



VICTORIAN ENDURANCE RIDERS ASSOCIATION INC.

RIDE ORGANISERS HANDBOOK

**Version 1.0
8 August 2009**

Contents

RIDE ORGANISERS	3
VENUE	11
COURSE	12
VETTING	12
PRE RIDE BRIEFING	13
BEST CONDITIONED AWARDS	14
COMPLETION AWARDS.....	14
WITHDRAWALS	14
WEIGHT DIVISIONS	15
STARTING TIMES AND TIME LIMITS.....	15
MAXIMUM RIDING TIMES	16
MINIMUM RIDING TIMES	16
INSURANCE	16
RIDE SAFETY PROCEDURES	17
LOG BOOKS	18
RIDE STATIONERY	18
EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST	20

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are intended to be used to aid and assist organizations/ride organizers run affiliated endurance rides in Victoria. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the current edition of the Australian Endurance Riders Association Inc. (AERA) Members Handbook.

All affiliated rides must be conducted in accordance with the AERA Riding Rules and the rules and Regulations of the Victorian Endurance Riders Association Inc. (VERA). Copies of the AERA Members Handbook and the VERA Rules & Regulations can be accessed on the VERA Web Page or from the VERA Secretary.

In this document the following terms are defined:

- **Endurance Ride** is a competitive horse ride of at least 80km (includes an elevated ride)
- **Training Ride** is a non competitive training ride for both horses and riders that provides endurance training over a distance of between 40 and 60km (usually) in one day.

RIDE ORGANISERS

Ride organisers must be an incorporated body or affiliated association as required by the insurers of Endurance Riding associations in Australia. It is a simple process to affiliate an association and helpful information can be found at www.eac.vic.gov.au. Before considering hosting an endurance event organisers should ensure that they have sufficient personnel to carry out all the tasks involved in hosting such an event. It is recommended that consideration be given to using local groups for such things as catering, check points and communications when planning an event.

Once the decision has been made to run a ride the next process is to make application for a ride date. No dates will be allocated to ride organisers without first being approved by the VERA SMC (State Management Committee). Application is made by submitting a Ride Application with the scheduled Ride Bond to the Ride Calendar Coordinator by the due date. These forms and details can be accessed via the VERA web page at www.aera.asn.au/vera.

There are a large number of duties that the Ride Organiser/Organising Committee is responsible for and these include (but are not limited to):

- Prepare a budget for the ride and obtain the appropriate financial backing
- Check that the ride base grounds have been booked, and whether any work is required before they can be used, e.g. slashing
- Arrange and book the required vets and provide accommodation and catering for the vets
- Discuss with the course designers all parts of the course, and arrange for the appropriate permits required to enter the State forests, plantations, Commonwealth owned land, etc.
- Arrange for an accredited Chief Steward to manage the ride and supervise the vetting procedures
- Organise and book the communications/radio controllers for all the check points
- Organise catering services
- Book a water tanker, if required
- Organise garbage bins and rubbish disposal
- Book portable toilets, if required, order toilet paper, cleaning agents, garbage bags etc.

- Arrange emergency float and towing vehicle with a driver that knows the course
- Arrange extra electrical leads, power boards, water hoses, etc.
- Arrange firewood in plenty of time and distribute around the ride base
- Arrange enough helpers for during the ride
- Arrange enough helpers for pre ride set up, during the ride and post ride clean up
- Co-ordinate the pre-ride set up, toilets, bins etc.
- Check stocks of trophies and order if necessary
- Check that fittest horse and top placing trophies are being arranged
- Arrange for helpers to clean toilets, and look after all the staff in the office and vetting area
- Ensure there is sufficient quantities of stationery available for use on the day
- Arrange for a cash float, and lock up cash box for entries
- Write and give pre-ride talk, or delegate this job to the Chief Steward
- Conduct the presentation ceremony, or delegate this job to the Chief Steward
- Keep a list of all officials/volunteers, especially those at checkpoints. This list is needed in case of insurance claims
- Maintain a list of day members and forward to VERA Assets & Insurance Officer
- Assist the Chief Steward during the ride
- After the ride check condition of grounds and make any necessary repairs
- Check that all ride numbers have been returned, repair and wash
- Pull down any structures put up for the ride, e.g. tents, etc.
- Check equipment used from VERA trailer and undertake any necessary repairs, repacking the trailer and returning it to the appropriate person
- Clean shower and toilet blocks, and lock up
- Close property gates, which may be open
- Pull road signs down
- Pull course markers down and check course for litter
- Ensure that all the appropriate master sheets, best conditioned sheets and other stationery items have been completed and sent to VERA, keeping a copy for the Association's purposes
- Send out thank you letters to ride staff, sponsors and other appropriate people

The following lists some of the personnel you will need to run a ride:

1. Veterinarians
2. Accredited Chief Steward
3. Ride Secretary
4. Time Keepers
5. TPR Stewards
6. Weigh In Steward
7. Pencillers and Runners
8. Course Designer/Coordinator
9. Check Point Personnel
10. Medical or First aid Officer
11. Recovery Float Driver

Following is a brief description of each of these positions:

1. Veterinarians

At all affiliated endurance rides accredited veterinarians must be used. A list of affiliated vets can be obtained from VERA. The duties, roles and authority of veterinarians at rides are contained in the AERA Members Handbook. When determining the number of Vets needed at a ride the Ride Organiser Guidelines for Vet-to-Horse Ratios must be read.

