



INDEPENDENT
GAMBLING CONTROL
OFFICE

October 19, 2026

IGCO Statement on Fatality at Desert Park Raceway

On Sunday, October 18, 2026, an incident occurred during the fifth race at Desert Park Raceway in Osoyoos which resulted in the fatality of a harness racing driver.

The Independent Gambling Control Office (IGCO) extends its deepest condolences to the family and friends of the driver and the entire racing community on this tragic loss.

The health and safety of racing participants is a priority for the IGCO. As BC's horse racing regulator, the IGCO is examining the circumstances of the incident to confirm that applicable racing rules and safety requirements were followed.

Three horses and three drivers were involved in the collision. The other two drivers were treated for minor injuries only. Two horses survived and are being treated for injuries, while one horse had to be euthanized today.

Racing at Desert Park Raceway has been cancelled today. The IGCO will confirm that all applicable safety requirements are being met before racing resumes.

The BC Coroners Service is investigating.

Backgrounder:

The IGCO regulates horse racing in BC and licences all eligible participants to ensure racing events are conducted in compliance with the *Gaming Control Act*, regulations, and the Rules of Racing.

The Western Canada Horse Racing Association (WCHRA) has held a horse racing licence in the Temporary Race Track Operator Class since August 14, 2026, to manage and operate the Desert Park Raceway.

The IGCO has a comprehensive Horse Race Track Operator Policy, which sets out the criteria that must be met for issuance of a race track licence:

<https://www.igcobic.ca/sites/default/files/assets/documents/policy-horse-race-track-operator-licensing.pdf>

Many of the criteria are designed to ensure the health and safety of individuals and horses. The race track licence issued to WCHRA is also subject to a variety of operational conditions aimed at ensuring the safety of race participants.

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