

# PREPARING YOUR GROUND FOR A RODEO

## PREPARING YOUR GROUND FOR AN APRA AFFILIATED EVENT

The information provided is a guide for you to ensure the safety of competitors and stock on your rodeo grounds.

You will need a tractor or suitable equipment with an attachment i.e. (disc plough, scarifier, ripper). This type of implement will of course depend on what you have available and the type of ground you have to work with. We would like to ask you when your rodeo has a slack, this equipment be made available to work the arena for the slack events to have grounds as evenly prepared to replicate conditions in the performance rounds.

## WHAT TYPE OF GROUND DO YOU HAVE?

The first question is determining what type of ground conditions you have to work with, some examples: - clay, natural sand, sandy loam and grassy.

Note Rule 18.6 - Arena ripped, disced or softened arena surface with minimum surface depth of three (3) inch or eight (8) cms.

## CLAY SOILS

1. Clay based soils have a tendency to pack. This will make it difficult for a horse to find any grip in the turns. We are not talking about what the top of the ground looks like we need to get down to the hard base.
2. A scarifier or ripper should be used to break up that hard surface underneath, down about 6 or 7 inches.
3. The arena should be worked in both directions in order to bust up the ridges that have been left from the first rip. Once your arena has been worked both ways a set of harrows or some sort of drag implement should be used to level the surface safe from any ruts made from the tractor, rocks or clods.

## NATURAL SAND

1. This type of surface does not have a hard base so would not require the use of a plough etc, it will require water to hold the sand together.
2. The amount of water will depend on the type of sand. The surface may need to be levelled out.

## SANDY LOAM

1. This type of surface will require the use of an implement to break up the ground but to a depth of about 5 to 6 inches as long as there is not a hard pan underneath.
2. The sandy loam should offer enough support to livestock.



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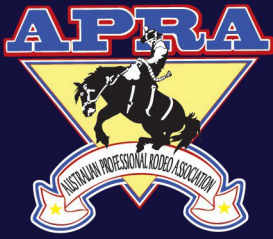


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## GRASSY

1. It is difficult to make decisions on what steps to take as the grounds are often used for other sports events.
2. Some rodeos use a layer of sand or fine loam. Fine gravel seems to be better than sand however this can be disastrous if not done properly. Do not water the surface from 2 weeks prior to the rodeo. The grass needs to be mowed very short. Do not water after laying it as this causes the surface to sweat making it very slippery. Lay surface as late as possible, the day of or day before the rodeo.

## INDOOR ARENAS

1. There should be at least enough dirt to withstand all runs on the ground and to keep it from breaking through to the floor.
2. These arenas are hard to work with as it greatly depends on the mixture of dirt used and what type of floor is under the dirt.
3. It takes a lot of experience with soil to try and make indoor arenas perfect time after time.

## BARREL RACING EVENT

You will be required to drag/work your barrel race pattern during your event in order to give each contestant an equal opportunity at the same ground. This will also depend on what type of ground you have. The result you are looking for is to keep furrows around the barrels as minimal as possible. The deeper the furrows, the more chance for injury and slower times. We suggest you work your pattern on clay based soils after every 10 contestants as per rule 45.29 below, sandy loam may require a rake after 5 to 10 and natural sand after 5 as the track will get heavy on natural sand.

### Some important APRA barrel racing rules for committees to note:

**45.16** Before commencement of rodeo, horses may be exercised in arena with the approval of the committee, director and/or stock contractor. No setting up of drums in arena on day of rodeo. No circling around markers once course is marked. Any member abusing this privilege may be removed from the arena by committee, director and/or stock contractor. Further disciplinary action may be taken.

**45.25** If a junior and open barrel race is run consecutively the open event will run first.

**45.29** A tractor drag of the arena surface must be done after a maximum of 10 competitors (or less) in both the slack and performance. Ie; if there are 24 competitors drawn in the slack and 10 in the performance then a tractor drag must occur after each 10 competitors (or less) in the slack and vice versa. This is the responsibility of the committee or stock contractor. If a tractor is unavailable then a similarly suitable implement is acceptable.



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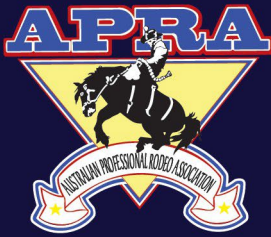


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## The ingredients for an exciting and safe barrel race:

1. Good ground conditions are extremely important not only for safety but for the fairness to each competitor.
2. Electric Timers. Set timer at the same height and position for each performance or slack and lock the legs. Height of the timer eyes shall be between 36 and 42 inches from the ground. When setting electric eye on the markers, centre of eye should be positioned over point where marker comes out of the ground.
3. 3 x 44 gallon size barrels (not heavy steel). Must be empty and have at least one end enclosed and this end positioned at the top.
4. Central arena access to Start/Finish line.

For further information on safe ground and how to prepare and improve arena surfaces we encourage you to visit <https://www.facebook.com/SAFsafearenafooting?mibextid=ZbWKwL>.

The APRA and its members would like to thank you for taking the time to read through this brochure and striving to provide the best possible conditions for your rodeo.

The APRA greatly appreciate all the hard work you put forth to have professional rodeos year after year. If there are any problems that we could help you with please feel free to contact our office.



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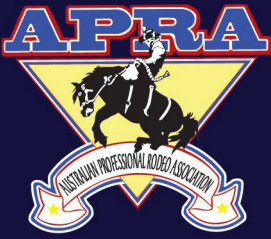


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Example of Arena soil profile layers:



This diagram illustrates the recommended arena soil profile layers.

**Base layers** are typically 6"-12" in thickness, but no less than 4" should be considered as an absolute minimum. If the underlying soil is soft, then a greater base layer thickness is required. If the underlying soil is sandy or gravelly soil, then you can get by with a smaller base thickness.

**The cushion layer** overlies the base material and forms the basis of the footing conditions. Cushion soil depth is ideally about 12" in thickness (when compacted). Although 12 inches deep, only the top 2"-4" is harrowed into a "fluff" or non-compacted state. The level of the compaction of the cushion soil underneath the harrow depth is critical and changes based upon the need of the arena for the type of event and the particular footing needs. For example, the harrow depth for barrel racing may be something like 4" deep with an underlying layer of intermediate compaction of perhaps 2"-3" in thickness (often referred to as the sub-cushion layer) with the underlying cushion-soil layer at higher soil compaction level.



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