

1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95825
(916) 263-6000
Fax (916) 263-6042
www.chrb.ca.gov

CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD



Los Alamitos Race Course
4961 E. Katella Avenue
Los Alamitos, CA 90720

Contact: Mike Marten
(714) 820-2748
Cell: (714) 240-1870
Fax (714) 821-6232

CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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CHRB SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON EXERCISE RIDER PROPOSAL

SACRAMENTO, CA – The California Horse Racing Board is considering a proposal to create a new license classification for a provisional exercise rider and is soliciting comments from the public prior to a July 17 public hearing at Del Mar. Written comments, pro or con, must be received by July 14.

Rule 1504.5 would create the new license category in order to allow aspiring riders to gain experience by working under supervision in the racetrack setting. Leigh Ann Howard, a licensed trainer and manager of a training facility, spoke in favor of this proposal at the April 24 CHRB meeting. There were no comments in opposition to this proposal.

“Once an exercise rider license is issued to a person, that licensee is free to move from track to track and is assumed to be as knowledgeable as a person who has been licensed and riding for years,” explains Howard. “By first issuing a provisional license to a new rider, that person can gain needed experience in a controlled situation within the existing structure and elements of racetrack safety.”

Currently, to receive a standard exercise rider license, the aspiring rider is questioned by the stewards to determine if the applicant is qualified to begin the evaluation process. The applicant must gallop a horse in front of the official outrider – an official who is always present when horses are exercised on the track and monitors activities to ensure the safety of all the horses and riders. The outrider judges the rider’s skills and determines whether the applicant knows the track rules. By signing a stewards’ card, the outrider states that the rider is qualified to gallop and breeze horses and work them out of the gate, along with everyone else.

“There is concern among many horsemen that newly licensed exercise riders are not experienced enough to be thrown in with experienced riders without some sort of supervision,” says Howard. “It is generally acknowledged that in order to gain the necessary experience, a new licensee must ride for some period of time on one of the licensed tracks. The new license category will enable inexperienced riders to gain this experience in a safe, legal manner. It will stop the common practice of newly licensed, inexperienced riders showing up at tracks without the necessary skills.”

As proposed, an applicant for license as provisional exercise rider must submit a notarized agreement as proof of employment by a CHRB licensed trainer, who will provide the structure around which the provisional exercise rider gains experience on the track. Provisional exercise

riders will be covered by the trainers' worker's compensation insurance policies.

The outrider generally will provide guidance and monitor the provisional rider's activities. The outrider will decide when a provisional exercise rider is allowed to come onto the track, whether the trainer or assistant trainer needs to accompany the rider, and when he or she will be allowed to ride freelance for other trainers. Provisional riders will be required to wear a distinctively colored helmet and vest cover when on the track to help others identify them.

A provisional rider will be eligible to apply for an unrestricted exercise rider's license after 60 days on the recommendation of the outrider and approval of the stewards. Persons holding an exercise rider license in other racing jurisdictions will not be required to go through this process.

Written comments should be addressed to: Harold Coburn, Regulation Analyst, California Horse Racing Board, 1010 Hurley Way, Suite 300. Sacramento, CA 95825. For additional details, he can be reached at (916) 263-6397 or Fax: (916) 263-6022 or e-mail (harolda@chr.ca.gov). The exact time and location for the July 17 public hearing on this matter will be posted on the CHRB website (www.chrb.ca.gov) at least 10 days beforehand.

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