



Trainer's Competency Pack

Level 1 - Attendant

Version 1.0



Greyhound Racing Victoria

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Chapter 1

1.1 – Introduction

The Greyhound Racing Industry in Victoria

In Victoria, Greyhound Racing Victoria is the body responsible for promoting and controlling the sport. A key part of its role is the setting of standards, regulating and policing the industry and the people involved. With approximately 800 race meetings held across 14 venues throughout the state, GRV distributes to owners and trainers more than \$20 million dollars in prize money every year.

The greyhound racing industry makes a substantial contribution to the Victorian economy, both as a recreational pursuit, and as an industry that employs thousands of people and generates millions of dollars in wagering.

According to an IER economic study completed in 2002, the contribution that the greyhound industry makes to the Victorian economy is in excess of \$178 million dollars annually. This contribution is particularly significant in provincial Victoria where 70% of all greyhounds are in training and 60% of breeders are located.

A major feature of the greyhound industry is its 'hobby trainer' basis. This is commonly an individual, a family or a small group of individuals as a syndicate who might own, rear, train or race anything from 1 to 5 dogs. The majority of the greyhound industry's participants fall into this category.

GRV has the task of ensuring that industry participants fully understand their responsibilities in relation to the greyhounds they own and train. They support and encourage continual improvement of training and husbandry techniques through research and education and are committed to the ongoing welfare of greyhounds throughout their racing careers and into retirement. To help care for those greyhounds that are no longer suited to racing, GRV has developed the highly successful Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) that helps to place ex-racing greyhounds into homes where they live out the rest of their lives as family pets. The Greyhound Adoption Program is just one way that GRV is involved in improving the welfare of racing greyhounds within the industry, however, responsibility for the welfare of each individual greyhound always lies with the owner.



The History of Greyhound Racing

The greyhound is considered one of the 'ancient' breeds. Records indicate greyhounds existed in ancient Egypt and Greece. Greyhounds were often considered akin to royalty, and their ownership was restricted at times to members of royalty.

It is thought that the sport of coursing was introduced by the Romans. Coursing involved dogs (generally greyhounds or other sight hounds) chasing a game animal and exhibited a single dog's skill to sight, chase and catch a game animal. In the 16th century, coursing became a competitive sport with two dogs matched against each other in a race for the game. Dogs were judged on not only their speed but also their agility, and their owners would often bet on the result.

Coursing evolved into a spectator sport, with other people coming to watch a race, and soon official Coursing clubs began to evolve. Two greyhounds would course a single hare that had been given a head start. Spectators would come to watch and place bets on the competing dogs.

The introduction of an artificial lure occurred first in England, but it was an American, Owen Smith, who first introduced racing on a track using an artificial lure. He understood the appeal of coursing but wanted to make it 'a more humane sport with a broader spectator appeal'. The idea took off, and greyhound racing as we know it today, was born.

The Industry Continues to Evolve

Greyhound racing takes place not only in Australia, but in Britain, Ireland, America, and Asia. Once thought of as the 'working man's sport' compared to Thoroughbred and Harness horse racing, it is now a vibrant and professional, multi-million dollar industry. Greyhound racing is a sport that attracts people from all ages and all walks of life.

By deciding to become an Attendant or Trainer, you are entering into an industry that is passionate about the sport of greyhound racing and even more passionate about the elite animal itself. The process involved in becoming a greyhound attendant or trainer, while being relatively simple, is designed to ensure that the people entering our industry are doing so with the right intentions and have the welfare of the greyhound at heart at all times.



1.2 – Industry Structure

The Greyhound Racing Industry in Australia

Race meetings throughout Australia are conducted by the various racing clubs under the control of the State or Territory Controlling Body as prescribed by the Racing Act in each state.



In order to foster and achieve national co-operation and uniformity between the states, there is a national body - Greyhounds Australasia (GA). GA is made up of representatives of each state or territory controlling body, along with representatives from New Zealand Greyhound Racing.

To help maintain consistency, GA is responsible for the naming of greyhounds, along with the maintaining and publishing of the annual Stud Book. They also oversee DNA testing, frozen semen and greyhound exports, along with the compiling and publishing of the National (GAR) rules.

The Greyhound Racing Industry in Victoria

Controlling Body

In Victoria, **Greyhound Racing Victoria** is the 'Controlling Body'. It consists of a 'Board' whose members are appointed by the Minister for Racing, and the associated staff needed to manage and administer greyhound racing in the state.

The Controlling Body is responsible for:

- » Registering Participants
- » Registering Clubs
- » Registering Trial Tracks
- » Controlling the Conduct of Meetings
- » Distributing the allocated revenue derived from wagering on Greyhound Racing



They are also responsible for all aspects of Greyhound Racing that involve the greyhounds themselves:

- » Breeding of Greyhounds
- » Litter Registrations
- » Stud Dog Registration
- » Identifying and Registering Greyhounds
- » Provision of Racing Certificates
- » Animal Welfare Direction

Registered Clubs and Associations

Like any association or club, Greyhound Racing Clubs are actually controlled by their members. People who have an interest in greyhound racing may choose to join the club by paying a membership fee. The club members then vote to appoint a Club President, and Committee to run the club.

Clubs usually provide facilities for their members to use.

National co-operation between the principal clubs in each state is achieved by the **Australian Greyhound Racing Association (AGRA)**. AGRA aims to minimise clashes between the dates for major races within the racing calendar allowing clubs to attract the best greyhounds available to run their in feature races.

Coursing Clubs

Coursing involves two greyhounds competing against each other in the chase for a mechanical quarry. Coursing competitions are usually elimination events with dogs who win a heat moving into the next round. This means that an individual greyhound may race a number of times in the same day. Coursing does not take place on a circular track, but rather a straight grass track over shorter distances. There are no starting boxes instead the two dogs are released from a special lead and collar by a person called the 'slipper'.

There are a number of coursing clubs throughout Victoria. They hold training sessions, and coursing competitions during the coursing 'season' which is from May through to late August/Early September.

Greyhound Racing Around the World

Greyhound racing takes place in a number of countries around the world including the United Kingdom, Ireland, America and Asia.

Representatives of each country's governing body have joined to create the **World Greyhound Racing Federation (WGRF)**. The WGRF meet regularly to discuss matters of importance to the sport worldwide. They also hold a conference to encourage communication between the various countries.



1.3 – Integrity within the Industry

The Importance of Fair Racing



Integrity refers to the 'honesty' of the industry. Greyhound racing is a multi-million dollar industry in Victoria and wagering on the outcome of races is a large component of this. People who participate by entering their greyhounds in races, along with the people who wager on the races are relying on the races to be conducted in a fair and honest manner so that each greyhound can run on its merits.

A large part of the management of Greyhound racing involves ensuring that the rules of greyhound racing are adhered to, and that participants do not do anything to compromise the integrity of the racing. The GRV Stewards Department is responsible for the policing of these rules.

The Rules of Greyhound Racing

There are a number of sets of rules that apply to Greyhound Racing:

1. The **'National Rules'** - these are a set of rules that apply to racing in all states of Australia and New Zealand and are issued by Greyhounds Australasia (GA). When these rules are quoted they carry the identifier GAR - for example GAR 106. The national rules cover the powers of the Controlling Body, the conduct of Race meetings, Offences, Inquiries and Penalties, along with the requirements of Registration and Breeding.
2. The **'Local Rules'** - these are a set of rules that have been endorsed by the state Controlling Body, and vary from state to state. The Local rules are identified by the letters LR, with the state in brackets - for example LR (Vic.) 26. The local rules cover some state specific things such as the Greyhound Owners and Breeders Incentive Scheme (GOBIS) program, but also act to clarify the National rules in regards to things such as Registration, welfare, penalties, and eligibility to compete in events. The Local Rules actually take precedence over the national rules.
3. The **'Plumpton Coursing Rules'** - are a set of rules that apply only to Plumpton Coursing events. (Note: 'Plumpton Coursing' is coursing that uses a dragged or mechanical lure rather than live game)
4. The **'Betting and Bookmakers Rules'**



It is important that you are familiar with the rules of racing so that you can understand what happens at a race meeting, and the things that you can and can't do. The rules are constantly being updated and modified - for example, the National rules had a major overhaul at the beginning of 2008.

An up-to-date copy of the rules is always available on the GRV website (www.grv.org.au) where you can download a copy free of charge. Any amendments or changes to the rules are also published in 'The ADVISER' (GRV's monthly magazine). If you would like a hard copy of the rules, you can contact the Member Services Department of GRV and for a small fee, they will send you a hard copy version.

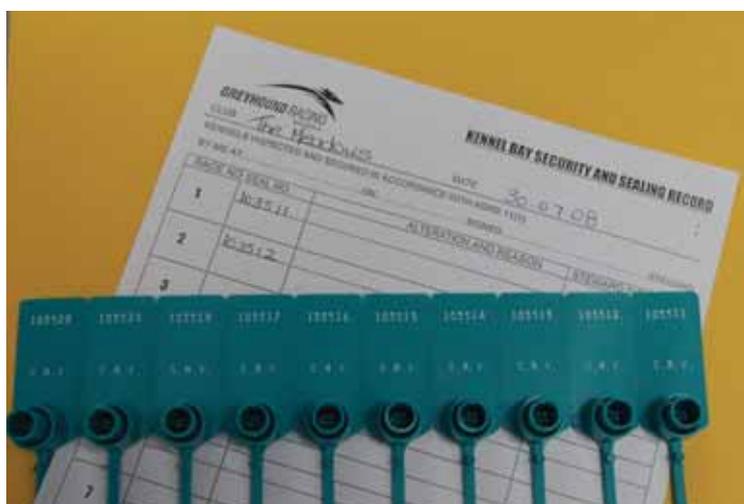
If you are planning on becoming an attendant you will need to have an understanding of all of the rules that apply to people handling a greyhound at a race meeting, along with your responsibilities in regards to the stewards. Trainers are expected to have a much better knowledge of the rules as they must also understand the rules that apply to training and nominating a greyhound for an event, along with how the outcomes of races are determined.

