



# Being a Greyhound Attendant

Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission handbook



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## 1. What attendants need to know

An attendant is a person who is authorised to be physically in charge of greyhounds but is not a registered owner or trainer. Attendants can handle, box, parade care for, and exercise greyhounds at kennels and during transport. At the end of a race they may catch and care for greyhounds and hold them if they are to be swabbed.

Attendants play an important role in the greyhound racing industry by supporting trainers and caring for greyhounds both on and off the racetrack. Registration as an Attendant does not authorise the person to own, trial, train or breed greyhounds, but many Attendants later become trainers or participate in other roles.

An Associate Attendant is a person under the age of 18 who is authorised to act as an Attendant. As Associate Attendant must work under the supervision of another registered participant who is an adult.

If you are considering becoming an Attendant or an Associate Attendant, you must understand how to:

- care for greyhounds at the track
- assist in transporting greyhounds to and from the track
- provide care and exercise in a kennel or home environment

Attendants and Associate Attendants are also expected to understand the requirements relevant to their role which are contained in:

- the NSW Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice
- the NSW Greyhound Racing Rules

Attendants should also read and understand the official GWIC policies on the GWIC website. A breach of one of these policies is a breach of the Greyhound Racing Rules.

All of these documents are available on the GWIC website: [www.gwic.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gwic.nsw.gov.au)

Attendants and Associate Attendants also need to understand the different roles played by the Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission (GWIC) and Greyhound Racing NSW (GRNSW) in greyhound racing:

- **The Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission (GWIC)** administers the Greyhound Racing Rules, registers greyhounds and industry participants (including owners, attendants, breeders, trainers and bookmakers), employs race stewards, inspectors, investigators and on-track veterinarians, and investigates animal welfare and integrity concerns relating to greyhound racing in NSW. The GWIC website ([www.gwic.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gwic.nsw.gov.au)) provides more information.
- **Greyhound Racing NSW (GRNSW)** manages greyhound grading, nomination of greyhounds for races and performance trials, the racing calendar, and distribution of prize money. Clubs are also overseen by GRNSW. The GRNSW website ([www.grnsw.com.au](http://www.grnsw.com.au)) includes tutorials on how to nominate

a greyhound for a race, and information about the Greyhounds As Pets program for rehoming retired greyhounds.

In NSW, an Attendant or Associate Attendant must be registered with GWIC. To become a registered Attendant or Associate, you must:

- complete the application form available online on the GWIC website
- pay the applicable fee
- comply with any requests for information and any conditions imposed on your registration
- complete the Attendant's Knowledge test available on the GWIC website.

## 2. Handling a greyhound

### Equipment

#### Leashes and collars

Greyhound collars are usually made of leather or synthetic webbing, are quite wide and are designed to fit high up on the neck of the greyhound.

Leather leashes and collars should be checked regularly for cracking and to ensure any rivets and stitching are secure. Leather should be oiled or treated regularly with a leather product, to prevent it becoming brittle and weak. Leashes and collars should be stored safely away from greyhounds, so they are not chewed, ruined or exposed to weather.

Martingale collars, which slip over the greyhound's head with a loop of chain or fabric which tightens the collar if the leash tightens, are used on pet greyhounds or as a catching leash.

When fitting a greyhound's collar, it is vital that you tighten the collar directly below the greyhound's head – NOT further down its neck where it will be too loose and allow the greyhound to slip the collar off. Collars should fit firmly, with just room for a finger or two to be placed underneath.

Some greyhounds are very good at slipping out of collars. When a greyhound backs up, it has the highest chance of slipping the collar and removing the muzzle. To prevent this, lower your end of the leash as close as possible to the ground, shifting the buckle to below the dog's chin and making it much harder for the greyhound to get free.



## Muzzles

A wire 'racing' muzzle is compulsory racing gear in NSW. It slips over the greyhound's face and is held in place by a loop of wire behind the dog's ears. These muzzles come in different sizes and are usually colour coded to indicate the size. The number of wires varies, and the muzzle must fit correctly so that it is neither too small, nor too loose. There should be approximately 2-2.5 cm clear of the nose. The muzzle can then be shaped to fit the particular greyhound by bending the nose and neck wires, or sides of the muzzle, to fit.

American muzzles can be used to kennel a greyhound but cannot be used in racing. Barking muzzles are prohibited under the NSW Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice, as they restrict a greyhound's ability to pant or drink. Barking muzzles must not be used on a greyhound at any time.

Muzzling during toileting, socialisation and group exercise helps acclimatise greyhounds to muzzles for racing. However, greyhounds should not be muzzled for long periods. Puppies under the age of 9 months should not be muzzled at any time.

The Greyhound Rules of Racing require all racing greyhounds to be muzzled and leashed in public<sup>1</sup>.

## Nose straps, head checks, head collars and harnesses

These items assist in walking strong or excitable greyhounds, improving head control and reducing pulling by the greyhound. There are several brands and designs available.

