



**EQUESTRIAN
CANADA
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**EQUINE CARE PROGRAM
FACILITY MANUAL**

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INTRODUCTION

About the Equine Care Program

To maintain a thriving equestrian industry in Canada, it is important that we proactively take steps to demonstrate our alignment with best practices in horse welfare. Building public trust is accomplished through transparency, which is what Equestrian Canada (EC) aims to achieve with the Equine Care Program.

The Equine Care Program is the first national animal care program for horses in Canada. Animal care programs provide a level of assurance that animals are being cared for in a manner that ensures good health and welfare. Animal care programs currently exist for other species in Canada, but not for horses. Therefore, EC has sought to fill this gap by creating a program that will help facilities showcase their management practices and make practical improvements where needed.

The Equine Care Program certification provides a stamp of quality assurance for your clients – that you strive to maintain the best standards of care for horses. Being certified provides your clients with confidence that they have chosen a facility where the welfare of horses is prioritized, and your facility is dedicated to continuous improvement.

The standards in the Equine Care Program are based on the minimum requirements outlined in the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines (or “Code of Practice”).

The Code of Practice can be accessed at: https://www.nfacc.ca/pdfs/codes/equine_code_of_practice.pdf

The goals of the Equine Care Program are to:

- Provide assessments to identify strengths and improvements for horse management systems
- Recognize facilities that successfully demonstrate the program requirements
- Create an industry benchmark that will drive continuous improvements in horse care and management in Canada, where needed

This program was developed in consultation with an expert committee consisting of veterinarians, industry members, academics, and auditors. EC also sought extensive input from our equestrian community through a series of focus groups and interviews with equine facility owners and veterinarians, and a national online survey of different equestrian stakeholders across Canada, including horse owners, coaches and riders, horse professionals, and more. The program is also informed by national legislation pertaining to horses in Canada.

The Equine Care Program is reviewed regularly and is subject to updates based on revisions to the Code of Practice and evolving evidence-based research.

Who Can Participate?

The Equine Care Program is designed for facilities that offer services such as boarding, breeding, training, raising, and maintaining the health and welfare of horses. This program is for all facilities, both new and well established, and of all sizes. This program was created with an intimate understanding of the breadth and diversity of housing and management systems within the Canadian equine industry.

Facilities can become certified if they offer one or multiple types of services. Certain program requirements may not apply to your facility, depending on the services you offer, your facilities, and the horses in your care.

About this Manual

Equestrian Canada has developed this manual as an easy-to-use, comprehensive resource to help you understand the requirements of this program and how to achieve them, within the context of your facility and the services you provide.

The term *horses* in this manual refers to all domestic equine species, including horses, ponies, miniature horses, donkeys, mules, and hinnies.

Using this Manual

Facilities are assessed on different criteria related to horse management and care. Each criterion in this manual contains the following sections:

Desired Outcome	Identifies the overarching goal or outcome that the program requirements are designed to achieve.
Rationale	Explains why the program requirements are included and how it is important for horse health or welfare.

Requirements	These are the program requirements that you must meet to become certified.
Templates	<p>These are templates for protocols, records, and other program documents, that must/may be required for this program.</p> <p>All templates can be found in the online Resource Library in EC's ECampus.</p>
Guidance Documents	<p>These documents are intended to help you evaluate your horses, facilities, and management practices, identify areas for improvement, and help you understand and achieve the program requirements.</p> <p>All guidance documents can be found in the online Resource Library in EC's ECampus.</p>
Recommended Practices	Provides additional information that is not required for this program and will not be evaluated by an assessor, but may be helpful for improving your own horse management and care practices. You are encouraged to implement these at your facility.

Benefits to Certification

There are many benefits to becoming certified:

- Certification demonstrates your commitment to quality horse care, which helps build trust between yourself and clients, staff, and your community.
- Gain access to tools and templates for protocols, records, forms, and other program documents that will help you build a robust horse management system.
- Promote your status as a certified facility, by using the program's logo graphic on your website, social media platforms, and other marketing materials.
- Have your facility listed as an Equine Care Program certified facility on EC's website. Your facility will also be featured in EC communications.

Becoming Certified

The steps for becoming certified through the Equine Care Program include:

Step 1 – Complete Training Course

Complete EC's online ECampus course: *Certification 101: An Introduction to the Equine Care Program*. This course walks you through the program standards, application, and certification process, and provides you access to the online Resource Library. This course takes only 30 minutes or less to complete.

Step 2 – Submit Application and Pre-Assessment Documents

Complete and submit the application form and pre-assessment documents in EC's ECampus.

The documents listed under **Criteria 1 to 3** in this manual are referred to as the *pre-assessment documents*. These are critical components of the program, and your facility must demonstrate that you have met these requirements before an assessor is scheduled to visit your facility.

Step 3 – Pre-Assessment Interview and Payment

You will be contacted to schedule a mutually agreeable date and time for an assessor to visit and evaluate your facility. You will also be issued an invoice for a deposit payment.

Step 4 – On-site Assessment

An assessor will arrive at your facility at the scheduled date and time and conduct an *on-site assessment*, where they will evaluate the requirements listed under **Criteria 4 to 14** in this manual.

When the assessor has completed their observations, they will record their findings in an assessment report and review their findings with you. They will also submit the report to be evaluated for certification review.

Step 5 – Become Certified

Your assessment report will be reviewed, and you will be notified if your facility is recommended for certification. If your facility is recommended for certification, you will be provided an agreement to sign. Once this is completed, your facility will become Equine Care Program certified.

Questions and Support

Our team is here to help. If you would like more information about the program or if you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact us:

Email: equinecare@equestrian.ca

EQUINE CARE PROGRAM CRITERIA

PRE-ASSESSMENT

CRITERION 1. VCPR

Desired Outcome

A Veterinary-Client-Patient-Relationship (VCPR) is established annually between the facility and a veterinarian.

Rationale

A VCPR is established when a veterinarian becomes familiar and knowledgeable of horses at a facility, and therefore, can make appropriate clinical judgements and provide sound advice. Having a VCPR is critical to ensuring responsible horse health care and appropriate drug use.

Requirements

Number	Requirement
1.0	<p>Facility has a written VCPR Validation Form.</p> <p>The veterinarian who signs this form is referred to as the <i>Attending Veterinarian</i>. This must be the same veterinarian who signs your Herd Health Plan Review Form (<i>see Criteria 2</i>). If the facility has a working relationship with more than one veterinarian, the form only needs to be signed by the veterinarian who you consult primarily about herd health. It is acceptable if other veterinarians perform veterinary services for client horses.</p> <p>Client horses refer to any horses at the facility that are owned by other parties. For example, any horses that are boarded at the facility for care, training or exercise, rehabilitation, or breeding purposes are considered client horses.</p> <p>The form must be signed and dated by the Attending Veterinarian and the facility owner within 12 months of the assessment date. The form is considered valid from the date of signage by the Attending Veterinarian and must be resigned annually.</p> <p>At minimum, the form must include:</p>

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- Attending Veterinarian’s first and last name, clinic or business name and address, and phone number.
 - Attending Veterinarian’s signature and date of signage.
 - Facility address.
 - Facility owner’s first and last name, and phone number.
 - Facility owner’s signature and date of signage.
 - A VCPR is established between the Attending Veterinarian and facility owner.

Facilities can use the provided template, or the Attending Veterinarian can include the above information on their business letterhead. The same form or letterhead can be re-signed annually by a veterinarian.

Templates

- VCPR Validation Form
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CRITERION 2. HERD HEALTH PLAN

Desired Outcome

The facility’s herd health plan is reviewed annually by a veterinarian.