Role of the Stewards

The stewards are responsible for ensuring that all racing is conducted in a fair and consistent manner. They also have the power to investigate any matter that may compromise the fair running of race meetings.

They can control, regulate and inquire into the conduct of officials, bookmakers, owners, trainers, attendants and other persons participating in or associated with race meetings. They have the ability to impose fines, suspend or disqualify any registered person who breaches the rules of racing.

Stewards are in charge of supervising the actual running of race meetings, and are also involved in performing kennel inspections of registered trainers to ensure the rules relating to the welfare of the greyhounds in their care are being adhered to.





HANDLERS WITH GREYHOUNDS ONLY IN THIS AREA

Chapter 2

2.1 – Occupational Health and Safety in the Greyhound Industry

What is Occupational Health and Safety?

In Victoria there are rules that relate to safety in the workplace. The purpose of these rules is to ensure a hazard-free and safe workplace for all Victorians. Although the Greyhound Industry is largely made up of hobby-type trainers, they still have a responsibility to provide a safe workplace for themselves and anyone who might help them care for their dogs.

The rules make up the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004. If you are interested in reading this act, it can be downloaded from the Victorian Government website www.legislation.vic.gov.au

The principles of health and safety involve the protection of employees, workers and the public (who may be visiting the facility). The rules make those people responsible for controlling or managing workplaces responsible for eliminating or reducing risks as far as is reasonable practicable.

So what does this mean for someone involved in the Greyhound Industry?

Basically, Occupational Health and Safety legislation requires you to provide a safe place to work as well as safe ways of working. It also sets minimum standards that need to be met.

To provide a safe workplace, you will need to identify potential hazards and act to minimise their risk or remove the risk completely.

A 'hazard' is anything that may injure or hurt you or the greyhounds in your care.



It is essential for the safety of both the greyhounds and the people working in, or visiting your greyhound facility, that careful inspections are made on a regular basis to check for and identify existing and/or potential hazards. After identifying hazards you must then act to rectify it before it causes an accident where people or greyhounds are injured.

Even if you have a greyhound facility set up in your backyard and you do not employ anyone to help you, you must still provide a safe working environment for yourself and any visitors you might have.

As the owner of the kennel facility, it is your responsibility to ensure that visitors, staff or un-paid assistants are given any necessary training to help them stay safe, and that you ensure everyone working in the kennels obeys the safety rules and standards.

If you assist someone else with their greyhounds, or are present at one of the tracks, you also have the duty to take reasonable care for your own health and safety. You are required to co-operate with any instructions given by the owner/manager of the facility in regards to safety, and you have a duty to make known any hazards that you identify.



2.2 – Occupational Health and Safety – Identifying potential hazards in the Kennels

What things are likely to be hazardous in your Greyhound Facility?

There are many things that may constitute a hazard in a kennel facility:

- » Slippery floors
- » Sharp wire or nails protruding from fences and gates
- » Heavy items that need to be lifted
- » Exposure to Chemicals
- » Obstructions in walkways and door ways
- » Poor or faulty machinery
- » Unsecured doors and gates
- » Broken or damaged feed and water bowls
- » Contaminated food
- » Poorly lit walkways



This is only a partial list, and the potential hazards will depend on the set up and level of maintenance of the individual facility.

Performing a Health and Safety Audit

It is suggested that you do a 'Health and Safety Audit' of your facility regularly. This means walking around your facility and looking for hazards that might exist. For each area of the facility (i.e. walkways, food preparation area, kennels, runs etc) these potential hazards are then written down, and an action plan is developed to try to minimise the risk or remove the risk completely.



This way you can document that you have identified a problem, have thought about how to fix it, and can document that it has been fixed, or how the risk has been reduced. This way if anything happens, you have written proof that you have been pro-active in preventing injury.

For Example:

You may identify that the pathway to your kennels is difficult to walk at night because it is uneven, and there is no lighting.

Your action plan may include re-surfacing the path, and installing a movement triggered spot light that lights the path. You can document the date that you identified the problem, installed the light, and also when the re-surfacing filled the pot holes.

Preparing for Emergencies

It is also necessary to have a think about what you would do if an incident were to happen at your kennel facility. It is recommended that you have emergency phone numbers (doctor, ambulance, vet, power company, etc.) clearly displayed in a prominent place close to the telephone.

A well-stocked First Aid Kit (clearly identified and easily accessible) is another good idea. There should also be a record book attached to the First Aid Kit in which any injuries can be noted. Even if someone at your kennel only needs to use a Band-aid, this is classified as an injury, and it is important that any hazards that contributed to the injury are identified and addressed.

You should also consider having smoke alarms and possibly a fire extinguisher (suited to electrical fires) located where there is a risk of this type of fire (near kitchen facilities or hydrobaths).

Planning for the Worst

All kennel facilities should also have an Evacuation Plan for times where you might need to evacuate your kennel facility and go to a safe place. This might include assembly areas, a way of making sure all staff and assistants know to evacuate, and a plan for what will need to happen with the greyhounds that need to be evacuated.

Everyone who regularly works at your facility should be aware of the Evacuation plan and what to do in the case of an emergency.

'Do I need to know about this, I just help out at the kennels...'

Even if you are not 'employed' to assist with a trainer and his greyhounds, you still have some obligations under the law.

- » You must tell the person responsible for the facility if you are injured, involved in an accident, or have a 'near-miss'.
- » You must follow any safety instructions given, use protective clothing where required, and report any hazards you might notice.
- » You should find out what the procedures are for dealing with accidents and injuries, and be clear on your responsibilities during an emergency.

Remember, even if you are working voluntarily for a hobby trainer, the responsibilities for providing a safe workplace are the same!



2.3 – Occupational Health and Safety – At the Track

How does OH & S apply at the race track?

The rules of Occupational Health and Safety also apply to Greyhound Race Tracks. The Clubs are responsible for providing a safe workplace, just as you are responsible for providing a safe kennel environment. Corporations and Associations are required under the law to assess their workplaces for safety, and will have safety protocols and procedures to ensure everyone who visits the track - trainers, the public, stewards and staff - are safe.

The Club will have in place a set of safe operating rules, and will have prepared emergency plans for all contingencies. There will be staff who are responsible for ensuring that emergency plans are initiated if need be, and there will be designated First Aid staff and people in charge of different sections/areas in the case of an emergency.

What is my role at the track?

As a visitor to the track, you are responsible for reporting any potential hazards to a member of staff. This may be broken or damaged equipment (such as fences, starting boxes, kennels, gates etc.) or other hazards such as unsafe footing, spills, or even lights that are no longer working.

You must also follow any instructions in regard to safe working practices that are given to you by a member of staff.

If you are injured, or have a near miss you must also inform staff at the track. This allows them to meet their requirements of identifying and reporting hazards, and ensures that they can act on the information to prevent anyone else suffering a similar injury.



What sort of hazards might be found at the track?

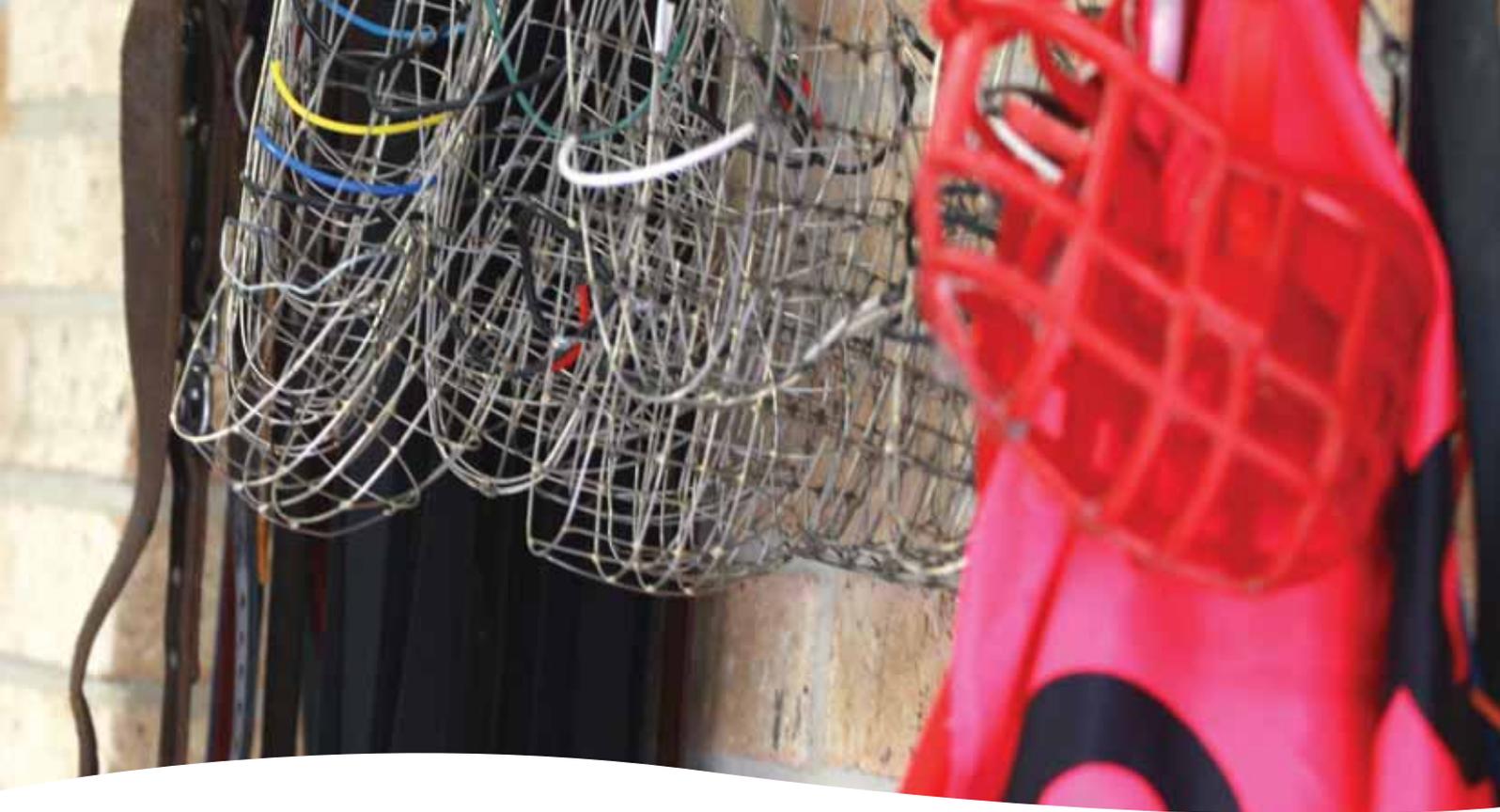
Many of the hazards at the track are similar to those that you will have identified at your own facility. Lighting, slippery floors, lifting heavy weights (such as lifting a greyhound up onto the vet's examination table) and fences or gates that might have become broken or damaged are all potential hazards in this environment.