A greyhound may only be paraded at the track in a nose strap, head check, head collar or harnesses if this has been approved by the Stewards and this endorsement appears on the greyhound's weight card (e.g. 'dog to be paraded in nose strap'). The trainer must apply to have the endorsement removed if the piece of equipment will no longer be used.

## Blinkers

Blinkers are thought to help prevent a dog turning its head (marring) during a race.

A greyhound may only be raced in blinkers if this has been approved by the Stewards following completion of a satisfactory 'blinker trial', and this endorsement appears on the greyhound's weight card. The trainer must apply to have the endorsement removed if the piece of equipment will no longer be used.

## Getting a greyhound out of a kennel, car or trailer

Make handling a positive experience for a greyhound by working with its natural behaviour.

<sup>1</sup> Greyhounds registered as companion animals are not required to wear a muzzle except in designated off-leash areas. Greyhounds which are both registered as companion animals and which have passed the Greenhounds test are not required to be on leash or wear a muzzle in a designated off-leash area.

Most greyhounds respond well to people, and will come to the front of the kennel when called. If a greyhound does not know you very well, watch its body language carefully. Some greyhounds get very excited to be going out and will jump up on people and can scratch or knock you off balance. Timid greyhounds may move away to the back of the kennel. Be kind and gentle when taking an unfamiliar greyhound from a kennel so neither you nor the greyhound are hurt.

When approaching an unfamiliar greyhound for the first few times, place one hand in a fist and let the greyhound sniff it. Look slightly down, not straight in the eye, talking softly and calmly, encouraging the greyhound to move towards you and sniff your hand, perhaps through the kennel wire, helping the greyhound learn who you are.

If the greyhound is reluctant to approach the front of the kennel, you can enter, crouch down a few steps away from the greyhound, again place your fist outstretched and wait for the greyhound to approach you. Make sure the kennel door is latched behind you so the greyhound cannot push past you and escape.

Once the greyhound has sniffed your hand and had a chance to get your scent, you can pat them gently on the neck before attempting to lead them out of the kennel.

Make sure other doors and gates behind you are closed before you open the kennel door, in case the greyhound tries to escape. Timid greyhounds may try to run - be prepared for quick movements and try to anticipate these and prevent it from hurting itself or you.

The collar and leash, and the muzzle if in public, must be securely fastened before allowing the greyhound out of its kennel, car or trailer. Once you have firm control of the greyhound, make sure there are no other dogs, vehicles or obstacles in the way, before stepping back and letting the greyhound out.

If getting greyhounds out of a vehicle or a trailer, use your body to block the exit until you have the dog under control and safely leashed. If the greyhound escapes onto a road it can cause an accident or serious injury to itself. Be very careful with vehicles that have a lift-up rear hatch as dogs may escape by shooting out through the gap as you raise the hatch.

## Walking a greyhound safely

All greyhounds registered with GWIC or another state or territory greyhound racing regulator, whether retired from racing or not, must be on a leash and muzzled at all times when in public.

By law, you must not be in control of more than four greyhounds (or any breed of dog) at the same time in public. If you have a very excitable greyhound, or one just learning its leash manners, it is safer to walk it on its own. Two greyhounds may be walked at the same time, as long as they are compatible and are well trained to walk on leash.

Most greyhounds walk well on the leash. Greyhounds that get excited and want to jump around or chase can be difficult to control. Be aware of what is going on around you at all times so you are well prepared if the greyhound becomes excited by other dogs, people or traffic and take action to change direction and walk away *before* the greyhound reacts.

Greyhounds can go from standing still to 70km/hr in as few as 5-6 strides. As sighthounds, greyhounds are not always easy to recall. If they become focussed on something it is difficult to break their focus and get them to come back to you.

The shorter the leash, 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 attendants and trainers will try to get a little more control by looping the leash around the dog's chest or belly (behind the front legs) and holding the leash short.

### **Rules and legislation**

- GAR 28 Prevention of greyhound straying
- GAR 29 Control of greyhound in public place
- Companion Animals Act – section 15

## **3. Preparing for race day**

### **Before you leave for the track**

Before you leave home, check that you are correctly dressed according to the rules described in Section 9, and have your GWIC registration card. If you are acting on behalf of a trainer who will not be attending the race meeting, you will also require at the racetrack:

- the correct greyhounds
- the registration card and weight card for each greyhound that is racing
- a suitable leash and collar for each greyhound
- a well-fitting race muzzle for each greyhound
- bedding for the race kennels for each greyhound;
- an Authority to Handle form signed by the trainer,
- bandaging or other gear requests (GAR 90);
- water bowl (unless your greyhound has an exemption).

There are certain things you **cannot** possess on a racecourse (see GAR 149) including prohibited substances, needles, syringes etc unless you have Stewards' written permission.

