

# A Guide to Careers in Harness Racing



# Acknowledgements

This guide is part of a larger effort to encourage young people to seek harness racing careers. It is coordinated by the Harness Horse Youth Foundation's Ellen Taylor and Keith Gisser in cooperation with Jessica Schroeder from the United States Trotting Association. The career initiative includes the USTA's introductory "Your Career In Harness Racing", a comprehensive equine scholarship database, a listing of colleges with equine programs and this in-depth guide. Each component of the career initiative is available at [www.hhyf.org](http://www.hhyf.org).



As you are about to read, harness racing offers many opportunities for employment. Some jobs involve direct contact with horses on a daily basis; others relate more to growing and promoting the business; and some revolve around the actual presentation of races as a form of entertainment. One of the best things about harness racing is that it allows you to "fit" wherever your interests and skills are best suited. We hope that this guide opens your horizons helping you to make the career choice that is right for you.

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HHYF has been making a difference in young people's lives since 1976, and its programs include interactive learning experiences with harness horses, scholarship programs, and creation and distribution of educational materials such as this one.

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# Introduction

## What is Harness Racing?

Before seeking a career in this diverse industry, a bit of background may be helpful. Harness racing is a competition for purse money between horses bred to trot or pace while pulling a sulky, a specialized two-wheeled cart. Professional drivers, wearing their unique individualized colors, sit in the sulky and drive the horses. Nearly all of these horses are registered Standardbreds. The Standardbred is an American breed developed in the late 1800s. They are bred to perform at a standard time for a distance of one mile. Today's Standardbred can exceed forty miles per hour for parts of the race, while averaging over thirty-five miles an hour for the mile. The North American national registries for harness racing are the United States Trotting Association and Standardbred Canada.

Harness racing was founded by farmers and sportsmen who raced on country roads and city streets in the early 1700s. Today the sport

is found in twenty-three states and ten Canadian provinces, both at commercial raceways and at fairgrounds across the continent. Most of these racetracks offer pari-mutuel wagering on the horses, and many racetracks offer other forms of wagering popular with the general public. Harness racing is enjoyed by fans around the world with racing venues in New Zealand, Australia and most of Europe.

In the United States, pari-mutuel wagering on races is permitted under the supervision of state racing commissions and in Canada through various national and provincial agencies. The word "pari-mutuel" means "among ourselves." Bettors are wagering only against other bettors, and the racetracks have no vested interest in who wins or loses a wager; the number and amount of bets placed determines the payoff. Racetracks keep a fixed percentage of every wager to cover their expenses, including taxes, and to turn a profit. Racing rules and licensing procedures are developed by the United States Trotting Association and Standardbred Canada, but each state and provincial jurisdiction also maintains its own set of rules and regulations.

Pacers and trotters are bred, owned, trained, and raced for profit and pleasure by individuals in all walks of life. Some own horses individually, others in partnerships, and still others through larger corporations, syndicates or breeding operations. People who work with Standardbreds develop close bonds with the animals and racing fans idolize the top stars of the racetrack. Many of these versatile animals go on to successful second careers after racing as riding and competitive show horses. Their breed type is described as "all-purpose, gentle, tractable as a light working horse from our agricultural heritage."



Harness races are classified by gait (trot or pace), gender, age, earnings or races-won. There are claiming races, in which a price is assigned to the horse by its owner and the horse may be purchased by a spectator. This helps assure evenly matched races. Stakes races can have purses of more than \$1,000,000 and require advance nominations, often done by a staking service.



Many racetracks race year-round while others compete during specific seasons. They can be owned and operated by large corporations, private owners, fair associations, and even by fraternal or charitable organizations. All of these organizations are constantly seeking new employees in many areas.

## Harness Racing Is Big Business

Although the landscape is constantly changing with new tracks opening, breeding farms consolidating and new investors joining the business, harness racing:

- Employs nearly a quarter-of-a-million people, directly or indirectly,
- Saw nearly 15,000,000 people attend races at tracks large and small across North America in 2010. That is about the same attendance as the National Football League draws. They wagered over \$2.5 billion dollars on races in the United States and Canada,
- Remains labor-intensive, despite advances in technology. There are nearly 200,000 registered harness horses in North America, each requiring individualized care,
- Has a never-ending demand for employees who possess understanding of cutting edge technology.



With the advent of advanced simulcast and broadcast needs, interactive websites, including convenience wagering platforms and social media, the business faces a shortage of workers with these skills,

- The American Horse Council reports that there are over nine million horses in the United States. Nearly a million of those are race horses. The equine industry provides over 460,000 full-time jobs and has a direct economic impact of \$39 billion and an overall economic impact of \$102 billion on the U.S. economy.

# Hands-On Racetrack Professions

## Caretaker

Also known as grooms, caretakers have the most responsibility for the day-to-day care of the racehorse. He or she follows the trainer's instructions. There are many different tasks a caretaker may be asked to perform. The structure of care varies from stable to stable. These tasks may include:

- Feeding, grooming and preparing the horse for its daily work, bathing and grooming the horse afterward, and cleaning the horse's stall regularly,
- Assisting the trainer with shipping the horse as needed,
- Caring for the horse at the barn and in the paddock (security area) on race nights,
- Monitoring the health and hygiene of the horse,
- Communicating any observations or concerns about the horse to the trainer,
- Cleaning and checking all equipment for safety after each use.



**Compensation:** Caretakers are usually paid weekly and salary is based on how many horses are under their care. Salary for a caretaker may range from \$15,000 to \$40,000 a year with year-end bonuses often given to those fortunate enough to look after a top contender.

