

STAFF ANALYSIS

DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY THE BOARD REGARDING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CHRB RULE 1878, WORKOUTS, TO ESTABLISH A MAXIMUM AGE FOR WORKOUTS

Board Meeting

August 21, 2025

ISSUE:

On June 19, 2025, the Board approved an amendment to establish a maximum age at which a horse is eligible to race in order to promote animal safety and welfare, increase the likelihood horses will have second careers, and establish consistency at the California tracks; however, no maximum age was established for workouts. Therefore, the California Horse Racing Board (Board) seeks to amend Rule 1878, Workouts, to establish a maximum age for workouts.

BACKGROUND:

In September of 2024, a 12-year old quarter horse suffered from a catastrophic injury at the Humboldt County Fair. This incident drew criticism from the media and animal welfare advocates who contend that horses of that age should not race. As a result, CHRB initiated a survey to be conducted by the Association of Racing Commissioners International (ARCI), which queried states and provinces to determine if their respective jurisdictions implemented maximum age restrictions. The ARCI model rules do not depict a maximum age for racing nor a maximum age for maidens. The Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority (HISA), the Jockey Club, and the American Quarter Horse Association do not have rules in place setting a maximum age for racing nor a maximum age for maidens to race. The United States Trotting Association sets a maximum age of 14 years old for racing. Santa Anita Park, Del Mar and Los Alamitos Racecourse have house rules setting the maximum age for racing at 10 years old. Los Alamitos and Del Mar have house rules not allowing maidens older than 6 years old to race. Santa Anita Park has house rules not allowing maidens over 5 years old to race.

On June 19, 2025, the Board approved the amendment of Rule 1588, Horses Ineligible to Start in a Race, to establish a maximum age for racing to create consistency in California by reflecting the house rules at Santa Anita, Del Mar, and Los Alamitos and to promote animal safety and welfare. The Board approved the amendment to establish the maximum age for racing at 14 years old for standardbreds and 10 years old for all other breeds. The Board also approved the amendment to establish the maximum age for a maiden to race at 5 years old.

CONTROLLING LAW:

Business & Professions Code (BPC) § 19440 (in part):

(a) The board shall have all powers necessary and proper to enable it to carry out fully and effectually the purposes of this chapter. Responsibilities of the board shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

(1) Adopting rules and regulations that protect and advance the health, safety, welfare, and aftercare of racehorses.

(2) Adopting rules and regulations for the protection of the public and the control of horse racing and parimutuel wagering.

(3) Administration and enforcement of all laws, rules, and regulations affecting horse racing and parimutuel wagering.

(4) Adjudication of controversies arising from the enforcement of those laws and regulations dealing with horse racing and parimutuel wagering.

(5) Licensing of each racing association and all persons, other than the public at large, who participate in a horse racing meeting with parimutuel wagering.

(6) Allocation of racing dates to qualified associations in accordance with law.

BPC § 19668

(a) On and after July 1, 1995, it shall be unlawful for any person to enter or accept the entry of a horse in a race upon which there is parimutuel wagering until two years after the horse's foaling date.

(b) Every person who violates this section is guilty of a misdemeanor. The board may suspend the license of any person who violates this section for a period of not more than one year.

ANALYSIS:

CHRB finds it necessary to establish a maximum age for workouts in the state to reflect the approved amendment changes to Rule 1588, which seeks to establish a maximum age for racing and a maximum age for racing maidens for animal welfare purposes and establishing consistency. If a maximum age a horse is eligible to race is established, then they should not workout if they are unable to race. Therefore, CHRB staff, in consultation with CHRB's Equine Medical Director, recommends that regulations be amended to reflect the approved amendment change to Rule 1588, Horses Ineligible to Race, so that standardbreds 15 and older and all other breeds 11 years old or older are ineligible to workout. CHRB staff also recommends that no maiden over the age of 5 years old shall be permitted to workout in California.

RECOMMENDATION:

The item is presented to the Board for action and discussion. Staff recommend that the Board approve the proposed amendments as presented and combine with regulation package Rule 1588.

CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS
TITLE 4. BUSINESS REGULATIONS
DIVISION 4. CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD
ARTICLE 6. ENTRIES AND DECLARATIONS
RULE 1588. HORSE INELIGIBLE TO START IN A RACE

- (a) In addition to any other valid ground or reason, a horse is ineligible to start in any race:
 - (1) if such horse is not registered by the Jockey Club if a thoroughbred, the United States Trotting Association if a standardbred, the American Quarter Horse Association if a quarter horse, the Appaloosa Horse Club if an appaloosa horse, the Arabian Horse Registry of America if an Arabian horse, or the American Paint Horse Association if a paint horse;
 - (2) if the parentage verification to both the sire and the dam of all horses foaled in 1992 and thereafter has not been certified by the Jockey Club if a thoroughbred, the United States Trotting Association if a standardbred, the American Quarter Horse Association if a quarter horse, the Appaloosa Horse Club if an appaloosa horse, the Arabian Horse Registry of America if an Arabian horse, or the American Paint Horse Association if a paint horse;
 - (3) if, unless the stewards permit otherwise, the certificate of foal registration, eligibility papers, or other registration issued by the official registry for such horse is not on file with the racing secretary at the time of entry;
 - (4) if such horse has been entered or raced at any recognized race meeting under any name or designation other than the name or designation duly assigned by and registered with the official registry;
 - (5) if the certificate of foal registration, eligibility papers or other registration issued by the official registry has been altered, erased, or forged;
 - (6) if the identification markings of the horse do not agree with the identification markings as set forth in the registration of such horse;
 - (7) unless he is eligible to enter said race and is duly entered for such race;
 - (8) when such horse is owned in whole or in part by an unlicensed person or is in the care of an unlicensed trainer;
 - (9) when such horse is on the Steward's List, the Starter's List or the Veterinarian's List;

when, except with prior approval of the stewards for good cause, such horse is on the Veterinarian's List in another racing jurisdiction. Good cause includes:

- (A) unforeseen administrative issues in removing the horse from the Veterinarian's List of another racing jurisdiction;
 - (B) the location of the horse prevents it from being evaluated by the official veterinarian of another racing jurisdiction and cleared from that jurisdiction's Veterinarian's List, and the horse is approved to race by a California official veterinarian; or
 - (C) any other unforeseen event or reason that would prevent a horse that would otherwise not be on a Veterinarian's List from being cleared from the Veterinarian's List of another racing jurisdiction.
- (10) when, except with prior approval of the stewards:
- (A) such horse has not been on the grounds of the association or its approved auxiliary stable area for at least 24 hours prior to the time the race is to be run, or
 - (B) such horse has not been in the care of a trainer licensed by the Board and stabled within a CHRB inclosure, including auxiliary stabling areas, for seven consecutive days prior to the race, except for horses being shipped directly from another racing jurisdiction.
- (11) when such horse does not carry a microchip or has not received a waiver from the stewards in accordance with Rule 1597.5.
- (12) when such horse has received an intra-articular injection within the previous fourteen days prior to the scheduled post-time for the race in which it is entered.
- (13) when such horse has not raced at a recognized race meeting within 12 consecutive months since its previous start, until the horse has performed satisfactorily in a workout or standardbred qualifying race as provided in Rule 1866(h) and (i).
- (14) when such horse is a first-time starter four (4) years of age or older, until the horse has performed satisfactorily in a workout or standardbred qualifying race as provided in Rule 1866(h) and (i).
- (15) when such horse is fifteen (15) years of age or older if a standardbred or eleven (11) years of age or older if any other breed.
- (16) when such horse is a maiden, as defined by rule 1420(k), and six (6) years of age or older.

NOTE:

Authority cited: Sections 19440 and 19562, Business and Professions Code. Reference: Sections 19440 and 19562, Business and Professions Code.

CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD
TITLE 4. CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS
ARTICLE 6. ENTRIES AND DECLARATIONS
PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF RULE 1878, WORKOUTS

§ 1878. Workouts.

(a) No trainer shall permit a horse in his charge to be taken onto the track for training or a workout except during hours designated by the association, and a trainer desiring to engage a horse in a workout shall prior to such workout identify the horse by name when requested to do so by the stewards or their authorized representative.

(b) A horse shall not be permitted to workout unless:

(1) The horse has been examined by the trainer's attending veterinarian during the seventy-two (72) hours immediately preceding the workout for the express purpose of evaluating the horse's fitness to workout; and

(2) An evaluation has been conducted by the attending veterinarian and a determination has been made that the horse is fit to workout.

(A) The examination shall include, but not be limited to, close inspection of the eyes, examination of the legs, and observation of the horse at rest and while in motion.

(B) The attending veterinarian and trainer shall inform the Official Veterinarian of any changes in the horse's fitness after examination and before workout.

(C) The evaluation shall be recorded in the Veterinarian Report in accordance with section 1842.

(3) such horse is fourteen (14) years of age or younger if a standardbred or ten (10) years or younger if any other breed.

(4) such horse is a maiden as defined by rule 1420 (k), and five years of age or younger.

(c) For the purpose of this section, "workout" means an exercise session near full speed, or close to full speed.

NOTE:

Authority cited: Sections 19440 and 19562, Business and Professions Code. Reference: Sections 19440 and 19562, Business and Professions Code