Rationale

A herd health plan is a preventative health program designed to maintain the health of horses. An effective herd health plan emphasizes prevention, rapid diagnosis, and quick decision making of any sick or injured horses at the facility.

The plan should consider proactive health management, such as parasite control and vaccinations, biosecurity, and the identification and treatments of any sick or injured horses. It is important that your plan is developed in consultation with a veterinarian to ensure your protocols are appropriate and effective for the horses at your facility. Your protocols must be reviewed by a veterinarian annually, as their recommendations may change each year.

Requirements

Number	Requirement
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2.0 Facility has a written Herd Health Plan Review Form.

The form is signed and dated by the Attending Veterinarian and facility owner within 12 months of the assessment date. The form is considered valid from the date of signage by the Attending Veterinarian and must be re-signed annually.

At minimum, the form must include:

- Attending Veterinarian’s first and last name, clinic or business name and address, and phone number.
- Attending Veterinarian’s signature and date of signage.
- Facility address.
- Facility owner’s first and last name, and phone number.
- Facility owner’s signature and date of signage.
- The Attending Veterinarian has reviewed the facility’s herd health plan and the protocols are appropriate for maintaining herd health.

Facilities can use the provided template, or the Attending Veterinarian can include the above information on their business letterhead. The same form or letterhead can be re-signed annually by a veterinarian.

Templates

- Herd Health Plan Review Form

2.1 Facility has a written Parasite Control Protocol.

The parasite control method and frequency of administration is per the recommendations of the Attending Veterinarian, and it must prevent internal and external parasites. Multiple parasite control methods can be used (e.g., oral paste deworming, fecal egg counts).

At minimum, the protocol must include:

- Parasite control method(s).
- Frequency of method(s) used.

Templates

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- Parasite Control Protocol

Guidance Documents

- Parasite Control Guidance
-

2.2 Facility has written Parasite Control Records.

Records must reflect the method(s) and frequency indicated in the facility's Parasite Control Protocol (*see Number 2.1*).

At minimum, the records must include:

- Horse identifier (e.g., name of horse).
- Date of parasite treatment or date of testing (e.g., fecal egg counts).

Templates

- Parasite Control Record

Guidance Documents

- Parasite Control Guidance
-

2.3 If the Attending Veterinarian has advised the facility to vaccinate horses, the facility has a written Vaccination Protocol to prevent disease.
May apply

The vaccinations administered and the frequency of administration is per the recommendations of the Attending Veterinarian.

At minimum, the protocol must include:

- Types of vaccine(s) administered.
- Frequency of vaccination.

Horses may be exempt from vaccinations as per the advice of a veterinarian, such as those with a history of anaphylactic reactions or horses that do not travel off the property. The frequency of vaccine administration may also vary for individual horses, depending on their age and individual needs.

Templates

- Vaccination Protocol
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Guidance Documents

- Vaccination Guidance

2.4
May apply

If the Attending Veterinarian has advised the facility to vaccinate horses, the facility has written Vaccination Records.

The records must reflect the vaccinations administered and frequency of vaccination stated in the Vaccination Protocol (*see Number 2.3*).

At minimum, the records must include:

- Horse identifier (e.g., name of horse).
- Vaccines administered.
- Date of vaccine administration.

Any horses exempt from vaccinations, as per a veterinarian's recommendation, do not need to be reflected in the records.

Templates

- Vaccination Record

2.5

Facility has a written Sick and Injured Horses Protocol.

Sick or injured refers to horses showing signs of illness (non-infectious or infectious), injury (including lesions), lameness, laminitis (founder), or dental problems.

At minimum, the protocol must include:

- Horses are observed at least once per day for signs of well-being.
 - Information about signs of lameness and laminitis (founder), dental problems, colic, and infectious diseases (e.g., respiratory infections, equine infectious anemia), parasitism, and signs of toxicity (e.g., toxic plant consumption) in horses.
 - Information about normal vital signs of horses.
 - Actions taken if a horse is observed to be sick or injured. Horses must be treated accordingly, and veterinarian advice sought on appropriate care and treatment if horses do not improve, or arrangements for euthanasia are made, as needed.
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- Medications are purchased from regulated and reputable sources, including a veterinarian or veterinary clinic, pharmacy or veterinary pharmacy, or licensed animal medicine outlet.
 - Medications administered to horses are used in consultation with and as per the advice and directions of the prescribing veterinarian.

If the facility has client horses, the protocol must include:

- Actions taken to notify a client if their horse is sick or injured.
- Actions taken if a client's horse is sick or injured and the client cannot be contacted, or they refuse to provide treatment, causing the horse to be in distress. Refer to provincial legislation, as needed.

Prescribing veterinarian refers to the veterinarian who originally prescribed a medication. The medication may be dispensed by the prescribing veterinarian or another reputable source (*see above*). Using medications for horses in a way that differs from the directions provided by the prescribing veterinarian or from its licensed use without veterinary consultation is unacceptable. The prescribing veterinarian must be consulted for any extra- or off-label use of medications.

Treatment refers to items or actions intended to treat an injury, illness, or health condition. Some examples of treatment include, but are not limited to:

- Equine first aid
- Consultation with or services provided by a veterinarian or other professional (e.g., equine nutritionist, farrier)
- Medications prescribed by a veterinarian

Templates

- Sick and Injured Horses Protocol

Guidance Documents

- Lameness Scoring Guidance
- Body Condition Scoring Guidance
- Injury Scoring Guidance
- Sick and Injured Horses Guidance

Recommended Practices

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- Facilities should have a first aid kit available for horses. Employees should be trained and certified in equine first aid, as needed.
-

2.6 Facility has a written Infectious Disease Protocol.

At minimum, the protocol must include:

- New arrivals are segregated from resident horses for at least seven days and their health status monitored.
- New arrivals or horses suspected or confirmed to have an infectious disease are housed in a designated segregation area (indoors or outdoors). The protocol must indicate where and how horses are segregated, and at minimum, the area must prevent nose-to-nose contact with other horses.
- Water and feed sources in the segregation area are cleaned between uses.
- Authorities are advised of horses that are suspected or confirmed to have a federally reportable disease. Refer to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) website for details about federally reportable diseases for horses in Canada: <https://inspection.canada.ca>

Biosecurity measures refers to practices that are used to reduce or prevent the risk of pathogen transmission in horses.

If the facility has client horses, the protocol must include:

- Actions taken to notify clients of a confirmed case of infectious disease at the facility and biosecurity measures implemented (e.g., testing, quarantine, cleaning procedures).

Templates

- Infectious Disease Protocol

Recommended Practices

- Facilities should work with their Attending Veterinarian to develop a biosecurity plan to prevent and reduce the spread of infectious disease. See the CFIA National Farm and Facility Level Biosecurity Standard for the Equine Sector for details on how to develop a biosecurity plan: <https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/biosecurity/standards-and-principles/equine-sector/eng/1460662612042/1460662650577#a63>

2.7 Facility has a written Heat and Cold Stress Protocol.

At minimum, the protocol must include:

- Information about signs of heat and cold stress in horses.
- Actions taken to assist horses that show signs of heat or cold stress.

Assistance refers to any actions intended to address a horse that is heat or cold stressed, such as the removal or addition of blankets, bringing the horse indoors (e.g., into a barn), cold hosing or applying ice packs (for heat stress), or contacting a veterinarian, as needed.

Special attention should be paid to blanketed horses, as they are at higher risk of heat stress if not monitored closely.

Templates

- Heat and Cold Stress Protocol

Guidance Documents

- Heat and Cold Stress Guidance

2.8 If the facility has gestating mares or jennets, the facility has a written Foaling and
May apply Newborn Care Protocol.