At the track you also have all of the machinery and equipment associated with the lure. Starting boxes, running rails, and the catching pen area can all pose potential hazards. In fact the catching pen may be one of the most dangerous areas on the track if sensible safety protocols are not adhered to. Being in a restricted space with eight greyhounds that are slowing from full speed, and are full of the excitement of the chase can be very dangerous. Add to this the lure passes through the catching pen just before the dogs, and you could easily have an accident. That is why catchers must not enter the pen until it is safe to do so.

Who should I report a hazard to?

It really depends on what sort of hazard you have detected, and where it is.

Hazards that are serious, and are noted in the kennelling area or out on the track should be reported to a steward. Other hazards might be reported to the Kennel Supervisor, the track staff, or the Club Manager, depending on what they involve and where they are located.



Chapter 3

3.1 – Greyhound Basics

Identifying a Greyhound

It is vital to the integrity of the racing industry that each greyhound can be identified to ensure that the right dog is presented for a race, and that races are legitimate and fair. There are a number of ways of identifying a greyhound, with different methods being used for different situations.

A greyhound's registration papers list the sex, colour, markings and ear brands of the greyhound, along with its racing name, registration number, sire dam and date of birth.

At the track, a greyhound will be identified by the stewards by its colour, markings and ear brands. At home in a small kennel, you may simply use the dog's pet/kennel name. In larger kennels, where there are a lot of greyhounds that may be similar colours and sizes, any distinctive markings might be used, or you may have to check the ear brands to make sure you have the correct dog.

When disputes occur about parentage, greyhounds can also be identified by their DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid). DNA stays constant throughout life, and is as individual as a fingerprint in humans. It is a requirement that all breeding stock (Stud Dogs and Brood Bitches) in Australia have a DNA sample taken and a profile recorded prior to registration of any puppies. This means that there is now a vast Australian database of DNA profiles from many greyhounds.

When a Greyhound has passed the Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) it is also identified by a microchip. Microchips are a small silicone implant containing a computer chip that is placed under the skin between the shoulder blades of the greyhound. The computer chip holds a unique 15 digit number that is linked to the greyhound's identity on a database. The chip can be 'scanned' using a microchip reader. When the reader is passed over the top of the chip, it will register the number and display it on the screen.



Understanding the Terminology

Sex

The correct terms are 'dog' for a male greyhound, and 'bitch' for a female greyhound.

Colour

Greyhounds come in many colours, with the most common colours being Black (BK), Blue (BE), Fawn (F), Brindle (BD), or one of these colours in combination with white. There are also White (W) greyhounds.

When describing the colour, the most predominant colour is usually listed first - i.e. Black and White suggests a greyhound that is more black than white. The colour refers to the main body colour(s). The white must extend to more than just the feet and chest of the dog to be listed as a colour. So a black dog with two white toes on each foot will still be called 'black'.

It is important that you know what each colour looks like so that you can identify the correct dog. If a trainer asked you to get the 'small brindle bitch' from the trailer, you would want to return with the correct greyhound.

Markings

The markings refer to the pattern of colour on the body of the dog and any unique marks or features. The placement, shape and size of any coloured patches is important in identifying a greyhound. The racing registration papers show a picture of a greyhound which is marked by the stewards to show every patch of white, any ticking, scars and even the colour of each toenail for the individual greyhound.

Any unusual features, such as a missing toe, or shortened tail will also be noted as these are part of the unique identity of the greyhound.

Ear Brands

In Victoria, greyhounds are branded with a set of letters in one ear (left ear), and a number in the other (right ear). There will be three letters - 'V' indicating the dog was born in Victoria, then the other two letters which represent the initials of the ear brander (the person who placed the ear brands). For example, if Fred Smith was the ear brander the dog would have VFS tattooed in its left ear.

In the other ear is a unique number. Each ear brander starts with the number 0001, and increases the number each time they tattoo a pup. So VFS 0578 would represent the 578th puppy that Fred Smith has ear branded. Each pup in the litter is given an ear brand and this is recorded, along with its colour, sex and markings on the Litter Registration form.

Ear brands from other states may differ in format, but many start with a letter indicating the state in which the greyhound was born- i.e. 'Q' for Queensland, 'S' for South Australia

Pet Name/Racing Name

Before a greyhound can race or be used as a breeding animal, they must be 'officially' named. Racing names are approved by Greyhounds Australasia, although the application to name a greyhound is submitted to the state controlling body. Usually a number of possible names are chosen, as it is not always possible to have your first choice. Names are restricted to 16 letters (including spaces or punctuation such as apostrophes) and there is a maximum of three words. There are strict guidelines about decency and what the name can and cannot include. You can read the Greyhounds Australasia rules about naming at their website www.galtd.org.au. Greyhounds Australasia also checks that the name is not currently in use (so two dogs do not end up with the same racing name).

Because greyhounds are not officially named until the time they are ready to race, they will often be assigned a kennel/pet name well before this time. This is a simple name that is used to identify the greyhound around the kennel.

Handling a Greyhound - Appropriate Equipment

Greyhounds are quite unique in their physical shape. They generally have quite strong, thick necks and small heads. This means that it is easy for a greyhound to slip out of a collar if it is not fitted correctly. Greyhounds are also big strong dogs (with males often weighing in excess of 35kg), and when they get excited and want to chase they can be quite hard to control.

There is a host of equipment designed specifically for greyhounds. But whatever equipment you use, you need to be familiar in fitting it, and also maintaining it in good condition.

Leads and Collars

Greyhound Collars are usually made of leather, are quite thick and are designed to fit high up on the neck of the greyhound. The most common design is one that buckles up around the dog's neck, and has a lead attached.

There are other styles of collar, such as a martingale collar which slips over the greyhound's head, and has a loop of chain or fabric that allows the collar to tighten if the lead goes tight. This style of collar is more commonly used on pet greyhounds.

If made of leather, the lead and collar must be checked regularly for cracking, and to ensure any rivets or stitching are secure. Care must be taken if the leather gets wet, as this can weaken the leather, or cause it to become brittle. Leather care includes regularly oiling or treating the leather with a suitable leather product.

You also need to store your leads and collars safely away from your greyhounds. If left lying around, they may get damaged or exposed to weather, or might be chewed and ruined by the greyhounds - an expensive result either way.





Fitting a greyhound collar

When fitting a greyhound collar it is vital that you tighten the collar directly below the greyhound's head - NOT further down its neck. If you fit the collar down the dog's neck, it will be too loose and may simply slip off.

Collars should fit firmly, with just room for a finger or two to be placed underneath. The collar should sit at the very top of the greyhound's neck, and should look like it would not slip over the dog's head.

Some greyhounds get very good at slipping out of collars, so make sure the collar is fitted right, but also be aware that when a greyhound backs up, it has the highest chance of slipping the collar. If the dog is also wearing a muzzle, this will be removed as the collar comes over the head. If the greyhound gets to run around and have a good time after slipping its collar, it will try this strategy again in the future.

If you get into a situation where the dog is trying to slip its collar, by backing up and shaking its head from side to side, lower your end of the lead as close as possible to the ground. This shifts the buckle to below the dog's chin, and makes it much harder for the greyhound to get free by slipping the collar.

Muzzles

It is a requirement under the law that all greyhounds are muzzled in public. Only greyhounds that have successfully passed through the Greyhound Adoption Program and have been awarded a special green GAP collar are deemed under law to be allowed to walk in public without a muzzle. The most common type of muzzle used is the wire 'racing' muzzle that slips over the greyhound's face and is held in place by a loop of wire behind the dog's ears. Wire greyhound muzzles come in different sizes and are usually colour coded to indicate the size.

It is important that any muzzle fits correctly so that it is neither too small, nor too loose. There should be approximately 2-2.5 cm clear of the nose. Because they are made of wire, the muzzle can then be shaped to fit the greyhound by bending the nose strap, neck strap, or sides of the muzzle to fit.

There are other styles of muzzle, including the 'American' muzzle which is a heavier design of muzzle. These are sometimes used to prevent greyhounds chewing their bedding at the track, or when stronger protection is required. These muzzles are often made of heavy duty plastic with a single adjustable neck strap, but can also be made of leather.



