



## AERA Course Marking Standard

This document provides a minimum standard of course marking expected for all rides affiliated with the AERA. It is imperative that the course is appropriately marked and safe to traverse.

In summary, course marking materials utilized must conform as a minimum with the course marking materials available for purchase on the AERA website. There must be a **consistency** in style as to how the course is marked both for navigation and hazard identification. Every arrow, blocker and caution should have a reflective surface for night riding.

### PLACEMENT OF ARROWS

In all circumstances, at a minimum, arrows are to be placed at intervals of **not more** than ½km (500m). Individual arrows should be placed between 200cm and 250cm above ground level and facing squarely toward the approaching rider and where possible, arrows should be kept to **one** side of the track to ensure continuity (e.g., the left side).

Arrows and blockers should be attached by the most secure means available, which may be dictated by the landlord or statutory authority managing any particular part of the course. In any case, all arrows and blockers shall be fixed in a manner that ensures it will not become loose, bend, dislodge or become a false indication in windy or inclement weather. In instances where the only object available to attach the arrow to is a structure where you cannot use your chosen method of attachment, clear packing tape around the structure is acceptable but only wraps the top and bottom of the arrow or blocker. Clear tape is not acceptable over the arrow or blocker images as it makes the reflective aspect of the indicator ineffective. If there are no existing supports where an arrow or blocker ought to be located, use a wooden stake or steel post.

In areas with low hanging foliage, shrubs or tall grasses it will be necessary to view the arrow from a rider's perspective (height) to ensure that it has not been obscured from sight. This will require the marker to back track a hundred metres or so to check the line of sight after placing the indicator. Often an arrow can be placed in what appears to be a clear conspicuous location only to be obscured by a tree/shrub 20m earlier on the course.

Arrows on any night section which is not a defined and fenced road or track, shall be placed so that the next arrows **reflection** can be easily seen from the preceding arrow, using a standard handheld torch.

### STRAIGHT AHEAD

When following a fence line or on a **clearly** defined road or track without deviations, the interval of arrows can extend to the maximum of ½ Km. Where the course follows directly along a defined track or fence line the arrow is to be placed vertically. This applies in all circumstances regardless of the shape or bending of the track or fence.

Where a rider's line of sight is obscured, or when crossing open ground, or emerging from trees and scrub the **next** arrow must always be **visible** from horseback.

### CHANGE OF DIRECTION

Changes of direction are where the course leaves a road, track, fence line, or there is an intersection of tracks. An arrow pointing in the direction that the course is heading will indicate changes of direction. Where a change of

direction is 90° or greater the arrow axis will be horizontal, the arrows must not point downwards. A **single** arrow, indicating the change of direction is to be 10-20 metres **before** the change of direction. At the actual change of direction, **2** vertically aligned arrows are required.

At all changes of direction, the rider must be able to see a confirmation arrow immediately upon turning the corner confirming the direction the rider is to proceed. This confirmation arrow will be vertical unless there is another change of direction immediately afterwards.

### DO NOT PROCEED INDICATION

Where there is a change of direction on the course and it is possible for competitors to continue along an incorrect track, a blocker (**X**) must be placed on either side of the incorrect track(s) at the point where the change in direction occurs. A further blocker must be placed on the incorrect track(s) approximately 20-30 metres along the incorrect track(s).

### SAFETY HAZARDS

Marking the course for hazards is of the utmost importance and consistency in marking hazards on the course is critical. A caution sign should be placed 20m prior to an actual hazard to warn a rider approaching at pace of the hazard ahead. Another Caution sign must be placed on the hazard itself. Additional tools to mark hazards include the use of plastic hazard tape or bunting. This tape/bunting should be used to rope off and indicate any areas on or adjacent to the course that are dangerous, in particular grids, rabbit warrens, large rocks, creek banks or wire obstructions to mention a few. In some instances, flashing lights or red glow sticks are used to indicate hazards. In any case, the use of such aids must be consistent throughout the course.

In some instances, parts of the course may need a “haircut” or trim. In particular, low hanging limbs protruding over the course and logs lying across the track should be removed where possible. This is critical where such areas may be ridden at night.

### FENCES

Whenever a horse and rider approaches a fence line, the fence must be highlighted to make it clearly visible. At night and at places where visibility is restricted, wire is almost impossible to see. Methods of highlighting a fence include bunting and/or white chaff bags tied to the fence with or without reflectors.