Jennet refers to a female donkey.

If the facility has employees, the protocol must be included in the Employee Training Program (*see Criteria 7*).

At minimum, the protocol must include:

- Gestating mares or jennets are observed close to foaling at least twice per day for signs of health, well-being, and foaling.
- Expert advice or help from veterinarian or experienced personnel is sought if any abnormalities are observed during birth (e.g., foal is not visible after 10 minutes of active labour), following birth, or as needed.
- Newborn foals are monitored to ensure they can rise and suckle unassisted.
- Foals must receive colostrum. If colostrum is not available, an alternative antibody source is readily available.

Colostrum refers to the first milk produced by the mare or jennet at parturition and contains a high level of antibodies which protect newborn foals from infection until their own immune system has developed.

Templates

- Foaling and Newborn Care Protocol

Guidance Documents

- Foaling and Newborn Care Guidance
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CRITERION 3. BOARDING AGREEMENT

This section only applies to facilities that have client horses.

Desired Outcome

There is a boarding agreement that includes the facility’s protocols related to horse management and care.

Rationale

It is important that facility owners and their clients have a mutual understanding of the facility’s protocols. Misunderstandings can cause discrepancies in horse management, which poses a risk to horses. For example, if clients do not follow the facility’s parasite control protocol, this can expose other horses to higher loads of parasites and parasite-related disease. Having a boarding agreement with detailed information reduces risks, stress, interpersonal conflicts, and ensures consistent horse management practices for optimal herd health.

Requirements

Number	Requirement
3.0	Facility has a written Boarding Agreement that is provided to and signed by all clients. At minimum, the agreement must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parasite Control Protocol (<i>see Criteria 2</i>)

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- Sick and Injured Horses Protocol (*see Criteria 2*)
 - Infectious Disease Protocol (*see Criteria 2*)
 - Heat and Cold Stress Protocol (*see Criteria 2*)
 - Hoof Care Protocol (*see Criteria 4*)
 - Humane Handling and Training Ethics Agreement (*see Criteria 6*)

And the following, if applicable:

- Vaccination Protocol (*see Criteria 2*).
- Newborn and Foaling Care Protocol (*see Criteria 2*).
- Blanketing Protocol (*see Criteria 11*).

These documents can be included as an appendix in the boarding agreement.

Templates

- Boarding Agreement Example
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ON-SITE ASSESSMENT

CRITERION 4. HOOF CARE

Desired Outcome

Horse's hooves are trimmed to maintain hoof functionality and prevent overgrowth or abnormalities that may cause injury or discomfort.

Rationale

Regular hoof care is essential for overall horse health and longevity through hoof and leg soundness¹. All horses need regular hoof trimming and care to ensure proper hoof health.

Requirements:

Number	Requirement
4.0	<p>Facility has a written Farrier Schedule.</p> <p>The facility can have multiple schedules and farriers. Hooves must be trimmed frequently enough to ensure functional condition and prevent overgrowth or abnormalities (e.g., hoof cracks) that may cause a horse to be in pain or discomfort.</p> <p>At minimum, the schedule must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horse identifier (e.g., name of horse). All horses at the facility are reflected in the schedule, including client horses (<i>if applicable</i>).• Farrier first and last name, or company name.• Scheduled trimming date(s). <p>Templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Farrier Schedule <p>Guidance Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hoof Care Guidance

	<p>Recommended Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horses' hooves are trimmed every 5-8 weeks, which may depend on factors such as the horse's age, activity level, nutrition, and breed.
<p>4.1 May apply</p>	<p>If the facility has client horses, the facility has a written Hoof Care Protocol, and it is included in the Boarding Agreement (<i>see Criteria 3</i>).</p> <p>At minimum, the protocol must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients are responsible for ensuring their horse's hooves are trimmed and maintained to prevent hoof overgrowth and abnormalities that may cause injury or discomfort to horses. Actions taken to address a client's horse with hoof overgrowth or abnormalities, if the client cannot be contacted or refuses to provide proper hoof trimming and care, causing the horse to be in distress. Refer to your provincial legislation.

CRITERION 5. HEALTH AND IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES

Desired Outcome

Health and identification procedures are performed with minimal stress and pain. All dental and surgical procedures, including castration, are performed by a veterinarian or a competent individual under direct veterinary supervision.

Rationale

Castration and Dental Care

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) regards castration as a medical procedure which should be performed by a veterinarian using appropriate surgical, anesthetic, and analgesic techniques. However, in Canada, castration by non-veterinarians (or "operator") may be exempt from certain Veterinary Acts.

Dental care involves specialized knowledge and skills to perform a comprehensive oral exam, diagnose oral disease, and address health conditions that may arise during oral examinations and procedures and

to prescribe follow-up care. Dental procedures may also require sedatives to ensure the comfort of horses and safe evaluation or treatment of the oral cavity.

If the facility uses an operator for castration or dental procedures, they must demonstrate that the operator has a VCPR with a veterinarian.

Identification

There are different types of identification used for horses, including microchipping, tattooing, hot-iron and freeze branding, and iris scans. Identification provides proof of ownership and allows for the traceability of horses. Hot iron branding is painful to horses, as it causes swelling and skin sensitivity. Freeze branding may be less painful than hot iron branding. There is limited research on microchipping and lip tattooing, though the effects of microchipping are shorter lasting than hot-iron or freeze branding.

Hot-iron branding is discouraged, especially if other identification can be used. Pain control options should be discussed with a veterinarian when performing identification procedures.

Tail Docking

Tail docking for cosmetic reasons is prohibited. The CVMA views the alteration of an animal's anatomy for cosmetic or competitive purposes as medically unnecessary and puts the animal's health and welfare at risk. Tail docking reduces the tail to the extent that horses cannot effectively fend off flies and biting insects. The tail is also useful for displays of mental and physiological states (e.g., estrus).

Requirements

Number	Requirement
5.0 May apply	<p>If the facility uses a non-veterinarian (operator) to perform castration on horses, and it is permissible by provincial legislation, the facility has a written VCPR Castration Validation Form.</p> <p><i>Operator</i> refers to a skilled individual who performs castration on horses and is not a licensed veterinarian.</p> <p>The form must be signed and dated by a veterinarian and the operator within 12 months of the assessment date. The form is considered valid from the date of signage by the veterinarian.</p> <p>At minimum, the form must include:</p>

- First and last name of the operator, business name (*if applicable*), and phone number.
- Operator’s signature and date of signage.
- Veterinarian’s first and last name, clinic or business name, and phone number.
- Veterinarian’s signature and date of signage.
- The operator has a valid VCPR with a licensed veterinarian who is willing to supply training (on the procedure and pain management), prescribe the required drugs for pain control and provide interventions, if needed.
- The operator meets the Code of Practice requirements to perform castration on horses (*see below*).

The requirements in the Code of Practice include:

- The scrotal area must be examined to ensure normal scrotal anatomy. If there is evidence of an abnormality, castration must only be performed by a veterinarian
- The handling and restraint methods must not cause injury or unnecessary suffering
- Pain control must be provided. At a minimum, this must include a local anesthetic and a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug. Castration must not begin until the local anesthetic has taken effect
- The horse must be monitored during and after the procedure and, if complications occur, a veterinarian must be contacted without delay.
- Horses with one or more retained testicle or other scrotal abnormalities (e.g., hernias) must only be castrated by a veterinarian.

Facilities can use the provided template, or the veterinarian can include the above information on their business letterhead. The same form or letterhead can be resigned annually by a veterinarian. The veterinarian who signs this form can be different than the Attending Veterinarian.