The main duty and responsibility of Vets during a ride is horse welfare and the requirements for the role are outlined in the AERA Members Handbook. Vets have the final say as to whether a horse will enter, continue or be removed from a ride. During the ride Vet(s) and all vet ring staff should be given refreshments and suitable meals.

2. Chief Steward

Accredited Chief Stewards must be used at affiliated endurance rides. A list of accredited Chief Stewards can be accessed via the VERA web page. The duties and responsibilities of the Chief Steward are outlined in the AERA Members Handbook. They are responsible for control and management of the ride and to ensure that the rules are applied in a fair and equitable manner.

The Chief Steward has the following responsibilities:

- Set up the vetting area. It is to be roped off or otherwise isolated, flat and clear for 80 metres or so. This allows the horses to be trotted out for lameness checks.
- Position the Start/Finish line so that a gallop start/finish is safe for horse, rider and spectators. The Finish line should have a straight approach and not be on bitumen, if possible.
- Erect barriers for TPR duties to be carried out with safety for horses and workers
- The Chief Steward must check all horses I D prior to the pre-ride vetting
- Appoint a Vetting Steward, to assist in the vetting area
- Get maps and course description from Course Designers. If possible, check the course and marking before the ride
- Introduce yourself to all the officials on course checkpoints and at the ride base
- Get ride maps and hand these out at pre ride talk
- Display a topographic map of the course near the communications facilities
- Determine the riding time for novice Horse/Rider combination, in consultation with the Head Veterinarian and ride committee
- During the pre-ride talk, ask training riders to stay behind for extra information and provide this additional information
- Ensure a start list of competitors with their ride numbers during the ride is made available for the communications people
- Discuss with Veterinary Team and TPRs the vetting procedures
- Sight Event Safety Checklist
- Take rider numbers as they leave the ground at the start of the ride
- Start the ride at the correct announced time
- Supervise and assist in the vetting area
- Settle all problems and disputes that may surface as they arise
- Ensure all TPR Stewards have stethoscopes, stopwatches and thermometers
- Arrange clipboards and pens
- Arrange for containers to be used for the logbooks to be placed in prior to and after the vetting
- Co-ordinate the logbooks in the vetting area in vetting order

- Ensure that all competitors are vetted on time, call up riders if required
- Elevator Rides - After the appropriate leg, ask the rider if they are going on. If the rider is not elevating, ask that the book to be marked NOT ELEVATING, (by the vet).
- Completed logbooks must return to the office for further processing,
- When riders successfully complete the ride, the logbooks should be signed by the head vet.
- Retain logbooks of any horse subject of a Rest Order and make sure red sticker is put on appropriate logbook page
- Ensure that all invasive treatment reports are filled in and signed
- Assist in any area where help is required, to ensure smooth running of the ride
- Prepare the BCH award sheets for all divisions
- Arrange Fittest Horse work out, together with the head vet, and calculate point score
- Check with the vet team for any problems regarding horses or riders
- Do a round of the ride base to check on any problems with horses (fit to travel)
- Write the Chief Steward report of the ride and list all TPRs assisting during the ride
- Thank the helpers who worked with you in the vetting area

3. Ride Secretary

The ride secretary is the person appointed by the organizing committee to be in charge of and to ensure that all the necessary paperwork is completed before, during and after the event. This paperwork includes:

- Ride Entry forms
- Vet Cards (used by training and introductory riders only)
- Master Sheets
- Time Sheets
- Weigh In sheets
- All ride reports and returns

The ride secretary will be in charge of taking rider entries and ensure all forms are completed satisfactorily and in accordance with the AERA rules and regulations. All relevant details will be recorded onto the ride master sheets.

The ride secretary will ensure that no person enters the 80km ride that is not in possession of a current Membership Card and a horse does not enter the same without a Logbook which contains both an Ownership Label and current Registration Sticker. During the course of the ride it is the duty of the Ride Secretary to update the information required on the master sheets. At the completion of the ride the evaluation sheets for the fittest horse/best conditioned horse will be filled out and handed to the Chief Steward/Vet(s) prior to the work out.

At the completion of the ride the Ride Secretary will ensure that all forms are completed and fees are forwarded to VERA within 14 days.

