

HRI Directive Changes Coming Into Effect Over The Upcoming Months

Trainers are **strongly advised** to note a number of HRI Directive Changes which will be introduced on various dates over the coming months:-

(the changes will be published in the relevant Irish Racing Calendars closer to the dates of implementation)

1. From the start of the 2022 Flat Turf Season which commences on March 26, horses with a rating of **less than 40** (was 38) will be the first to be balloted out of all races with the highest rating affording the greatest protection. This means that the minimum flat rating band will now be 47-65 (up from 45-65). Horses rated below 47 in handicap races will run off a minimum rating of 47 in these races.
2. From February 1, INH Flat Races will no longer have restrictions on **age qualification** (previously only for 4, 5, 6 and 7yos) and also will no longer have restrictions on the **number of times they can run in bumpers** – however, horses will still not be allowed to run in Flat Races, Steeplechases or more than twice over hurdles to be allowed run in a bumper.
3. From February 1, in all Flat Handicaps that close at the normal entry stage, horses that win races after the calculation of the handicap will now carry **7lb extra** for each flat race won (up from 6lbs)
4. From February 1, in all National Hunt Handicaps that close at the normal entry stage, horses that win races that after the calculation of the handicap in all hurdle and steeplechase handicaps will now carry **7lb extra** for each hurdle/steeplechase won (up from 5lbs)
5. From February 1, the minimum weight in a flat handicap shall be **8st 7lbs** (up from 8st 6lbs) before any rider's allowance is claimed.
6. From February 1, the minimum weight in a national hunt handicap shall be **10st** (up from 9st 12lbs) before any rider's allowance is claimed.
7. From March 26, there will be slight changes to the distance categories in the 47-65 handicap races: **Sprint** (5f to less than 7f), **Mile** (7f to exactly 9f), **Intermediate** (9f 1yd to exactly 12f), **Long** (12f 1yd or more)
8. From March 26, there will be changes to the balloting procedures in **Benchmark Handicaps with a Rating of 80 or less (eg 80 = 10st, 75 = 9st 12lb, 70 = 10st)**. The main change is that horse rated 3lb and higher above the benchmark rating **will no longer be** first to be protected in the ballot. Horses rated 2lb and 1lb above the benchmark rating will continue to be the first to be protected, then horses rated at the benchmark or below the benchmark down as far as 8st 7lb (horses in the handicap), then horses rated 3lb and more above the benchmark in ascending order and finally by ballot among the lowest weighted horses which are out of the handicap but before any penalties have been applied.

9. From May 2, there will be changes to the balloting procedures in maiden hurdles, beginners steeplechase and a new distance category will be introduced for low grade National Hunt handicaps (80-95 handicap hurdles, 0-95 handicap chases and also 0-102 handicap chases).