Templates

- VCPR Validation Castration Form

5.1 May apply	If the facility uses a non-veterinarian (operator) to perform dental procedures on horses, the facility has a written VCPR Validation Dental Form.
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Operator refers to a skilled individual who performs dental procedures on horses, and is not a licensed veterinarian, such as an equine dentist.

The form must be signed and dated by a veterinarian and the operator within 12 months of the assessment date. The form is considered valid from the date of signage by the veterinarian.

At minimum, the form must include:

- First and last name of the operator, and phone number.
- Operator’s signature and date of signage.
- Veterinarian’s first and last name, clinic or business name, and phone number.
- Veterinarian’s signature and date of signage.
- The operator has a valid VCPR with a licensed veterinarian who is willing to supply training (on the procedure and pain management), diagnose oral disease or other issues, prescribe the required drugs for pain control, sedation, and provide interventions, as needed.
- The operator has the competencies to perform dental procedures and only works under direct veterinary supervision.

Facilities can use the provided template, or the veterinarian can include the above information on their business letterhead. The same form or letterhead can be re-signed annually by a veterinarian. The veterinarian who signs this form can be different than the Attending Veterinarian.

Templates

- VCPR Validation Dental Form

Recommended Practices

- Dental care for horses should be performed at least annually by a licensed veterinarian.
- If you have equine health and mortality insurance, review your dental care policies. Equine health and mortality insurance policies may be considered void if dental procedures are performed by a non-veterinarian.

5.2 May apply	If the facility performs horse identification procedures, the facility has a written Identification Protocol.
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Identification procedures include hot-iron or freeze branding, tattooing, and microchipping.

If the facility has employees that perform or assist with identification procedures, the protocol must be included in the Employee Training Program (*see Criteria 7*).

At minimum, the protocol must include:

- Identification method(s) used.
- Handling, stress, and pain mitigation measures implemented (*see below*).
- Requirement that horses are never branded on the jaw or cheek or branded when wet (*if applicable*).

Examples of handling, stress, and pain mitigation measures includes:

- Providing sedation, analgesia, and local anesthesia (*if applicable*) during the identification procedure.
- Administering a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug as advised and prescribed by a veterinarian.

Templates

- Identification Protocol

5.3 Tail docking for cosmetic purposes is prohibited. It is only permitted for medical reasons as determined by a veterinarian.

Tail docking involves the amputation of part of the horse's tailbone.

CRITERION 6. HANDLING AND TRAINING

Desired Outcome

Horses are handled, ridden, and trained humanely and safely.

Rationale

Humane handling techniques reduce stress, fear, and the risk of injury to horses and handlers. Horses have evolved as a prey species with a strong fight/flight response. Therefore, horses should be handled calmly with minimal pressure and consistent, predictable cues or aids. Equipment used during handling, riding, or training should be effective without causing stress, discomfort, or injury to the horse and designed for maximum safety.

There is zero tolerance of abuse towards horses.

If any persons demonstrate abusive actions towards horses during the on-site assessment, the facility owner or employee(s) must promptly intervene and request immediate cessation of the abuse. Permitting or performing abuse towards horses will result in a failure of the assessment.

Facilities are expected to adhere to all Canadian federal, provincial, and territorial acts and regulations, and municipal bylaws related to animal cruelty, care, and transportation.

Requirements

Number	Requirement
<p>6.0 May apply</p>	<p>If the facility has employees, the facility has a written Humane Handling and Training Ethics Agreement, and it is included in the Employee Training Program (<i>see Criteria 7</i>).</p> <p>If the facility has client horses, the agreement must be included in the Boarding Agreement (<i>see Criteria 3</i>).</p> <p>At minimum, the agreement must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horses must not be subjected to avoidable pain or abuse during handling or training, or that causes injury as a direct result of the training method used. • Horses must not be subjected to training methods or actions that are abusive or intentionally injurious. • Horses must only undergo training that matches their physical capabilities and level of maturity or age. • The use of electric spurs or prods, or any other shock-related training devices on horses is prohibited. • Tail nicking and blocking are prohibited. • Violations of the agreement will be reported to designated persons at the facility (<i>see Number 6.3</i>).

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- First and last name, and phone number or email address of the person(s) responsible for addressing abuse complaints (e.g., facility owner or manager).

The agreement must include a list of handling or training methods that are prohibited, which at minimum must include:

- Nosebands used in such a way that they interfere with the horse's breathing, or be tight enough to cause pain or discomfort;
- Excessively whipping or beating a horse;
- Subjecting a horse to any kind of electric shock device;
- Excessively or persistently using spurs or jabbing a horse in the mouth with the bit;
- Riding/driving an obviously exhausted, lame or injured horse;
- Forcing the horse's head position by tying the horse to a fixed object;
- Rapping a horse;
- Soring a horse;
- Hyper-sensitizing any part of a horse;
- Using shackles or chains (not to be confused with rubber or elastic exercising devices);
- Competing with a horse with raw or bleeding sores;
- Using an explosive (i.e. firecracker, fire extinguisher except in the case of fire) or using fire such as lighters, matches, etc.);
- Ignoring adverse medication reactions that compromise the horse's welfare (including but not limited to staggering and falling down);
- Inappropriate or over-use medications, drugs, and supplements in both on label and off label scenarios; Or
- Excess of use in activity, lesson, training, or competition to which physical or emotional impacts are demonstrated.

Tail nicking involves cutting the horse's tail muscle to achieve a tail carriage for show purposes. The horse's ability to move the tail becomes compromised.

Tail blocking is a procedure whereby the major nerves of the tail are injected with a substance that affects the horse's ability to lift, swish, or control its tail. This procedure causes the horse to lose the use of its tail for fending off biting insects, lifting the tail to

urinate and defecate, and for communicative purposes. It is also associated with serious health risks and complications.

Soring is the practice of inflicting pain on the limbs of a horse for the purpose of accentuating its gait.

Hypersensitization refers to causing a horse to become highly aroused, sensitive, or reactive to certain stimuli.

Rapping is a term construed to include all the artificial techniques intended to induce a horse to jump higher or more carefully. Some examples of rapping include: hitting the horse's legs manually with an object or deliberately causing the horse to hit something itself, whether by building fences too large and/or too wide, setting false ground lines, placing trot poles or elements of a combination at a false distance, intentionally pushing the horse into a fence or otherwise making it difficult or impossible for the horse to negotiate the obstacle without hitting it.

Animal abuse is the infliction of injuries or causing unnecessary physical or emotional harm and/or suffering. Abuse may be caused by actions including, but not limited to: hitting, kicking, throwing, beating, whipping, spurring, shaking, poisoning, burning, scalding, or suffocation.

Templates

- Humane Handling and Training Ethics Agreement

6.1 If the facility has employees, the facility has a written Equine Behaviour and Learning Theory Factsheet, and it is included in the Employee Training Program (*see Criteria 7*).
May apply

At minimum, the factsheet must include:

- Information on signs of fear and stress in horses.
- Explanation of the handling concepts: field of vision, flight zone, and point of balance.

Templates

- Equine Behaviour and Learning Theory Factsheet

Recommended Practices

-
- Employees involved with handling, riding, or training horses should be familiar with the International Society for Equitation Science (ISES) Principles of Learning Theory in Equitation: <https://equitationsscience.com/learning-theory/>
-

6.2

May apply

If the facility tethers horses, the facility has a written Tethering Protocol.

If the facility has employees who tether horses, the protocol is included in the Employee Training Program (*see Criteria 7*).

Tethering is a form of restraint and refers to attaching a long rope or chain to the halter or leg hobble on a horse. Tethering does not refer to tie-stalls or temporarily tying a horse to a fixed object (e.g., for grooming or tacking up).

Tethering can pose a high risk of injury to horses unless performed correctly.

