



## **IHRB Authorised Officers – Q and A for licensed Trainers and Handlers**

In August 2020, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine authorised the IHRB to appoint Authorised Officers via a Memorandum of Understanding. We would like to explain to licensed Trainers and Handlers what this means via a number of 'Questions and Answers'. If you have further queries about this work, please contact us via [equine@ihrb.ie](mailto:equine@ihrb.ie).

### **Q: How and why are IHRB Officials becoming Authorised Officers?**

A: Under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Irish Horseracing Regulatory board (IHRB) and the Department of Food Agriculture and the Marine (DAFM), persons nominated by the IHRB and appointed by the Minister for the purposes of 10(1) of the Animal Remedies Act 1993 are conferred with additional authority to act in certain circumstances.

This was one of the commitments agreed by the Irish horseracing industry, including trainers' representatives, in the 2018 Industry Anti-Doping Policy as part of a wider movement towards increased transparency and accountability, regulation of veterinary medicines and assurance of horse welfare and integrity within our sport.

### **Q: What is new in terms of inspections?**

A: IHRB Authorised Officers inspecting licensed premises will carry out the core tasks associated with an inspection as previously such as identifying and inspecting horses on the licensed premises and inspecting the premises themselves. Over and above this, IHRB Authorised Officers have additional powers in relation to the Animal Remedies Act 1993 extending to Thoroughbred horses, premises on which they are kept and associated records and documentation. This includes the authority to search a premises and seize material if necessary, including animal remedies. They also have the authority to enter unlicensed premises. If for example, a Thoroughbred horse in the care and control of a licensed person is not on the licensed premises, the IHRB Authorised Officers may travel to an unlicensed premises to locate, identify and test it. They may seek veterinary or other records associated with it. Should a contravention be suspected in relation to an animal remedy, this will be reported to the DAFM, as well as being acted upon within the IHRB.

### **Q: Are the inspections DAFM inspections or IHRB inspections?**

Unless otherwise advised on entry, all inspections will be carried out by IHRB Officials who are Authorised Officers and who must produce their warrant cards to confirm this. An IHRB Authorised Officer may invite a non- Authorised Officer to attend an inspection and any such person will not have an Authorised Officer card. There may be other reasons why IHRB Officials need to go to a trainer's premises, for example for a pre-licensing or change of training quarter inspection, or an interview, in which case they may not be an Authorised





Officer. An IHRB inspection of an unlicensed premises will always only be carried by an IHRB Authorised Officer.

**Q: What can I as a Trainer expect to happen on the day of an inspection?**

A: Inspections will be as now unannounced and usually in the morning so as to coincide with the time when the horses are usually attended. As now, as far as possible, every effort will be made to enter at a reasonable time and give due regard to the activities of those ordinarily present on the premises and any biosecurity arrangements that are in place. As now, every effort will be made to minimise disruption to the business of the premises being inspected. The Officers will take due care and be respectful of property and will also act in a manner to protect and prioritise animal welfare.

IHRB Authorised Officers will work as a team to carry out a detailed audit of the premises. Horses will be identified (primarily through microchip scanning but also by passport markings as necessary), assessed and in some cases sampled. Medicines and supplements identified on the premises will be examined, documented and, in some cases, samples will be taken for analysis. Relevant documentation pertaining to veterinary medicines will be examined including the medicines register, relevant prescriptions and passports.

**Q: What does a Trainer need to have in order?**

Your Medicines Register should as now be accurate and up to date. Your Medicines cupboard, or place in which in any medicines are kept, should be secure. You should know what horses you have under your care and their whereabouts.

**Q: What will I be asked to produce?**

Medicines Register, Prescriptions (paper or digital equally acceptable), Passports.

**Q: During an inspection, will an Authorised Officer enter a trainer's dwelling place?**

A: In order for an Authorised Officer to enter any dwelling place, in Ireland, a warrant is needed after application to a Judge – the 'inviolability of a dwelling' is a constitutional right. Under Section 11.2 of the Act, however, if the Officer has reasonable cause to suspect material of concern in relation to an offence under the Act either being, or likely to be, destroyed or disposed of before such a warrant can be obtained, they are able to enter the dwelling without one. The IHRB Authorised Officers do not envisage being in this position but in the interests of complete transparency felt it important to flag this.

**Q: What would happen if I refuse access to my premises by an IHRB Authorised Officer?**

A: This would be an offence under the Animal Remedies legislation, and a breach of the Rules of Racing. It would be referred to the DAFM for potential prosecution and the IHRB Licensing and Compliance Department for consideration of licensing and disciplinary action.