## **Transporting greyhounds**

Greyhound clubs and tracks are located all over NSW, so participants often travel long distances to attend race meetings. Successful greyhound may be taken interstate to contest the bigger 'Group' races, and be transported by air to avoid long road trips.

There will also be regular travel to the trial track, veterinary clinic or the slipping/training track. To perform well, greyhounds should arrive at their destination in the same condition they left home in, not dehydrated, stressed or injured.

The NSW Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice includes minimum standards that participants must meet to ensure that greyhounds are transported safely, and the GWIC Race Day Hydration and Hot Weather Policy includes additional requirements for transporting greyhounds in hot weather.

**Key standards:** Part 6, NSW Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice, GWIC Race Day Hydration and Hot Weather Policy.

### **Types of transport**

The family car or van is often used to transport a small number of greyhounds - one or two - but is not suitable for larger numbers of dogs as cars rarely have facilities to keep dogs separated from each other or from other passengers. Greyhounds **MUST NOT** be transported in a sedan car boot or on the open tray of a vehicle or trailer.

Transporting larger numbers of greyhounds safely will require a dog trailer which attaches to the car tow-bar. Trailers may have 2 or 3 berths up to about 10 berths, separated by wire mesh. The size of the berths, and trailer width and features may vary. Trailers usually have two doors – an outside, lockable door, and an inside wire door.

Trailers must have plenty of ventilation, including 'spinners' on the top which encourage airflow through the berths but only when the trailer is moving. Some trailers are air-conditioned. Ventilation must be designed so that rain does not enter the berths in wet weather, and exhaust fumes from the car are not drawn into the trailer. Do not smoke in a car transporting greyhounds.

Parked trailers **MUST** not be used to house greyhounds for long periods – dogs get heat stressed quickly when ventilation is poor.

Transport for your greyhounds must:

- be safe for greyhounds and secure
- be clean, weather-proof and have adequate ventilation
- provide space for the greyhound to sit, lie down and stand in a natural position
- be maintained at a temperature which is comfortable for greyhounds.

## Comfort and safety

Greyhounds are quite thin-skinned, and at racing weight, do not have much excess body fat as 'padding'. Travelling greyhounds will need enough clean, dry and thick bedding to protect them from bumps and jolts and insulate them against heat from the road (especially in trailers with metal floors) or from the cold. Layers of towels or blankets may be safer than foam style bedding. The bedding in a float or trailer should be thicker than bedding used inside a car, due to the greater 'bounce' of the ride.

Each greyhound must have enough space during transport to sit, lie down, turn around and stand in a natural position without contacting overhead structures. Adult greyhounds must be physically separated or individually enclosed by a compartment or cage, and safety restrained to avoid distracting the driver or injuring themselves or occupants in an accident. Collars and leads must not cause any discomfort or injury.

If trailers or vehicles are used as temporary housing for greyhounds when away overnight, greyhounds must be given regular opportunities to stretch their legs and relieve themselves. Vehicles and trailers must not be used as on-going (i.e. more than two days) housing for greyhounds.

## Temperature and humidity

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 for them.

The normal air temperature of a greyhound's environment should be between 23 - 30°C. Temperatures outside this range will require greyhounds to expend extra energy, and risk dehydration or hypothermia.

Greyhounds cool themselves mainly by panting. This requires good air flow to keep moving the moisture away. Any increase in humidity, such as being in an enclosed car, can adversely affect their ability to cool themselves.

Potential indicators of heat stress in greyhounds are dehydration, panting, skin feeling warm, fast heart rate and pulse, drooling, red gums, muscle tremors and seizures. If you think your greyhound is suffering from heat stress, you **MUST** seek veterinary treatment at the nearest possible location.

In hot weather and longer trips, the greyhound may suffer some dehydration unless you provide adequate drinking water during the trip. Be careful giving greyhounds electrolytes, as they contain salt and may actually dehydrate the dog. Take your own supply of water rather than relying on water at rest stops.

Greyhounds have naturally thin coats and are sensitive to cold. If travelling in cold weather, greyhounds require warm bedding and participants should carry sufficient



dog coats for rugging greyhounds if they show signs of cold stress.

Signs of hypothermia (extreme cold stress) include shivering, cold skin to touch, slow heart rate and pulse, pale gums, or non-responsive (coma). You **MUST** seek veterinary treatment at the nearest possible location if you think your greyhound is suffering cold stress.

## Rest stops

Allow adequate time for rest stops. The NSW Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice requires that you must stop at least every three hours to allow greyhounds to drink and toilet, and stopping every two hours is advisable.

In warm weather, try to pull up in a shaded area so that the vehicle does not heat up. In colder weather, keep the greyhound warm and dry wherever possible.

Greyhounds should not be left unattended in a stationary vehicle or trailer for any longer than 20 minutes. In hot weather, greyhounds should not be left unattended in a stationary vehicle or trailer for more than 5 minutes – or even less if it is very hot. Remember: if the car or trailer is too hot for you, it will be too hot for your greyhounds – and dogs get dehydrated more quickly than humans.