## Driver

The driver is the human "star." Harness drivers are professional athletes who risk their lives every time they sit in the sulky. While some drivers also train horses, the current trend is toward drivers dedicating their efforts to the racing.

Without the demands of daily care of the horses, a driver can focus on his responsibilities, which include:

- Maneuvering and positioning the horse to perform its best during a race,
- Conveying information to the trainer regarding soundness or equipment adjustments to enhance the horse's future performance.



While weight and gender of an individual are not vitally important to earning a driver's license, a candidate must be in good physical condition. Drivers make split-second decisions, so they must have good reflexes, the strength to control a 1,500 pound animal and a competitive nature. They must also have the courage and common sense to make strategic decisions

while traveling at thirty-five miles per hour with no windshield, power steering or brakes. To become a driver, a series of written, medical and practical tests must be passed. There are different levels of licenses, and as a driver gains experience, he or she can move up through the ranks to a full or "A" license. U.S. and Canadian requirements are slightly different.

**Compensation:** Drivers generally earn 5 percent of what the horse earns in purses. At some tracks, they also get a guaranteed minimum per drive, and many drivers get tips as well. Most drivers make \$20,000 - \$50,000 a year, but the very best drivers can earn over \$500,000 annually.

## Trainer

The trainer is responsible for the management and care of all the horses in his/her stable. Some trainers own all of their own horses, but most train for owners who pay them a daily or monthly rate plus a percentage of the horse's earnings. Some trainers work exclusively for one owner (private trainer) and are paid a salary plus a bonus based on the stable's performance. A trainer's responsibilities include:



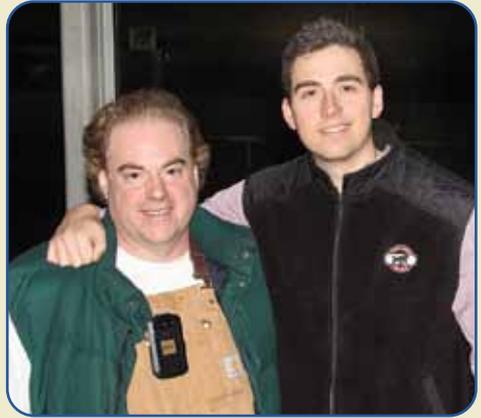
- Developing exercise, training and racing schedules, as well as shipping the horse when needed,
- Selecting the appropriate driver for the horse,
- Determining proper shoeing and veterinary care (type and scheduling),
- Communicating with owners regularly in regard to the horse's progress,
- Hiring support staff (caretakers, second-trainers, stall cleaners, etc.),
- Maintaining medical, financial and billing records (larger stables have book keepers or accountants to do most of this work),
- Selecting horses for owners to purchase and acting as agent in helping owners sell their horses.

To become a licensed trainer in North America, an individual must demonstrate his experience with horses, be recommended by other licensed trainers, and pass a written examination as determined by the United States Trotting Association or Standardbred Canada.

**Compensation:** Trainers usually charge a daily rate ranging from \$20/day to \$100/day plus they earn 5 percent of what each horse makes in purses. Their annual earnings would be based on the number of horses trained. This might range from \$20,000 to \$200,000 or more depending on the stable's success.

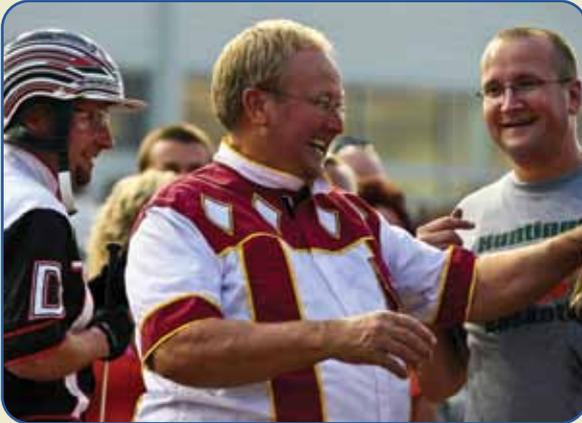
## Owner

Owners are the cornerstone of the racing industry. While most owners have careers in other fields, a select few manage their stables full time. The owner takes financial risks and reaps any rewards. The owner pays for the horse, its equipment, its care and the trainer. He also must make investment decisions from a business standpoint. Standardbred racehorses can cost as little as \$1,500 or hundreds of thousands of dollars. Those with breeding potential can be worth millions of dollars. Most owners are “regular folks,” many of whom became interested in harness horses by watching the races. They come from all walks of life.



Ownership takes many forms – individual, partnerships, corporate and syndicates, in which a large group of people own several horses. Syndicates have become very popular thanks to the ease of staying in touch through the Internet. The idea of shared (and sometimes fixed) risk and benefit is often an economical way to introduce newcomers to horse ownership.

A major appeal of harness racing is that owners can become very active in the sport. While some just write a check to the trainer each month, many go to the barn regularly to jog and work with their own horses, sometimes driving them in races. (Can you imagine the owner of a Major League Baseball team playing shortstop?



Owner-amateur driver Mal Burroughs, whose primary business is construction, recently won the Hambletonian, the sport’s biggest trotting race.

**Compensation:** Owners’ earnings are based on the percentage of ownership, which is variable according to the quality of the horse and the level of competition. With the increasing expenses involved in getting a horse to

the races, it should not be assumed that owning racehorses is automatically a money-making endeavor, although this is the desired outcome.