4. Time Keepers

The role and responsibility of the time keeper(s) is to fill out the time sheets and logbooks at the start/finish line during the course of the event. The ride organiser will supply a tent, float or shelter suitable for the role allowing for an uninterrupted view of the riders and horses coming and going during the event.

The equipment required by timekeepers includes:

- Tables and chairs
- Writing equipment and note paper
- Time slips, logbooks, weigh-in sheets
- Time clocks
- Weighing scales

There are three clocks provided by VERA for this role. Depending on the vetting system in place at each ride depends will determine how many clocks are used. The clocks are used to provide the times recorded on the master sheets, in/out time slips and logbooks during the event. Where standard vetting is used one clock should be set at the correct time, the second half an hour later (to indicate the vet time) and the third one hour later (to indicate the out time). All clocks must be synchronized with the clock or watch used by the Chief Steward.

The time keeper(s) and ride secretary should work together and organize the logbooks and Vet cards needed at the time keeper's station prior to the first horse completing the first leg. It is recommended that time keepers be in place a reasonable time before the anticipated arrival of the first horse. On arrival of a horse at the start/finish line the time keeper will fill in the hour, minute and second the horse arrives on the time slip and enter this information into the logbook. The slip and logbook are handed to the rider who will take them to the vetting area when presenting their horse for examination. The procedures will vary for vet-into-hold.

To ensure the correct times are recorded it is suggested that at least two time keepers are present, this will alleviate errors and problems when large numbers of riders present and the start/finish line and quickly relieve any congestion.

Duties of the Time Keepers are as follows:

- In conjunction with the Chief Steward, set up the timekeeper's area in sight of the finish line and near the scales. Arrange for shelter from sun, wind, and rain.
- Ensure sufficient supplies of time slips and time sheets are available
- Ensure the logbooks are available and in rider number order (for ease of accessing)
- Synchronise all clocks at the pre ride talk in conjunction with the Chief Steward
- Set up three small digital clocks, one real time (in time), one half hour ahead (vetting time) and the third one hour ahead (out time) for rides held under standard vetting conditions
- Arrange for a minimum of four separate containers to hold the logbooks. One for the first leg, the second for second leg, one for the training riders and one for books waiting to go to vetting.
- One person writes out the time slip with the three times and gives it to the rider. Another person writes the time sheet at the same time, ensuring that the same times are entered in the log book and onto the vet slips.
- When quiet, write the times for vetting and out time for the next leg in the logbooks and place them in vetting time order in a container waiting to go to vetting. Make sure they go to vetting in plenty of time.
- As the riders leave on the second (and other) legs, tick the time sheet so you know who has left the ride base.
- Once logbooks have returned from the vetting area re-sort ready for the next leg. Vet out books to be written up and kept in a separate area

- Time keepers must keep a check on the riding times of Novice Horse/Rider combination for the minimum riding times set down by the ride committee.
- As the riders finish the final leg, follow the same procedure, but do not record an out time on the time slip or the time sheet.
- If riders go over the finish line holding hands, then put an '=' sign in front of the time in their logbooks so the person working out final placing can pick this up and record them as equal placing. If riders don't hold hands, place them in order of arrival over the line.

5. TPR Stewards

TPR stewards are responsible for taking the temperature, pulse (heart rate) and respiration of the horses. TPR stewards must be qualified and accredited and a list of these stewards can be obtained from VERA. These stewards must be contacted and arranged prior to the event by the ride organizer. TPR stewards come under the control of the Chief Steward and Vets during the course of the ride. Stewards should be supplied with refreshments and meals during the event.

The duties of the TPR Stewards are as defined within the rule book. The Chief Steward will advise the TPRs what is required of them and the correct procedures to be followed where parameters being recorded are not within the defined boundaries.

6. Weigh In Steward

The duties of the Weigh In Steward commence from the time entries are taken. It is the duty of the steward to record the weight of riders and their riding gear so that their all up riding weight can be recorded on the entry forms and master sheets. These weights determine which weight division the rider enters for the event. Discrepancies in weight may result in elimination from the ride.

During the event the steward is located at the start/finish line. Riders that are required to weight at the completion of each leg present themselves to the steward. Once the weight is recorded the steward checks to ensure each rider remains within their correct weight division. Junior riders do not have to weigh during the event, but must weigh at the completion of the event to be considered for the Best Conditioned evaluations. Heavyweight and Middleweight rides must weigh at the completion of each leg. Lightweight riders can be weighed at the completion of each leg or randomly but **all** competitors **must** weigh at the end of the ride.