Other Equipment

Nose Straps/Head Checks

These are items that are often used to help walk strong, or excitable greyhounds. Acting like a halter on a horse, they give better head control, and can reduce the amount of pulling a greyhound can generate. Often called 'Head Collars' by the general public there are many brands and designs on the market.

If a greyhound is particularly difficult to handle at the track, you can ask permission of the stewards to parade the dog in either a nose strap or head check, but they must first approve the piece of equipment you plan to use, and endorse it. This endorsement will go on the dog's racing certificate, ('dog to be paraded in nose strap') and you must apply again to have the endorsement removed if you chose not to use the piece of equipment at a later stage.

Blinkers

Occasionally a trainer will apply to the stewards to have a greyhound race in blinkers, similar to blinkers worn by horses during races. The idea is to try to help prevent a dog turning its head (marring) during a race, but experience shows they rarely achieve this.

Similar to head checks and nose straps, you must apply to the stewards to use blinkers and your dog's record will be endorsed accordingly after a satisfactory 'blinker trial'. If you chose to remove them, you will have to apply again to have the endorsement removed.

Getting a greyhound out of the kennel, car or trailer

Most greyhounds are quite responsive to people, and will come to the front of the kennel when called. If you are not familiar with the greyhound you must collect, always make sure that you watch its body language carefully. Some greyhounds get very excited to be going out and will jump up on people and can potentially scratch or knock you off balance. More timid greyhounds may not want to approach and may retreat to the back of the kennel, forcing you to go in to get them.

Before you open any kennel door, it is a good idea to make sure that other doors and gates behind you are closed. This way if a greyhound does escape, at least they cannot get too far, and are less likely to hurt themselves or get in trouble. Remember scared dogs will try to run, so be prepared for quick movements and try to anticipate what the dog will do so you can prevent it from hurting itself or you. If you have to go into a kennel to catch a greyhound make sure you shut the gate behind you and latch it so the greyhound can't simply run past you and out the door.

Before you allow the greyhound out of its kennel or the car or trailer, you must first ensure that its collar and lead are securely fastened. If you are out in public, the greyhound's muzzle will also need to be securely fitted. When you are happy the dog is under control, the next step is to check behind yourself and make sure there are no other dogs, vehicles or obstacles in the way, before stepping back and letting the greyhound out.

When getting greyhounds out of a vehicle, you need to be especially careful that there are no dangers. If a greyhound was to escape onto a road the result could be tragic. You can usually use your body to block the exit until you have the dog under control and safely leashed, whether you are getting it out from a berth of the trailer, or out of the backseat of the car. Be especially careful with station-wagons that have the lift up hatch. By the time you can reach the dogs, they may have had ample opportunity to escape by shooting out through the gap.



Walking a Greyhound Safely

Most greyhounds are taught to walk nicely on the lead, and welcome their daily walks. The main time problems occur is when the dog gets excited and wants to jump around or chase. You need to be constantly aware of what is going on around you as you walk a greyhound. Other dogs, rabbits, birds and even traffic movement can excite some greyhounds, so if you are watching what is happening round you or what is up a head, you will be better prepared, or might decide to change direction and walk away BEFORE the dog(s) react.

When out in public it is a law that you must not be in control of more than four (4) greyhounds, but in reality, very few people could control four greyhounds at once if they decided to chase something. It is much safer to limit yourself to 2 greyhounds at a time as long as they are compatible and are well trained to walk on lead. If you have a particularly excitable greyhound, or one just learning its lead manners, it is probably safer to walk it on its own.

Remember that the shorter the lead, the better the control you will have. Sometimes you may need to hold onto the dog's collar directly to maintain control. If they have a lot of leash, greyhounds can accelerate to quite a speed before hitting the end of the leash and this can lead to neck damage or other injuries.

Some trainers will try to get a little more control by looping the lead around the dog's chest or belly (behind the front legs) and holding the lead short. This added 'body support' may help to increase control, especially if the dog is likely to jump forward suddenly.

Rules associated with the control of greyhounds

GAR108 Prevention of greyhound straying

A registered person must ensure that any greyhound pursuant to the person's care or custody does not stray onto any private property without the permission of the owner or occupier of that property, or stray onto any public place.

GAR109 Control of greyhound in public place

(1) A registered person must not permit a greyhound, which is pursuant to the person's care or custody to be in or on a public place unless the greyhound-

(a) has a securely fixed muzzle; and

(b) is pursuant to the effective control of some competent person by means of a leash of leather, or other durable material of a type capable and in a condition of effectively restraining a greyhound, and which is securely fastened to the collar worn by the greyhound.

(2) Unless determined otherwise by the Controlling Body, a registered person who has the care, custody or training of greyhounds shall not-

(a) lead more than 4 greyhounds in a public place at the 1 time;

(b) permit any person acting for the registered person to lead more than 4 greyhounds in a public place at the 1 time; or

(c) permit any person less than the age of 16 years, to lead a greyhound in a public place unless a registered person or some other person above the age of 18 years accompanies that person.



3.2 – At the Race Track

Handling a Greyhound - At the Track

Whether you are at the track to trial your greyhound(s) or for a race meet, you will need to be able to adequately control them. The rules of racing state that for a race meeting, there needs to be at least one person for every four greyhounds to be presented and raced, and that when parading, boxing or catching, that there is only one greyhound under the control of each person.

Handling a greyhound at the track can often pose some new problems. There are lots of other greyhounds, many of which are excited. These greyhounds are all unfamiliar to your dog, and may be intimidating (especially if your dog is nervous or shy). There are a lot of people moving about and making noise, many of whom are oblivious to what is happening around them or what their dogs are doing. It is up to you to stay on top of the situation, and keep a close eye on what is happening around your greyhound so that you can step in to prevent any problems from developing.

Often the biggest excitement is the sound of the lure going around. Many dogs will jump up and down, lunge forward, bark and carry on at the sound of the lure passing by. For this reason it is best that you do not just stand around near the track unless you need to. Some dogs perform better if they are allowed to see and hear the lure prior to a race, but this is the only time that you want the dog excited - not whilst you are waiting for it to be kennelled.

Dogs that are going to run a trial can be kept away from the track until it is their turn to run. You can walk around the car-park, or leave the dog in the trailer or car if needed, but be aware that some dogs can 'load-up' with excitement even here, and may cause damage to the vehicle or themselves as they try to get out to chase the lure.



Controlling your Greyhound on the track

On race day, you are required to parade the greyhound in front of the public, and then walk the greyhound to the starting boxes. Not only will your handling skills be on display to the public, and other trainers, you may also be shown on the television coverage of the race. You need to have good control of your greyhound at all times.

When parading you are expected to take your place in number order according to the box your greyhound has drawn, so it is important that you know which dog you will be following. Make sure you leave enough space between your dog and the one in front, so that if your dog decides to leap forward it will not make contact with the greyhound in front.

If your greyhound is particularly energetic, the first thing to do is ensure that your lead is short, and that you have any excess safely looped so that no one gets tangled. If the dog is still very difficult to control, taking it by the collar directly will usually be enough to settle it and make sure that it does not bounce around. You could also try looping the lead around the chest of the dog or under its belly, and holding the loop firmly along with the dog's collar.

If the dog is continually difficult, or you are small or slight in build, then you may find that a nose strap or head check may help, although you will need to seek approval to use these on race day from the stewards. It may pay to try them at home, or at the trial track before deciding whether they might help you.

At the Boxes

There is a short period of time between removing the dog's collar and leash and loading them into the starting boxes where the greyhound could potentially escape. This is a very important time to make sure you have adequate control.

Before taking the collar and leash off, make sure that you have walked the greyhound as close to the starting boxes as possible, so you only have to load them, rather than walk any distance to the boxes. Keep your hands on the dog at all times, this way you can feel if the dog is likely to jump forward or resist. It is recommended that you have one hand on the dog's chest and the other underneath its abdomen. This way if the dog goes to move forward or back, or tries to turn side-ways, you should be able to maintain control.

This type of handling is a skill that you need to practice, away from the race meeting. The more greyhounds you box and handle manually, the better you will become at the manual art of restraint. Remember you only want to use the least amount of pressure necessary to maintain control. If you handle a dog roughly, or put a lot of pressure on, they will naturally fight the restraint, making them harder to hold.



After the Race

After the race, the greyhound will be breathing heavily, and as a result, you may need to fit its collar a little more loosely. You do not want to restrict its breathing, as this is necessary for the recovery after the race, but at the same time, you do not want the dog getting free. You may need to check the fit and gradually tighten the collar over time to ensure the greyhound remains suitable under control.

By the time you are ready to go home, the dog will have fully recovered and you will be able to fit the collar in a normal fashion.

Rules associated with the control of greyhounds at the track

GAR27 Control of greyhound on racecourse

- (1) The trainer of a greyhound shall be responsible for, and shall make provision for, the proper care and handling of each greyhound from the time the greyhound arrives at a racecourse for an Event or trial until the time the greyhound leaves the racecourse.*
- (2) Without limiting sub-rule 1, and notwithstanding any other Rule, a trainer shall ensure-*
 - (a) that for that trainer's greyhounds which are at a racecourse, there is at least 1 handler for every 4 of the trainer's greyhounds so that there is 1 person who is generally responsible for no more than 4 greyhounds while they are at the racecourse;*
 - (b) that between kennelling and completion of all the post Event or Event activities, a handler is in physical control of not more than 1 greyhound at any 1 time; and*
 - (c) compliance with such other directions as the Controlling Body may issue from time to time concerning the handling of greyhounds at a racecourse. For the purpose of this Rule a person shall be considered to be in "physical control" of a greyhound where that person is handling the greyhound during pre-Event preparations, Events and post-Event activities. A greyhound which is kennelled does not require a person to be in "physical control" of it.*





3.3 – Transporting Your Greyhound

Greyhound racing clubs and tracks are located all over Victoria, so it is inevitable that you will have to travel some distance to participate in the sport. Tracks are located as far away as Sale or Horsham so you may be looking at travelling many hours to reach the track. If you have a particularly successful racer you may even consider travelling the dog to interstate venues to contest the bigger 'Group' races. These days many greyhounds are shipped interstate via air transport rather than have them spend days in transit on the roads.