# Farm Professions



There are many important racing professions that are not based at the racetrack. These jobs are at breeding centers and farms, training centers and boarding facilities where horses are bred, raised and trained. The early care a foal receives is critical because the horse is growing rapidly both mentally and physically. The typical racehorse is introduced to harness and equipment at fourteen to sixteen months of age.

## Farm Administrator

As with any business, horse farms need support staff and the bigger the farm, the bigger the need for receptionists, bookkeepers and secretaries.

Detailed medical, pedigree, training and breeding records must be kept for each horse on the farm. Billing records must be accurate and sent out monthly or seasonally, and invoices must be processed for payment. Arrangements for prospective client visits must be handled professionally. While computers make these tasks much easier than they once were, there is increasing demand for more and more records.



**Compensation:** Salary for a farm administrator may range from \$25,000 – \$75,000, depending on the level of responsibility.

## Farm Caretaker



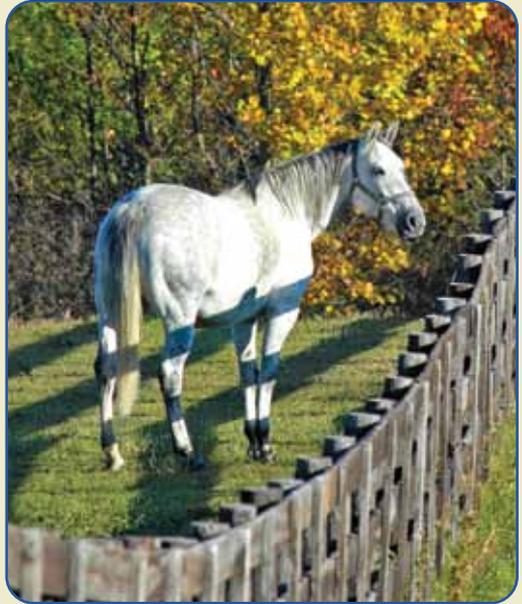
While there are similarities between farm grooms and racetrack grooms, the farm groom will generally care for a larger group of horses with less intensive individualized care. In addition, he will have the added responsibility of broodmare and foal care, depending on the time of year. The farm caretaker may also have responsibilities for farm maintenance, the yearling sale, and farm equipment operation.

**Compensation:** Salary for a farm caretaker may range from \$15,000 – \$40,000.

## Farm Manager

The farm manager has complete responsibility for the farm's operations. This is a top management position that requires years of experience in animal husbandry as well as a general understanding of farming techniques and procedures. Depending on the specific nature of the farm, these responsibilities can include:

- Selecting and supervising all staff,
- Supervising farm maintenance
- Selecting and purchasing of feed and equipment,
- Supervising care and monitoring the health of all the horses on the farm,
- Communicating with clients (and potential clients) and the farm owners regarding animal care, breeding selections and options,
- Representing the interests of the farm, including promoting and advertising its business facilities and products.



**Compensation:** Salary for a farm manager may range from \$25,000 - \$100,000, depending on the level of responsibility.

## Foaling Attendant



The foaling attendant must be a detail-oriented, level-headed individual who can stay calm in the event of a crisis. The foaling attendant is a key person in the success of any breeding farm and experienced attendants are in demand.

The foaling attendant's responsibilities include:

- Observing the mare prior to and during the birthing process (foaling),
- Providing assistance in the event of problems during foaling.

**Compensation:** The foaling attendant is often a seasonal employee. Wages may be either hourly or salaried and may range from \$10,000 - \$20,000 per foaling season.

## Stallion Manager

The stallion manager handles and manages the farm's breeding stallions under the direction of the farm manager. He must be an experienced horseman, capable of handling the often valuable, but often volatile studs with a firm, yet measured manner to assure their health and production.

Responsibilities include:

- Caring for the stallions on a daily basis,
- Preparing the stallions for breeding duties,
- Supervising semen transport as needed.

**Compensation:** Salary for a stallion manager may range from \$25,000 – \$40,000.



## Training Center Manager



A training center may be a stand-alone facility or part of a larger farm. The training center manager has many of the same responsibilities as the farm manager, but may also deal with training track maintenance, stall rentals for trainers, blacksmiths, and therapy facilities. He is responsible for staffing these positions, but in many cases, depending on the size of the training center, must be able to assist in a variety of capacities.

Additionally, the training center manager must arrange for manure removal, billing and other clerical functions.

**Compensation:** Salary for a training center manager may range from \$50,000 - \$80,000 and depends on the level of responsibility.

# Racetrack Professions



The racetrack is a complex operation that demands the talents of hundreds of people in a variety of jobs, not all of which are horse-centric. Racetracks often play an important economic role in their community; they are high-profile crosses between a theater and a stadium, showcasing racing to the public. In the current business environment, many tracks combine positions and an eager, energetic individual may fill multiple roles.

Management structure of racetracks and specific job titles vary. At smaller racetracks, tasks and duties may be combined in different ways and/or managers may do more of the work themselves. At large racetracks, they may be supervising dozens of individuals within distinct departments.

Because many racetracks do not race throughout an entire year (hosting a “live meet” may range from thirty to 200 days), employees who work on the racing side may work at several different race tracks in the course of a given year. Compensation figures are based on the assumption that the individual will work an entire year (often among two or three racetracks) and thus represent an approximate annual salary.