Duties of the Weigh In Steward include:

- Ensure a clipboard, pen and weigh in sheets are available
- Set up the scales on a flat surface and ensure they are working correctly
- Weigh riders as they enter and record their weights ensuring that a bib for the correct weight division is either worn by the rider or provided to them
- During the ride weigh riders, as directed by the Chief Steward, and record their weights, ensuring that the appropriate weight division is being maintained
- At the end of the ride all riders must be weighed and the weights recorded
- Where a weight division is not maintained contact the Chief Steward
- At the end of the ride the weigh-in sheets should be given to the Ride Secretary to be kept in case of dispute

7. Pencillers and Runners

Pencillers assist the TPRs and Vets in the vetting area when horses are presented for examination. The pencillers' record, in the logbook or Vet Card, details, scores and parameters dictated to them by the TPRs or Vets.

Runners assist the ride secretary by taking completed logbooks and Vet Cards from the vet ring to the ride secretary and time keepers and vice versa.

8. Course Designer/Coordinator

The course designer/coordinator is the person for designing the course. This person **must** have a complete knowledge of the course that includes but is not limited to:

- Distance of each leg
- Hazards on course
- Checkpoints
- Water points
- Communications
- Recovery float
- Course marking

The course designer/coordinator will arrange for the course to be checked prior to the commencement of the ride. This will ensure all legs are clearly marked and that no arrows have been removed or fallen down. It is advisable that this check is completed as close to the starting time as practicable. A recovery float must be available at all times to pick up lame or injured horses and riders. This float must be easily accessed and not obstructed by other parked vehicles.

Where courses or part thereof are travelled during the hours of darkness it is essential that the course designer/coordinator check the course at night. This will ensure that the arrows are clearly visible and in the correct positions. All arrows used during darkness must have reflective tape affixed to them. To ensure a safe and successful event it is strongly recommended that the course marking should be undertaken or at least checked by an experienced person. The safety of horses and riders is paramount.

The course designer/coordinator will also be responsible for familiarizing the Chief Steward with the course design. This may be organized prior to the event to allow the Chief Steward plenty of time to review the course and the conditions that riders and horses will encounter on the day of the ride.

The duties of the course designer include:

- Design course, making sure there is water at least every 10km
- Check accessibility for communication and emergency services
- Measure the distance of the course and publish the distance
- Produce a map or course description to hand out to riders
- Obtain course maps for the relevant authorities if required, e.g. DSE, Local Councils
- Obtain necessary permits, local council, police, plantation owners, etc.
- Obtain and display a topographic map for all interested people to see
- Provide the radio Communication People with the location of the checkpoints

- Go over the course with the communications people, making sure they are familiar with it and can cope with what is required from them
- Notify emergency services such as Ambulance and Police that the ride is on
- Work out the best place for spectators and rider refreshments
- Put buckets with ropes attached at boggy dams so riders can get to the water
- Familiarize the committee and helpers with the course
- Put up directional signs, so people can find the ride base
- Put up road safety signs on public roads, e.g. "Caution Horses on Road"
- Arrange for the course to be checked just before the ride starts, if possible, checking that all checkpoints, markers, etc. are in place
- Take the Chief Steward around the course prior to the ride
- Make sure the emergency float is on the grounds before the ride starts
- Arrange for checkpoint people to be in position on time, making sure they know what to do and ask them not to switch the car headlights on when riders are approaching
- Arrange for refreshments to go out on course, to the right locations
- Prepare a brief statement for the pre-ride talk, pointing out highlights or dangers
- Fix any problems which may arise during the day. The course designer, or someone else who knows the course, should remain at the ride base during the ride
- Provide a list of property owners for the ride secretary to send thank you letters

9. Check Points

All check points must be in effective communication with the ride base and/or the Chief Steward. This can be via either radio or mobile phone. Check point personnel must be supplied with a list of phone numbers including the ride secretary, Chief Steward, ride organiser, emergency services and local police. Where possible all emergency calls should be co-coordinated via the Chief Steward or his/her deputy.

It is the responsibility of the persons manning the check points to ensure that any water points are maintained and replenished where necessary.

It is the ride organiser's responsibility to ensure that checkpoint personnel are fully aware of their role and responsibilities and have a sound knowledge of the track and direction of travel in the area they are assigned. During the course of their stay at a check point the ride organiser will ensure they receive suitable food and refreshments.

Persons attending a check point must be supplied with start lists, pens, clip boards and communication. Any vet outs or withdrawals during the course of the event will be transmitted to the check point as soon as possible by either the Chief Steward or ride secretary.

It is an option, but not mandatory, that human drinking water and lollies be supplied at check points for riders as well as nourishment (such as hay) for horses to pick at.

10. Medical/First Aid Person

A suitably qualified person should be appointed as the First Aid Officer at each ride. This person should be located at the ride base and be in communication with the Chief Steward.

Each ride trailer has a First Aid kit. The First Aid Officer appointed should check this kit before each ride and replenish any items that require it.

The First aid Officer must have access to all necessary phone numbers including ambulance, local hospitals and medical facilities.

The First Aid Officer may be required to attend an incident that occurs on track and a person with full knowledge of the track must be available to assist the First Aid Officer.