GWIC's Race Day Hydration and Hot Weather Policy prohibits greyhounds being left in vehicles unattended during race meetings or trials. Trailers can be used as temporary housing for greyhounds for short periods (for example, if you are attending a racing carnival) but greyhounds must be provided with water and regular breaks.

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

Local councils have by-laws about removal of dog waste, so it is important that you carry a supply of plastic bags and pick up after your dogs.

## Poor travellers

Many greyhounds take a while to get used to travelling,



and anxious greyhounds can find travel stressful. Greyhounds should be introduced to travel at a young age through short trips with a pleasant outcome such as a walk or run at a slipping track. If the greyhound only associates travel with an unpleasant consequence (a painful veterinary procedure or rough rides causing vomiting), it will learn to anticipate bad things and become stressed.

Some greyhounds get motion sickness which may prevent them from racing at their best, or predispose them to injury. Badly affected greyhounds may need medical intervention to help them relax during travel, but some of the medications will return a positive swab if used in a racing greyhound. Ask your veterinarian about the various options for poor travellers.

### Air travel

If you have to travel interstate with a dog, it may be sent with a road transport company or shipped by air in a crate. There is the option to use your own crate or to hire one from a shipping company. Crates must meet strict guidelines.

Animals that are flying need to be lodged with the airline freight department about an hour and a half before the flight. 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. If travelling for an event, it might also be advisable to travel a day or two in advance to allow the greyhound time to recover from the flight.



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.

### Travelling and racing in hot weather

The Race Day Hydration and Hot Weather Policy describes the management of race meetings and trials in hot weather ([www.gwic.nsw.gov.au/integrity/rulesandpolicies](http://www.gwic.nsw.gov.au/integrity/rulesandpolicies)). Race meetings will be cancelled if the temperature at the track is forecast to exceed 38°C, or exceeds 38°C during the meeting. GRNSW makes efforts to re-schedule meetings that are cancelled, so it is important to watch its website for announcements.

Extra precautions should be taken with your greyhounds

when travelling to and from the track on hot days. If hot weather is forecast and trainers wish to avoid travelling, greyhounds can be scratched without penalty where the temperature is forecast to reach 32°C or higher, although note that trainers must scratch ALL greyhounds they have nominated for that meeting.

### Summary - things to consider in managing travel

When planning travel with greyhounds, you should consider:

- the number of greyhounds being transported
- the length of the journey and number and length of breaks that will be required
- weather and road conditions anticipated during the journey
- what you will do if a greyhound becomes ill or is injured during the journey.

## 4. Who's who at the track?

On race day it is essential that everyone knows what is required of them so that the program can run smoothly and races can start on time. As an Attendant, you must be aware of exactly what you have to do and where you have to be at a particular time. You should also know what role other participants play.

The 'Steward in Charge' is the Steward responsible for everything that happens at the race meeting, but there are people responsible for every aspect of the race meeting, ensuring the meeting runs smoothly and that each greyhound is given every chance of performing to their best.

**Stewards:** Ensure the effective and fair running of race meetings and that the Rules of Greyhound Racing are adhered to, including drug testing of greyhounds.

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

**Track Staff:** Responsible for maintaining the track and equipment for racing.

**Kennel Staff:** Responsible for the security and welfare of the greyhounds.

**On Track Veterinarian:** 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:** Ensure races start on time under the direction of the Stewards.

**Lure Driver:** Responsible for driving the mechanical lure.

**Judge:** Responsible for judging the placegetters in each race.

**Trainers and Attendants:** Prepare and parade the greyhounds before the race start.

**Catchers:** Catch the greyhounds at the end of a race.

## 5. Before the race

### Arriving at the track

Once arrived at the track, you will need to prepare for presentation of the greyhound (*GAR 86 Presentation of greyhound for racing and kennelling time*). You must allow your greyhound to stretch its legs and empty out, especially if your greyhound is drawn to race in one of the later races as they may be kennelled for several hours. Each greyhound should also be offered a drink of water.

You must be able to adequately control your greyhounds. The Rules of Racing require there to be at least one person for every four greyhounds to be presented and raced at a race meeting, and that when parading, boxing or catching, each person is only in control of one greyhound.

All greyhounds entered in a race at a meeting must be vet checked and kennelled before the start of the first race.

Handling a greyhound at the track can be hard around many other dogs which may be excited and are all unfamiliar and possibly intimidating to your dog. Many people moving about and making noise can be stressful to greyhounds. Monitor your greyhound for signs of stress and try to keep it calm.

Greyhounds usually get excited by the sound of the lure going around, jumping up and down, lunging forward, barking and carrying on at the sound of the lure passing by. Some dogs perform better if they are allowed to see and hear the lure prior to a race ("stir-up"), 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, but walk them around the carpark rather than leave them in the car. A greyhound must not be left unattended in a stationary vehicle or trailer for any period exceeding 20 minutes, and on a hot day a greyhound must not be left unattended<sup>1</sup> for more than 5 minutes.