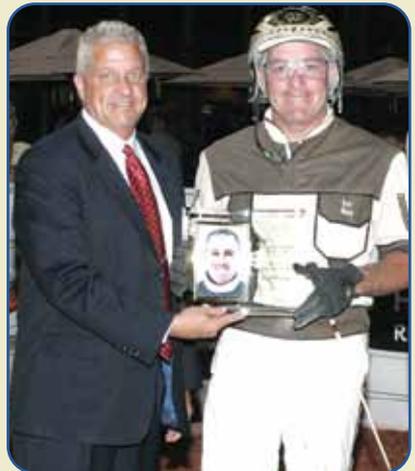
## General Manager

The general manager oversees all aspects of the track’s operation, from coordinating million dollar stakes races to making sure there is soap for patrons in the restrooms. He often has assistants to oversee specific areas, but they report to him and he makes the ultimate decisions.

The general manager’s responsibilities include:

- Supervising all employees, either directly or indirectly,
- Delegating authority as the track’s head of administration,
- Making all day-to-day decisions regarding operation of the racetrack,
- Implementing policies and procedures as directed by the track’s owners to maintain an efficient and profitable operation.

The general manager must be a competent administrator, capable of dealing with horsemen, patrons, regulatory bodies and government agencies and his staff. An intimate knowledge of the racing industry as a whole is critical.



**Compensation:** Salary for a general manager may range from \$75,000 – \$250,000 depending on the level of responsibility.

## Office Staff

In addition to the management positions discussed below, every racetrack needs executive assistants, receptionists, secretaries, bookkeepers and accountants to ensure smooth day-to-day operations. While these individuals may not have comprehensive knowledge of racing, it is a huge asset if they do.

**Compensation:** Salary of general office staff may range from \$25,000 - \$50,000 (comparable to similar positions outside of the horse industry).

At many tracks, specific administration duties are divided among departments each with its own manager or vice president. These departments may include:

## Racing Operations Department

This department is responsible for “putting on the show.” At some tracks, the individual in charge may also be given the title "Director of Racing." He may supervise track crews and judges. At some tracks, he is responsible for simulcasting, the sending and receiving of races to and from other locations for wagering purposes.

## Business Development Department

This department is responsible for maximizing the wagering, both on- and-off track. The manager is also often responsible for the track's player rewards program and may have responsibility to act as a liaison for any relationships the track has with advanced deposit wagering services, which allow people to bet on-line or by phone on the track's races. In many cases, he is also responsible for customer relations, since maintaining and finding patrons is a key to the track's success.

## Customer Relations Department

This department is responsible for making sure the racetrack has customers and keeping them happy. The manager often supervises all guest relations personnel (parking attendants, admission clerks and program sellers) as well as all food service operations, both concession and fine dining. He assists in coordinating on-track promotions and advertising as well.

## Marketing and Communications Department

This department is in charge of relationships with the local and industry media and with making sure they are informed of track events in a timely manner. The manager is also the supervisor of the track's website and any social media initiatives. At many tracks, he is also responsible for scheduling and hiring the track announcer and any on-air personalities used in a simulcast broadcast.

**Compensation:** Salary for each of these department manager positions may range from \$40,000 - \$100,000 depending on the level of responsibility.

## Racing Operations Personnel

### Charter

This individual views the progress of each race and after recording details of the race, creates the chart showing horses' positions at key points in the race. This information is later included in the racing program, which patrons use for handicapping purposes, so accuracy is a must. This individual must have a sharp eye and consistent judgment as well as knowledge of numerous computer systems. Some tracks use automated tracking systems, and at these tracks the charter must verify, record and transmit the information. The charter may also administer claims and transfers of ownership.

**Compensation:** Salary of a charter may range from \$30,000 - \$60,000.

### Facilities Maintenance Workers

The physical plant of a racetrack requires daily maintenance and cleaning. Custodians, porters and supervisors handle these duties. Most tracks also employ skilled tradesmen – carpenters, electricians, plumbers and mechanical technicians – to deal with everyday repairs and construction at the track. Another very important aspect of facility maintenance includes personnel who keep the actual racing surface in top (and safe) condition in all kinds of weather, both during the morning when horses are exercised and during the races. While large construction jobs may be sent to outside contractors, these key employees make sure the physical plant itself is running effectively.



**Compensation:** Salary of facility maintenance workers may range \$20,000 - \$70,000.

### Field Representative

In Canada, the field representative at each track functions as a branch office of Standardbred Canada, assisting members with licensing, registration and transfers. This individual also completes and verifies the Judges' "Official Race Reports," and assists the judges in preparing rulings, forms and reports.

In the United States, the field representative is usually an employee of the state's horsemen's association, acting as a liaison between horsemen and the association and between individual horsemen and track management

**Compensation:** Salary for a field representative may range from \$30,000 - \$50,000.

## Groundskeeper

With acres of grass (and pavement) to be maintained, groundskeepers and landscapers are critical to providing racetracks with a clean, neat, contemporary look. Their work is the first thing a patron sees.

**Compensation:** Salary of a groundskeeper may range from \$20,000 - \$40,000.

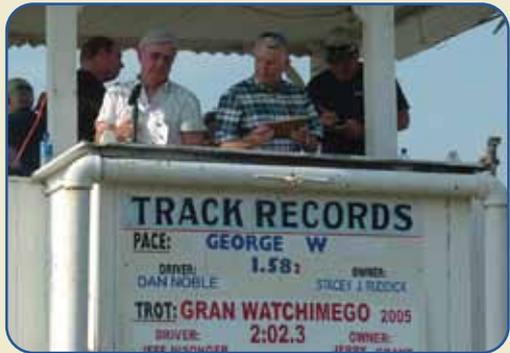


## Judges, Presiding and Associate

All race meets are conducted within rules of racing set by state or provincial racing commissions. In some jurisdictions, judges are hired exclusively by the commissions. In others the presiding judge is an employee of the commission, while the associate judges are hired by the track. Regardless, they act as official interpreters of the rules, both during the races and during post-position draws. Just as there are checks and balances in government, the judges provide a check and balance system in the race office.

