

Published based on [Two tracks slip up on jockey safety](#)

Two tracks slip up on jockey safety

The health and safety of jockeys must be a major consideration for all racecourses. It was disappointing then, that the BHA's Disciplinary Panel had two tracks before it last week as it looked into breaches of the rules governing their responsibilities in this area.

In the case of Salisbury racecourse, which is controlled by The Bibury Club Limited, they related to its meeting on 10 October this year. There were charges that one of the ambulances on duty that day did not have the full complement of gear set out in the BHA's General Instructions, and that one of the ambulances was left untended in the first race, so it could not be used instantly if called on. In addition, the panel heard that some of the checks Racecourse Medical Officers (RMO) are required to carry out at the beginning of each race weren't conducted. The panel ordered a fine of £3,500 on The Bibury Club for these failings.

Newton Abbot Races Ltd, handling executive of Newton Abbot racecourse, were also queried about their supply of medical facilities. The pre-race inspection on 7 October identified missing gear in one of the ambulances and also in the bags carried by Racecourse Medical Officers. There had been also no direct outside telephone line from the Jockeys ' Medical Room. As the equipment supplies had been made up before racing commenced, and the Chief Medical Adviser pointed to the fact that they were only other minor nature, the disciplinary panel warned Newton Abbot Races Ltd as to its future conduct.

The General Directions about the provision of medical support are detailed, running to some 40 pages. They set out the personnel required and their many alternative responsibilities: at least 2 Racecourse Medical Officials who must act on at least eight days racing annually; a qualified nurse on duty in the Jockeys Medical Room; and 1 first aid attendant at each fence or hurdle as a jumps meeting.

Each race meeting must be covered by three ambulances, 2 of which must carry a paramedic on board. One of those paramedic ambulances must be on the course at every point. It's not that long gone that racing got delayed at one meeting as the two paramedic ambulances had each taken a wounded jockey to infirmary and a further one needed to be rustled up from somewhere.

One ambulance and an RMO are on duty at the beginning of every race, and on the rare occasion that the doctor's services are needed there the race can't get started until he has given the all clear on any jockey he has inspected.

There is a amazing list of clobber required with 20 items in the doctor's bag, and around 50 on each of the three ambulances. These go from stretchers, spinal boards and dressings, through simple oral medication like aspirin, up to 14 items to help with breathing and 12 or so drugs which can sometimes be injected if required. The Jockeys ' Medical Room holds a fresh set of supplies.

RMOs have to examine every jockey who falls, and then finish a report on his fitness, even if they find him unhurt. As soon as possible after the report has been finished the course Stewards ' Director enters the data on the BHA wounds database, and if an injury ends up in the rider being stood down the medical suspension will be identified, a so-called red entry. Other copies go to the Chief Medical Advisor and the Pro Jockeys Association, which handles any insurance claims.

When we go racing we see awfully little of this work, which is precisely as it should be. And there are many other behind-the-scenes jobs that go toward making a day at the races go well for everyone concerned. I may be taking a look at some of those activities in future articles.

[UK Horse Racing News](http://geegeez.co.uk): geegeez.co.uk is one of the premier independent UK [horse racing news](#) sites, featuring daily content that the main line horse racing news sites won't carry. Get the best and latest horse racing news at geegeez.co.uk

You can also find this article published on [Two tracks slip up on jockey safety](#), and on the tag pages [Horse Racing](#), [horse racing news](#), [Salisbury racecourse](#), [UK horse racing](#), [uk horse racing news](#).