At minimum, the protocol must include:

- Tethering method(s) and equipment used.
- Safety precautions implemented to prevent injury to horses, including the direct supervision of horses when tethered.
- Tethering is only used to restrain horses off-site temporarily (e.g., during backpacking or trail riding).

Templates

- Tethering Protocol
-

6.3

Facility has a plan for reporting and addressing abuse towards horses at the facility.

This includes abuse by employees, clients, volunteers, visitors, coaches or trainers, or other persons that interact with horses at the facility. The plan can be written or verbally communicated to the assessor.

See *Number 6.0* for the definition of animal abuse.

At minimum, the plan must include:

- Person designated to receive reports of abuse towards horses (e.g., facility owner or manager).
 - Actions taken to address reports of abuse (*see below*).
-

Examples of actions taken include, but are not limited to:

- Reviewing the facility's Zero-Abuse Policy with the individual and providing a verbal or written warning.
- Terminating employment, boarding, or other services with the individual (if applicable).
- Reporting the abuse to appropriate enforcement authorities as needed. Refer to provincial legislation.

6.4 Facility has at least one Zero-Abuse Policy posted in a location visible to all persons.

It is recommended that the policy is posted where horses are commonly ridden, handled, or trained, such as an indoor or outdoor arena.

At minimum, the policy must include:

- Abuse towards horses at the facility is prohibited.
- Actions or training methods that are considered abusive (*see Number 6.0*).
- First and last name, and phone number or email address of the person(s) responsible for addressing abuse complaints (e.g., facility owner or manager).

Templates

- Zero-Abuse Policy
-

CRITERION 7. EMPLOYEE TRAINING

This section only applies to facilities that have employees.

Employees refers to active employees with duties related to horse management, handling, or training duties.

Desired Outcome

There is a comprehensive Employee Training Program that is used to successfully train employees.

Rationale

Having an Employee Training Program is essential to implementing consistent horse management practices. Employees must review and understand the facility's protocols that fall within the scope of their employment responsibilities. This may include duties related to horse management and care, handling and training, transportation, and others. Documents in the Employee Training Program should be accessible, comprehensible, and reviewed as often, as needed.

Requirements

Number	Requirement
7.0	<p>Facility has a written Employee Training Program.</p> <p>At minimum, the program must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All applicable Herd Health Plan protocols (<i>see Criteria 2</i>).• Equine Code of Practice Factsheet (<i>see provided template</i>).• Humane Handling and Training Ethics Agreement (<i>see Criteria 6</i>).• Equine Behaviour and Learning Theory Factsheet (<i>see Criteria 6</i>).• Emergency Preparedness Protocol (<i>see Criteria 12</i>). <p>And the following, if applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification Protocol (<i>see Criteria 6</i>).• Tethering Protocol (<i>see Criteria 6</i>).• Blanketing Protocol (<i>see Criteria 11</i>).• Transportation Protocol (<i>see Criteria 13</i>).• Transport Decision Tree (<i>see Criteria 13</i>).• Health of Animals Regulation Factsheet (<i>see Criteria 13</i>).• Euthanasia Protocol (<i>see Criteria 14</i>) <p>Templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equine Code of Practice Factsheet
7.1	All documents in the Employee Training Program are translated into languages understood by all employees, as needed.

7.2	<p>All documents in the Employee Training Program are reviewed and updated, as needed.</p> <p>At minimum, the documents must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of last review and update. • First and last name, or initials of the reviewer on each document (e.g., facility owner or manager).
7.3	<p>Facility has written Employee Training Records demonstrating that all employees have reviewed the Employee Training Program, as needed.</p> <p>Training should be conducted as frequently as needed to maintain employee knowledge and competency of the facility's protocols and standards.</p> <p>At minimum, the records must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee first and last name. • Employee signature and date of review. <p>Templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Training Records

CRITERION 8. HOUSING

Desired Outcome

Horses are housed in an environment that optimizes health, comfort, safety, and allows the expression of normal behaviour.

Rationale

Horses can be successfully housed and managed in a variety of outdoor and indoor environments. It is important that horses can express normal behaviours in their environment, as this is essential for maintaining their physical and emotional health. The facility design, maintenance, and management should promote health, hygiene, comfort, and protect horses from inclement conditions.

Requirements

Number	Requirement
8.0	<p data-bbox="305 327 1469 451">Facility has a plan for managing mud in paddocks and ensuring that horses have access to a mud-free area where they can stand and lie down. The plan can be written or verbally communicated to the assessor.</p> <p data-bbox="305 499 1469 577"><i>Paddocks</i> refers to outdoor fenced-in fields or enclosures where horses are kept or exercised (e.g., pens, pastures).</p> <p data-bbox="305 625 1469 661">If horses are brought indoors overnight during muddy conditions, this is acceptable.</p> <p data-bbox="305 709 1469 745">Some examples of mud management include:</p> <ul data-bbox="354 772 1469 1228" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="354 772 1469 808">• Pasture rotation.<li data-bbox="354 835 1469 955">• Providing drainage in high traffic areas (e.g., near feeding or watering sources, horse shelters, or gates) and ensuring drainage is away from feed and water sources.<li data-bbox="354 982 1469 1018">• Removing manure regularly.<li data-bbox="354 1045 1469 1081">• Soil stabilizers (e.g., grid systems).<li data-bbox="354 1108 1469 1186">• Providing dry bedding (e.g., shavings, straw, hay) in shelters or surrounding feed sources.<li data-bbox="354 1213 1469 1249">• Ensure appropriate stocking density (not overcrowding paddocks). <p data-bbox="305 1297 1469 1375">Continuous exposure to muddy conditions can result in increased risk of lameness and painful skin and hoof conditions, such as mud fever (scratches) or thrush.</p> <p data-bbox="305 1423 1469 1459">Guidance Documents</p> <ul data-bbox="354 1486 1469 1522" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="354 1486 1469 1522">• Mud Management Guidance
8.1	<p data-bbox="305 1549 1469 1627">Horses have opportunity for turnout or exercise, unless under stall rest for medical reasons advised by a veterinarian, or due to severe environmental conditions.</p> <p data-bbox="305 1675 1469 1753"><i>Turnout</i> refers to “free time” or horses moving freely about in an indoor or outdoor areas, such as a dry lot, arena, or pasture.</p> <p data-bbox="305 1801 1469 1879"><i>Exercise</i> refers to horses engaging in controlled indoor or outdoor physical activity such as riding, training, lunging, hand walking or grazing, or on a hot walker.</p>

8.2 Horses in paddocks have access to an adequate natural or constructed shelter that protects them from inclement conditions, such as rain, wind, snow, or heat.

An example of a *natural shelter* is a thick, mature tree line that effectively protects from inclement conditions. The natural shelter must be adequate. For example, a few trees in a paddock are not considered an adequate natural shelter.

Examples of a *constructed shelter* include a run-in, three-sided shed, or a barn. For constructed shelters, there must be sufficient space in the shelter to accommodate all horses in the paddock at the same time. Constructed shelters must be 11.2m² for 2 horses, plus 5.6m² for each additional horse in the paddock. See the guidance document below for more details.

If there is no shelter in a paddock, the facility has a plan to protect horses from inclement conditions. The plan can be written or verbally communicated to the assessor.

Acceptable plans include:

- Monitoring horses and outdoor conditions (e.g., weather) and moving horses indoors (e.g., into a barn) or to another outdoor area with access to an adequate shelter.
- Blanketing horses accordingly (during cold and/or windy conditions).

The plan can be written or verbally communicated to the assessor.

