

**7884.0240 POST TIME AND STARTING.**

Subpart 1. **Post time.** The association shall establish the post time for each race and the stewards shall call the horses on the course at a time to prevent delay after the completion of one or two scores.

Subp. 1a. **Cancellation and postponement.** In the case of questionable racetrack or racing conditions due to weather, the presiding judge shall call a meeting consisting of an agent of the track member, a representative of the horsepersons, and the chief commission veterinarian to determine if cancellation or postponement of races is necessary. The presiding judge has the final authority to cancel or postpone races. For the purposes of tracking the following weather events, the Air Quality Index (AQI) must be monitored via <https://www.airnow.gov> or via the AirNow application. The heat index must be monitored via <https://www.osha.gov/heat/> or via the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) heat index application. The My Lightning Tracker Pro application must be used to measure lightning strikes within a set number of miles from the racetrack. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather reports and the National Weather Service RADAR must be used to confirm weather patterns and directions.

A. When the AQI for the racetrack's zip code is elevated due to an extreme air pollutant event, including when smoke from wildfires is forecasted or detected, the following procedures must be followed:

(1) when the AQI for the racetrack's zip code reaches a level of 150, both equine and human participants must be provided the option to withdraw from competition without penalty; and

(2) when the AQI for the racetrack's zip code is at or above 175, no horse racing, training, or jogging may be conducted.

B. When the heat index for the racetrack's zip code is projected to reach 105 degrees Fahrenheit or higher for more than two consecutive hours, the chief commission veterinarian must recommend to the association that horse racing be postponed or canceled.

C. When lightning first strikes within an eight-mile radius of the racetrack, the following procedures must be followed:

(1) the racetrack must suspend or cancel racing, in coordination with the commission stewards. Racing activity may resume after 30 minutes from the last lightning strike within eight miles of the racetrack, or earlier if an all-clear is established; and

(2) if the suspension lasts longer than one hour, the commission chief veterinarian must discuss with the association canceling a partial amount of the remaining card or implement a plan to cancel the remainder of the race card.

Subp. 2. **Time between single race heats.** The time between separate heats of a single race shall not be less than 40 minutes.

Subp. 3. **Horses called to post have exclusive right.** Horses called for a race have the exclusive right to occupy the course, and all the other horses shall vacate the course immediately.

Subp. 4. **Scoring.** Horses are permitted to take one or two scores before going to the post, and upon completion of the last score, the horses shall be gathered by the starter and immediately moved to their appropriate starting positions behind the gate.

Subp. 5. **Post positions.** The following procedures shall apply to post positions:

A. When a horse is withdrawn from the front tier, horses on the outside shall move in to fill the vacancy.

B. If there is only one trailing horse it may start from any trailing position.

C. If there is more than one trailing horse it shall start from inside the horse with a higher post position.

D. The withdrawing of a horse that has drawn or earned a position in the front tier shall not affect the position of the trailing horses, except as provided for in handicap claiming races.

Subp. 6. **Starting gate.** All races shall be started with a mobile starting gate of a design consistent with part 7875.0200, subpart 4, and approved by the commission, and shall be equipped with two-way communications to the stewards and a mechanical loudspeaker for communicating instructions to drivers. No person except the starter, his or her driver, and a patrol judge, shall ride in a starting gate without the permission of the stewards.

Subp. 7. **Starter has control of horses.** The starter shall have control of the horses from the formation of the parade until a fair start has been determined.

Subp. 8. **Determination of a fair start.**

A. A fair start pole shall be erected at a point before the start that is clearly identifiable. The pole shall be distinctive in color in relation to existing pylons and at least two feet above the existing pylons.

B. If a horse has not reached the fair start pole when the horses are released at the starting point by the starter, the judges shall cause the inquiry sign to be displayed immediately and request that any money wagered on that horse be refunded.

C. The determination of a fair start is signified by the word "go" announced by the starter at the starting point. The starting point is a point that shall be marked on the inside rail at a distance of not less than 200 feet from the first turn.

Subp. 9. **Conduct of start.** The following procedures shall be observed during the start of a race.

A. The horses shall be brought to the starting gate as near one-quarter of a mile before the start as the course will permit.

B. The starter shall cause the gate to move towards the starting point, gradually increasing speed of the gate to maximum speed.

C. When maximum speed has been reached in the course of a start there shall be no decrease, except in the case of a recall.

D. After the determination by the starter of a fair start all the horses shall race the course, except in the case of an occurrence that in the opinion of the stewards makes it impossible for the horses to race the course.

E. During the start of a race, if a horse is unmanageable or liable to cause an accident or injury to another horse or to a driver, it shall be scratched by the stewards.

F. Subject to the age, experience, and post position of the horse and the condition of the racetrack, during extended pari-mutuel meetings, each horse in the first tier shall approach the starting gate in concert with the other horses in the field and shall be on the gate at the start. If the judges deem that a driver has intentionally laid off the gate and then charged it near the start in order to gain an advantage at the start, the driver shall be fined or suspended or both.

Subp. 10. **Helmets and safety vest to be worn.** No person shall ride or drive a horse on the racing track surface without a properly fastened protective riding helmet and safety vest.

**Statutory Authority:** *MS s 240.03; 240.13; 240.23; 240.24; 240.29*

**History:** *9 SR 2527; 40 SR 29; 46 SR 1210; 49 SR 497; 50 SR 1117*

**Published Electronically:** *April 23, 2026*