### Kennelling a greyhound at the track

The kennelling procedure is very regimented – every step is done in a particular order according to the Rules (*GAR 80-94*). The purpose of this is to ensure that the integrity of racing is protected. This is the general procedure:

1. On arrival at the kennel block your first stop will normally be at the window or booth at the entrance to the kennels. Here you often pay the Club admission fee and collect your starter's fee and travel subsidy, or you may do this after you kennel the greyhound.
2. Present your attendant's registration so they will allow you to enter the kennelling area.

<sup>1</sup> Unattended is defined as the greyhound not being visually checked to ascertain its physical state.

3. Proceed to the vet check area 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. If a female greyhound is in season, she will be stood down from racing for 28 days. In the event of being withdrawn due to injury or illness, a greyhound will be prohibited from competing for 10 days.

4. Proceed to the weighing area where you will present the greyhound along with its registration card and weight card to the Stewards. You will also have to produce your own registration card and authority signed by the trainer that allows you to handle the greyhound that day.



5. The Stewards will then check the identity of the dog and scan the microchip against those details on the registration card.

6. The greyhound will then be weighed with its muzzle on, but without the collar and lead. The Stewards will then record the weight of the greyhound in OzChase. Under the rules it is your responsibility to ensure the correct weight is entered by the Steward, and that you record the weight on your weight card.

7. Your greyhound will be allocated a kennel number. All the dogs for a single race are kennelled in the same row, but the greyhounds are assigned randomly to the kennels in the row so no one knows ahead of time which kennel will house each dog.

8. The kennel supervisor or staff will escort you to the correct kennel. You have the opportunity to inspect the kennel and place your greyhound's bedding into it before placing the greyhound in it. Kennel attendants should not handle your greyhound's bedding or water bowl because this breaks protocol for swabbing.

9. Stewards check all kennels prior to the start of race day, lock each individual kennel, and lock and seal the row of kennels when all of the greyhounds for the race have been kennelled. The seal will only be broken once the handlers are present prior to the actual race.

10. You will need to be back at the kennels to prepare your dog for its race no later than 20 minutes before the scheduled race time.

## Rules:

- GAR 76 Withdrawal after box draw
- GAR 77 Greyhound in season

## Understanding the weight requirements

A weight variation of 1 kilogram from the last race or satisfactory weight trial is permitted, but if the weight varies by more than this the greyhound will not be allowed to race. The only exception to this is where the greyhound has not competed for more than 28 days, in which 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 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 100 Weighing
- GAR 101 Weight variation
- GAR 102 Satisfactory weight trial

## Preparation for racing

About 20 minutes before the greyhound's race, you will return to the kennel area to collect and prepare your dog.

Once the trainers or attendants for the greyhounds in the next race 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 leash.

Take your greyhound out to the toileting area for a chance to empty out. Fit your greyhound with a racing rug, ensuring you have the correct racing rug for your greyhound's box. The rugs come in small, medium, large and extra-large sizes to accommodate the different sized greyhounds, so you will have to know which size to ask for. Slip the rug over the dog's head before gently feeding the dog's front legs through the leg holes.

Now ensure any requested or necessary bandaging ('strapping' or 'taping') is applied to the dog. Some dogs will have talcum powder or lubricant such as Vaseline, provided by the club, applied to certain areas to prevent chafing.

The Stewards will again check each dog's microchip, and ensure the muzzle is fitted appropriately and the correct rug has been appropriately placed on the greyhound.

By this time the race prior to yours has 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 around.

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 you must understand what type of warm-up the individual greyhound does best with.

## Parading a greyhound

You must parade the greyhound in front of the public and then walk the greyhound to the starting boxes. If the weather is unsuitable (rain, hot), the dogs may be walked directly from the kennels to the boxes. Your handling skills will be on display to the public and trainers, and you may also be shown on the television coverage of the race, so maintain good control of your greyhound.



In the parade, you must take your place in number order according to the box your greyhound has drawn. Leave enough space between your dog and the one in front, so if your greyhound decides to leap forward it will not contact the greyhound in front.

If your greyhound is very energetic, ensure that your leash is short and that you have any excess safely looped so that no one gets tangled. If the dog is still 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 leash 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, a nose strap or head check may help, although you will need prior approval to use these on race day from the Stewards. Try them at home or the trial track before deciding whether they might help you.

In cold weather you may parade the greyhound in a warm rug. Each race club has a set of these rugs in several sizes for participants to use. Only club-supplied rugs may be used, keeping all competitors looking the same which is important for spectators.

After leaving the kennel area, you must follow instructions of the 'Parade Steward' escorting the runners from the kennels to the parade area and the starting boxes. Parading helps warm up the muscles and maintain the greyhound's circulation before racing.

