

2024 Safety from Start to Finish

Media Brief



Churchill Downs Incorporated (“CDI”) established the “Safety from Start to Finish” program in March 2009 to formalize its comprehensive approach to continual improvement of the health and safety protocols and policies for horses and humans who work, train, compete and attend racing events at Churchill Downs Racetrack (“Churchill Downs”). Since that time, the program has expanded and evolved to address and emphasize new initiatives each year while maintaining a focus on the measures that have facilitated 150 years of racing integrity and excellence.

Churchill Downs, Kentucky Horse Racing Commission (“KHRC”) and Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority (“HISA”) collectively create, mandate and implement policies and protocols for horses competing in the Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (Grade I) and Longines Kentucky Oaks (Grade I).

Following a comprehensive evaluation of existing safety protocols and a thorough assessment of industry best practices in June 2023, Churchill Downs has implemented several key enhancements to the Safety from Start to Finish Program for 2024.



KEY ENHANCEMENTS

- Investment in Surface Management:** To further maximize surface oversight and consistency, new and upgraded equipment including harrows, tractors and grader accessorized with smart grade technology have been incorporated into the track maintenance process. Highly regarded turf expert Leif Dickinson was added to the CDI track operations team to work closely with the Churchill Downs Track Superintendent to provide additional development and maintenance oversight of the turf course. Collaboration with the world’s foremost racing surfaces researcher, Dr. Mick Peterson, continues to routinely conduct engineering analyses and testing of racing surfaces with increased frequency for safety and consistency. Churchill Downs continues to monitor and record cushion depth measurements at specified locations around the track, perform surface grades and crossfall measurements and monitor moisture content throughout race day to determine the necessary watering schedule.
- Increased Veterinary Oversight:** Dr. Dana Stead was added to CDI’s qualified veterinary team, led by Dr. Will Farmer, as Equine Safety and Integrity Veterinarian, to provide additional monitoring and specialized care for horses and to assist in developing and enforcing CDI equine safety protocols. Additionally, 15 KHRC veterinarians will join CDI’s veterinary team to closely monitor and observe Kentucky Derby and Kentucky Oaks participants before, during and after training and in their stalls beginning as early as two weeks prior to the Kentucky Derby as they arrive.
- Collaboration with Industry Experts:** Synergetic work continues with HISA and other industry experts to identify at-risk horses and potential safety threat factors using veterinary medical records, computer models and advanced analytic techniques.
- Established Safety Management Committee:** Comprised of a cross-section of horsemen including trainers, exercise riders, jockeys, racetrack management and veterinarians, the organized mobilization of this group allows for regular weekly meetings throughout the live race meet to foster an open dialogue to candidly discuss observations or concerns and provide real time feedback on areas for improvement. Members of the committee are also encouraged to communicate issues with track management at any time.
- Implemented Technology:** As an industry leader, Churchill Downs is investing in new technologies to help identify horses that may pose an increased risk potential for injury. This allows for early veterinary intervention in an effort to diagnose and treat the horse before serious injury occurs. As a result, all starters will wear StrideSAFE biometric sensor technology to detect changes in a horse’s gait to help identify inconsistencies or early warning signs of possible developing injury. Additionally, Churchill Downs has partnered with Hagyard Equine Medical Institute to provide an on-site Positron Emission Tomography (“PET”) unit. This cutting edge diagnostic imaging unit is only the second PET machine permanently located at a racetrack in the United States.

In addition to updated processes and policies initiated by its internal racing, veterinarian and track management teams, Churchill Downs remains in compliance and full support of new regulations and initiatives developed by HISA related to medication, track safety and jockey health and safety. A full list of HISA’s Rules and Regulations including HISA’s Racetrack Safety Program and Prohibited Substances list (banned and controlled) can be found at the link below. HISA’s Anti-Doping and Medication Control (“ADMC”) rules and regulations as enforced by Horseracing Integrity & Welfare Unit (“HIWU”) were approved by the Federal Trade Commission (“FTC”) on March 27, 2023, and were implemented on May 22, 2023, following last year’s Kentucky Derby.