Responsibilities include:

- Regulating the conduct of all races and all race participants,
- Observing the races to assure there are no rule violations and if there are, assess fines or suspensions as needed and posting the official order of finish and adjudicate the photo finish, if necessary,
- Conducting the post-position draw, usually three days prior to the races, and assure that drivers make their final choices in a timely manner,
- Instilling public confidence in the integrity of racing, which often means responding to patron emails or letters about specific races.



The judges are the ultimate authority in all matters pertaining to the daily racing program, and while an appeals process exists, as with most contests, the decision of the judges is final. Judges must have experience in the racing side of the industry and be decisive, but tactful and be of utmost character. Judges must be accredited either by the U.S. Trotting Association or Standardbred Canada and must be licensed by their state or provincial racing commission as well.

**Compensation:** Salary of a presiding or associate judge may range from \$30,000 - \$100,000.

## Paddock Judge

The paddock judge supervises the paddock, a secure area where horses go prior to racing. This area is limited to licensed grooms, owners, trainers and drivers who have horses racing.

The paddock judge's responsibilities include:

- Supervising the identification of each horse in the paddock prior to racing, usually with assistance from an identifier who checks the lip tattoo or freeze brand and also oversee pre-race sampling of blood and/or urine,
- Supervising paddock security, including the sign-in of participants and administration of the breathalyzer,
- Communicating with the presiding judge regarding issues or violations that occur in the paddock and orders from the judges to the starter and outrider.

**Compensation:** Salary of a paddock judge may range from \$20,000 - \$60,000.

## Patrol Judge

Although many tracks have done away with this position because of the advent of multi-camera broadcasting of races, which allows all three judges to be in the same place, with some watching the races live and others watching a TV monitor, the patrol judges are associate judges who view the races from a different vantage point to get perspective on rules infractions.

**Compensation:** Salary of a patrol judge may range from \$20,000 - \$60,000.

## Outrider

Not to be confused with a parade marshal who leads post parades, the outrider is an experienced horseback rider. He or she helps control unruly horses by assisting drivers prior to the start and in the event of an on-track accident. He chases and catches loose horses during races or warm-ups. The outrider must have knowledge of harness racing and its rules, and must be attentive at all times.

**Compensation:** Salary of an outrider may range from \$20,000 – 40,000.



## Photo Finish Operator/Race Timer

While these were separate positions years ago, the use of computers now allows one person to fill both roles at most tracks. Typically this person must be computer literate and have the ability to operate several computer systems simultaneously.

**Compensation:** Salary of a photo finish operator/race timer ranges from \$25,000 - \$40,000.



## Program Director

The program director is employed by the racetrack and is licensed by the United States Trotting Association. He works under the supervision of the race secretary and the judges, preparing the official records of each race prior to its being run, verifying information and transmitting it to the USTA, working hand-in-hand with the charter to assemble the post-race records and results and transmit those as well. At some tracks the program director and charter jobs are combined.

**Compensation:** Salary for a program director may range from \$35,000 - \$80,000.

## Race Secretary

The race secretary manages the races by structuring daily race cards. This individual oversees the day-to-day programming of competitive races to the satisfaction of track management, horsemen and fans. He or she may also supervise other backstretch activities.

Responsibilities include:

- Constructing a weekly condition sheet, the list of races to be held that fits the horse population available,
- Supervising the assistant race secretary and clerk of course or program director and other race office personnel,
- Ensuring all administrative details pertaining to the race card are performed according to the appropriate rules.

The race secretary must have thorough knowledge of harness racing, its rules and conditions because the ability to create competitive racing may be the single most important factor in a racetrack's success. The race secretary must be computer literate and be able to navigate varied systems for eligibility, earnings, etc.

**Compensation:** Salary for a racing secretary may range from \$50,000 – \$125,000.

## Regulatory Personnel

While some state and provincial racing commission personnel work out of central offices, the majority work in the field, at raceways or county fairs. Among the responsibilities are:

- Licensing and fingerprinting all participants, horsemen, owners, racetrack employees and others,
- Disbursing wagering handle for taxes (includes support personnel, accountants and clerical workers),
- Verifying all bets and payout prices and checking for unusual betting patterns,
- Supervising collection of blood and urine, pre and post-race, as dictated by state or provincial regulations to ensure no prohibited substances are being used.

Regulatory personnel work in conjunction with racetrack management and racing commission officials to assure the integrity of racing for both the industry and the public.

**Compensation:** Salary of regulatory personnel may range from \$25,000 - \$150,000.

## Starter

The starting of races, from a mobile starting gate, is actually a two-person job. The driver of the starting gate steers the car. The starter controls the speed and the gate itself. The starter is responsible for:

- Supervising the driver,
- Gathering the horses and providing instruction to the drivers so that all horses get away from the starting gate fairly and in the proper positions, controlling of the horses until he says "Go!",
- Enforcing the rules of the start, signaling a recall if necessary,
- Acting as a patrol judge (at some tracks).



**Compensation:** Salary of a starter may range from \$20,000 - \$35,000.

## Business Development Personnel

### Advance Deposit Wagering Attendant

This individual takes deposits for interactive wagering accounts that may be affiliated with the track. He must be trustworthy with money, and have good computer and interpersonal skills.