**Rule:** GAR 103 Preparation for starting

## 6. Boxing a greyhound

The Starter Steward ensures all the runners for the race have arrived at the starting boxes in time. It is very important that races start on time due to television coverage.

You must have experience in boxing a greyhound before handling any dog at a race meeting. Early experience in training greyhounds should include boxing dogs at a trial track where people that can help and advise you if you have trouble. This type of handling is a skill that you need to practice away from the race meeting. The more greyhounds you box and handle, the better you will become at the manual art of restraint for a race setting.

You should 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.

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.

Most handlers will straddle the dog as they remove the collar and leash, placing one hand on the dog's chest to prevent it moving forward, and placing the other hand under the dog's abdomen. 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.

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. Do not throw the lead behind you as you could hit another person or dog.

When loading the greyhound, 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. Avoid closing the door harshly and noisily, as this can frighten the dog.

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. The greyhound may become hard to box if it associates pain with the starting process.

Repeated difficulty in loading a greyhound in the box may result in a Box First requirement being placed on that greyhound by the Steward, outside the normal box order.

### Race starters

The 'starter' is responsible for ensuring the start of the race is 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 removal of any parade rugs, nose straps, head checks, along with the greyhound's leash and collar. Muzzles are kept on. 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 all the box doors are fastened securely and no part of any greyhound is visibly held or caught by the doors. The starter gives the green light and the race can be started. The lure driver will start the lure, and the boxes will automatically open as the lure passes a certain point.

## 7. Being a catcher

Each racetrack has an area called the 'Catching Pen' where the dogs are caught after the race. There is a large catching pen gate in front of them that prevents the dogs following the lure further around the track. In the catching pen gate there is a small door that allows the lure to pass through, which is closed quickly so greyhounds cannot follow the lure. As the last greyhound comes into the catching pen, a second gate (the 'Run Back 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 decoy lure (usually a squeaker on a rope) may be thrown into the catching pen to attract the dogs.

The catcher is the person who must safely catch and control the greyhound after the race is finished. Every greyhound must have an assigned catcher responsible for catching that greyhound. Catchers must be registered Trainers or Attendants, unless otherwise approved by Stewards. The job requires confidence and competence in handling greyhounds in a situation where there may be many excited dogs loose in the pen.

Due to the distance between the starting boxes and catching pen on most tracks, the person parading and boxing the greyhound cannot also be the catcher. If the trainer is not attending the race in person, they should organise an appropriate person to act as catcher.

Once the greyhounds are enclosed in the catching pen, the catching pen Steward will give permission for catchers to enter the pen when safe to do so, at which time you must quickly go in and catch your dog. Each catcher must have a collar and lead or a 'catching leash' (a form of slip leash) and may **only** catch and handle the greyhound they have been assigned. You must be clear on which greyhound to catch – so remember the colour of its race rug and the colour of the dog.

Once your greyhound is on leash and under control, 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.

Catchers can give important information to the Trainer or Attendant if they have noticed a lameness or injury, or seen a knock, bump or fall that might have occurred towards the end of the race or as the dogs were in the catching pen.

**Rules:** GAR 99 Catcher to be available.

## 8. After the race

### Post-race care of the greyhound

After the race, the greyhound will be breathing heavily, and you may need to fit its collar a little more loosely to avoid restricting its breathing. Check the fit and gradually tighten the collar over time to ensure the greyhound remains under control and doesn't get free. By the time you are ready to go home, the dog should have fully recovered and you will be able to fit the collar in a normal way.

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

Check for any signs of injury sustained during the race. Is the dog's gait normal? Is there swelling or bruising? You may seek advice from the On-Track Veterinarian if you are concerned. Report anything unusual to the trainer of the greyhound. Dogs under stress may have a reddish-brown urine colour – observe the urine colour when the dog urinates after a race, particularly if it continues the next day.

*GAR 122 Matter affecting performance to be reported* requires a report to Stewards on anything that may have affected the running of a greyhound.

The greyhounds are walked around until they have recovered their breath. Ensure the dog is completely dry before going back in its kennel as if the dog becomes cold or humidity increases within the cage, it will affect the dog's ability to cool itself through panting.

All greyhounds are returned to their kennels for the length of a race. In this time, the Stewards will review the video footage of the race and may decide to ask for certain dogs to be checked by the On-Track Veterinarian (vetted) or samples taken for drug testing (swabbed). They may also hold an inquiry into the running of the race.

Once Stewards have 'signed off' on the race (denoting that they are happy with the outcome and any matters have been attended to), you may take your greyhound from the kennels and leave unless you have been told to wait until your greyhound has been vetted, swabbed, or stewards have spoken to you. Check the Steward's sheet posted outside the Stewards' room after the race. If you have several runners, you cannot 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.

Many Attendants will give the greyhounds some form of fluids and nutrition after running, but not a full meal. For the journey home it is important that the greyhounds have warm, comfortable bedding, and are kept at a suitable temperature.