### GATEWAYS AND GRIDS

Grids should be taped off with hazard tape to prevent a rider proceeding into a grid. All gateways including an opening in a fence, which will be used as a gateway, are to be marked with an arrow on each post to clearly indicate the extremities of the safe passage. Where the rider is required to change direction immediately after negotiating the gate there will be an additional arrow on each side of the gate, below the vertical through gate arrow, which is tilted to the change of direction. As stated earlier in the Change of Direction notes, a confirmation arrow and appropriate blockers are required.

### ROAD CROSSINGS

“Road Crossing Ahead” signage must be placed on the course 30-40 metres before actual road crossings to warn riders.

When the course crosses a public road, the use of artificial gates on each side of the road is recommended. An artificial gate is created by the installation of 2 wooden or steel posts with the appropriate arrow indicators attached. The posts can be covered by a length of white poly pipe to increase visibility and minimize injury if struck by a horse.

The designated gates will ensure competitors cross the road at 90 degrees and do not “J” walk. All artificial gates must be a minimum of 7m wide to allow several horses to proceed abreast.

If the road crossing occurs at an actual intersection, the crossing point should be relocated 20–30 metres either side of the intersection proper.

### VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

Where the course crosses a public road, appropriate authorisation must be obtained from local Police, Local Government Council and in some instances the State RTA or similar organisation. These authorities may place their own requirements on the road crossings that obviously must be adhered to. In any case, as a minimum, large signs a minimum 1.5m x 1.5m advising that horses are crossing must be placed 200m and 50m from the crossing area warning traffic in both directions. If the crossing is to be traversed at night, flashing lights must also accompany the signs.

Depending on the volume of traffic that uses the road, it may be prudent to man the crossing with a Steward(s) who shall control the movement of horses across the roadway.

### TRAVELLING ALONG A PUBLIC ROAD

Unfortunately, at some stage, portions of the course may travel along a public road due to necessity. Appropriate signage warning motorists as discussed in Road Crossings above must be in place. In addition, where the course travels **along** a public road, further signage warning motorists must be at no more than 500m intervals in both directions.

Hazard marking is no more critical than on public roads where culverts, drains, guide posts, a steep camber and simply holes (to name a few) could cause an accident and result in injury to the horse, the rider or both. It is recommended the course be designed (where possible) to minimise night riding on public roads.

### BITUMEN ROADS

Where the road to be traversed is bitumen, it is preferable the course should follow a track or path several metres off the roadside. It must be only as a last resort that the course travels along the immediate edge of a bitumen road.

### GRAVEL ROADS

It is rare that a course will not include some work on gravel roads. Motorist warning signage mentioned earlier must be adhered to.

### CREEK CROSSINGS

Creek crossings should (where practical) utilise artificial gates on each side of the creek to indicate the safest passage through the creek proper. Where appropriate the approach down the creek bank and climb up the other side may require hazard signage. Prior to each creek crossing there must be a sign indicating maximum depth of water. The access and egress to each creek must be such that a “bog” does not develop and if necessary, gravel or other material may need to be placed at the crossing.

### COMMON COURSE WITH MORE THAN ONE LEG IN THE SAME DIRECTION

Where there are indicator arrows for different legs on the same track they should be grouped at the same post or mounting and be placed with the earliest leg at the top and subsequent legs consecutively descending down the post. Do not scatter different indicators randomly along the course.

## DISTANCE MARKERS

Whilst it is not compulsory to provide distance markers in a 160km ride, it is desirable to place such distances markers every 10kms as near as possible to the accurate distance. They are to be placed at the same height as arrows and with the same care and an appropriate course arrow is to accompany the distance marker. The distance markers are not cumulative and must be placed at the 10km 20km 30km etc point on each individual leg.

## WATER POINTS

Water points are required a **minimum** of every 10kms. Drums placed on the side of the track will usually provide the majority of water. Where drums are used, the drums should be spread approximately 5m apart to avoid crowding. In instances where the water point is a dam, trough or creek and it is not located on the designated course proper, then arrows marked with a "W" are to direct riders **to and from** this water point. If the water point is a dam or creek, the safest access is to be clearly marked and buckets are to be provided.

If the ride committee provides hay on course, it is recommended to locate the hay in the vicinity of (yet separate) from the water drums and is dampened down to avoid the possibility of a horse choking.

## CHECK POINTS

A minimum of 2 checkpoints are required on any leg longer than 30kms. Each checkpoint must be clearly numbered and have communication capability to the central communications office at ride base.