**Compensation:** Salary of an advance wagering attendant may range from \$25,000 - \$45,000.

### Money Room Attendant

Money room personnel work in a secure area separated from wagering areas. With the assistance of counting machines, they handle all of the money wagered and paid out over the course of a racing day. Their responsibilities include:

- Counting and recording all money before it is distributed to the tellers and cashing out the teller at the end of his or her shift,
- Redistributing cash to tellers as needed to replenish their “bank” in order to assure they have enough cash on hand to pay winning bettors,
- Counting, recording and preparing all cash for bank deposit at the end of the racing day.

Money room attendants must have a good head for numbers and the ability to work quickly under pressure. They must also be trustworthy and (often) bondable as they may handle tens of thousands of dollars daily.

**Compensation:** The salary of a money room attendant ranges from \$30,000 – \$50,000.

### Mutuel Clerk

The mutuel clerks or tellers sell and cash wagers from patrons using pari-mutuel terminals. They also have an important customer-relations function, as they probably have more face-to-face contact with patrons than any other track employee. These individuals are responsible for balancing their cash and payouts at the end of each shift. Some tellers work specialty areas for check cashing, credit card advances, Players Club services or to facilitate advance deposit wagering account transactions.



**Compensation:** Salary of a mutuel clerk is \$25,000 - \$35,000.

## Mutuel Manager

The mutuel manager supervises the wagering operations at a racetrack or off-track facility. This individual oversees the mutuel clerks, the totalisator (see below) and others. Mutuel supervisors assist the mutuel manager, who also schedules mutuel clerks and has input, if not direct control, into their hiring and firing.

**Compensation:** Salary of a mutuel manager may range from \$40,000 - \$80,000.

## Players' Club Supervisor and Attendant

The Players Club allows patrons to earn points toward rewards or cash bonuses. While each track's club is set-up differently, the Players Club Supervisor has responsibility for special events, establishing and maintaining the rewards structure and dealing with questions about the program. He must interact regularly with the track's biggest players to ensure their needs are being met. Players Club attendants process new membership applications and also answer questions about the program. They may also be responsible for handling redemption of points for rewards or prizes. At some tracks, a mutuel teller receives an hourly bonus to take on this responsibility in addition to selling and cashing tickets.

**Compensation:** Salary of a players' club attendant may range from \$25,000 - \$45,000.

## Simulcast Director



This is an important and evolving position. Some tracks derive more than 80% of their revenue from incoming simulcasts. The simulcast director has complete responsibility for simulcasting issues, the broadcast and wagering on races to and from other tracks. He decides which other tracks to schedule, creates the simulcast calendar and often supervises the program

department manager and simulcast television control. The simulcast director must be a salesman, negotiating with other tracks, off-track betting facilities and account wagering platforms to accept his track's signal. He often negotiates contracts and must be knowledgeable about harness racing as well as Thoroughbred and Quarter horse racing.

**Compensation:** Salary of a simulcast director may range from \$40,000 - \$100,000.

## Totalisator Personnel

“Tote” personnel actually work for the business that supplies the wagering terminals and associated computing equipment that calculate payouts and wagering totals. They also maintain the wagering terminals, including self-service terminals, which allow patrons to wager without approaching a mutuel clerk. These are usually skilled computer programmers or operators. Most tote companies are also responsible for the large tote board which displays odds and will-pays in the infield of the racetrack, as well as conveying the information to the track’s TV department to broadcast on-track and to simulcast locations.



**Compensation:** The salary of a totalisator personnel may range from \$25,000 - \$50,000.

## Customer Relations Personnel

### Executive Chef

Racetrack restaurants are prime areas to watch the races and must serve top-notch food. All of the careers available at a stand-alone restaurant are also available at the racetrack clubhouse restaurant. The executive chef's role is to ensure high quality dining. This individual not only is in charge of all the line cooks and all the food that comes out of the kitchen, but also creates special menu items and coordinates staffing and promotions with the food service director.



**Compensation:** Salary of an executive chef may range from \$25,000 - \$60,000.

### Food Service Director

Racetracks serve food ranging from hot dogs and fries to prime rib and lobster. The food service director supervises the concession stands and restaurants. He must take care of a myriad of details, including:

- Hiring all concession and restaurant staff and setting schedules,
- Managing costs and profits by selecting suppliers and determining pricing in conjunction with the Executive Chef, purchasing all food and supplies
- Insuring the facilities meet all health codes,
- Coordinating promotions and special offers in the restaurant with special racing events.

**Compensation:** Salary of a food service director ranges from \$40,000 - \$75,000.

### Group Sales Coordinator

This individual is responsible for attracting group parties to the track. Often attending trade shows and special events, he or she must be outgoing and detail-oriented. The group sales coordinator works with the executive chef and food service director to assemble special group menus and often is responsible for special decorations. He often serves as a party host, although some larger tracks hire a separate person for this task.

**Compensation:** Salary of a group sales coordinator may range from \$20,000 - \$40,000, although most also make commission based on the number of parties booked.

## Guest Relations Manager

Although this position is often subsumed into others, it is a key one and can be one of the most satisfying. The guest-relations manager's responsibilities include:

- Working with the players' club director to assure regular and high-level patrons are properly served,
- Dealing with special amenities and requests,
- Responding to and dealing with customer suggestions and complaints.

