to be the number of riders entered in the appropriate division at the start of the ride.

2. The ROC is;

(a) required to award appropriate place and completion awards to those riders who successfully completed the course and passed the appropriate veterinary inspections.

(b) required where possible and practical, to conduct the Best Conditioned judging and awards given.

(c) required to refund 25% of the nomination fee to those riders who were **unable** to complete the course (as completion awards cannot be given). This excludes vet outs and withdrawals.

3. The ride secretary is to ensure that the relevant logbook page is notated with the words "Ride Terminated".