Guidance Documents

- Spacing Allowance Guidance

8.3 Horses have enough space to move easily, walk forward, turn around with ease, and lie down in a normal resting posture, both indoors and outdoors.

Horses must also have enough space to escape aggression from other horses.

If horses are housed indoors, horses must be able to stand with the head fully raised without contacting the ceiling or other fixtures (e.g., lights, fans). Ceiling or support beam height should permit at least 61cm (or 2ft) of clearance above the horse's head when standing, and ideally, should exceed 1m (or 3.3ft).

If horses are housed in tie-stalls, there must be enough space for the horse to lie down in a normal resting posture, stand with the head fully raised and step forward comfortably.

The use of tie-stalls is only permitted for temporary use within the scope of this program. The long-term housing of horses in tie-stalls is not permitted, unless it is performed by a facility that has established standards and protocols for tie-stall housing.

A *tie-stall* (or standing stall) is a three-sided space in a barn where horses are restrained.

Guidance Documents

- Spacing Allowance Guidance
- Group Housing Guidance

8.4 Bedding is provided in stalls in amounts that sufficiently absorbs urine, liquid manure, prevents slipping, injury, or discomfort caused by contact between the horse and stall flooring. Bedding in stalls is cleaned or added to prevent the accumulation of wet or soiled bedding.

Stall areas are of a design or texture that will not bruise, cut, or otherwise injure the horse. Concrete or hard rubber mats without sufficient bedding is unacceptable.

Soft or comfort (padded) stall systems are designed to be used with minimal bedding and this is acceptable.

Insufficient bedding can cause horses to experience discomfort or injury from contact between the horse's body and the stall flooring (e.g., elbow abrasions or rubs), and may deter horses from resting or sleeping comfortably.

8.5 Horses are easily visualized indoors. Artificial lighting is provided during the day if horses do not have access to natural light.

Horses housed continuously in darkness is unacceptable.

CRITERION 9. RISK MANAGEMENT

Desired Outcome

Horses are protected from hazards through risk management.

Rationale

The safety and well-being of horses should be prioritized at facilities. The main considerations are the safety and comfort of the horses, ease of access, adequate drainage, and ventilation. If poorly designed or managed, facilities can contribute to the spread of disease and the risk of injury.

Requirements

Number	Requirement
9.0	<p>The facility is designed, managed, and maintained to minimize risks to horses.</p> <p>The facility has a plan for monitoring facility hazards and addressing hazards promptly. Facilities are encouraged to use a checklist to routinely monitor for hazards (<i>see the provided checklist</i>). The plan can be written or verbally communicated to the assessor.</p> <p>Gates or doorways for the single entry and exit of horses, indoors and outdoors, must be at least 1.22m wide.</p> <p>Examples of common <i>facility hazards</i> include sharp corners, protrusions (e.g., nails, screws), loose floorboards, uneven flooring, uncovered light fixtures, unsecure or narrow gates, low ceilings, or dangerous objects in aisleways.</p> <p>Guidance Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facility Safety Checklist
9.1	<p>Paddock fencing is constructed and maintained to contain horses. Fencing is free from hazards that may cause injury.</p> <p>Examples of common <i>fencing hazards</i> include protrusions (e.g., nails, screws), loose, unstable, or broken fencing, or electrical fencing that is touching or is in contact with water sources.</p> <p>Temporary electric fences (used for strip grazing or pasture rotation) as permanent perimeter fencing is unacceptable. Horses must not be housed in small or closely confined enclosures with barbed wire, page wire, or narrow gauge high-tensile steel wire fencing.</p>
9.2 May apply	<p>If electrical fencing is used in paddocks, the power units for electric fences are designed and maintained to ensure proper functioning and prevent short circuits or stray voltage.</p>

The facility must have at least one functional electric fence meter, and it is used to monitor the voltage in electric fencing, as needed. Facilities should be familiar with the fencing manufacturer's instructions and recommendations (e.g., appropriate voltage).

9.3 Facility has a plan to reasonably segregate any sick or injured horses for quarantine or treatment purposes. The plan can be written or verbally communicated to the assessor

At minimum, the segregation area (indoors or outdoors) must prevent nose-to-nose-contact with other horses (*see Number 2.6*). If there is an existing segregation area, the assessor will view the area.

Reasonable segregation refers to a sick or injured horse that is segregated according to the condition and severity of the illness or injury. For example, horses with an infectious disease should be isolated from other horses until treatment is complete and the horse is determined to be non-infectious. Horses with a minor injury or non-infectious illness (e.g., metabolic disease) do not need to be segregated. Having a companion with a horse while undergoing treatment may help reduce stress associated with segregation.

9.4 Traction or non-slip flooring is provided in areas designated for grooming, saddling, and bathing horses (e.g., wash racks).

Examples of traction or non-slip surfaces are rubber mats, rough cut planked floors, sand, stamped or grooved concrete, or other surfaces that facilitate drainage.

Recommended Practices

- Non-slip surfaces should be provided in barn aisleways. Traction should be provided during inclement conditions, such as spreading gravel or sand during icy conditions.

9.5 The application of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and farm manure is timed to prevent health risks to grazing horses or the contamination of ground water.
May apply

If the facility has client horses, the facility has a plan for notifying clients about the application of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, or manure at the facility, including the areas of application and how long areas should be avoided to prevent health risks to horses. The plan can be written or verbally communicated to the assessor.

<p>9.6 May apply</p>	<p>If the facility uses fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides, the facility has written Chemical Records of any fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides used at the facility within 12 months of the assessment date.</p> <p>At minimum, the records must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of fertilizer, herbicide, or pesticide used. • Date(s) of application. • Location(s) of application. <p>Templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemical Records
<p>9.7</p>	<p>Good indoor air quality is maintained to prevent a buildup of dust or moisture and ammonia concentrations do not exceed 25ppm in barns.</p> <p><i>Barns</i> (or stables) refers to areas where horses are housed and/or handled indoors.</p> <p>If you can smell ammonia or mold upon entering a barn or experience eye irritation from ammonia, this indicates that the air quality is unacceptable.</p> <p>Examples of strategies that can improve <i>air quality</i> include fans, dehumidifiers, opening of windows or vents, and turning horses outdoors during stall or facility cleaning.</p>
<p>9.8 May apply</p>	<p>Bedding used in stalls is non-toxic.</p> <p>Acceptable types of bedding for horses includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood shavings, sawdust, or pellets (e.g., pine) • Straw • Shredded paper • Peat moss <p>Examples of <i>toxic bedding</i> for horses includes bedding derived from black walnut, maple, or red maple. Bedding derived of these materials are unacceptable.</p>
<p>9.9</p>	<p>Water sources (e.g., troughs, containers) are free from abrasive or sharp edges that could injure horses.</p>

<p>9.10 May apply</p>	<p>Concentrates are stored securely. There must be a safeguard in place to prevent horses from accessing concentrates.</p> <p>Examples of <i>safeguards</i> include latches on feed bins, containers, or storing concentrates in a closed room with a lock or latch system.</p> <p>Bins or storage containers that contain concentrates are labelled in a manner to prevent feeding mistakes and the label is applied to the body of the bin or storage container (as opposed to the lid of the container or bin). Lids can be mistakenly placed on the wrong bin or container, leading to feeding mistakes. Feeding instructions may also be posted in the area where concentrates are stored or prepared for horses.</p> <p>Any preparation of concentrates required prior to feeding (e.g., adding water to beet pulp pellets) must also be labelled accordingly. Feeding mistakes can lead to serious health consequences for horses, such as colic, toxicity, laminitis, worsening of certain metabolic conditions, or other health issues.</p> <p><i>Concentrates</i> are grains, cereals, minerals, vitamins, pelleted rations, supplements, or combinations of such, that are designed and formulated for horse consumption.</p>
<p>9.11 May apply</p>	<p>Toxic chemicals are stored securely to prevent horse access. There must be a safeguard in place to prevent horses from accessing toxic chemicals.</p> <p>Examples of <i>safeguards</i> include storing toxic chemicals in a closed room with a lock or latch system, or in a storage area outside of the barn that is inaccessible to horses.</p> <p>Examples of <i>toxic chemicals</i> include cleaning solutions, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and pest control chemicals.</p>
<p>9.12</p>	<p>Facility has at least one No Smoking Policy posted in a location visible to all persons.</p> <p>Templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Smoking Policy

CRITERION 10. NUTRITION AND WATER

Desired Outcome

Horses are provided water and nutrition that maintains normal health and vigour.