11. Recovery Float Driver

A sound float and suitable vehicle capable of traversing the course must be available at the ride base. This vehicle and float must be readily available and accessible at all times. A 4WD vehicle is preferable.

The driver of that vehicle must remain at the ride base until required and must have a sound knowledge of the course. The driver must be in effective communication with the ride base and Chief Steward and must advise the Chief Steward when leaving the ride base.

It is recommended that the recovery float and/or vehicle have on board horse rugs, halter & lead rope and water.

Where possible the driver of the recovery float should be a person with horse experience and confident with floating horses.

VENUE

The venue for an endurance ride can be many and varied but can include, but not restricted to:

- Empty paddocks
- Recreation reserves
- Pony club grounds
- Equestrian centers
- Football ovals

Facilities that suitable venues should have include:

- A large enough area to accommodate all horses, trucks, floats and other vehicles for those nominated including camping
- Ample water supply
- Toilet facilities
- A separate level area for vetting
- Hall or building in which pre-ride talk and presentations can be conducted

A suitable comfortable, dry area for the ride secretary, time keepers, vet ring staff, etc. is required in the event of bad weather and also one that provides shade and shelter in hot weather. If these are not available arrangements must be made to bring these facilities to the event, i.e. toilet hire, water cartage/supply, marquee hire, etc.

When assessing a possible ride venue the Ride Organiser should consider all this factors and also take into account the Horse Containment guidelines (available on the VERA web page).

COURSE

When designing a course many factors should be taken into consideration. These include, but are not limited to the horses, riders, checkpoints, vehicle access, safety and hazards. It is preferable that courses are of a clover leaf style design. This enables the ride base to remain in the one location allowing for camping, vetting and strapping to occur without disruption and reducing the number of staff required to support the ride.

Where possible avoid bitumen roads, especially busy major roads. If bitumen roads must be part of a course ensure roads with wide verges and areas where horses can safely get out of the way of traffic are available. Where crossing of major roads is unavoidable marshalls should be provided to assist riders and horses cross the road in safety.

Bush roads and tracks, private property and the like are the most preferred. Where hills are part of the course riders will appreciate a balance of them and level going. Always take into consideration the amount of other traffic that might be using parts of the course when planning an event.

Any one leg must not exceed 50km. A vet check must be held at the completion of each leg. An average of the distances between standard veterinary checkpoints must not be greater than 40km. Training rides of more than 41km but less than 60km must have a standard veterinary check and hold, preferably half way along the course. For vet gate into hold rides where the distance is 119kms or less should be three legs with the last being the easiest, rides of 120kms but less than 160kms should have a minimum of four legs and rides of 160km are to have a minimum of five legs, the last two legs should be shorter in distance and lesser intensity, where possible.

Where a leg is greater than 20km, a checkpoint must be positioned on the course. Clean, drinkable water if not naturally available must be provided at least every 10kms. Distance markers are required every 10km and, preferably, every 5km.

Prior to marking a course the VERA Course Marking Policy must be read by all those involved. This policy is accessible via the VERA web page. When planning a course it is suggested that a record, e.g. a map, is kept of potential roads/tracks and distances together with relevant information such as natural water points, hazards and emergency access points, etc.

VETTING

The vetting area should be as flat as possible. Rough ground, holes, stones, etc should be avoided. An area large enough to accommodate at least one, possibly two horses completing the trot out for the Vets is to be provided. It must be away from the start finish line and other distractions. If the area is to be used during the hours of darkness sufficient lighting is to be provided to give the Vets every opportunity to assess horses fairly and with confidence.

Only horses being assessed and their strappers are permitted to be in the Vet ring and then only under the direction of the Chief Steward. Vets may allow a stable/paddock mate to accompany a horse into the vetting area if it is considered that it will allow a fair assessment. Small children and dogs are not permitted in the vet area.

Pre ride vetting is held at a suitable time set by the ride organiser in conjunction with the Chief Steward which allows for horses to be assessed in a suitable manner. Pre ride vetting time should be defined when advertising the ride.

Once horses have completed the pre ride vet check they must remain at the ride base and are under the control of the /Chief Steward. Horses remain under the control of the Chief Steward until such time as the Head Vet signs off the logbook at the completion of the ride and is satisfied that the horse is fit to leave the ride base.

In the event of several rides being run at the same time, horses travelling the longer distance have precedence over those travelling the shorter distance. It is suggested that the article TPR & Vet Ring Etiquette by Yvonne Knight should be read. It can be viewed on the VERA website.

PRE RIDE BRIEFING

This briefing is held prior to the commencement of the ride once pre ride vetting has been completed. All riders entered in an event should attend this briefing. The briefing is delivered by the Ride Organiser or a person nominated by them who is aware of all facets relating to the ride.

