



Frequently Asked Questions

At 12 July 2018

Greyhounds Australasia (GA) Rule Changes

1 August 2018

When do the rule changes apply to me?

GRSA introduced these changes on 1 April 2018.

RWWA introduced these changes on 1 June 2018.

Tasracing has yet to determine when it will introduce the changes.

All other controlling bodies will adopt the changes on or just after 1 August 2018.

Which rules will change?

The following Greyhounds Australasia Rules (GARs) will change:

- GAR 1 – Definition of prohibited substance
- GAR 1 – Definition of exempted substance
- GAR 83A – Race day and Day Prior Treatment
- GAR 79A – List of permanently banned prohibited substances
- GAR 84A – Treatment records to be kept
- GAR 21A – Consecutive days racing

<http://galtd.org.au/news-article/change-definition-prohibited-substances-be-made-greyhounds-australasia-rules>

<http://galtd.org.au/news-article/norethisterone-control-oestrus-females-be-introduced-exempted-substance-greyhounds>

<http://galtd.org.au/news-article/enhanced-restrictions-treatment-prior-racing-be-introduced-greyhounds-australasia-rule>

<http://galtd.org.au/news-article/list-permanently-banned-prohibited-substances-be-expanded-greyhounds-australasia-rules>

<http://galtd.org.au/news-article/amendments-be-made-treatment-record-requirements-greyhounds-australasia-rules>

<http://galtd.org.au/news-article/local-rule-prevent-greyhounds-competing-consecutive-days-be-extended-greyhounds>

What is a permanently banned prohibited substance?

The prohibited substances as defined in GAR 79A are considered so concerning from a welfare or integrity point of view that they are deemed by experts to have no place in the sport at all – these are called permanently banned prohibited substances.

Permanently banned prohibited substances should never be in a greyhound's system (whether on race day or out-of-competition).

Because these substances are so concerning for the integrity of the sport, participants are also not permitted to possess, acquire, attempt to acquire, administer or attempt to administer any permanently banned prohibited substances at any time.

Example – EPO/Growth hormone/Anabolic androgenic steroids are permanently banned prohibited substances (as listed in GAR 79A i/viii/xx respectively)

If a trainer acquired, possessed, administered or allowed these substances to be administered to a greyhound it would be in breach of this rule, regardless of whether a veterinarian had prescribed the substance to the greyhound, as they have been assessed as having no place in greyhound racing.

What is a prohibited substance?

A prohibited substance is defined in GAR 1. As in the previous definition, it includes any substance capable of having an effect on a greyhound's body system.

The basic underlying principle is that we should have “drug-free racing” so that punters can be confident that greyhounds run on their merits, and the greyhound's performance is not influenced in any way by any sort of drug or other substance.

This means that when they are presented to race, greyhounds must not have anything falling within the definition of prohibited substances in their system.

What is the difference between a permanently banned prohibited substance and prohibited substances?

All permanently banned prohibited substances are also prohibited substances but not all (in fact relatively very few) prohibited substances are permanently banned prohibited substances.

If prohibited substances are acquired and possessed appropriately, many can be used in the routine husbandry and training of greyhounds - they just need to be out of the greyhound's system on race day.

Example – A veterinarian prescribes a 7-day course of firocoxib to a greyhound for lameness. This is a prohibited substance because it is an anti-inflammatory and a Prescription Animal Remedy (Schedule 4 of the Poisons Standard)

During the 7 days of treatment Stewards attend the trainer's property and conduct an out of competition swab. The laboratory detects firocoxib - a prohibited substance. However, as this substance is detected in a non-race day sample, Stewards will take no further action.

If the sample were taken on a race day it would have resulted in a positive swab, as greyhounds need to be presented to race drug free.

What is an exempted substance?

A group of substances are exempt from being prohibited substances, as defined in GAR 1. These exempted substances include vaccinations, antibiotics (except procaine penicillin), antiparasitics registered for use in canines (except levamisole) and specific substances in females only for controlling oestrous (heat/season). If these substances are detected in a greyhound, it will not result in a breach of the rules.