## What happens if a greyhound in my care is injured at the track?

GWIC provides on-track veterinarians (OTVs) at every greyhound race meeting in NSW to help prevent injuries, provide immediate emergency treatment and support the welfare of greyhounds who are injured.

The OTV will examine any injured greyhound and provide necessary first aid and pain relief. The OTV will also record the findings of that examination on a Veterinary Examination Details form, and may recommend further off-track veterinary care for the greyhound. If this recommendation includes a specific time-frame, the Steward will issue an order. Failure to comply can result in a penalty for breach of GAR 21(1)(d), GAR 21(2) and GAR 156(h).

With this order for further off-track veterinary care, the Steward will:

- provide you with a copy of the Veterinary Examination Details form
- provide you with a signed Stewards Order form for Further Veterinary Care, and
- explain to you their requirement to obtain off-track veterinary care and the timeframe by which you must ensure the greyhound must be examined by an off-track veterinarian.

You will need to sign the Stewards Order to demonstrate that you understand what's required.

After the race meeting you should receive an email from GWIC outlining the injury and any requirements relating to veterinary follow-up.

If a greyhound is injured during a club trial, the responsibility will sit with the Club Manager and with the Starting Boxes Attendant to take control of the situation.

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

If Stewards call you in after the race, you must go to the Stewards Room 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 interfered with ('marred') the race of another greyhound. In some cases, a warning will be given, in others, the greyhound may be required to complete a satisfactory trial before racing again.

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 doubts 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, including the performance of a greyhound, or the behaviour of a registered person.

## What happens when my greyhound is ordered to be vetted?

A Steward may ask for a greyhound to be 'vetted' after a race if concerned the dog has injured itself during the race or performed badly, suggesting something is not right. The person in charge of the dog must present the greyhound to the OTV who will examine the dog at an appropriate time. The OTV look for an injury that might have affected the greyhound's performance and examine it thoroughly.

Where an injury is detected, a period of 'stand down' may be imposed, based on the severity of the injury. This stops the dog from being nominated to race again until this 'stand down' period has expired. The greyhound may need to complete a satisfactory trial for the Stewards before being eligible to race again.

## What happens when my greyhound is to be swabbed?

All greyhounds must be free of prohibited substances when presented for racing. Stewards can select any dog to be swabbed, and also conduct random swabs. GWIC's Swabbing Policy is available on its website at [www.gwic.nsw.gov.au/integrity/rulesandpolicies](http://www.gwic.nsw.gov.au/integrity/rulesandpolicies). A swab taken at the track is usually a urine sample, but occasionally blood and/or hair samples can be taken.

### The swabbing procedure

A swab sample may be taken at any time: on arrival at the racecourse, prior to the race when the dog is taken from its kennel, or after racing. 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 from the regular hose and tap, and it will then be placed back in its original kennel or within the swabbing bay kennels and a security seal and a Steward's lock applied for additional security. When the time comes to have the sample collected (usually at least two races later), a Steward will escort you to the swabbing area to commence the procedure.

The swabbing process follows a strict procedure and the Steward or OTV collecting the sample will explain each step to you. It is vital that you watch and understand the collection procedure from start to finish.

Urine sample collection kits contain three clean plastic bottles, tamper evident seals and necessary documentation sealed together in a bag. You will be required by the steward to confirm the unique number of the kit matches on the documentation and seals. Two of the bottles are empty, but the third bottle contains a 'control' fluid.

The person collecting the sample will wash their hands, put on disposable gloves, and then rinse the collection ladle with water. The collection ladle 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.

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 caught in the collection ladle. Most greyhounds are quite obliging, and the sample should not take long to collect.

The urine sample is then brought back into the swabbing area, the remaining bottles are rinsed with the control solution and the sample is split in two bottles 'A' and 'B'. All bottles are then sealed and placed into the tamper evident security satchel.

You will have to sign the sample identity document confirming you observed the collection, sealing and packaging of the sample and that they had the same sample number. A copy of this document will be given to you for your records.

When blood or hair samples are collected, the processes regarding the documentation are similar, and these will be explained to you at the time.

### **What happens to the sample after collection at the track?**

The sample is kept refrigerated prior to transport to the laboratory. Once at the laboratory, it is logged by its sample number (the laboratory does not know which greyhound it is) and the 'A' sample is tested for prohibited substances. In less than 1% of cases a 'positive swab' is detected and in those cases, the control fluid that was used to rinse everything prior to collection will be tested to rule out contamination and the 'B' sample will also be tested to confirm the positive swab.

Any positive swabs will result in an inquiry by GWIC. The participant will be notified of the positive result, and the Commission will investigate to look for the possible source of the positive swab or whether other breaches of the rules of racing have occurred. The Commission may take disciplinary action against the participant.

## **9. Your other responsibilities on race day**

### **Expected standards of behaviour**

In whichever industry you work, your behaviour and appearance are direct reflections of that industry. The greyhound industry is a multi-billion-dollar industry that attracts a lot of publicity. Standards of behaviour for all industry participants, particularly on race day, are set out in the Rules of Racing and the Act.