The briefing should include:

- Introduction of the Chief Steward, Veterinarians and Organising Committee
- Welcome to all riders
- Start times of each ride being held
- Start/finish location
- Cut off times
- Maximum and minimum riding times
- Official time (ascertain from the Chief Steward)
- Number of legs
- Distance of each leg
- Colour of arrows for each leg and any other track markers
- Checkpoint locations and water points
- Remind riders to call their numbers clearly at checkpoints and wait for confirmation that their number has been taken
- Distance markers
- Hazard locations and identification of same
- Local rules relevant to entrants
- Phone numbers for emergency contact
- Vetting procedures, presenting on time, protests, rider responsibility
- Total number of riders and number of entries in each division
- Advise that smoking is banned on track

Prior to the completion of the pre ride briefing the Head Veterinarian should address riders in relation to any issues requiring particular attention. Riders should also be addressed on matters such as extreme weather conditions which may affect themselves or their horse's welfare.

BEST CONDITIONED AWARDS

Best conditioned awards are a separate award from place getters, completions, etc. It is an award designed primarily to recognize the horse in each division that has performed to its best capability. Riding time, weight carried, heart rate, physical and gait factors are taken into consideration in this evaluation.

This award can be given in each weight division or in a combined format – Heavyweight/Middleweight & Lightweight/Junior. The format of the Best Conditioned award should be mentioned at the pre ride briefing.

Horses eligible for the Best Conditioned award are generally the first five horses in each division to complete the event.

Where rides are 160km or more the Best Conditioned workout must be under saddle. For rides of any lesser distance it is up to the discretion of the Head Vet as to whether it is conducted under saddle or led.

The Best Conditioned workout should be at a time which allows for all eligible horses to present effectively. It is also recommended that it is held at a time when spectators can gather and appreciate the efforts of both horse and rider. Rider should be given adequate time to prepare their horses after being notified of their selection and time of the workout.

Horses that are lame or those that have had invasive treatment in the time between completion of the ride and the work out are not eligible for the award. Riders whose horses are selected for Best Conditioned do not have to present for the workout but should be encouraged to do so.

COMPLETION AWARDS

Completion awards must be given to all horses successfully completing the event and vetting through. Placing trophies are also to be provided in each weight division.

Trophies and awards should reflect a standard commensurate with the entry fee being charged. A separate award is to be provided for each Best Conditioned category contested. This award should be the prestige award for a ride and be reflected accordingly.

WITHDRAWALS

All withdrawn horses must be presented to the Vets for examination. The only exception to this is if the horse is withdrawn after being vetted through and before going out on the next leg. Horses withdrawn on course must be presented to the Vet as soon as possible after returning to the ride base but no more than 30 minutes after returning. If, after examination by the Vet, the horse is lame or not fit to continue, that horse is vetted out. The reason and condition of the horse must be recorded in the logbook and on the master sheets.

Failure to present a horse to the Vet automatically is classed as a Vet Out and will incur penalty points as per the AERA Members Handbook, Rule H18.

Once the logbook of a horse is marked Withdrawn by the Veterinarian it cannot be retracted.

WEIGHT DIVISIONS

At all affiliated AERA endurance rides the weight divisions consist as follow:

Heavyweight – 91kg and over, all up riding weight

Middleweight – 73kg and up to 90.9kg all up riding weight

Lightweight – less than 73kg all up riding weight

Junior – 17 years and under in the year of the ride. Juniors aged 10 or under must be accompanied by adult rider at all times.

All competitors must weigh-in at entry. The scales must be accurate. The scales must be set on a firm level surface and manned by a steward to record all weights. On the day of the ride the scales should be located near the finish line so riders can weigh with a minimum delay.

At the completion of each leg, Heavyweight and Middleweight riders are required to demonstrate that they have maintained the minimum weight. All riders must weigh-in at the completion of the ride and these weights are used to calculate the weight scores for Best Conditioned Horse Awards.

STARTING TIMES AND TIME LIMITS

Ride start times are up to the Ride Organisers and will vary according to weather conditions, maximum ride times and other factors such as the availability of appropriate lighting for vet checks. Training and introductory rides should not start in the dark. Many of these riders may be first time endurance riders or inexperienced and their horses may not be trained to lights.

Early starts are necessary for endurance rides to allow time for horses to recover after the event prior to travelling home.

Presentations should be held as soon as possible after the last rider has vetted through and the Best Conditioned horse evaluation has been completed. Riders who have travelled long distances appreciate an early ride start and reasonable time to travel home.

The following is a set of recommended start times for events:

160km – Midnight

120km – Between 2am and 4am

80km – Between 5am and 6am

40km – Between 7am and 9am

Start times can vary depending on local conditions and requirements from local authorities. Horse and rider safety is paramount and this must be a determining factor when setting start times.

Lead vehicles are recommended for night-time starts, especially where any potential hazards are early in the course or if there are points where riders could miss a turn-off. Safety lights/light sticks are available and are excellent for night sections, which are otherwise difficult to mark.

