

GBGB Firework Policy 2021

Purpose

It is intended that the Policy and Recommendations in this document be used by stadia and stakeholders responsible for protecting greyhound welfare in relation to fireworks and to minimise exposure of greyhounds to fireworks during race and trial events and during transportation to and from these events.

Policy

- There will be no conventional Firework displays at GBGB Licensed Racecourses whilst greyhounds are present at the racecourse.
- Measures shall be put in place to reduce the risk and impact of greyhounds being exposed to fireworks while at stadiums.
- Measures shall be put in place to reduce the risk of greyhounds being exposed to firework noise whilst in transit.
- GBGB will join with Welfare Charities, in lobbying Government in the banning of the sale of over-the-counter Fireworks and banning the usage of Fireworks except for Professionally Organised displays.

Risk Assessment of exposure to fireworks for racing Greyhounds

Racing Greyhounds may be exposed to fireworks in various locations at Stadia, during transport and at their residential kennels.

Risk Periods

HIGH RISK

- 5th November where the racing is scheduled to continue past sunset.
- The Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings of the nearest weekend to 5th November where racing is scheduled to continue past sunset.
- Known major or public firework displays adjacent to a stadium at any other time of the year.

MEDIUM RISK

- The evenings of the other weekend around 5th November, where racing is scheduled to continue past sunset.
- 31st December where racing is scheduled to continue past sunset.
- Cultural events, such as Diwali, Chinese New Year, etc. in areas where the local population profile applies.

LOW RISK

- Bank Holidays & weekends throughout the year.
- Cultural events, such as Diwali, Chinese New Year, etc. in areas where the local population profile does not suggest likelihood of displays.

Risk Mitigation at Stadia

Measures shall be put in place to reduce the risk of greyhounds being exposed to fireworks while at stadiums.

During High Risk Periods racecourses should look to schedule racing times and meetings to avoid any local major displays or exposure. The necessity for levels of mitigation action changes from racecourse to racecourse depending on local population profile.

To mitigate the effects of spontaneous fireworks during these high-risk periods, procedures should be put in place to reduce the impact of unexpected firework displays on greyhounds as follows;

- Stadium staff and track vets shall be prepared to implement emergency measures to minimise the impact of any unexpected firework noise on the dogs present at the stadia (see below for details of these measures)
- Where unexpected firework noise occurs, stadia management/welfare officer, together with the veterinary surgeon, shall consult as to how to minimise the impact on the greyhounds and consider cancelling meetings where noise levels are high or sustained (see emergency measures below).
- For stadia with resident dogs, special efforts shall be made to identify and understand the risk in advance of firework displays near the stadium so that efforts can be made to minimise the impact of these on resident dogs.

Emergency Measures recommended when unexpected firework noise ensues during a race meeting in Low Risk periods.

- All dogs shall be held within the kennel area until the management are confident that the display is over.
- If dogs are out on the track when the noise starts, they will return to the kennel area immediately. The race will not go ahead unless the dogs have already been placed in the traps before the firework noise begins.
- The track veterinarian shall be consulted as to whether racing may continue once the display is over, based on such things as: the perceived impact of the display on the dogs, the period of time the dogs have already been kennelled, etc.

- Kennel staff shall implement measures within the kennels to minimise impact of noise on the dogs. This may include playing other sounds in the kennels such as radio/music to mask firework noise, provide additional bedding/drape blankets over kennel doors, etc. to allow hiding. Close monitoring of all dogs is key throughout the period of noise.
- Kennel staff and the track vet shall take note of any dog(s) showing signs of anxiety and/or fear. These dogs shall be examined carefully by the vet and withdrawn from racing if deemed necessary by the track vet.
- If racing does continue after the display, all dogs shall be inspected by the vet before being deemed fit to race.
- No dogs should be permitted to leave the kennel area while the fireworks are going off (i.e. being moved into vans).
- For dogs already in vans, trainers shall stay with the dogs and implement measures to minimise the impact of the fireworks on the dogs (close the doors, turn on the engine, radio, etc.). If all dogs are loaded, the trainer may leave in order to remove the dogs from the situation, providing the dogs are in a calm state to travel.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- Every effort is made to avoid scheduling greyhound race and trial events during periods identified as 'high risk' for firework displays.
- Stadia avoid holding conventional firework displays outside times of GBGB Licensed activities where there are residential properties or livestock immediately adjacent to the stadium. This reflects understanding of the impact of conventional firework on other animals in general.
- Stadia management engage with the local authority, the neighbouring community, and adjacent businesses to improve knowledge of local firework displays, such that unexpected exposure to those displays is minimised.
- The policy is reviewed annually before distributing to greyhound trainers, owners and kennel hands; racecourse promoters; racing managers; track veterinary surgeons; and track welfare officers.