These substances still need to be appropriately prescribed, administered and their use recorded.

As noted in these FAQs, norethisterone and ethyloestrenol will soon be exempted for oestrus control in females.

Example – A veterinarian prescribes a 7-day course of the prescription animal remedy (Schedule 4 of the Poisons Standard) amoxicillin (an antibiotic) to a greyhound for a mild infection. The trainer records the treatment in their Treatment Record.

The greyhound recovers, races and is swabbed. The laboratory detects amoxicillin, but as it is an antibiotic it is therefore an exempted substance, and Stewards take no further action.

Why is the definition of prohibited substance changing?

The definition of prohibited substance in greyhound racing has not been reviewed for over 20 years despite significant advances in medicine and the creation of new drugs. A review of this definition identified a need to include a more detailed list of substance categories that will provide more clarity to participants.

This clarity was needed as, at times, there has been confusion about whether a substance was prohibited because its drug class may not have been listed in the definition, but it clearly had an effect on a body system or was specifically listed in the Commonwealth Poisons Standard.

The amended rule now lists consistent mammalian body systems and drug categories as compared to other racing codes. This allows for greater consistency across codes that share the same drug testing laboratories, and in many jurisdictions, operate under the same controlling body.

Why is the definition of prohibited substance so broad?

The new definition is no broader than the previous definition. There will be no actual change in the practice by laboratories of which substances they report as a prohibited substance as a result of the implementation of this change.

Regulatory bodies are not, and never have been, concerned with applying the racing rules unreasonably so as to capture the provision of food and water (or the vitamins and electrolytes (including potassium, bi-carb, etc.) that are present in normal foodstuffs). To do so is clearly not in the interests of the sport or the regulation of it. This common sense approach is reinforced by the recent NSW Court of Appeal decision in *Day v Harness Racing NSW* (2014) (88 NSWLR) which warned against ‘*extreme literalism*’ (594) in interpreting racing rules and ‘*that the legal meaning of the rule has nothing to say about ordinary, naturally occurring foodstuffs.*’ (606)

The list of prohibited substances includes things like vitamins by injection – does that mean I can’t give vitamins to my racing greyhound?

Most substances that are administered by injection already meet the current definition of a prohibited substance as they are being administered to cause some effect on a body system. If that were not the intention, then would be no purpose for administering the substance.

The list of prohibited substances in Part B only refers to vitamins that can be administered by injection and, as with any prohibited substance, they can be used but must not be present in a sample taken on

race day. All prohibited substances must be registered, labelled and obtained appropriately, including vitamin injections. Oral supplementation of normal amounts of vitamins for a canine diet is still acceptable but participants must be mindful of breaching any thresholds established (e.g. cobalt from Vitamin B12).

The definition of prohibited substances is hard to understand. Where can we find more information about prohibited substances?

Controlling bodies do not expect participants to know every one of the thousands of substances that are prohibited, however they do need to know about every substance that they intend to administer to their greyhound, before they administer it (or arrange for someone else to administer it). To assist participants and their advisors (i.e. vets), the detailed notices published by GA provide an overview of each of the groups of substances.

Participants should also ensure that they have a good relationship with their own vet who can provide advice on those substances which can or can't be administered.

More information about registered veterinary medicines can be found on the Australian Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines Authority database: <https://portal.apvma.gov.au/pubcris>

More information about human medicines can be found on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods database: <http://www.tga.gov.au/>

The current Commonwealth Poisons Standard listing the substances within the each schedule is available <https://www.tga.gov.au/publication/poisons-standard-susmp>

Why is the definition of exempted substance being changed?

The definition of exempted substance is being amended to add norethisterone (when administered in the prescribed way) as a treatment for the purpose of regulating or preventing oestrus in female greyhounds. Owners and trainers in consultation with their prescribing veterinarian will now have more flexibility in choosing the best form of oestrus control treatment (if any) for that greyhound, instead of the only current option of ethyloestrenol, which many have reported does not suit all females.

