

# Alcohol Testing for New York Jockeys Approved

By [Tom Precious](#)  
Bloodhorse.com

New York regulators have given final approval to a first-ever rule in the state requiring race-day testing of Thoroughbred jockeys for the presence of alcohol.

“I think it’s a step toward integrity and also safety,” state Racing and Wagering Board Chairman John Sabini said Jan. 25.

The expected approval of the new rule, given preliminary okay last summer, provides that a blood alcohol content of .05 or higher will be considered alcohol impairment.

Jockeys testing positive will be banned from racing that day and could face suspensions, fines and other penalties, including mandatory alcohol counseling.

The race-day screening has been in place for years for harness drivers, and has been a practice by the New York Racing Association. The new rule mandates the testing with approved devices at all NYRA tracks and Finger Lakes racetrack.

Officials say the new rule will put New York in compliance with an effort by the Racing Commissioners International.

The new testing also permits the “discretionary” testing of other people with racing licenses at Thoroughbred tracks, though officials said the primary focus of the new rule is on jockeys.

Tracks will have until the end of February to notify the racing board of the kinds of devices it has purchased, which will then be followed up with a training program. The tests must be administered by employees of the racing board or track officials they designate.

The racing agency earlier this week released a chart on existing rules around the country for jockey testing:

State	Is there BAC testing of jockeys/drivers?	State Rule or In-House Track Policy?	BAC Threshold	Differ between TB/HB/Etc.?
Nebraska	Yes with Cause	State Rule	0.05	No
Delaware	Random or Probable Cause	DTRC Rules	0.04	TB and Arabian
Illinois	Yes with Cause	IRB Rules	0	No
Wyoming	Yes with Cause	State Rule	0.05	No

New Jersey	Random or Probable Cause	State Rule	0.05	No
Washington	Random or Probable Cause	State Rule	0.02	No
Minnesota	Yes with Cause	State Rule	0.04	No
Oregon	Yes with Cause	State Rule	0.02	TB and Quarter
Michigan	Yes with Cause	State Rule	0.05	No
Maryland	Random or Probable Cause	State Rule	0.05	No
Louisiana	Yes - Mandatory	State Rule	0.05	TB and Quarter
New York	Yes - Mandatory - Drivers	State Rule	0.05	Yes
Indiana	Yes - Mandatory	State Rule	0.05	No
Ontario	Yes - Mandatory	State Rule	0.02	No
Ohio	Yes - Mandatory	State Rule	0.035	No
Kentucky	Yes - All, Random or Probable Cause. Policy is to test daily.	State Rule	0.05	No