Even without entering your greyhounds in races at distant tracks, there is still going to be regular travel to the trial track, veterinary clinic, or the slipping track. It is essential that your greyhounds arrive in the same condition that they left home in. No one wants to spend a lot of time and money on feeding and conditioning their dogs to have them arrive exhausted, dehydrated or injured.

Types of Transport

Given the 'hobby' nature of most trainers in Victoria, the family car is often the transport of choice. This is suitable for one or two greyhounds, but makes travelling larger numbers of dogs almost impossible. There is no facility to keep dogs separated, either from each other or from other passengers, unless you install a crate or cage in the car.

For transporting larger numbers of greyhounds, most trainers choose to use a dog trailer (also called a dog 'float'). These attach to the tow-bar of the car like any other trailer, and vary in size from small 2 or 3 berth trailers through to much larger sizes that have 8 or more berths. The size of the berths, width of the trailer and features may vary, but basically they provide a safe way to travel large numbers of greyhounds. Each berth is separated from the others with wire mesh, and has two doors - an outside, lockable door, and an inside wire door.

Trailers typically have plenty of ventilation, including 'spinners' on the top which encourage airflow through the berths. It is important that the ventilation can be controlled, and that rain does not enter the berths if the weather is inclement. Given the trailer is towed immediately behind the car, it is also important that the ventilation is designed not to draw exhaust fumes into the trailer. Given the constant ventilation, trailers are often much cooler than the interior of a car in summer. This is because they do not have the glass that a car does, and they are usually white in colour which reflects a lot of the heat.

Things to Consider during Travel

Air quality

The quality of the air we breathe does have an effect on us, and it certainly can affect the performance of a racing greyhound - both short-term and long-term. Under no circumstances should a racing greyhound be forced to breathe cigarette smoke. The chemicals in the second-hand smoke are much more toxic than the toxins inhaled by the smoker. If you do need to have a smoke, and the greyhound is travelling in the car with you, pull over and get out whilst you do it.

Exhaust fumes are also very toxic, both to humans and dogs. Carbon monoxide, in particular poses a problem as it binds to the red blood cells in the blood and prevents them from carrying much needed oxygen to the body. This can affect the performance of a racing animal by lowering the supply of oxygen to the muscles. You must take care not to draw exhaust fumes either into your car or into the dog trailer. This may mean not using the re-circulation function of your car's air-conditioner where there is a risk of trapping exhaust in the system, or making sure the flaps that face forward on your dog trailer are securely closed whilst you travel.

Comfort

Ideally, the trip from your kennels to the track should be a restful one. Greyhounds are quite thin-skinned, and at racing weight, do not have much excess body fat as 'padding'. For this reason it is important that they are provided with enough bedding to keep them warm, comfortable and to protect them from the jolts and bumps associated with travel. The bedding also provides an insulation against heat from the road (especially in trailers with metal flooring), or from the cold.

Bedding should be clean and dry, and of a reasonable thickness to protect the body from jarring. Some dogs will tear at or chew at bedding, which can make providing safe bedding a challenge, but you will soon find something that they will tolerate. Sometimes layers of towels or blankets may be safer than foam style bedding. Typically the bedding in a float or trailer will need to be thicker than bedding used inside a car due to the increase 'bounce' of the ride.





Temperature

Greyhounds require roughly the same temperature range as people. They can tolerate short periods where the temperature moves outside their comfort range, but exposure to long periods of excessively hot or cold weather is very stressful. Greyhounds cool themselves by panting - moving air quickly over the air passages, tongue and mouth to promote evaporative cooling. They cannot sweat like humans, although a small amount of sweating occurs on their foot pads.

Because they rely on evaporative cooling, they need a good flow of air to keep moving the moisture away. Any increase in humidity can adversely affect their cooling mechanism. Having a greyhound panting in the enclosed space of a car for any length of time will increase the humidity due to the evaporated water being trapped in the cabin of the car. Once the humidity rises, the greyhound can no longer effectively cool itself, and its body temperature will start to rise. This is why good airflow, even if it is warm air, is vital in the car.

The use of evaporative cooling also means that in hot weather greyhounds can lose quite a bit of fluid simply through maintaining body temperature. If the weather is very hot and you have to travel for a number of hours, it is quite possible for the greyhound to suffer some degree of dehydration unless you pay careful attention to providing water (possibly mixed with electrolytes) during the trip.

Ideally, the cabin of the car should be air-conditioned as this helps to maintain a comfortable temperature for everyone. If your car is not air-conditioned, then adjusting windows and vents to ensure a constant flow of air through the cabin is required. Be careful when first getting into the car as the temperature will be very high until air-conditioning or air flow has had a chance to cool the car's interior.

It may be possible to assist with cooling by having the greyhound sit on a wet towel, or by placing ice in a non-tip tray or bucket near the greyhound so it can lick the ice, and can breathe the cooled air. Drinking water can also be cooled with ice. At rest stops, the vehicle should be parked in the shade, and time can be taken to cool the greyhound with water splashed onto its belly area, or by placing a wet towel or cooling vest on the greyhound.

GRV Heat Policy

Race meetings normally continue to run regardless of the weather. GRV does have a heat policy that allows you to scratch your greyhound(s) without penalty under certain conditions.

Applications for scratching due to the heat will only be considered if the predicted temperature is 32 degrees or above at the venue where the meeting is to be conducted. A trainer who has to travel more than an hour to reach the track can then decide whether or not to scratch their greyhounds. Scratchings must be received by the normal scratching time, and a trainer must scratch ALL of his runners engaged at that meeting (not just select which to race).

On days of extreme heat, the greyhounds are kept in the air-conditioned kennels for as long as possible, and are not paraded for the public. Instead they are walked straight to the boxes for the start. After they race, they are hosed off with cool water, and then put back into the air-conditioned kennels to assist with cooling.



Rest Stops

When travelling with greyhounds it is important to allow adequate time for rest stops. All greyhounds should be emptied out prior to being placed in the car or trailer, then every couple of hours should be given a chance to stretch their legs and go to the toilet. These stops also give the driver a chance to relax and freshen up, and the greyhounds can be offered a drink.

In warm weather, every attempt should be made to pull up in a shaded area so that the vehicle does not get hot. In colder weather, care must be taken to keep the greyhound warm and dry wherever possible.

If you are travelling with young dogs, then rest stops need to be more frequent. Younger dogs are usually not quite as reliable toilet-wise and it is much better to have a couple of extra stops than to have to clean up a wet or dirtied bed. Most dogs choose not to mess their own bed, but there is little they can do to avoid it if they have been confined for far too long and need to go.

Every council in Victoria has local by-laws about removal of dog waste, so it is important that you carry a supply of plastic 'poo-bags' and pick up after your dogs.

Food and Water/Electrolytes

It is important that your greyhounds do not dehydrate during travel. Offering frequent small drinks of water or water and electrolytes will go a way to preventing this. Be careful with the use of electrolytes as too much may actually further dehydrate the dog due to increasing salt levels. If your greyhound is reluctant to drink, sometimes splashing a small amount of milk into the water may encourage them to take a drink. When travelling it is often a good idea to take your own water, as this means you will always have a supply of clean, fresh water, and minimises the risks of tummy upsets due to changes in water.

If your trip is a long one, you might also need to take food for your greyhound. This might be a small 'snack' after racing to help replace the energy they have lost, or may be full meals if you plan to be away for a number of days. Beware that some dogs will vomit if they are fed too close to travel time, so try to feed the dog well before you leave.

Poor Travellers

Many greyhounds take a while to get used to travelling. The more anxious a greyhound is, the more likely they are going to find travel stressful. The best thing to do is to gradually introduce the greyhound to travel, preferably at a young age. Short pleasant trips, with careful, considerate driving can help habituate young dogs to the movement. If the trip has a pleasant outcome - such as a walk, or a gallop at the slipping track - this will also help. Conversely, if every time the greyhound travels there is an unpleasant consequence (i.e. trips to the vet, rough rides that lead to vomiting), they soon anticipate bad things and will start to show signs of stress even before they get into the vehicle.

Some greyhounds are not good travellers no matter what you try. Some dogs truly get motion sickness. For these dogs the problems associated with the loss of fluids from drooling and panting (even in colder weather), loss of electrolytes and energy from barking and restlessness, and the nausea from vomiting mean they may be unable to race. Dogs that are dehydrated, stressed or nauseous are unlikely to be able to perform to the best of their ability, and may be predisposed to bigger problems if raced in this condition.

These dogs often need medical intervention to help them relax during travel. After a number of relaxed trips they will often become better travellers. You will need to ask your greyhound veterinarian about the various options for poor travellers.

*****Many of the medications used to assist with travel sickness will return a positive swab if used, so you will need to resolve the travelling issues well before the dog is ready to race.*****



Air Travel

If you have to travel your dog interstate, you may choose to send it with a road transport company, or might prefer to ship it by air.

Air travel has its own set of issues, but is by far the quickest way to get a dog interstate. Dogs are travelled in crates as freight in the cargo area of the plane. There are usually a restricted number of places for dogs, and some airlines do not carry animals at all.

When travelling a dog by air there is the option to use your own crate or to hire one from a shipping company. Air travel crates must meet strict IATA Guidelines (a copy can be obtained from the airlines). The cost of travelling a dog by air is usually calculated on the weight of the dog (along with the crate and bedding) or the volume of the crate, or a combination of both.

