

Frequently Asked Questions

Greyhounds Australasia (GA) Proposed Rule Changes (March 1 2018)

Do the proposed rules apply to me from 1 March 2018?

A: The rules issued by GA, known as national rules, do not have any effect in each State until they are approved by the Controlling Body. Controlling Bodies will undertake their own consultation processes on the proposed rule changes and, subject to consideration of that feedback, consider whether or not they should be introduced in their State.

Q: How can I give feedback on the proposed GA Rules before they are considered by the Controlling Bodies?

A: Check with your own Controlling body how to make submissions on the proposed amendments.

Specific questions seeking clarification about any of the proposed rule changes or their meaning should be emailed to Greyhounds Australasia admin@galtd.org.au.

Q: Why should the definition of “prohibited substance” be changed?

A: 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 their 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 (as defined in GAR 1). The definition essentially includes any substance that can have an effect on any body system in the greyhound. Many of these compounds can be used in the routine practice of training greyhounds, they just need to be out of the dog’s system on raceday.

Regulatory bodies are not, and have never been, concerned with applying the rule unreasonably so as to capture the provision of food (or the vitamins/electrolytes that are present in normal foodstuffs) and water. To do so is clearly not in the interests of the sport or the regulation of it.

There has at times been confusion as to whether a substance was prohibited because it may not have been an example listed within the drug classes. This is particularly the case if the substance category/class is not listed in the rule, but was administered with the intent of having an effect on one of the body systems mentioned in the racing rules, or the substance is listed within the Commonwealth Poisons Standard, and therefore met the definition of prohibited substance within the rules.

The definition of prohibited substance has not been updated in over 20 years. Upon review of the rule, as conducted by GA’s Vets and Analysts Committee, it was proposed to amend the rule from an out-dated, inconsistent short definition to a more specific list of those substances that are prohibited in order to provide more clarity to participants.

The proposed lists of mammalian body systems and drug categories are identical to those used in horse racing under AR178B of the Australian Rules of Racing, which uses the same drug testing laboratories as the greyhound racing Controlling Bodies. All of the categories listed in the proposed rule are considered to already be an example of a prohibited substance under the current definition.

Q: What's the difference between prohibited substance and banned substance?

A: There is group of prohibited substances that are so concerning from a welfare or integrity point of view that they are deemed to have no place in the sport at all – these are called **permanently banned prohibited substances**. It is these substances that not only cannot be in the greyhound's system on raceday but also cannot be present in an out-of-competition sample. 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 of these substances at any time from birth to retirement of a greyhound (GAR 79A).

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

Q: The list of prohibited substances includes things like vitamins – does that mean I can't give vitamins to my racing greyhound?

Most substances that might already be 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.

However, many of these injections may contain substances not readily detectable by a laboratory or that are indistinguishable from naturally occurring substances. In those that occur naturally, specific research would need to be done to prove that a substance has been administered too close to racing and a threshold developed, as was done with cobalt.

The list of prohibited substances in Part B therefore only refers to vitamins that can administered by injection if required, but which cannot be injected within one clear day of racing (see clarification below in relation to treatment prior to racing).

Q: Why should the definition of "exempted substance" be changed?

A: The definition of exempted substance is proposed to be 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.

Q: Why should the restrictions on treatment prior to racing be changed?

A: The current definition of "race day treatment" has been identified as causing confusion with some participants.

The proposed change is intended to make 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 dog 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.

This position is already in place for other racing codes and as is the case in the other codes, these rules focus on what is considered an acceptable practice on raceday (rather than on the substance itself – which is the ambit of raceday sampling and subsequent analysis).

Q: My State already has a rule that doesn't allow me to race a greyhound in races over consecutive days. Why is the rule being proposed?

A: 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.

Q: Why should requirements about treatment records be changed?

A: The rule change proposed 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.

While most participants already adopt an approach which records treatments as soon as they are given, there are instances where these records are not available when requested by an authorised person or steward.