

**Washington Horse Racing Commission  
Policy Statement 2015-01**

Equine Testing For Cobalt

The Washington Horse Racing Commission views equine medication testing as vital to the integrity of the industry. In its enforcement of this program, the commission directs its regulatory officials to utilize all methods under their authority to ensure that a medication testing program is effective in detecting the use of medications or levels of medications, either authorized or prohibited.

WAC 260-70-545 prohibits the possession or use of any drug, substance, or medication that may endanger the health or welfare of the horse. WAC 260-70-590 specifies that the random or extra testing may be required by the stewards, an official veterinarian, or the commission at any time on any horse on association grounds.

Cobalt is a mineral that is essential in all horses and is normally metabolized as part of Vitamin B12. Administration of bulk cobalt salt to humans and other species has been demonstrated to increase red blood cell production. While there is no scientific research that indicates any effect to equines, administration of bulk cobalt has been shown to cause acute toxic effects in equines, creating a health and welfare concern.

In an effort to protect the health and welfare of the equine athletes and to gather data as to the extent of possible bulk cobalt administration use in Washington, for the remainder of the 2015 race meet the following procedures will be observed:

1. The board of stewards may select races on a periodic basis where all horses involved in that particular race may have a blood sample taken upon reporting to the receiving barn.
2. The samples taken will be sent to the official testing laboratory for screening of cobalt.

If a sample is reported to be above a level of 50 ppb, the trainer will be notified and the horse will be placed on the official veterinarian list until such time as a second sample is submitted and reported to be below the 50 ppb. The first retest cost will be at the Commissions expense. Any following retests will be at the owner's expense.

Adopted by the Washington Horse Racing Commission  
June 12, 2015