



Cold Weather Policy

Policy Statement

Due to their low level of body fat, greyhounds are more susceptible to extreme weather conditions than other breeds of dogs. The Cold Weather Policy is designed to provide trainers, owners and racecourse staff with a set of principles designed to protect the health, comfort and safety of greyhounds during periods of cold weather.

Kennel Care & Arrangements

In order to maintain vital organs at a constant temperature, a greyhound's metabolism needs to work much harder during the winter months. It is, therefore, essential that the following provisions are in place at each residential kennel:

- Additional food should be made available during any cold spells to increase energy input and to assist with thermoregulation.
- Additional bedding shall be used to ensure each greyhound has a warm and comfortable place to sleep, and this shall be kept clean and dry and regularly replaced.
- Kennel coats are a good method of providing an extra layer of insulation during the winter months and trainers shall ensure that they have a suitable quantity of good quality kennel coats available for use in the kennel and when out walking.
- Other non-conventional methods of keeping a dog warm include the use of a Snood (cross between a scarf and a hood), or the use of cut down woolly tights to cover the neck and ears.
- Where central heating is used, it shall be regularly maintained and in full working order ahead of any forecasted cold weather.
- Modern methods of insulation can provide a noticeable improvement to the ambient temperature of a kennel by reducing draughts and unnecessary heat loss. Funding for kennel insulation or a functioning heating system is available through the GBGB Trainers Assistance Fund.

Transporting Greyhounds in Cold Weather

- To ensure the safety and welfare of racing greyhounds, transportation must be undertaken in accordance with **Appendix II of the GBGB Rules of Racing**.
- In extreme cold weather and when there is a real risk of ice and / or snow, it is advisable to contact the Racing Office at the earliest opportunity to discuss potential transport difficulties.
- Extra care should be taken to ensure all greyhounds have adequate coats to be worn during transport. It is recommended that internal vehicle temperature, when possible, should be maintained at 10°C and above.
- Each journey shall be planned and managed and consideration should be given to the following:
 1. The number of greyhounds being transported
 2. The road and traffic conditions
 3. The length of the journey
 4. The experience of handler
 5. Emergency management in case of an accident, breakdown or high traffic congestion. This should include a fully charged mobile phone, emergency contact details, and alternative route planning (sat Nav or other).
- Where **extreme weather is forecast**, the Racing Office should make every effort to take an early decision to abandon before trainers have embarked on their journey to the racetrack.

Additional Precautions

Trainers should display extra vigilance during the winter months when certain constituents are used to combat the effect of snow, ice and freezing. These can be particularly harmful or discomforting to a greyhound. Extra precaution should be taken when:

- Walking greyhounds on salted paths or highways as this can carry a small risk to greyhounds from the additional chemicals added to rock salt and road grit, which can be toxic to dogs if ingested. It is recommended that a greyhound's feet are washed thoroughly after exercise on gritted areas.
- Greyhounds that have sore quicks or healed sandburns should have a barrier cream such as Sudocrem applied to protect these areas from contact with grit / salt and to prevent unnecessary discomfort.
- Extra precaution shall be given to greyhounds with recent sandburns or spike wounds when out exercising. Consideration shall be given to using a protective bandage or boot and greyhounds shall be rested from racing in accordance with veterinary advice.
- During the winter months, the use of anti-freeze (ethylene glycol) is commonly used for vehicle maintenance and shall always safely be stored away from greyhounds. Anti-freeze tastes sweet and appealing to dogs and is extremely toxic. Extra caution should be shown when exercising greyhounds in public areas and muzzles shall always be worn.
- Water receptacles that have become frozen overnight shall be defrosted fully and cleaned before re-using.

At the Racecourse

- **Thermometers** must be available to monitor the ambient temperature on the track and within the kennel block. GBGB shall provide each track with a device that measures air temperature.
- Walkways and entrances to the paddock and track shall be clear from ice or snow.
- Local officials should ensure that each greyhound has had sufficient time to adequately warm up prior to racing (see additional GBGB pre-race warm-up guidelines) and they are kept warm by using good quality overcoats. When greyhounds are on parade, they should be kept moving and periods of inactivity should be avoided.
- Each greyhound shall be provided with a suitable overcoat by the racecourse when parading. The overcoat shall be dry and resistant to the wintry conditions.