

The Judicial Panel Chairwoman, Rowena Scrimgeour, has approved the following sanction under the Channel Islands Horseracing Authority fast-track system:

Karl Kukk

Acting in an improper manner on land on which he was present for the training of a racehorse.

£400 fine of which £200 is suspended for 12 months – A breach of Rule (A)25.2.2 of the Rules of Racing in that at approximately 10.30am on 12 March 2022 Mr Kukk got into several altercations with members of the public whilst attempting to exercise a horse on the beach in St. Ouen's Bay and that during those altercations he swore at members of the public, including a number of children under the age of 10.

Notes to Editors

More information on the fast-track system can be found [here](#).

Postscript – The Rules of Racing do not set out any code of conduct in respect of exercising horses on the beach and given the frequency that trainers in the Channel Islands use the beach for training, the Disciplinary Panel Chairwoman wishes to set out the Panel's expectations in terms of conduct when using the beach for training racehorses.

The Panel expects trainers to adhere to pages 1-4 of the British Horse Society's advice which is set out in full below and which can also be viewed on the following link:

https://www.bhs.org.uk/~/_media/documents/access/access-leaflets/beaches-1019.ashx?la=en

Advice on Riding on beaches and estuaries in England and Wales

The law and management of public access rights vary widely between the four countries of the United Kingdom. This advice note is written for England and Wales and although elements of the advice may be applicable in Scotland and Northern Ireland this cannot be assumed.

More advice is available on www.bhs.org.uk/accessadvice.

There are a number of beaches around England, Wales and Ireland that allow riding (in Scotland most beaches are available to all non-motorised users), and BHS Approved centres that offer the opportunity to ride on a beach. There are few where use with a horse-drawn vehicle is permitted or practical so it is best to check specific sites with the local council. This advice is therefore aimed at riders rather than all equestrians.

Beaches and Estuaries

There are many health benefits of riding on a sandy beach for both horse and rider. Long sandy stretches are good for building up fitness levels and often the sand can encourage muscle tone and strength. It can provide outstanding views of the sea and is a refreshing way to see areas of beauty throughout the coasts of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Beach riding can be a wonderful experience for both you and your horse if you are aware of a few points of legality and safety, so please read all the guidance in this leaflet.

Estuaries are where rivers meet the sea and they are unpredictable places, requiring caution and respect for the variety of conditions underfoot, the special ecology and the potential risks in riding there. While large expanses of open ground look inviting to riders, some of the conditions encountered may be dangerous. However, with due care and knowledge, estuaries can provide excellent riding opportunities.

Is riding on the beach permitted?

Check that riding on the beach is permitted. It may be limited to certain times, days or areas and there may be bylaws. Restrictions on time will often be to riders' benefit, being at quieter periods such as early morning and late evening when there may be fewer other users to avoid.

If there are areas where riding is not permitted, be sure you are clear about their extent and avoid them carefully; their boundaries may not be obvious even if they are above high water because signs and fences tend not to last long on the shore or may not be permitted.

Always avoid disturbing wildlife and plants, paying particular attention to dunes, salt marshes and estuaries. Keep to designated paths. Sand dunes and salt marshes are fragile environments and riding through or over them should be avoided for conservation reasons, even if riding is not specifically prohibited.

Estuaries provide a rich habitat for wildlife and many are protected areas, particularly for birds which may be easily disturbed. Wading birds flock to estuaries at low tide to feed and as the tide comes in they are liable to take flight as a flock. It is important not to disturb birds when they are feeding at low tide, particularly during prolonged bad weather as adverse conditions will already have upset the birds' feeding.

It is very important that you observe restrictions as infringement could result in all equestrian access being prohibited.

Your horse's reactions

Horses that are not used to the beach may be excited by the different environment, even if they are normally calm. It is often breezy and the atmosphere is stimulating and very different. Humans are aware of it – why else have beach holidays always been so popular? Horses, too, will respond to the change and you should be prepared.

Be wary of faster paces, especially in company, as horses may be stimulated into racing by the atmosphere, even if they would not normally do so in other places. Being out of control could be particularly dangerous where there are people who may not realise that you cannot stop. There could be areas of softer sand, debris, holes or other hazards – you need to be able to avoid them.

People commonly exercise dogs on the beach, and the dogs can become excitable and more difficult to recall, so be particularly alert if you see dogs and keep to a walk near them. Please see our BHS advice leaflet on dogs.¹

Be cautious of the sea, and on first entrance ride slowly. Some shores are shallow for some distance, some shelve steeply or suddenly. Approach the sea at an angle rather than head on because if your horse spooks at the breaking waves, it is then more likely to shy away from the water than rear. Approaching alongside the shallows often encourages nervous horses to get their feet wet.