Rationale

Good feed management includes providing feeds that are safe and that meet the nutritional needs of individual horses. Water is the most important nutrient for horses and must be palatable, clean, and always available to horses.

Requirements

Number	Requirement
10.0	<p>Horses are provided palatable, clean water. Automatic waterers and water heaters are functional (if applicable). Bodies of water such as streams, ponds, dug outs, or lakes are acceptable, permitting the water is potable and in available amounts. Water must be accessible to horses and not impeded by any debris, snow, or ice.</p> <p>Snow or ice as a sole source of water for horses is unacceptable.</p>
10.1	<p>Feedstuffs is appropriate for consumption by horses.</p> <p><i>Feedstuffs</i> refers to food provided for horses.</p> <p>Examples of <i>appropriate feedstuffs</i> for horses include grass (pasture), hay, hay cubes, haylage or silage, and concentrates. Straw may be provided (e.g., for weight loss purposes), but it cannot be the horse's primary source of forage.</p> <p><i>Hay</i> is grasses or herbage cut and cured for horse consumption. Hay or forage cubes is hay that has been dried, cut, and compressed.</p> <p><i>Haylage</i> is feed cut as fresh forage and has been chopped and stored at a relatively high moisture content, undergoing a fermentation process.</p> <p><i>Silage</i> is a succulent, moist feed (from forage, corn, or other crops) that has gone through a process of fermentation that helps it stay free from spoilage.</p>

	<p><i>Straw</i> is the dried stems of what or other grain products.</p>
10.2	<p>Horses are provided daily access to forage that is free from visible mould and has minimal dust.</p> <p><i>Forage</i> refers to bulky feeds such as grass or hay.</p> <p>Recommended Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If horses are fed haylage or silage, it is strongly recommended that horses are vaccinated against botulism. Facilities should consult with their Attending Veterinarian about vaccination recommendations (<i>see Criteria 2</i>). • Paddocks or areas where horses graze should be regularly inspected for toxic plants. Facility owners and employees should be knowledgeable about toxic plants that may grow in the local area and during different seasons. Any identified toxic plants should be removed promptly.
10.3	<p>Feedstuffs provided to horses meets their daily maintenance and activity requirements.</p> <p>The amount and type of feedstuffs provided to horses must consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental conditions (e.g., cold temperatures). • Individual horse needs (e.g., activity level, age, size, breed, health conditions, reproductive status).
10.4	<p>The body condition of horses must be monitored.</p> <p>Horses with a body condition score equal to 3 or less, or equal to 7 or greater is not appropriate. Actions must be taken to improve the horse's body condition (e.g., altering the horse's diet or feed intake). If the horse's body condition does not improve after actions are taken, a veterinarian must be consulted.</p> <p>Guidance Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sick and Injured Horses Guidance • Body Condition Scoring Guidance
10.5	<p>Horses have daily access to salt, either provided in the horse's ration, or freely in the form of a block or loose salt.</p>

CRITERION 11. GROOMING, BLANKETING, AND EQUIPMENT

Desired Outcome

Horses are groomed to maintain normal health. Horse equipment and blankets are maintained to ensure comfort and prevent injury.

Rationale

Grooming

Grooming loosens dirt and mud, and can help prevent skin irritation, infections, and maintain the insulating effect of hair coats in cold environments. Debris also needs to be removed where equipment is placed on the horse to prevent injury or discomfort. Grooming a horse is also a good opportunity to inspect them for injuries or lesions.

Blanketing

Blankets are designed to provide horses with additional protection from weather or biting insects. However, blankets can lead to heat stress and rubs or abrasions if horses are not monitored closely. Blankets can also mask changes in the horse's health, and some of these changes can occur quickly (e.g., skin infections, changes to hair coat, weight, or body condition). Therefore, it's essential that blankets are maintained, and the condition of horses under blankets is checked regularly.

Equipment

Equipment must be maintained in good repair and fit the horse correctly. Ill-fitting equipment can cause sores, irritation, or other injuries and behavioural issues.

Requirements

Number	Requirement
11.0	Horses are free from debris (e.g., mud, dirt) where equipment is placed. Equipment must also be free of debris prior to being placed on a horse. <i>Equipment</i> includes saddles, bridles, girths, saddle pads, harnesses or other items placed on the horse for riding, training, handling, or driving purposes.

The facility has at least one Ill-Fitting Equipment Factsheet posted in a location visible to all persons. At minimum, the factsheet must include information about physical and behavioural signs of ill-fitting equipment in horses.

Horses are inspected regularly for signs of ill-fitting equipment, such as rubs, blisters, white hairs, or abrasions. Actions are taken to stop equipment from causing discomfort or injury to horses, as needed.

Templates

- Ill-Fitting Equipment Factsheet

11.1 If any horses at the facility are blanketed, the facility has at least one Blanketing Protocol posted in a location visible to all persons.

If the facility has client horses, the agreement must be included in the Boarding Agreement (*see Criteria 3*).

If the facility has employees who are responsible for blanketing horses, the protocol must be included in the Employee Training Program (*see Criteria 7*).

At minimum, the protocol must include:

- The condition of the horse beneath the blanket is examined at least once per week to observe the horse's body condition and for signs of skin infections and ill-fitting blankets (e.g., rubs or abrasions).
- Information about the recommended blanket fill weight for different temperature ranges.
- Information about factors to consider when blanketing (e.g., clipped or unclipped hair coat, body condition, health status, weather conditions).
- Information about the importance of maintaining blankets to ensure good condition (e.g., washing, repairs, waterproofing).

Templates

- Blanketing Protocol

11.2 The facility has a plan for inspecting and maintaining restraint equipment to prevent discomfort or injury to horses, as needed. The plan can be written or verbally communicated to the assessor.

	<p>Restraint equipment must be free of sharp edges and protrusions, and padding is provided, as needed.</p> <p>Examples of <i>restraint equipment</i> for horses include halters, lead ropes, leg hobbles, lead chains (shanks), stocks, or chutes.</p>
11.3	<p>Horses are monitored for burdocks and horses with burdocks that may cause pain, discomfort, or injury (e.g., burdocks near the horse’s eye, ears, muzzle, or other sensitive body areas) must be removed promptly.</p> <p>The removal of burdocks may require veterinary assistance, in some instances.</p>

CRITERION 12. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Desired Outcome

Risks to horses during emergencies are minimized through an emergency preparedness plan.

Rationale

Emergencies can necessitate the need to urgently release horses from a facility due to a barn fire or natural disaster. It is essential that a facility has an emergency preparedness plan to minimize risks, optimize safety, and ensure a timely and efficient evacuation, if needed. Facilities should also have safety equipment and emergency contact information readily available.

