



AERA Endurance Medication Control Protocol

1. Event Planning Summary

The Division Association (DA) Management Committee, responsible for affiliation of an event where medication control / sampling of horses is to take place, must plan the following:

1. The presence at the event of appropriately qualified personnel, a Veterinarian and an EA/FEI accredited Swabbing Steward.
2. The Chief Steward / Ground Jury (FEI) of the day must be advised that swabbing is to take place to allow appropriate support and preparation.
3. Access to a "swabbing box" or a facility where samples can be collected at the event.
4. Availability of an adequate number of sample collection kits and equipment. These kits are available from the AERA National Medication Control Officer (MCO).
5. The method of selection of horses should be left to the Chief Steward (AERA) / Ground Jury (FEI) of the day and the Head Veterinarian. The Swabbing Steward should not be involved in the selection of horses for drug testing.¹
6. Approval of funding for all costs associated with the required sampling.

2. Qualified Personnel

The EA National Office and the EA National Medication Control Officer maintains a list of members that are accredited as EA Swabbing Stewards and a list of accredited Veterinarians. The EA Steward in charge of drug testing of horses must be accredited for this function under the EA National Officiating Accreditation Scheme.

At endurance events, a Line Veterinarian should be used to draw the blood samples. A Treatment Veterinarian or any Veterinarian who has administered drugs during the event must never draw samples. The Swabbing Steward or the Veterinarian can collect the urine samples. There is no requirement for the Line Vet to be accredited under the EA MCP Steward Program.

3. Supply of Sample Collection Kits

Sample Collection Kits will be ordered by the AERA National Medication Control Officer and will be delivered to the Swabbing Steward who must check that all use-by dates are current.

Sample kits come in a security bag, which has a tamper evident seal at the end of the zipper. The security bag has been sealed with a uniquely numbered tamper evident seal. The seal is ONLY broken, and the bag opened IMMEDIATELY prior to the collection of samples AT THE COMPETITION, in the presence of the sample collection officials (usually the veterinarian and the EA Swabbing Steward), and the Person/s Responsible.

All kits, whether used or unused, must be returned to the EA laboratory.

A washed purpose-built urine catching receptacle must be available.

Detailed procedures for the use of sampling kits may vary from kit to kit, lab to lab. Please consult the appropriate laboratory resource material provided with the sample kits.

4. On-site Facilities

¹ Refer to EA Medication Control Policy Section 7 [here](#)

It is preferable to have a separate stable dedicated to the collection of samples. This “swabbing box” should be in a quiet and private area, be clean and preferably have a supply of fresh straw/sawdust in it. There should be chairs for Person Responsible, veterinarian and steward(s), and a table on which the sampling kits can be processed.

In the absence of such facility, the sampling can be done in other areas, preferably in an area with which the Person/s Responsible and sampling personnel are comfortable, preferably providing some quiet and safe for horse and handlers.

5. The Selection of Horses to be sampled

Both the EA and FEI have a policy regarding the number of horses that must be sampled. AERA has also set a target percentage of entries for each year.

The AERA and EA maintain a Medication Control Program (MCP) / Swabbing Program that ensures that drug testing (swabbing) is carried out during official competition compliant with those policies.

The methods for selecting horses to be swabbed at AERA events and EA competitions include:

- Horses may be chosen specifically because their behaviour raises suspicion. In other words, the horse may appear drugged or under the effect of medication (this will be deemed a Ground Jury “targeted test”)
- Horses may be chosen at random from all competitors entered or chosen at random from a group of winners or place getters (this will be deemed a “random selection”)
- Horses may be chosen because they are winners or place getters (this will be deemed “obligatory”, e.g. at certain FEI Events)
- Horses may be chosen because they have been withdrawn or scratched (this will be deemed a Ground Jury “targeted test”)
- Horses may be chosen because of poor performance (this will be deemed a Ground Jury “targeted test”) and/or
- Horses may be chosen at a judge’s request (this will be deemed a Ground Jury “targeted test”)

Once the Chief Steward (AERA) / Ground Jury (FEI) have selected the required number of horses for swabbing, a Chief Steward (AERA) / Ground Jury member / Ride Organising Committee member must sign the EA Medication Control Notification form(s) that will be used for the notification of the Person/s Responsible.