Be aware that loose horses (and other animals) entering the water tend to head straight out to sea which of course has a high risk unless they can be reached in time.

Box parking

Check whether there is a car park near the beach before you go that is accessible with your vehicle. If the only parking is on the beach this may be impractical, particularly when towing with a vehicle that is not four-wheel drive.

Height barriers are common on many beach parking areas and can restrict horse trailers and lorries.

¹ 'Look at it from my point of view' www.bhs.org.uk/our-work/safety/free-leaflets

Parking charges are common, though this may only be in the summer months. National Trust members may receive a reduced rate at the Trust's car parks..

Always park sensibly and do not cause an obstruction for access by emergency vehicles; this includes access to a slipway or other boat launching area, sometimes with big vehicles and trailers which need large turning circles.

Be people aware

Any unpopular behaviour by riders can lead to all horses being prohibited. Please act with care and courtesy at all times.

Some beaches require you to remove dung and it is good practice to do so on all beaches. Always go equipped with poo bags. Removing dung goes a long way to making horses more welcome.

If there are other people on the beach, ride past them slowly and sensibly, leaving plenty of room. Sand kicked up by horses' passing will be carried several feet with even a gentle breeze and could be unpleasant for people hit by it.

Some beaches are often used for kite flying, sand yachting, motorbike racing, parasailing and many other sports. Check with locals if possible so that you can avoid popular times or areas.

Be particularly alert for people with dogs. Many dogs will chase horses which are moving faster than walk, which can cause horses to bolt. Dog walkers should prevent their dog chasing, but they want their dog to have a good time too, probably off the lead, so 'share the beach' and avoid popular dog areas or times if possible. Keep an eye out for loose dogs and be ready to slow down or stop unless it is clear that the owner is in control.

Tides

Check tide times before you go. Awareness of tides is vital, especially if riding on a narrow beach with coves. Tides can come in very quickly and could cut off your route from the beach. Tide timetables are available online, from the council and often local shops. In difficulties, call 999 to contact HM Coastguard, giving your position as precisely as you can.

On estuaries, the flatness of the area means that tides can come in fast and sometimes imperceptibly or along hidden channels, cutting off escape routes. Ebb tides may leave slippery conditions behind or increase the incidence of sinking sands.

Sand

Sand will vary in texture and depth. It may be harder closer to the water and softer further away, but that is not always the case. Sandbanks can go from hard to soft in less than a stride, especially on estuaries.

On many beaches, sand can change, so even if you have ridden a beach before, do not rely on soft and hard areas remaining the same.

Quicksand, sinking sand or mud are common in some estuaries and may move around. They are unpredictable and extremely dangerous.

Deep, soft or very hard sand can cause injury to horses, especially at speed. If you want to ride fast, it is sensible to walk or trot the beach beforehand to check the surface.

Be aware of holes in the sand and streams running across to the sea. Streams may be deep or cause soft patches that you will need to jump over.

Do not ride in the water if you cannot see the bottom: there may be hidden debris or rocks.

On estuaries in particular be alert for varying surface texture and depth. Rocky surfaces can be low and difficult to spot, and are especially slippery when fine seaweed is left by the tide. There can also be very soft areas left behind.

High visibility

The BHS recommends that both horse and rider should wear 'hi-viz' clothing. This is particularly important when riding on estuaries, where tides can come in or fog can descend quickly. Make sure your horse can be easily spotted from above if you become separated – hi-viz exercise sheets can be a benefit.

Litter and rubbish

The majority of sandy beaches around England, Wales and Ireland are well maintained, but you should always be alert for washed up glass bottles, cans, chain, ropes, nets, general rubbish and hidden structures or rusty spikes protruding from the sand. Be aware of this risk, including in the water.

Dung

Dog owners are required to remove their dogs' faeces from beaches and many would say that riders should remove their horses' droppings. Even though the health risks from dung are negligible, it is not pleasant to find droppings on a beach where people may sit, picnic and play.

On some beaches you are required to remove droppings and it is good practice to do so on any beach, because dung is frequently given as a reason for prohibiting access by horses. You are recommended to take a plastic bag with you on your ride and to collect and remove your horse's dung. The easiest way is to put your hands inside the bag, gather the dung into the plastic and turn the bag inside out around it. A piece of twine easily secures the bag to your saddle. Make sure you go prepared to 'poop scoop'.