Animals who are flying need to be lodged with the airline freight department about an hour and a half before the flight. This can pose a problem if the flight is then delayed, as the dog will be locked into its crate for the entire time. Animals are generally loaded last, and taken off the plane first, but then have to be shipped to the freight area for pick-up.

Travel by air is generally not recommended during the hotter parts of the day in summer as the dog and crate may sit on the hot tarmac waiting to be loaded. Early morning or night flights are often preferred. If travelling for a particular event, it might also be advisable to travel a day or two in advance to allow the greyhound time to settle and recover from the flight. Some dogs are not bothered by air travel, but some dogs will stress a little, and you do not want this to affect your dog's performance in a big race.

Air travel can be arranged by special Animal Transport companies who will book the flights, provide a hire crate, as well as drop-off and pick-up the dog. This is often easier than trying to organise the flights yourself.





3.4 – Practical Assessment

It is very important that both attendants and trainers are competent when it comes to handling a greyhound at a race meeting. The short time frames for preparing a greyhound for a race, loading it into the starting boxes, and even presenting it for kennelling mean that everyone must be experienced with the relevant equipment, and can handle a greyhound safely.

You will have to demonstrate that you can:

1. Properly fit a collar and lead to a greyhound
2. Walk a greyhound safely in the presence of other greyhounds
3. Properly fit a racing muzzle
4. Demonstrate that you can fit and remove a race rug
5. Load a greyhound properly into the starting boxes

Practical assessments will be supervised by the stewards at a time nominated by them. You will need to contact the Member Services Department to make a suitable time for a practical test.

Prior to the test, it is strongly suggested that you get as much experience as possible, handling greyhounds of varying temperaments. Being used to walking excitable greyhounds, or loading difficult dogs into the starting boxes will make you more confident, and give you an increased range of skills when faced with a difficult situation.



Chapter 4

4.1 – Preparation and Presentation for Kennelling

What happens on Race Day?

On Race Day there are a lot of things going on. It is essential that everyone knows what is required of them so that the program can run smoothly and the races can start on time. The 'Steward in Charge' is the person responsible for everything that happens at the race meeting, but there are plenty of other people who all have important roles in the running of the race meeting.

As the person responsible for presenting a greyhound, it is important that you are aware of exactly what you have to do and where you have to be at a particular time. Depending on the number of races on the program, there may be more than 80 greyhounds arriving at the track kennels in a very short time. These greyhounds need to be individually vet checked, weighed and their papers inspected by the stewards all in the short space of 45 minutes.

So Who Does What?

There are many roles filled on race day. There are people who are responsible for every aspect of the race meeting, ensuring the meeting runs smoothly and that the greyhounds are given every chance of performing to their best.

Stewards - are responsible for ensuring the rules of greyhound racing are adhered to

Race Club Staff - are responsible for ensuring that spectators are suitably catered for, ensuring adequate betting facilities are in place, and organising the presentation of any trophies or awards.

Track Staff - are responsible for maintaining the track and equipment for racing

Kennel Staff - are responsible for the security and welfare of the greyhounds

Track Veterinarian - is responsible for the welfare of the greyhounds including pre-race examination of greyhounds to ensure they are fit to race, providing first aid for injured greyhounds, post-race examinations and drug sampling of greyhounds at the request of the stewards.

Starter - is responsible for ensuring races start on time under the direction of the stewards

Lure Driver - is responsible for driving the mechanical lure

Judge - is responsible for judging the placegetters in each race

Trainers/Attendants - are responsible for preparing and parading the greyhounds

Expected Standards of Behaviour

In whichever industry you work, your behaviour and appearance is a direct reflection on that industry. The greyhound industry is a multi-million dollar industry that attracts a lot of publicity and as such there are expected standards of dress and behaviour for all industry participants, particularly on race day.

These issues are addressed in the Local Rules, and you need to be familiar with all of the points contained in Local Rule (Vic.) 22 - 'Behaviour and Attire at Meetings'

Standards of Dress

If you are engaged at a race meeting as a Trainer, Attendant or Catcher, you must comply to the following dress code:

- » Black or dark blue ankle length trousers
- » Black or dark socks
- » Black shoes boots or gumboots

There is also the provision in this rule for:

- » Such other or alternate clothing as the Board may determine from time to time

This section of the rule allows for the requirement that all handlers wear the jackets or coats provided by the race club whilst parading the greyhounds to the start.

The rules also specifically prohibit the wearing of the following items:

- » Overalls or track pants of any description
- » Any item of denim clothing
- » Track shoes or high heeled shoes of any description
- » Anything that is in the opinion of the stewards to be offensive or inappropriate (this extends to headwear/hats)
- » Any other item of clothing that the Board may determine from time to time

If you do not comply with the dress code, you will not be allowed to parade, handle or act as a catcher of a greyhound for the duration of the meeting unless you can change your attire to meet the requirements. The stewards may then nominate any other person to act as your substitute to parade, handle or catch any greyhound you were engaged to handle.



Punctuality

It is very important that you are on time for a race meeting. Greyhound races run like clockwork, so it is your responsibility to ensure any greyhounds in your care are ready and at the right place at the right time.

To ensure that you arrive on time, you need to allow adequate travel time to reach the track. If you are travelling long distances, you will also have to factor in any stops that may be necessary for either you or your greyhounds. It is always better to arrive a little early, than to be running late.

Kennelling of greyhounds usually starts about an hour and a half before the start of the first race and normally finishes 45 minutes before the first race. This gives you a 45 minute window to present your greyhound(s). Remember: if you have to present more than one greyhound you cannot take them all in at the same time, so allow for this when you are deciding what time you plan to arrive.

If you fail to present your greyhound(s) at the correct time, they will not be allowed to compete, and will be 'stood down' for 28 days, meaning they are not allowed to compete in any event for the next 28 days. You will also be guilty of an offence and will be liable to a penalty. (GAR 31)

You must also make sure you are punctual when returning to the kennels to prepare your dog for its race.

Behaviour

As with an industry, there are minimum standards of behaviour expected. Inappropriate behaviour such as swearing, arguing, or being intoxicated is not tolerated at greyhound race meetings, and the stewards have the power to fine you and/or hold an inquiry into your behaviour. You can also be removed from the precincts of the racetrack.

Local Rule (Vic.) 22 states:

22.1 A club shall ensure that all persons at a Meeting are suitably dressed and behave in accordance with a standard commensurate with the ideal of the betterment of greyhound racing as a public entertainment.

22.2 the Steward in Charge of a Meeting may require the secretary of a Club to have removed from the Premises of a Club any person who is, in that Steward's opinion, not suitably dressed, or who is intoxicated or behaving improperly.

Remember you are representing not only yourself and your kennel, but also the sport of greyhound racing. Inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated.

Communication

Working in the greyhound industry as either a Trainer or Attendant requires you to communicate effectively with a wide range of people and officials. You will need to listen carefully to instructions and questions and be able to reply quickly and politely. In the course of a race day you will need to speak to Stewards, the track Veterinarian, Kennel Staff, and Catchers. You may also have to report back to the greyhound's owner or trainer. If you have a win, you may have to speak at a trophy presentation, or might be interviewed.

There are also rules relating to communication on race day, restricting communication in certain instances:

GAR 44 Prohibited Use of Communication Devices

Unless the controlling body determines otherwise, an owner, trainer or attendant shall not use in any way, or have turned on, a mobile telephone, mobile communication device or any unauthorised device whilst parading, handling, or acting as a catcher of a greyhound or whilst participating in a presentation ceremony or while present in the kennel building or parade area.

GAR 47 Parading Greyhound

(1) A person handling a greyhound whilst it is being paraded shall not communicate excessively with any person outside the parade area.

It is very important that you remember to turn off your mobile phone when you arrive at the track, and only turn it on when you are well away from the kennelling area.

Before you Leave for the Track

Before you leave home it is essential that you check that you have everything that you need and that you yourself are correctly attired. Given the short time frame for presenting your greyhound for kennelling, there is unlikely to be time to go home and get things you have forgotten.

You need to make sure that you have:

- » The correct greyhound(s)
- » The registration papers for each greyhound that is racing
- » The weight card for each greyhound that is racing
- » A suitable lead and collar for each Greyhound
- » A well-fitting race muzzle for each greyhound
- » Bedding for the kennels of each Greyhound
- » Any written documents required (i.e. an Authority to Handle, or bandaging request)
- » Your Trainer's/Attendant's license card
- » Water and water bowls
- » Any other equipment you require (i.e. American muzzle for greyhounds that chew their bedding whilst kennelled, food, rugs, towels, catching leads, etc.)





Chapter 4.2 – Kennelling, Preparation for Racing, Boxing and Catching

When you arrive at the Track

Once you have arrived at the track, you will need to get everything organised for presentation of the greyhound. It is also a good idea to give your greyhound(s) a chance to stretch their legs and empty out. This is especially important if your greyhound is drawn to race in one of the later races as they will be kennelled for up to a few hours. Each greyhound can also be offered a small drink of water.

It is not uncommon for trainers to start queuing up as kennelling time approaches. Unless your greyhound is especially calm or you have a number of greyhounds to present, it is probably better to wait until the initial rush is over, and then head over to the kennels. It is far less stressful for your greyhound to be walked quietly around the exercise area, rather than be expected to stand still in an area with a lot of other greyhounds who might be excited or boisterous, surrounded by people who are noisy and unfamiliar.

