

Standards for reporting greyhound racing injuries



About injury reports

The NSW Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission has published data about injuries sustained by greyhounds while racing in NSW since 2018, continuing a practice established in 2016 by Greyhound Racing NSW.

Reports are published:

- Quarterly, providing timely updates about the industry's welfare performance
- Annually, providing long-term trends in injury rates
- Biannually, providing analysis and recommendations of the Race Injury Review Panel about serious and catastrophic injuries.

Together, these reports contribute to a growing body of evidence to progress the industry priority of reducing the incidence and severity of greyhound racing injuries.

The standards for documenting greyhound racing injuries in this document apply to all injury reports published by the Commission from April 2022 onwards.

Data sources

Injury reports published by the Commission are prepared by the Commission's Chief Veterinary Officer, and cover greyhound injuries and fatalities that occurred at race meetings held in New South Wales in the time period stated in each report.

Injury reports are compiled from data recorded by the Commission's On-Track Veterinarians (OTVs) using the Greyhound Examination Database (GED) managed by the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

The data captured by OTVs and input into the GED includes a description of the greyhound; the track; the race distance; the box and race number; the anatomical location and nature of the injury; the incapacitation time applied; the apparent location on the track where the incident that resulted in the injury occurred; and all treatment information. This information also contributes to ongoing research being conducted by UTS into greyhound racing track design, safety and injury prevention.

Additional data may be drawn from the Commission's business systems OzChase and OneGov, from Steward's reports made at the race meeting, and by review of any available video of the race.

Track procedures

All greyhounds that present at a race meeting are subject to a pre-race veterinary examination by the OTV.

The OTV examines some greyhounds after they race for reasons that include:

- the request of a steward due to suboptimal or inexplicable performance
- a racing incident (for example, a race collision or race fall or a marring incident)
- where a greyhound fails to finish a race

- at a trainer's request
- initiation by the OTV

All greyhounds injured at the racetrack receive immediate veterinary treatment from an OTV. Trainers may be directed by the OTV to seek follow-up treatment for a greyhound from a veterinarian in private practice.

Injury classification

Injuries are classified according to the number of days 'incapacitation' or stand-down from racing required to recover from the injury diagnosed at the time of the examination by the OTV.

In February 2022 the Commission and Greyhound Racing NSW adopted a nationally agreed convention for classifying injuries (Table 1), and will use this for reporting injury numbers from 2022 onwards.

The new injury classification has been agreed to by the greyhound racing controlling bodies in Australian states and territories and New Zealand via Greyhounds Australia, and will enable the development of national benchmarks for welfare in greyhound racing.

Injuries requiring no stand down period

Prior to 2020, injuries that OTV's deemed to be so minor that no stand down period was required were reported as Minor I, and injuries requiring 1 to 10 days stand down were reported as Minor II.

From the first quarter of 2020, injuries requiring no stand down period were not publicly reported, and injuries requiring a 1-10 day stand down were reported as Minor.

As of 2022, the Commission will recommence reporting injuries requiring no stand down period as Category A injuries (Table 1).

Counting method

Where an individual greyhound sustains injuries in more than one injury category, only the highest category is used in reporting.

Injury rates are primarily reported as injuries per 1,000 starts, in which a greyhound is counted every time it races within the quarter. This is an industry standard used across Australian jurisdictions.

Causative factor analysis

The Commission's Race Injury Review Panel examines possible causal factors for Major II and Catastrophic race injuries and sudden deaths at race meetings, and these reports are published biannually.

The Race Injury Review Panel divides causative factors into:

1. Greyhound factors: genetics, nutrition, physical growth and development, fitness, race preparation and previous injury history
2. Track factors: design and surface characteristics
3. Race factors: race distance, racing incidents and number of greyhounds in a race.

Injuries may have multiple possible causes, and in some cases the Panel is unable to attribute an injury or death to a cause.

Table 1: Classification of injuries

New classification name and definition starting 2022	Equivalent in pre-2022 classification
<p>Category A</p> <p>Race injuries, where the injury occurred on track in a race and identified post-race by the On-Track Veterinarian after a post-race veterinary examination, given no stand down period by the officiating veterinarian, which are typically incidental findings such as skin abrasions and are expected to not need any additional time off prior to racing. It excludes greyhounds examined and found not to be injured (No apparent injury / No anomaly detected)</p>	<p>Minor 1</p> <p>(Injury so minor that no stand down period required)</p>
<p>Category B</p> <p>Race injuries, where the injury occurred on track in a race and identified post-race by the On-Track Veterinarian after a post-race veterinary examination, given a stand down period of 3-10 days by the officiating veterinarian, which are typically mild muscle soreness, or other minor injuries that are generally expected to recover within a short time period prior to being able to race again</p>	<p>Minor also called Minor 2 prior to 2020 (1-10 day stand down)</p> <p>No post-race 1-2 day stand downs have been issued by GWIC.</p>
<p>Category C</p> <p>Race injuries, where the injury occurred on track in a race and identified post-race by the On-Track Veterinarian after a post-race veterinary examination, given a stand down period of 11-27 days by the officiating veterinarian, which are typically lacerations, joint sprains, or muscle injuries (Grade 2), or other forms of soreness and are generally expected to recover within that time period prior to being able to race again</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>(14-21 day stand down)</p>
<p>Category D</p> <p>Race injuries, where the injury occurred on track in a race and identified post-race by the On-Track Veterinarian after a post-race veterinary examination, given a stand down period 28-90 days by the officiating veterinarian, which are typically more significant muscle tears, bone fractures or other injuries that require a greater amount of treatment and recovery. These injuries may or may not race again depending on severity, prognosis and treatment</p>	<p>Major 1 (28-42 day stand down) and Major 2 (43-90 day stand down)</p>
<p>Category E</p> <p>Any greyhound that died during a race or was euthanised by the officiating veterinarian due to the catastrophic nature of the injury sustained. Note: this will include a small number of medical conditions</p>	<p>Catastrophic (euthanasia and sudden death)</p>
<p>Category F</p> <p>Includes all Category E incidents as well as those within Category D that are deemed to be of a particular serious nature. The following are included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • death or euthanasia on-track; • any skull or spine fracture or paralysis (partial or complete); • any long bone fracture (i.e. humerus, radius/ulna, femur or tibia); • a hock fracture/dislocation where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days; • any other fracture where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days; • any other joint injury where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days; • a skin injury where the stand-down period is 60 or 90 days; • a soft tissue injury (including muscle injury) where the stand-down period is greater than 90 days. 	<p>Catastrophic and Major 2 (43 - 90 day stand down including long bone fractures; severe spinal, pelvic or skull injuries; major fracture dislocations, Achilles tendon ruptures)</p>
<p>Category G</p> <p>Includes any injury in Categories A to C and those in Category D that do not fit the definition of a Serious injury (i.e. Category F)</p>	<p>Minor 1, Minor (Minor 2), Medium and Major 1</p>
<p>Post-race Veterinary Examination</p> <p>An examination performed by the officiating veterinarian after an event to determine the presence or absence of an injury / condition, that may result in a stand-down period being issued for the greyhound.</p>	<p>Post-race Veterinary Examination</p>