

BHA Instructions for Point-to-Point Steeple Chases - 2025/26 Season

Instruction 9: VETERINARY ARRANGEMENTS

DUTIES OF THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

- 9.1** All veterinary arrangements at a Point-to-Point Meeting must be in accordance with this Instruction. Unless prior permission has been obtained from the BHA in advance no Meeting should commence or continue without the required veterinary arrangements being in place.

PROVISION OF SERVICES

9.2 Pre-Raceday

- (i) Three Veterinary Surgeons (S)PVSs **MUST be appointed; one of whom must be appointed to act as the Senior Point-to-Point Veterinary Surgeon (SPVS) and to take charge of all the veterinary arrangements. The SPVS must be appointed and their name passed on to the PPA Office at least eight weeks (preferably three months) prior to the Meeting.**

Unless already accredited as an approved Senior Racecourse Veterinary Surgeon (SRVS), any Veterinary Surgeon acting as Senior at a point-to-point must have completed the BHA (Racing to Learn) online Senior Point-to-Point Veterinary Surgeon (SPVS) training. Organisers are responsible for checking that the SPVS they appoint has carried out the necessary training and is accredited as either an SRVS or SPVS before submitting their details to the PPA.

Note: Three (S)PVSs **must be in attendance at all meetings**. Whilst it is sensible for the third (S)PVS to be fully trauma trained, this is not mandatory unless required at a specific course in the opinion of the SPVS.

- (ii) (S)PVSs must:
- Be members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons with current, valid professional indemnity insurance;
 - Have a clinical involvement which includes a significant amount of regular treatment of horses.
 - Have been qualified for at least five years with a broad experience of equine practice;
 - (A minimum of two) Have attended an approved ARVS Casualty Management Seminar (CMS) within the last 5 years.
 - Be physically and mentally capable of carrying out all the duties required of a (S)PVS on a Point-to-Point course.

BHA Instructions for Point-to-Point Steeple Chases - 2025/26 Season

Information regarding Casualty Management Seminars (CMS) are available on the Association of Racecourse Veterinary Surgeons Website (www.arvs.org.uk). The BHA Equine Science and Welfare Department can be contacted on 0207 152 0090.

- (iii) The SPVS is to ensure a minimum level of equipment is available to deal with casualties, which should include:
- Adequate materials for Robert Jones dressings
 - Gutter and/or commercial splints
 - Materials for chemical euthanasia
 - Intravenous fluids
 - Newmarket Compression Boot (if available in the region)

Raceday

- (iv) Before racing commences the following must be present and procedures in place to check their attendance:
- Three (3) (S)PVSs, each provided with a radio handset.
 - A recovery vehicle with screens and specified experienced driver, who should remain in the vehicle throughout racing. The recovery vehicle must have high sides with either a fixed or temporary roof, working winch and a tarpaulin.
 - A separate 4x4 towing vehicle suitable for the ground conditions.
 - A horse ambulance with screens, water and experienced driver, who should remain in the vehicle throughout racing. The vehicle must have a front ramp to allow the horse to be unloaded in a forward direction. A separate vehicle and driver must be provided for the recovery vehicle and the horse ambulance.
 - A Rapid Response Vehicle with screens and water. Clerks of the Course have been advised that they must provide abundant supplies of cool fresh water and buckets adjacent to the Parade Ring, unsaddling enclosures, between the pull up and unsaddling enclosure (at a site agreed with the SPVS), and at the horse box park. Ideally water should also be available at the last two fences. Static supplies may take the form of ICBs or water butts. Water should also be carried on the horse ambulance and on the Rapid Response Vehicle.
- Screens should ideally be provided at the last two fences, on the Rapid Response vehicle, horse ambulance and recovery vehicle, and at the unsaddling enclosure and Parade Ring;

**BHA Instructions for Point-to-Point Steeple Chases
- 2025/26 Season**

- (v) Fence Attendants must have the required orange flag which should be used to summon veterinary assistance.
- (vi) It is recommended that the Clerk of the Course, in conjunction with the (S)PVS, ensures that the course allows suitable vehicles (four wheel drive) for veterinary staff to have access throughout, or provide suitable locations to give veterinary coverage for the whole course.
- (vii) Prior to racing all (S)PVS in attendance must endeavour to attend the Clerk of the Course briefing of the staff working on the racecourse.
- (viii) Two (S)PVSs must be on the racetrack for each race one, of whom should be at the start. Veterinary arrangements should be such that it is possible to deal efficiently with two separate incidents in the same race.
- (ix) The (S)PVSs, horse ambulance, recovery vehicles and Rapid Response Vehicle must be deployed to ensure an immediate response to equine casualties. The SPVS should be aware of where the nearest veterinary referral centre is in relation to the Meeting.
- (x) (S)PVSs must alert the Stewards if;
 - they consider that a rider has failed to pull up, or delayed pulling up, a horse that in their opinion was very tired or lame;
 - they notice after the race that the use of the whip has produced a weal or drawn blood, or that the horse has been marked in the wrong place.
- (xi) A (S)PVS must be available in the Parade Ring prior to each race.
- (xii) The SPVS must not leave the course until all horses in the last race have been accounted for, and the permission of the Clerk of the Course for withdrawal of veterinary services has been obtained.
- (xiii) (S)PVSs should wear a distinctive jacket/armband during racing.

BHA Instructions for Point-to-Point Steeple Chases - 2025/26 Season

- (xiv) Calls for veterinary assistance should not be made over the open PA system. (S)PVSs should be issued with radios with which they can communicate with each other and with the Clerk of the Course.
- (xv) A (S)PVS must complete a VO19 and provide to connections on any occasion that a horse receives medical treatment. The (S)PVS must contact the home vet or referral centre in the case of serious and/or long-term injuries that are likely to require ongoing care.
- (xvi) At the end of the Meeting the SPVS must complete the online 'Fixture Veterinary Report', using the link provided by the BHA and available within Appendix (9)A 'Senior Point-to-Point Veterinary Surgeon (SPVS) Responsibilities'.

DESTRUCTION OF HORSES

- 9.3** At least two suitable screens should be used behind which it will be possible for a (S)PVS to destroy an injured horse out of sight of the public. At least one screen should be carried as part of the equipment of the recovery vehicle and one on the Rapid Response Vehicle.

Screens should be kept up until the horse is loaded into the recovery vehicle and covered, but it should be made clear that absence of the screen must in no case hold up the humane despatch of an injured horse. Service/recovery vehicles can be parked in such a way as to maximise the screening of horses. The method of euthanasia must be left to the attending (S)PVS taking into account the welfare of the horse and the safety of assistants and/or onlookers e.g. in the home straight. If a fire arm is to be used it must be with a sound moderated weapon and not used in any area close to the public.

DISPOSAL

- 9.4** The Organising Committee must have a designated area for the placement of dead horses during the day, which is both secure and out of public view. All dead horses must be covered so that aerial photos cannot be taken. The recovery vehicle should not keep dead horses on board following an incident or try to drag a second horse onto the first at the site of the incident. No race should be started until the recovery vehicle is empty and back in position.

Organisers must have a policy regarding 'elective euthanasia' to avoid unnecessary debate and ill feeling. (S)PVS should be made aware of this policy.

It is strongly recommended that Organising Committees cover all veterinary costs involved when on-course humane euthanasia occurs.