6. Reporting of Results

The reporting of the sample results will only be made to the President of Australian Endurance Riders Association (AERA) for non-FEI events. Reporting of sample results for FEI events is directly to the FEI.

OCs, MCO and Sampling Officials are only informed of the sample results at the discretion of the AERA President. This would not usually occur until after a judicial enquiry (if needed) or after the Person Responsible has been informed.

7. EA and FEI Reference Laboratory

The EA/FEI Approved Laboratories within Australia:

Australian Racing Forensic Laboratory (ARFL)

Level 11, 51 Druitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 02 8344 5000

8. Other Contact Details

EA National Medication Control Officer:

Dr Penny Dow

Email: penny.dow@equestrian.org.au

Ph: (02) 8762 7777

AERA National Medication Control Officer:

Marylou Locke

Email: Marylou.locke@aera.asn.au

Ph: 0402 862 979

Equestrian Australia

Integrity Department

Email: integrity@equestrian.org.au

Ph: (02) 8762 7777

PO Box 673

Sydney Markets

NSW, 2129

9. Endurance processes

9.1 Endurance Event Flow

- Pre –Ride Vetting
- Ride Start - each leg has arrival at finish line; strapping, end-of-leg vetting, rest; repeat for each leg of the event entered.
- A horse has not finished the event until it has passed final vet check.
- 160km rides will have 5 legs (AERA) / 6 phases (FEI) and will run over 24hrs (AERA) 24hrs or less (FEI)
100km – 120km rides will be run over 2-3 legs/phases and 8-12 hrs (AERA/FEI)
- Best conditioned judging
- Best conditioned horse is judged after all legs have been completed. In case of a 160km this is usually done the following day.

9.2 Notification and Supervision

The Swabbing Steward or a trained assistant seeks out the selected rider/horse combinations without significantly interfering with their competition or preparation. Horses may be sampled at any time during competition. Horses may be sampled more than once.

In practice it is best that the riders/drivers/handlers (person's responsible) are notified and swabbed immediately after they have finished competing, completed Best Conditioned presentations or have taken part in the presentation of prizes or within 30 minutes of the announcement of the final competition results.

The Person Responsible, or person appointed by the Swabbing Steward, must stay with the horse from the point of notification until the sampling procedure is completed.

If the Rider is a junior (under 18 years of age), they must be accompanied by a guardian or Person Responsible, who must be 18 years of older.

Note: Person responsible is defined in the AERA Rules as

The person responsible for the horse at a ride is prima facie, the rider and the trainer of the horse, (jointly and severally), however support personnel and the owner of the horse may also be regarded as additional persons responsible if they were present at the event and/or made a relevant decision about the horse, and compelling circumstances warrant such an extension.

The Swabbing Steward / trained Steward must notify the PR formally by handing PR the completed and signed EA/FEI Horse Drug Testing Notification form. The PR MUST complete and sign the EA/FEI Horse Drug Testing Notification form.

The horse must then be accompanied by the Swabbing Steward / trained steward at all times after notification.

The Swabbing Steward/trained steward should supervise the selected horse from the moment the PR is notified

and until handing over to the Swabbing Steward who will supervise until the swabbing process has been completed.

Endurance horses can be dehydrated and also in need of feed. If this is the case, the person responsible, must bring water and feed in their own containers, and let the horse eat and drink only out of these, with feed and water being supplied from the horse's usual stores.

The horse may be hosed down, may have its tack removed and may be presented quickly for photographs before making its way to the sampling box/area. However, after notification the PR must present the horse at the swabbing area as soon as possible for sample collection.