Norethisterone is readily available as a human pharmaceutical and is currently used in racing greyhounds in the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

As it is now an exempted substance, will controlling bodies supply norethisterone to control oestrous in female greyhounds?

No. This is a Prescription Only Medicine as defined in Schedule 4 of the Commonwealth Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Drugs and Poisons, and prescribing laws and guidelines require it can only be prescribed to an animal by a registered Veterinary Surgeon that has that animal under his or her care after establishing a therapeutic need for that substance.

As this is a human medication, it would also require off-label prescription (as does ethyloestrenol), which is prescription for an unapproved indication, dose or form of administration. These requirements can only be met with a bona fide vet-client relationship, and participants need to ensure an active relationship with their vet to assist in the ongoing care of their animals.

Why are restrictions on treatment/injections prior to racing being changed?

The current definition of “race day treatment” has been inconsistently applied by controlling bodies and therefore caused confusion with participants. The notice published clarifies how controlling bodies intend to enforce this rule from 1 August 2018.

The rule already in place makes it clear that no treatment can be given to a greyhound on the day the greyhound is nominated to compete in an Event. That is, no ‘treatment’ can be administered on the calendar day of racing, from 12:01am until the greyhound is removed from the racecourse after the completion of that Event with the permission of the Stewards pursuant to Rule 42(2), or is scratched with the permission of the Stewards.

In addition, the new rule also prohibits the use of any injectable substance on the calendar day prior to (and day of) an Event.

This rule is already in place for other racing codes and the rule focuses on what is considered an acceptable practice on race day and the day prior (rather than on the substance itself – which is the ambit of race day sampling and subsequent analysis).

What food and supplements can my greyhound have on race day?

Only normal feeding that a greyhound voluntarily eats or drinks is considered acceptable on race day.

No ‘treatment’ as defined in GAR 83A is allowed, this includes any tablets, capsules, pills, etc. or liquid, paste, etc. that requires syringing into the oral cavity. These can only be administered after leaving the racecourse after the Event.

If normal daily feeding includes adding a small, reasonable amount of electrolyte liquid or powder to a greyhound’s feed or drink (e.g. ½ teaspoon of potassium or bi-carb), then this is permitted but this should be done prior to arrival on the racecourse.

What if my greyhound needs an injection prior to racing?

No injectable substance (whether administered by injection or not) can be given from 12:01am the day prior to racing, until after the greyhound has left the racecourse after the event. i.e. If racing on Thursday, the last injection can be given on Tuesday.

Healthy greyhounds are unlikely to need regular administration of injectable substances but where their use is required that can be performed well clear of race day. Treatments close to racing are more likely aimed at affecting performance and do not create a level playing field.

Why can’t I administer exempted substances on race day?

You are permitted to administer exempted substances such as oestrus control medication after the Event e.g. in the evening meal following a race.

Administering prior to racing reduces the concentration of these substances and therefore any potential affect they may have, which is more in line with the principles of “drug-free racing”.

Why should requirements about treatment records be changed?

The treatment records rule changes require that the date and time of treatment be recorded, and that the record be made on the day the treatment was given. The rule change is intended to ensure that participants keep timely and accurate records of treatments administered to greyhounds. When treatment records are not kept on the day the treatment is given, they can be forgotten about or recorded inaccurately and then are not available when requested by an authorised person or steward.

The information recorded is often helpful in prohibited substance investigations and where the substance, amount, time, route and individual greyhound characteristics are known, there are cases where calculations can be done to ascertain the accuracy of the information provided, therefore it is in the interests of a participant to keep accurate and detailed records in case of an inadvertent positive swab.

My state already has a rule that doesn't allow me to race a greyhound in races over consecutive days. Why is this rule being changed?

Western Australia, Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria already have this as part of their Local Rules. If adopted, this rule will harmonise the national rules and establish a national standard.