The Kennelling Procedure

The kennelling procedure is very regimented – every step is done in a particular order according to the National Rules (GAR 26-42)

1. On arrival, you need to present your Trainer's or Attendant's License Card to the kennel staff so they will allow you to enter the kennel area.
2. Your first stop will be at the window or booth at the entrance to the kennels. Most tracks charge an entrance fee, which you will need to pay. You will also need to collect your envelope containing your starter's fee and your allocated kennel pass ticket.
3. You must then proceed to the kennelling area where you will need to present the greyhound along with its registration papers and weight card to the stewards. You will also have to produce your Trainer's/Attendant's License card. If you are acting on behalf of the trainer of a greyhound, you will have to hand the stewards a written letter of authority signed by the trainer that requests that you be allowed to handle the greyhound for the day.
4. The stewards will then check the markings of the dog and the ear-brands match those on the registration papers.

5. From here you will proceed to the vet check area. You will have to walk the greyhound up the ramp, or lift it up onto the top of the ramp so that the Track Veterinarian can check that the dog is fit to race, and in the case of a bitch, that she is not in season.
6. From the vet check you will then have to take the greyhound to the weighing station/scales. Greyhounds are weighed with their muzzle on, but their lead and collar are removed. You will have to place the dog onto the scales and make sure you have removed the collar and lead. The stewards will then record the weight of the greyhound on the dog's weight card. Under the rules it is your responsibility to ensure the correct weight is entered on the weight card, so make sure you check what has been written down.
7. At this point, you will be allocated a kennel number. Each greyhound is given its own kennel within a row containing all the starters for that particular race. The kennels are assigned randomly, so no one knows which kennel will house each dog. Your kennel pass will be marked with the dog's kennel number on it, and this will need to be presented to the kennel supervisor/staff so that they can escort you to the correct kennel. Stewards check all kennels prior to the start of race day, and after this each individual kennel is locked, and nobody is allowed to enter the kennelling area unsupervised.
8. The kennel supervisor/staff will take you to the kennel that has been allocated for your greyhound and unlock it for you. Once your greyhound's bedding has been placed into the kennel and the greyhound has been placed in, the individual kennel is once again locked. When all of the greyhounds for the race have been kennelled, the row of kennels is also locked and sealed. The seal will only be broken once the handlers are present prior to the actual race.
9. Depending on the time of the race, you may now have some time to relax. You will need to be back at the kennels to prepare your dog for its race approximately 30 minutes before the scheduled race time or by the time the race immediately prior to the one your greyhound is drawn in starts.





Understanding The Weight Requirements



The rules of racing state that each greyhound must be weighed prior to racing and its weight is to be recorded in the greyhound's own weight record card. The weight record card must be produced each time the greyhound is to race, along with the greyhound's papers. It is your responsibility to ensure the correct weight is recorded in the weight card by the stewards.

A weight variation of only 1 kilogram from the last race or satisfactory weight trial is permitted otherwise the greyhound will not be permitted to race. The exception to this is where the greyhound has not competed for more than 28 days, and written notification of the reason for the weight variation is given to the stewards at the time of kennelling. In this case a variation of up to 2 kilograms is permitted.

If the greyhound is prohibited from racing due to a weight variation, the greyhound will receive a 'stand down' period of 10 days, and the trainer will be guilty of an 'offence' under the rules. This means the stewards will impose a penalty, generally a fine.

If the trainer wants a weight variation of more than 2 kilograms, they can apply to the stewards for a 'Satisfactory Weight Trial'. This means the dog is trialled in the presence of a steward. This cannot occur before 28 days have elapsed since the greyhound's last race. The steward will record the dog's weight in the weight record card, and will also record whether or not the trial was satisfactory. If the trial is deemed satisfactory, then the greyhound can race again, with the new weight recorded at the trial being taken as its last start weight.

Rules relating to Weight

GAR 38 Weighing

GAR 39 Weight Variation

GAR 40 Satisfactory Weight Trial

Preparation for Racing

When the time comes for the greyhounds to race, you will need to return to the kennel area to collect and prepare your dog. You will have to show your kennel pass to the gate attendant, otherwise you will not be allowed to enter the kennel area.

Once the trainers or attendants are present, the steward or kennel staff member responsible will break the seal on the kennel row in your presence. The individual kennels are then unlocked so you can collect your greyhound. You may need to fit the greyhound's racing muzzle, and put on its collar and lead.

From here you can take your greyhound out to the toileting area for a chance to empty out. This is very important as no dog will race well if it is uncomfortable with a full bladder.

The track veterinarian will again inspect each dog to check they are fit to race, and that nothing has happened to the dog during the time in the kennel that would make the dog unsuitable to race.

Now is the time to ensure any requested/necessary bandaging is applied to the dog. Some dogs will have talcum powder or lubricant such as Vaseline applied to certain areas to prevent chafing. The talcum powder and Vaseline are provided by the club for this purpose.

The stewards will once again check the ear brands of each dog, and you will be given the dog's racing rug. The rugs come in small, medium and large sizes to accommodate the different sized greyhounds, so you will have to know which size to ask for.

The racing rug will have to be fitted. They are a one-piece lycra design that has to be slipped over the dog's head, before gently feeding the dog's front legs through the leg holes.

By this time the race prior to yours will have finished, and there will be an opportunity to let the greyhound see the lure. This stir-up is helpful for some greyhounds, but can be too exciting for others, so it is your choice whether the dog goes out to watch the lure go round.

Now is the time to perform any massage, or stretching necessary to help warm the greyhounds up. Some trainers will want the dog walked around, others will want the dog kept as calm as possible so it is important to understand what type of warm-up the individual greyhound does best with.

Parading a Greyhound

Prior to each race, the competitors are paraded for the public to view. This is unless the weather is particularly hot, in which case the dogs may be walked directly from the kennels to the boxes. By this stage the dogs are often very excited and may be a handful, so you will need to be well prepared for the greyhound to bounce or jump around.

If the weather is cold, you have the option of parading the greyhound in a warm rug. Each race club has a set of these rugs for participants to use in a range of sizes. The club supplied rugs are the only ones allowed to be used and help keep all competitors looking the same. This uniformity is considered important especially as there may be many thousands of people watching the parading and race all around the country via the television coverage.

Before each dog leaves the kennel area for the parade ring, the stewards will again check the ear brands and ensure your dog is wearing the correct race rug. They will also check that the rug along with the racing muzzle is correctly fitted. You must then follow the instructions of the 'Parade Steward' who is in charge of escorting all of the runners from the kennels, to the parade area, and then onto the starting boxes. Keeping the dog moving during parading also assists with warming up the muscles and maintaining circulation prior to racing.

GAR 49(4) says that the greyhound must not be assisted or carried from the parade area to the starting boxes.





At the Start

The parade steward will ensure that all of the runners for the race have arrived at the starting boxes in plenty of time. Because of the television coverage, it is very important that the races start on time.

The 'Starter' is the person responsible for ensuring the start of the race is undertaken in accordance with the rules. When the greyhounds arrive at the starting boxes for an event they are deemed to be 'in the starter's hands'.

The starter will order the removal of any parade rugs, nose straps, head checks, along with the greyhound's lead and collar. Once ordered to box their greyhound, each handler must quickly place their greyhound in their assigned box and then move out of the way to avoid delaying the start of the race.

Greyhounds are placed in the starting boxes in the following order:

**1-3-5-7 are placed in first,
followed by 2-4-6-8**

The starter will then ensure that all of the doors to the boxes have been securely fastened, and make sure that no part of any greyhound is visibly held or caught by the doors. The green light is then given and the race can be started.

The lure driver will start the lure, and the boxes will open as the lure passes a certain point.

Boxing a Greyhound

It is essential that you have some experience of boxing a greyhound prior to handling any dog at a race meeting. If you have been involved with training the greyhounds, you will have most likely had to box dogs at the trial track, where it does not matter if you have trouble, and there are people that can help.

When boxing a greyhound you must first walk the dog up to the area immediately behind the boxes, before taking off the dog's collar and lead. You do not want the dog to get away from you at this point, so you must always have the dog securely held. Most handlers will straddle the dog as they remove the collar and lead, placing one hand on the dog's chest to prevent it moving forward, and placing the other hand under the dog's abdomen.

Make sure that you place the collar and lead safely away from the greyhound as you do not want to get the dog's legs tangled in it as the dog is boxed. It is also important not to throw the lead behind you as you could hit another trainer or dog in the process.

When it is time to load the greyhound, you need to lift it forwards as far as possible into the box, and then gently push the dog forward using a hand on the dog's rump. As you close the door, make sure that the dog's tail and legs don't get caught.

It is important not to injure the dog whilst boxing. Some people dig their hands into the dog's abdomen which can cause discomfort, others are rough and put so much pressure on the dog that it is forced into an unnatural position and there is the potential to do muscle damage. If a part of the dog gets caught in the door of the box a lot of damage can be done - especially if the dog is released whilst part of it is still trapped. As a result, the greyhound may become difficult to box as it associates the pain it felt with being in the confines of the starting box.

The Role of the Catcher

Each race track has an area called the 'Catching Pen'. This is an area where the dogs are caught after the race by shutting a gate that blocks access for them to follow the lure further around the track. There is a small door in the catching pen gate that allows the lure to pass through, and this is quickly closed to ensure no greyhound tries to follow the lure. As the last greyhound comes into the catching pen, a second gate is closed behind the field to stop them turning around and heading back the other way. To help encourage the greyhounds into the catching pen a second 'lure' (usually some fur on a rope) is thrown to attract the dogs.

The role of the catcher is an important one on race night. They are the person who must safely catch and control your greyhound after the race is finished. Every greyhound must have an assigned catcher who is in charge of catching that particular greyhound.