**Compensation:** Salary of a guest relations manager may range from \$25,000 - \$60,000.

## Security

Security is required at many points of the racetrack, including the backstretch and the paddock, but the most visible places for security are in the grandstand and clubhouse. With tens of thousands of dollars being wagered each day, security is critical. Security guards must have specialized training (weapons use, for example) and must also have a customer-service oriented personality to resolve disputes between patrons. They will also escort money room and mutuel department employees who carry large amounts of cash.

**Compensation:** Salary of a security officer may range from \$25,000 - \$50,000.

## Program Department Manager

This position usually incorporates two aspects of responsibility. First, the program department manager supervises the track print shop.

Timing and a solid understanding of the track's business are critical for this position. If too many programs are printed, they sit unused and the track wastes money, paper and resources. The program department manager is also responsible for staffing the program seller stands and sometimes the admissions and parking booths.



**Compensation:** Salary of a program department manager may range from \$25,000 - \$60,000.

## Marketing and Communications Personnel

### Announcer

The track announcer is one of the most well recognized racetrack employees even though many people never see him. He calls the races, vividly describing the action to the public. The best track announcers have a unique voice, a great memory and good eyesight. He plays an important role in enhancing the racing experience for fans and horsemen.



The announcer's duties include:

- Observing each race and conveying accurate information about it to the public,
- Informing the betting public of program changes or additional information not in the racing program, under direction from the judges,
- Informing the public of upcoming events and other on-track promotions.

**Compensation:** Salary of an announcer may range from \$30,000 - \$50,000.

### Handicapper/TV Host

This job, often coupled with other responsibilities at the racetrack, involves handicapping the races each day and then delivering the betting tips to the public. Some tracks do this live, on-air between races; others do it in a pre-race show; still others pre-record the tips, which are often supplemented with tip sheets with more wagering advice. The best public handicapper does not just give out winners, but provides a positive return on investment by identifying potentially good-value horses and information from his own experience and observations of.



**Compensation:** Salary of a racetrack handicapper may range from \$30,000 - \$50,000 depending on responsibilities.

### Audio/Visual Room Personnel

The audio/visual room at a typical racetrack is similar to what might be seen in a small to medium size city's network affiliate. The role of the TV department has grown with the increased popularity of simulcasting. In addition to a director of TV operations

who oversees the entire department, from equipment to staffing, other positions include graphic designers; floor director, who controls which camera views are broadcast; audio technicians; camera operators; Chyron and other effects operators who are responsible for getting the graphics onto the screen; an engineer, who is responsible for maintaining most of the hardware; and a simulcast attendant who makes sure that all incoming and outgoing simulcast equipment (satellite dishes, decoders, wiring, TV monitors) is working properly.



**Compensation:** Salary of television department personnel may range from \$25,000 - \$75,000.

## Marketing Director

This individual is responsible for all communications with the media. He or she issues press releases before and after races or promotions. The marketing director interacts with local print and broadcast media, pitches story ideas about the racetrack and often serves as a spokesman, appearing on TV or being interviewed for newspapers or radio. In recent years, the marketing director has often taken on the added role of working with social media like Facebook and Twitter. The marketing director may also write articles for the racetrack's website.

**Compensation:** Salary of a marketing director may range from \$35,000 - \$75,000.

## Webmaster



The racetrack's website is the first interaction that many people have with a racetrack when they are looking for a racing schedule, dining information, entries or promotions. It is critical that the website be updated regularly. While many webmasters are strictly responsible for updating and editing content, others have responsibility for designing graphics for the site and will periodically review (with other management) the site's effectiveness by analyzing volume of use and other metrics.

**Compensation:** Salary of a webmaster may range from \$30,000 - \$50,000.

# Specialized Skilled Professions

These individuals are usually independent contractors, self-employed or work for someone else's company. They are usually not racetrack employees. Compensation varies for independent contractors.

## Accountant

The unique aspects of running an equine business are often handled by accountants who have a general understanding of the horse industry.

## Attorney

The legal implications and ramifications of horse ownership are difficult to navigate. Many attorneys choose to specialize their practices in horse-related issues.

## Equine Dentist

The equine dentist performs check-ups, which include floating the horse's teeth as well as diagnosing and treating specific problems in the horse's mouth. While there are some educational programs that teach equine dentistry, most equine dentists serve as dental assistants or apprentices first and learn the trade in that manner.

## Farrier

A farrier is a blacksmith who specializes in shoeing horses, but he or she is more than just a metalworker. His knowledge of conformation, hoof health and composition, and the many shoe types and materials available are critical to any racehorse's success. While some schools offer courses in this field, on-the-job training as an intern or apprentice is necessary.



## Equine Insurance Agent

Just as accountants and attorneys may specialize in horses, so do insurance agents. Racehorses can be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, so there is a need for specialized insurance advisors. Policies are customized to meet the risk requirements of each horse owner, and a value is assigned to each horse which is tricky, since the value can change based on the horse's current form and earnings potential. Equine insurance advisors must be properly accredited and generally have previous insurance experience. Agents typically work on commission.

## Scientist/Lab Technician

Qualified personnel are needed by laboratories that deal with racehorse-related matters. Some of these laboratories are independent businesses, while others are affiliated with universities or state agencies. These labs analyze blood and urine samples to determine health problems and to ensure prohibited substances have not been used by equines or humans during races. Related positions in artificial insemination, embryo transfer and blood typing to verify parentage are also available. This is a fast-growing industry, which requires an ability to keep abreast of new technologies and a solid understanding of both biology and chemistry.