- [HISA Regulations](#)

Churchill Downs continues to adhere to all applicable state laws as regulated by KHRC, an independent agency of Kentucky’s Public Protection Cabinet. A comprehensive overview of those state regulations, including information on post-race and out-of-competition testing protocols, can be found at the link below.

- [KHRC Regulations](#)

The Kentucky Derby Week & Spring Meet Condition Book contains Churchill Downs’ Equine Safety Initiatives and Rules and Conditions for Racing and Training which must be signed by the trainer and attending veterinarian of every participating horse. The Condition Book also includes all safety policies related to required exams, paddock schooling, entries, workout rules and procedures, ship-ins and out-of-competition testing. The Kentucky Derby Week & Spring Meet Condition Book can be found in its entirety at the link below.

- [Kentucky Derby Week & Spring Meet Condition Book](#)

All rules and regulations approved and instituted by HISA and KHRC or included in the Churchill Downs Conditions for Racing are implemented into the Churchill Downs Safety from Start to Finish program and are to be considered key initiatives for **Equine Safety & Welfare, Racing Integrity, Medication Compliance** and **Jockey Safety & Welfare**.





NEW AND UPDATED RULES

- Horses participating in the Kentucky Oaks and Kentucky Derby must be on the grounds no later than 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 27, and must remain on the grounds until after the running of their race, pending an unforeseeable emergency.
- Horses participating in the Kentucky Oaks and Kentucky Derby will have 24-hour barn security as well as 24-hour video surveillance starting at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 27, through post time for their respective races.
- Horses that have been beaten by 12 lengths or more in 5 consecutive starts will be ineligible to race until approved by the CDI Equine Medical Director to return.
- Horses shall be limited to 4 starts in a rolling 8-week period.
- All first-time starters 4-years-old and older or 3-year-olds and older with no race within 365 days are required to have an official veterinary exam. In addition, horses that have not raced within 150 days, but less than 365 days, may be required to have an evaluation by the CDI Equine Medical Director prior to entry.
- Waiver Claiming Rule allows a trainer to enter a horse in a claiming race but be ineligible to be claimed providing the horse has been laid off and has not started for a minimum of 120 days since its last race, and the horse is entered for a claiming price equal to or greater than the price at which it last started.
- HIWU will conduct out-of-competition blood and hair samples of horses competing in the Kentucky Derby and Kentucky Oaks as well as undercard races before entries are taken and will be sent to an HIWU certified laboratory for immediate testing. Other jurisdictions will also obtain out-of-competition samples on behalf of HISA/HIWU from horses that are not stabled in Kentucky.
- All veterinary treatment records must be submitted to HISA and are available to regulatory veterinarians for review.
- Veterinarians shall not have contact with an entered horse within 24 hours of post time unless approved by the regulatory veterinarian.
- No medications are permitted within 48 hours of the race. In the event of a medical emergency, the Stewards will authorize treatment and the horse will be scratched.
- Any owner or trainer previously stabled at a CDI track who sells or transports a horse for purposes of slaughter will have stalls permanently revoked at all CDI properties.

In addition to these priorities, Patron Safety has always been considered a critical function of the Churchill Downs Safety from Start to Finish program. Key Initiatives for patron safety are highlighted below as well as a link to additional security policies created for the protection and safety of guests.

PATRON SAFETY

- A total of 33 Paramedics and EMTs, 11 nurses and 4 doctors are onsite.
- 5 First Aid Stations are located throughout the facility: Executive Gate, First Floor Clubhouse, Jockey Club Suites, Finish Line Suites and Infield.
- A minimum of 14 ambulances are onsite with an EMT and paramedic in each ambulance. Other ambulances are on standby within the area for immediate response if necessary.
- More than 30 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and public safety partners are onsite to further the level of security for all in attendance.
- [Kentucky Derby Guest Security](#)



If you suspect or witness conduct in violation of these safety rules and policies, please report it to one of the following:

HISA Anonymous Text Tipline:
 (855) 901-8477 or call
 (888) 714-4498

**Churchill Downs Integrity
 Department:**
horsesafety@kyderby.com

**Kentucky Horse Racing
 Commission Integrity Violation:**
 (859) 246-2040