GAR 48 *The handler of a greyhound engaged to compete in an Event shall ensure that a registered person or a person authorised by the Stewards is in attendance at the catching pen prior to the commencement of the Event for the purpose of catching the greyhound.*

It is impossible to be in two places at once - the starting boxes and the catching pen, so in most cases the catcher must be someone who is not going to be parading or boxing the greyhound. Only registered Catchers, Attendants or Trainers are allowed to catch a greyhound, unless approved by the stewards, and you will have to organise the person to act as catcher well before your race.

Once the greyhounds are enclosed in the catching pen, the catchers enter and must quickly catch the greyhound they have been assigned. Each catcher must have a collar and lead or a 'catching lead' (a form of slip lead) and may only catch and handle the greyhound they have been assigned.

You must be clear on which dog it is that you must catch - so remember the colour of its race rug and the colour of the dog. The catching pen steward will give permission for the catchers to enter the pen when it is safe to do so, at which time you must quickly go in and catch your dog. Be very careful of runners who may be entering the catching pen late, and be aware of what is happening around you. Some dogs are hard to catch, and they may continue to run around the pen causing a potential hazard to you and the greyhound you are catching.

Once your greyhound is on lead and under control, you can move it out of the way of other dogs. If there is any concern that another dog might get too close, try to place yourself in between the two dogs, or walk your greyhound quickly away. You are not allowed to touch the other dogs, or push them away, and you are not allowed to catch anyone else's dog.

The greyhounds who have won or been placed in the race will be required to parade to the winners area, the other runners will be heading to the wash bay for their cool down. By this time, the greyhound's handler or trainer should have arrived, and will take over.

Catchers can provide important information to the trainer or handler of a dog. They may have noticed a lameness or injury, or may have information about knocks, bumps or even falls that might have occurred towards the end of the race or as the dogs were in the catching pen.





Post Race Care

After a race, it is important that the greyhound receives the correct cool-down. The cool-down period allows the greyhound to recover from the huge exertion of the race, and provides an opportunity for the handler or trainer to make sure no injuries have been sustained, and that the dog has recovered well and is not overly stressed.

From the catching pen the greyhounds are taken to the wash bay. Here the sand is hosed from their legs and feet. The cool water from the hose also helps to bring their body temperature down as it will have been elevated by the heat generated in the dog's muscles during the race. The greyhounds are then walked around, and are offered a drink of water.

Now is the time to look for any signs of injury sustained during the race. Is the dog's gait normal? Are there any signs of swelling or bruising?

The greyhounds are walked around until they have recovered their breath, and may be given an opportunity to empty out again, before being dried and placed back in their kennel. The colour of any urine passed should be noted. Dogs that are under stress may have a reddish-brown colour to their urine so it is important to watch for this when the dog goes to the toilet after a race. If you do see anything unusual you should make sure you tell the trainer of the greyhound, or if the greyhound is yours, have the greyhound thoroughly examined by your greyhound veterinarian as soon as possible as this can be a sign of a serious problem. It is important that the dog is dried off before going back in its kennel as you do not want the dog getting chilled.

At this stage the stewards will have had time to review the footage of the race and may decide to ask for certain dogs to be vetted or swabbed (see Chapter 4.3). They may also hold an inquiry into the running of the race.



Leaving for Home

All greyhounds are returned to their kennels after the race. Once the stewards have 'signed off' on the race, indicating they are happy with the outcome and any matters have been attended to, you are free to take your greyhound from the kennels and to leave. To find out if you can leave, you need to consult the race sheet hanging outside the steward's room. After each race's paperwork is completed, the stewards will sign off that race on the running sheet, and all participants involved in that race are free to leave. If you have a number of runners, you will not be able to leave before the last race you are involved in has been signed off. You can leave the greyhounds from the earlier races in the kennels until it is time to go.

It is now up to you to ensure any greyhounds in your care get home safely. Most trainers will give the greyhounds some form of fluids and nutrition after running (Vanilla Sustagen™ is commonly used rather than a full meal). For the journey home it is important that the greyhounds have warm, comfortable bedding, and are kept at a suitable temperature.

If you have a long journey home, it may be that you choose to give them a small meal prior to leaving to help replenish the energy they have lost, or give them a drink with some electrolytes in it. You want the journey home to be restful, and not to contribute to any soreness or injury they may have sustained.



4.3 – Sampling, Vet, and Steward Procedures

What happens after the race?

After each race the stewards will review the video footage of the race, and discuss any observations they have made. They then prepare a 'Steward's Report' of the race which is published on the GRV website so that any member of the general public can read it. At this stage they may do a number of things - hold an inquiry into the performance of a greyhound (or more than one greyhound), order a greyhound to be 'vetted', or to be 'swabbed'.

What happens if the Stewards call me in for an inquiry?

If the stewards call you in after the race, you are required to go to their rooms when asked. If there is concern about how your greyhound performed, they will explain to you why they have called you in, and what has prompted the inquiry. In many cases they will have vision of an incident and they will show you the vision and explain what they see happening.

Inquiries are generally called when a greyhound has failed to chase the lure properly, or has 'marred' the race of another greyhound. In some cases a warning will be given, in others, the greyhound in question may have its papers endorsed.

As the person responsible for the greyhound you will be given an opportunity to explain your version of events, and may be required to answer questions. The entire process of an inquiry is recorded so there are no arguments about what was and wasn't said at the time.

Stewards can hold an inquiry into any matter that is in contravention of the rules of racing, whether it relates to the performance of a greyhound, or the behaviour of a registered person.



What happens if my greyhound is ordered to be 'vetted' after a race?

Sometimes the stewards will ask for a greyhound to be vetted after a race. It may be they are concerned that the dog has sustained an injury during the race, or it may have performed badly, suggesting something is not right.

If this is the case, a steward will approach the catcher of the dog, or the trainer, and inform them that the dog is to be vetted. The person in charge of the dog is then required to present the greyhound to the track veterinarian who will examine the dog. The veterinarian will be looking for any injury that might have affected the dog's performance, and will examine the dog from head to toe.

In the case of an injury being detected, a period of 'stand down' will be imposed, based on the severity of the injury. The 'stand down' period means that the dog cannot be nominated to race again until this 'stand down' period has expired. In some cases the greyhound may need to complete a satisfactory trial for the stewards before being eligible to race again.



What happens when my greyhounds is called in to be 'swabbed'?

As all greyhounds are required to be presented for racing 'drug free', it is necessary to ensure that this is in fact the case. Stewards can ask for any dog to be swabbed, but there are also random swabs taken at most meetings.

If your greyhound is to be swabbed after a race, you will be escorted from the catching pen by a steward. You will be allowed to wash down your dog, and give it a drink, but it will then be placed in a special 'swabbing' kennel for security reasons. When the time comes to have the dog's sample collected, a steward will escort you to the swabbing kennel to collect the dog, and from the swabbing kennel to the vet's room at the track.

The swabbing process is very regimented and the steward or veterinarian collecting the sample will explain each step to you. It is vital that you watch the collection procedure from start to finish.

Swabbing sample kits contain three plastic bottles that have been sterilised before being placed together in a bag. The steward or vet will check the number of the kit, and open the bag that contains the three bottles in front of you. Two of the bottles are empty, but the third bottle contains a 'control' fluid.

The track vet will first wash his/her hands, and then rinse the collection pot with running water. The collection pot, the two sample jars, and the lids will then be rinsed with the 'control fluid' to ensure that any contaminants that might be present prior to collection can be detected. The control sample is placed back into its original bottle and the bottle is sealed with a numbered seal.

The next step is the collection of a urine sample. For this, you and the greyhound are taken outside to the dog toileting area and a sample is collected by the vet into the collection pot. Most greyhounds are quite obliging, and the sample does not take long to collect.

The urine sample is then brought back into the vet's office and is split in two, placing similar amounts into each of the two sample bottles 'A' and 'B'. These two bottles are then sealed with numbered seals, and placed with the control sample back into a plastic pack which is also sealed.

You will have to sign a document that states that you observed the collection and checked that the numbers on the samples and controls all matched prior to the samples being sealed into tamper-proof plastic packaging. A copy of this document will be given to you for your records.

What happens to the sample after collection at the track?

The urine sample is kept refrigerated prior to transport to the laboratory. Once at the laboratory, it is checked in and one of the two samples - the 'A' sample - is tested for banned substances. Most samples are free from any drug or medication residues, but occasionally a 'positive swab' will be detected. If this is the case, the control fluid that was used to rinse everything prior to collection will then also be tested to rule out accidental contamination.

Any positive swabs are referred to the stewards for an inquiry. You will be notified by the stewards, and will undergo a kennel inspection. Stewards will be looking for the possible source of the positive swab. At this time the stewards will ask you to sign a form allowing you the option to appoint an independent analyst to be present and observe the testing of the second (or 'B') sample at the laboratory.

If both the 'A' and 'B' samples are positive, this confirms the positive swab result and an inquiry will be held by the stewards.





What Do I Need to Do Now?

Having now learned about the Greyhound Racing Industry and its structure, we hope that your interest has been sparked and that your involvement in the sport of greyhound racing will continue to develop into a life-long passion.

Formal completion of this Level 1 competency is required before you are allowed to register as an 'Attendant' (someone who handles a greyhound at a race meeting). If this is your plan, you will need to fill out an 'Application to become an Attendant' form and submit it to GRV, along with your answers to the assessment questions for this competency level.

People planning to actually train greyhounds to race have to not only complete Competency Level 1, but must also complete Competency Level 2 to become an 'Owner Trainer' (someone who trains only greyhounds they own or part-own), or Competency Levels 2 AND 3 to become a 'Public Trainer' (someone who trains other people's greyhounds). There are assessment sheets for each level, and you will need to submit your answers along with your registration paperwork.

Each level of competency can be completed (in order) individually at different times as your involvement develops and your skills increase, or they can be completed all at the same time. If you have any questions regarding registration or completion of the competency levels, please call our Member Services Department on (03) 8329 1100





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