## Photographer

In years past, the photographer was an employee of the track and took pictures for whatever purposes needed (promotions, publicity and, of course, the winner's circle). Promotional and publicity photos are usually taken by the marketing director or webmaster, while an independent photographer contracts with the track to provide winner's circle pictures. There are also opportunities for independent photographers to work with commercial websites, trade journals and other media sources.



## Equine Therapist

This career can cover a wide range of activities. In addition to traditional therapy methods, there are continually increasing therapy options including equine swimming pools and aqua spas, hyperbaric chambers (where horses breathe pure oxygen in a pressurized compartment) and treadmills as well as more traditional techniques of equine massage, acupuncture and acupressure. Equine therapy continues to mirror the advancements being made in human therapy techniques. Some practitioners are mobile, moving among many farms, racetracks or training centers, while others have their own permanent facility.

## Veterinarian

The veterinarian is an important member of the team required for a horse to reach and maintain its potential. The participation of the veterinarian includes:



- Developing a program to maintain the horse's health, including vaccination and worming schedules and a regular check-up program,
- Providing diagnosis and suggesting therapeutic care for disease, injuries and emergencies.

Whenever a horse requires medical care of any sort, the veterinarian is called. Veterinarians may be independent practitioners who center their practice at racetracks; employees of breeding farms caring for mares, stallions and foals; researchers or instructors at universities or clinics conducting specialized research related to equine health. Veterinarians are highly educated and often specialize in a certain area.

Racetracks are required to have a veterinarian on call during the races. Some vets limit their practice to this. They evaluate lameness at the request of the judges and deal with accidents or injuries occurring on the racetrack or in the paddock.

## Veterinary Assistant

The job of veterinary assistant is an attractive alternative for those who cannot attend college to earn a full veterinary degree. These individuals assist the veterinarian in his daily round, by providing basic care, applying medication under the doctor's instruction, providing post-surgical care and assisting with minor and major surgeries.

There are a number of certification programs available leading to careers in this field. In rare cases, an individual with previous equine experience may be hired without certification.



# Other Related Careers

## Association Staff

There are a myriad of groups related to the racing industry, each of which requires knowledgeable individuals to fulfill the purpose(s) of the organization. From state horsemen's and racetrack associations to equine welfare groups, these entities benefit greatly by hiring employees already familiar with the racing industry.

## Farmer

Racehorses must be fed high quality feed, including hay and grain, to ensure success on the racetrack. In addition to providing basic horse feed, there is also a demand for special mixes for specific dietary needs. An understanding of equine nutrition and new research helps the farmer to better serve his equine clients.

## Journalist/Media Professional

Trade journals, newspapers, broadcast and alternative media as well as many of the associations and organizations affiliated with horse racing all require full-time and free-lance writers to cover major industry events.

## Sales Company

While the fall yearling sales are the highest profile auctions, sales involving older horses are held year-round. There are numerous full and part-time positions available with the sales company, ranging from the general manager to pedigree writers who research a horse's lineage to assemble the catalog information to best highlight his successful relatives. Auctioneers and bid-spotters are active in the sales arena. There is also need for those who lead and present the horses for inspection prior to being sold.



## Staking Service

A staking service acts as an agent for owners, making payments to various organizations at certain points in time in order to make horses eligible for particular races. Individuals employed in this field must have comprehensive understanding of the racing business and must be computer literate. They keep detailed records in order to make sure they do not miss a deadline. They should have good interpersonal skills as well.

## Tack and Equipment Sales

Horse racing requires resources to supply a full range of horse-related equipment and accessories. As with any sales position, knowledge of the product line is critical as is the ability to successfully interact with potential customers.



## Tack and Equipment Manufacturers

While there are manufacturing jobs in horse racing, there are also opportunities available for research and development of new products. This is especially true in race bike/sulky design.

## Equine Transportation

While many trainers transport their own horses, larger racing stables are often spread among multiple racetracks so there is increasing demand for horse transportation providers. These companies may offer services which range from basic trucking to more luxurious accommodations, and in some cases, may offer airline transport services. Experience in driving a truck or trailer rig and in handling horses is necessary.

# Industry Resources

**Canadian Sportsman**  
[www.canadiansportsman.ca](http://www.canadiansportsman.ca)

**Hambletonian Society**  
[www.hambletonian.org](http://www.hambletonian.org)

**Harness Horse Youth Foundation**  
[www.hhyf.org](http://www.hhyf.org)

**Harness Racing Museum & Hall of Fame**  
[www.harnessmuseum.com](http://www.harnessmuseum.com)

**Harness Racing Update**  
[www.harnessracingupdate.com](http://www.harnessracingupdate.com)

**Harness Tracks of America**  
[www.harnesstracks.com](http://www.harnesstracks.com)

**Horseman & Fair World**  
[www.harnessracing.com](http://www.harnessracing.com)

**Standardbred Canada**  
[www.standardbredcanada.ca](http://www.standardbredcanada.ca)

**United States Harness Writers Association**  
[www.ushwa.org](http://www.ushwa.org)

**United States Trotting Association**  
[www.ustrotting.com](http://www.ustrotting.com)



## Do You Want A Career

- That combines sport, entertainment and business?
- That offers diverse opportunities working with and around horses?
- That provides entrepreneurial opportunities and a wide variety of positions?
- That affords opportunities for personal growth and individual accomplishment?

### Then A Harness Racing Career Is For You!

While the industry focus is on the racetrack, there is an enormous support system including breeding operations, farms and training centers, as well as manufacturers, sales and administrative organizations. Horse racing also employs talented individuals in other areas including accounting, restaurant management, farming and many others.