Inappropriate behaviour such as swearing, arguing, fighting or being intoxicated is not tolerated at greyhound race meetings. Stewards have the power to hold an inquiry into your behaviour and may penalise you. You can also be removed from the precincts of the racecourse.

Remember you are representing not only yourself and your kennel, but also the sport of greyhound racing.

### **Standards of dress for Attendants**

If you are attending a race meeting as an Attendant, you must comply with the following dress code:

- GRNSW issued polo or a white polo shirt;
- Black or navy dress shorts, trousers, or skirt;
- Black or navy jumper and coats
- Black shoes, boots or gumboots
- Black beanies in cold weather

The Rules also allow 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 specifically prohibit the wearing of:

- 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 may extend to head wear/hats)
- any other items of clothing that the Board may determine from time to time.

If you do not comply with the dress code, you may 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 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.

Allow adequate travel time to reach the track, including any stops necessary for either you or your greyhounds. The Code of Practice requires that you stop to allow greyhounds to have a drink and go to the toilet at least every three hours. It is always better to arrive a little early than to be running late.

Kennelling usually starts 45 minutes before the first race. In hot weather kennelling may start 30 minutes earlier than those times. It is always advisable to check kennelling time before leaving home.

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 at the correct time, it will not be allowed to compete, and will be 'stood down' for 28 days, meaning that it is not allowed to compete in any event for the next 28 days. This is also an offence and will attract a penalty.

### Rules:

- GAR 86 Presentation of greyhound for racing and kennelling time.
- GAR 97 Preparation for racing.

## Communication

Working in the greyhound industry as an 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 On-track Veterinarian, kennel staff and catchers. You may also have to report back to the greyhound's owner or trainer. If your dog wins a big race, you may have to speak at a trophy presentation or might be interviewed.

You must 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. Do not chat to others while parading your dog.

### Rules:

- GAR 97 Prohibited use of communication devices
- GAR 98 Parading a greyhound

## 10. Work Health and Safety

Laws about safety in the workplace are there to ensure that workplaces are safe for everyone. Greyhound racetracks and training and kennelling facilities are also workplaces, even if the people there do not all get paid.

More information about work health and safety requirements and responsibilities is available on the Safe Work NSW website: [www.safework.nsw.gov.au](http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au)

## Reporting hazards, near misses and accidents

If you are injured, involved in an accident, or have a 'near-miss', you must tell the person in charge of the premises. Even if you do not get paid for your work with greyhounds, or are a visitor to the premises you still have some obligations under the law.

In the kennelling area or out on the track during a race day, hazards should be reported immediately to the Club Manager. Other hazards on non-race days might be reported to the Kennel Supervisor, the track staff or the Club Manager, depending on what they involve and where they are located.

## Follow instructions and rules at the track

Many racetrack rules have been made to keep both greyhounds and humans safe.

- The catching pen, with fast-moving greyhounds entering and a high-speed lure passing through, can be a particularly dangerous area on the track. Catchers must not enter the pen until they are told that it is safe to do so by an authorised person.
- Participants and spectators must never enter the track during a race under any circumstances.
- Wear Personal Protective Equipment prescribed by the Club and the Stewards, and covered shoes whenever you are handling or close to greyhounds.



## 11. Other useful information

### Lost, damaged or stolen ID cards

Registered participants must have their ID card with them at all times when they visit a race track. If a greyhound identification card is lost, damaged or stolen, the participant can apply for a replacement card by contacting GWIC's Registration & Welfare team on 13 49 42 (13 GWIC).



### eTrac

The eTrac participant portal is GWIC's new, one-stop shop where participants can complete all their industry transactions quickly and easily. The portal provides participants with 24/7 access to their registration and greyhound information, including greyhound health records.

eTrac also enables GWIC to record and track the location of every registered greyhound in NSW, in real time, at every stage of their life.

There are requirements outlining how often pre-racing, racing and retired greyhounds need to be in contact with, or 'checked-in' with GWIC. Racing greyhounds need to have contact with the Commission at least every 6 months, and pre-racing or retired greyhounds every 12 months.

A 'contact' is when a greyhound's record is updated in eTrac as a result of;

- Starting in a NSW or interstate race meeting
- Being scanned at the track for a race or trial
- A vaccination record
- Breeding application
- Lodgement of a Whelping Notice
- Earbranding or microchipping
- A scan during a kennel inspection
- A change in ownership
- A kennel or trainer transfer
- A visit to a select group of veterinary practices
- A retirement notification
- Being scanned at GAP or another rehoming facility
- Naming a greyhound
- Completing a breeding/racing lease
- Lodgement of a DNA test with Greyhounds Australasia







13 49 42 (13 GWIC)

Level 1, 230 Howick Street Bathurst NSW 2795

[www.gwic.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gwic.nsw.gov.au)