MAXIMUM RIDING TIMES

The following are recommended maximum riding times for the various standard endurance and training ride distances:

160km – 21 hours

120km – 12 hours

80km – 8 hours

40km – 4 hours

These times are based on an average course and can be extended with regard to the terrain and weather conditions. The setting of this time is at the ride organiser's discretion but it must not be less than a time based on 10 km/h. Only riders who finish the course within these times can be considered to have completed.

MINIMUM RIDING TIMES

These apply to all novice riders, novice horses, training and introductory riders. Again, the setting of these times is at the discretion of the ride organiser but must not be less than a time based on a speed of 14 km/h. In endurance rides pace riders may be used instead of a specified minimum time for novice riders/novice horses.

Minimum times are usually averaged up as follows:

80km – 6 hours

40km – 3 hours

The actual minimum ride time for 40kms is 2 hrs 52 minutes. Rounding up is done to assist riders to remember an easy cut-off time as well as to assist the time keepers.

Minimum riding times should be set per leg. Both minimum and maximum times are based on riding time, i.e. time spent on course. Riders are considered to have started the ride/leg at the time they are due to start, not at the time that they actually leave base.

INSURANCE

All VERA members are covered by Public Liability insurance. Ride organisers do not have to arrange their own insurance. VERA/AERA also has a Voluntary Workers Policy, which covers voluntary workers and helpers. The full details of the coverage provided by this insurance can be viewed at the AERA website – www.aera.asn.au.

Day Membership Fees apply to non-VERA members entering training and introductory rides. The Day Membership form must be included with the Ride Stationery for distribution following the end of the ride.

All riders entering the endurance ride must be full financial members of VERA and provide their membership card at entry. If a membership card cannot be produced the rider cannot enter the endurance ride.

RIDE SAFETY PROCEDURES

VERA has a Risk Management policy that is available on the VERA website (www.aera.asn/vera) and it is recommended that all Ride Organisers download a copy of this document and read it thoroughly.

The Chief Steward must complete a Risk Management return and will be required to identify what local services and other authorities have been notified of the ride. The ride organizer should be aware of the requirements appropriate to the degree of hazard that the ride presents, e.g. distance from nearest hospital, etc. and make appropriate arrangements in advance of the ride. For example, if it is necessary for the riders to cross a bitumen road, it may be necessary to contact the local Police and advise them.

Endurance riding is an invigorating and sometimes dangerous sport. Experienced and older riders must consider novice and younger riders and their horses. These considerations are most critical in the dark and every encouragement should be given to more experienced riders to 'buddy' someone who is new to the sport.

Check points on course are important and ensure that each rider has reached that point. If a horse or rider experience difficulties, assistance can be called from each checkpoint. Checkpoints are also useful in ensuring that riders follow the designated track.

Ride organizers should make every effort to have at least 1 radio checkpoint (2 or 3 is preferable) on each leg. If the terrain or climatic conditions are difficult more checkpoints may be required.

All checkpoints should be in communication with the base, either directly or by relay, and should be aware of their position on course. If a rider arrives at a checkpoint either experiencing difficulties themselves or with a message from another rider in difficulty, base camp should be notified immediately so that assistance can be arranged. In this situation it is important that the radio operator at base is aware of their responsibilities, has access to maps of the area and knows the exact position of all checkpoints so that assistance can be swiftly and efficiently coordinated.

A mobile steward, in communication with the ride base may travel the course to deal with any problems arising on course.

A vehicle (4WD preferably) and float must be available to collect any horse in distress.

Local Ambulance should be notified of the ride date and venue and it is useful to also inform the police of the ride. Ride base should have a radio or telephone contact with emergency authorities.

LOG BOOKS

All riders competing in endurance rides must have a log book for their horse. Horses that have been issued a logbook and who enter a Training ride must use that logbook and cannot use a Vet Card. Riders with horses that have not been issued with a log book are only permitted to enter training or introductory rides. Ride details for the training and introductory rides will be recorded on a Vet Card. All logbooks must have an Owner/Agent label affixed inside the logbook cover which is clearly legible and filled out.

Novice Horse log books are blue. The identification page must be filled in. Novice Horses or Novice Riders must be noted on the master sheets in the appropriate columns.

Endurance Horse log books are yellow. All Endurance Horses must have the identification page in the log book correctly completed and signed by a Vet or Log Book Secretary. If this identification has not been done the horse must compete under Novice Horse rules. If the horse has not successfully completed a ride of 80 km or over in the previous 13 months it must also comply with the Novice Horse rules for one ride. Endurance horse logbooks must have a current registration sticker affixed inside the front cover which is clearly legible and filled out.

At the time of entry, the log book is to have the ride details entered and is then returned to the rider. The rider takes this to the Vet for the pre-ride vetting. All log books are kept by the ride secretary once the horse has been vetted. This allows the details to be entered onto the master sheets prior to the ride.