A refusal or wilful obstruction by any person to submit a horse for sampling must be reported immediately to the Chief Steward (AERA) / Ground Jury (FEI)/Event Organising Committee. If the Chief Steward (AERA) / Ground Jury (FEI) / Committee decide there are no grounds for such a refusal or obstruction, and the Person Responsible persists, the horse must be disqualified from the entire event. The matter must be reported in writing to the relevant Division Association Management Committee (AERA) / National Anti-Doping Control Officer (EA).

Once at the swab box/area, the identity of the horse should be confirmed in the best way possible. The veterinarian must identify the horse against its AERA logbook /EA / FEI papers. If the documents are absent or an AERA novice logbook is the identification, the veterinarian must write a description on the horse ID forms provided.

10. The Sampling Process

The Swabbing Steward / Veterinarian must open the swab kits in the presence of the PR, conduct the wash-through procedure and sample the horse, waiting for urination for a reasonable time, but no more than half an hour. The length of wait for urine may be shortened if the sampling officials are of the opinion that an expedited collection of urine is not probable.

Endurance horses are encouraged to urinate before final vetting for a lowering of heart rate and may not be able to provide any sample after this, in which case a lengthy wait for urine is unreasonable.

If a horse becomes dangerous, while being swabbed, then the sampling procedure may be curtailed or abandoned by the approval of the sampling officials.

11. EA Swabbing Stewards Personal Kit

All EA Swabbing Stewards should obtain a personal kit, which should contain the following:

- Identity badge
- A pair of cheap reading glasses +2 (many riders PR do not carry these but need these to read documents)
- Scissors
- Stapler
- Collection pan/urine collector
- File/notebook, pens
- Plastic Gloves
- Sunscreen lotion ,or cap
- Swabbing Procedures
- Where available, the Laboratory's Sample Collection Procedures Booklet (It is advisable to read this booklet thoroughly and carry it with you on swabbing days.)
- EA Notification Forms
- Blank Horse Identification Forms
- Express Post Envelopes for paperwork return to Equestrian Australia
- Express Post secure bags for the posting of samples to the laboratory (if needed)

Upon arrival at grounds, check that the following are available:

- Swabbing Area/Stable is available/clean/ready

- Competitor List/Event program (the Chief Steward (AERA)Ground jury (FEI)/event organiser, must supply the swabbing team with an event program and competitor listing upon request)
- The Swabbing Steward, the Chief Steward (AERA),a member of the ground jury (FEI) or event coordinator and veterinarian must meet to discuss procedures for the day

12. After Sampling Completion

As soon as possible after a sample is taken and sealed, it needs to be kept chilled in a suitable secure cooler container or refrigerator. This is to ensure the biological integrity of the sample

Used and unused sample kits are to remain in the custody of the Swabbing Steward or the DA MCO.

Swabbing samples are to be sent by express registered post or courier freight to the approved laboratory on the first working day following competition.

Post sampling paperwork is to be scanned and emailed as a matter of priority to the EA National Office with a copy sent to the EA NMCO and to the AERA National Medication Control Officer. The hard copy is to be returned to the EA National Office once confirmation of receipt of electronic copies is received. Under no circumstances are copies to be held by individuals.

13. Risk Management Measures

To ensure that the PR is confident that the correct processes have been followed and need not be challenged, the following measures should be observed:

- The Swabbing Steward should not be involved in the selection of horse to be swabbed.
- The PR must have a clear view of all procedures and be given an explanation about each step of the process.
- Only a Veterinarian is to take blood; either the Veterinarian or the Swabbing Stewards may collect the urine samples. Stewards should be well versed with regulations, procedures and equipment required.
- The Swabbing Steward is ultimately responsible for the swabbing conducted and will be scrutinised more than the competitor.
- Identification of the horse should be through a suitable I.D such as an AERA Logbook (AERA rides)/ EA/FEI passport (FEI rides).
- Stewards must be consistent with their procedures.
- The Swabbing Steward should ensure the Veterinarian has disposed of sharps into a sharps container.
- Security for the completed kits/chain of custody is the responsibility of the Swabbing Steward.