As each rider completes each leg, the times are entered into the log book and the log book is handed to the rider. The rider then presents the horse and log book to the Vet. Once the vetting details are entered, the log books are then returned to the ride secretary for vetting details to be entered onto the master sheets.

Log books can only be returned once they have been signed off by the ride Secretary and the Head Vet. Log books are usually returned to competitors at the presentation of awards after the ride. Prior to presentations, the ride secretary should check all log books have been correctly filled in and signed.

The only personnel able to alter data entered in the log book are the Vet, Chief Steward, and Ride Secretary, who may correct data entered at the time, by drawing a line through and initialling. White-out is not to be used at any time. Entries should be made in biro only.

Where vet cards are used, the same procedure is followed. Where a horse with a log book is entered in a training ride, that log book must be used.

RIDE STATIONERY

It is important that organizers are familiar with the ride stationery and that it is correctly completed. The Ride Stationery should be downloaded from the web page two to three weeks prior to the ride. The organizers should familiarize themselves with the various forms at this stage and contact VERA for clarification if necessary.

Entry forms – All entrants must complete the 'Entry and Indemnity Form'. Check the rider's membership number and the horse's log book number have been noted on the form. These forms should be kept by the organisers.

Master Sheets – These are the complete record of the ride. They must be correctly filled in with the following details:

1. Novice Horses and Riders are noted
2. Membership numbers have been recorded for all riders
3. Start Times are recorded
4. Pre-ride weights and vetting details are recorded
5. Log book numbers are recorded for all horses
6. Reasons for vet/out withdrawal are recorded (including heart rates)
7. Maximum and minimum times are noted
8. Pace Rider noted (if used)

It is suggested that the master sheets are not written up until all entries have been taken, and that riders are listed by weight division. This will simplify the calculation of placings after the ride. These forms must be returned to the VERA Point Score Secretary together with the Course information Sheet.

Time sheet – This assists with recording times. Rider numbers can be rapidly noted and then transcribed into log books. It does not need to be kept once the ride is completed.

Best Conditioned Evaluation – This format must be used for the calculation of Best Conditioned Horse. One form is used per section, i.e. one form for Heavyweight/Middleweight and one form for Lightweight/Junior and one form for Harness. All calculations should be completed by the Ride Secretary or Chief Steward except for sections 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4. These sections are to be completed by the Vet. Many of the details can be completed prior to all eligible horses completing the ride in order to save time. The weight score cannot be completed until all eligible horses have been vetted through. These forms should be returned to the VERA Point Score Secretary.

Chief Stewards Ride Report – This form must be completed by the Chief Steward after the ride and should include details of any out of the ordinary incidents. If an invasive treatment or vet order form is used it must be noted. This form must be returned to the VERA Secretary.

Head Vets Report – This form must be completed by the Head Veterinarian after the ride and forwarded to the VERA Secretary.

Invasive Treatment/Accident Form – This form is only required to be completed if a horse is treated by the Vet, i.e. after an injury, or if the Vet administers any invasive treatment, such as drips, drenches, injections, etc. This form should be sent to the VERA Horse Welfare Officer.

Rest Order Form – These forms are available for the Vet to complete if it is felt that any horse should be prevented from competing or made to compete as a Novice. If they are used, one copy is given to the rider, one is sent to the VERA Horse Welfare Officer and the third is retained by the Ride Secretary. The logbook of the horse should also be retained and sent to the VERA Horse Welfare Officer.

Risk Management Checklist – This form demonstrates that in the planning and preparation of the ride, all of the relevant agencies have been notified, and that risks have been assessed and adequate controls put in place. This form must be sent to the VERA Insurance Officer.

Ride Fees – The Ride Fees and Ride Forms return are located on the VERA web page. At the completion of the ride the form is complete and sent together with the ride fees to the VERA Treasurer within 14 days.

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

VERA supplies ride trailers for use by ride organisers. These trailers are equipped with the following ride equipment:

- Scales
- Time Keeping Clocks
- Ride Number bibs
- Vests for the Chief Steward, Vets and other Officials
- Bollards, hats, vetting bays for the vetting area
- Marquee
- Microchip Scanner

Ride Stationary, vet cards, entry forms, etc. can be accessed via the VERA Web Page. Download the required forms and print sufficient quantities of each form for use during the ride. Ride Rules and Member Handbook can be located on the website. Where any equipment is damaged during the ride the ride organiser is responsible for the repair or replacement of that equipment.

Ride Organisers are responsible for the provision of the following:

- Pens, paper, clipboards, paper clips
- Table and chairs
- Cash float for entries
- Staple gun and staples (or similar) to mark the course

In addition to this equipment VERA also supplies ride laptops and printers. These are usually kept within each region by a VERA member to ensure that they are located safely and securely and in an appropriate environment for their upkeep. To ascertain who the VERA member is that is looking after this equipment contact the VERA Assets Officer for details.