Requirements

Number	Requirement
12.0	<p>Facility has a written Emergency Preparedness Protocol.</p> <p>If the facility has employees, the protocol must be included in the Employee Training Program (<i>see Criteria 7</i>).</p> <p>At minimum, the protocol must include these types of emergencies:</p>

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- Fire.
 - Power failure or outage (including loss of water for facilities with automatic waterers or electric well pumps).
 - Natural disasters common to the facility's area (e.g., flood, wildfire, winter storm, extreme heat or cold).
 - Large animal rescue (e.g., horse becomes stuck, or entrapped on their side or back).

For each type of emergency listed above, the protocol must include:

- Actions to take. Consider how shelter, food, and water to will be provided to horses during power outages, or natural disasters such as a winter storm.
- Emergency supplies or equipment required for actions and where it is stored or located (e.g., fire extinguisher, first aid kit).

Templates

- Emergency Preparedness Protocol

Guidance Documents

- Emergency Preparedness Guidance

Recommended Practices

- Horses should be taught how to load and unload from a trailer, using low-stress and humane training techniques. Training a horse to load into a trailer will facilitate a quick evacuation during an emergency.

12.1 If the facility has client horses, facility has a written Client Contact List.

At minimum, the list must include:

- Horse identifier (e.g., name of horse).
 - Horse owner's first and last name, and phone number.
 - Alternate emergency contact (first and last name, and phone number).
 - Horse's primary veterinarian's first and last name, clinic or business name, and phone number.
 - Horse's insurance company and insurer's phone number (if applicable).|
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	<p>Templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client Contact List
12.2	<p>Facility has emergency contact information posted in a location visible to all persons.</p> <p>At minimum, this includes contact information (name, phone number) for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility owner or manager. • Local fire department, police, and ambulance. • Attending Veterinarian (or other veterinarian with emergency hours). • Farrier. <p>The full address of the facility and locations of any known facility hazards (e.g., propane tanks) and safeguards (e.g., power shut-offs, fire extinguishers) must also be posted.</p> <p>Templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Contact Sheet
12.3	<p>Facility has horse halters and lead ropes on stall doors, near gates of paddocks, or other areas that are easily accessible to all persons (e.g., by a barn entrance or exit) during an emergency</p>
12.4	<p>Facility has at least one fire extinguisher in each barn and on the premises. The fire extinguisher is labelled (e.g., type of extinguisher) and it is inspected and replaced, as needed. The fire extinguisher is placed in an easily accessible location (e.g., near an entrance or exit).</p> <p>Recommended Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees should receive training on the use of fire extinguishers, as needed.

CRITERION 13. TRANSPORTATION

Desired Outcome

Horses are loaded, transported, and unloaded humanely and safely.

Rationale

The federal requirements for animal transport are covered under the Health of Animals Regulations, Part XII). They are enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) with the assistance of other federal, provincial, and territorial authorities. Some provinces have additional regulations related to animal transport.

Facilities are expected to comply with all transport requirements in the Health of Animals Regulations. You can access this document at: <https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/humane-transport/health-of-animals-regulations-part-xii>

Transportation is not evaluated within the scope of this program, but the facility owner and employees (*if applicable*) must be knowledgeable of and follow all relevant federal and provincial legislation. If in doubt, transporters should seek the advice of a veterinarian or contact the CFIA prior to transporting horses.

Requirements

Number	Requirement
13.0	<p>Facility has a written Transportation Protocol.</p> <p>If the facility has employees who are responsible for transporting horses, loading, or unloading horses, the protocol is included in the Employee Training Program (<i>see Criteria 7</i>).</p> <p>At minimum, the protocol must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horses are assessed for fitness prior to being loaded for transport with consideration of all relevant transport factors (e.g., total duration of anticipated trip, prevailing weather conditions).• If the expected duration of the horse’s transport time without access to feed or water is longer than 24 hours, horses must be fed and watered within 4 hours of being loaded. Horse must not be without access to feed, water, or rest for more than 28 hours, after which they must have a rest period of at least 8 consecutive hours before resuming their journey.

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- Unfit horses are not transported, except to receive veterinary care on the advice of a veterinarian. Refer to the Transport Decision Tree under *Number 13.2* for more details about unfit horses.
 - Horses are individually assessed before loading and upon arrival to the facility.
 - Horses are provided water upon arrival to the facility.

If the facility has gestating mares or mature stallions, the protocol must include:

- Mares in the last 10% of their gestation periods are not transported.
- Mares with its suckling offspring, and mature stallions must be segregated from all other animals during transport.

Templates

- Transportation Protocol

13.1 Facility has a written Health of Animals Regulation Factsheet. This factsheet includes interpretative guidance that helps you understand the transport requirements for horses included in the Health of Animals Regulation.

If the facility has employees who are responsible for transporting, loading, or unloading horses, the factsheet is included in the Employee Training Program (*see Criteria 7*).

Templates

- Health of Animals Regulation Factsheet

13.2 Facility has a written Transport Decision Tree posted in a location visible to all persons.

It is recommended that the policy is posted where horses are commonly loaded or unloaded.

If the facility has employees who are responsible for transporting, loading, or unloading horses, the decision tree is included in the Employee Training Program (*see Criteria 7*).

Guidance Documents

- Transport Decision Tree
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CRITERION 14. EUTHANASIA

This section only applies to facilities that use a non-veterinarian (operator) to euthanize horses.

Desired Outcome

Horses are euthanized humanely.

Rationale

If euthanasia is necessary, it must be performed by a veterinarian or an individual who is knowledgeable and skilled in an acceptable euthanasia method. The welfare of the horse is of paramount importance when making an end-of-life decision.

Requirements

Number	Requirement
14.0	<p>If the facility uses a non-veterinarian (operator) for the euthanasia of horses, the facility has a written Euthanasia Protocol.</p> <p>Operator refers to the skilled individual who performs euthanasia. They must be knowledgeable in the euthanasia method(s) used.</p> <p>If the facility has employees that perform or assist with euthanasia, the protocol must be included in the Employee Training Program (<i>see Criteria 7</i>).</p> <p>At minimum, the protocol must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operator's first and last name, and phone number.• Acceptable on-site euthanasia method(s) (<i>see below</i>).• Once the euthanasia method is performed, unconsciousness is confirmed immediately and when it is safe to do so.• A secondary euthanasia step or method.• Death is confirmed before moving or leaving the horse.• Disposal is in accordance with provincial and municipal regulations.

Acceptable *euthanasia methods* include those included in the Code of Practice. This includes:

- Lethal injection administered by a veterinarian.
- Free bullet deployed by a skilled individual.
- Penetrating captive bolt deployed by a skilled individual (depending on the model used, a secondary step will be required).

See the Code of Practice for further details.

Templates

- Euthanasia Protocol

Guidance Documents

- Euthanasia Guidance
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REFERENCES

1. National Farm Animal Care Council (2013). Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines. Available at: https://www.nfacc.ca/pdfs/codes/equine_code_of_practice.pdf
2. Equine Code of Practice Scientists' Committee Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines: Review of Scientific Research on Priority Issues (2012). Available at: https://www.nfacc.ca/resources/codes-of-practice/equine/Equine_SCReport_Aug23.pdf
3. Canadian Food Inspection Agency (2022). Federally reportable diseases for terrestrial animals in Canada. Available at: <https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/federally-reportable-diseases-for-terrestrial-anim/eng/1329499145620/1329499272021>
4. Canadian Food Inspection Agency (2020). Health of Animals Regulations. Part XII: Transport of Animals-Regulatory Amendment Interpretative Guidance for Regulated Parties. Available at: <https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/humane-transport/health-of-animals-regulations-part-xii/eng/1582126008181/1582126616914>
5. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (2020). Elective and Non-Therapeutic Veterinary Procedures for Cosmetic or Competitive Purposes. Available at: <https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/policy-and-outreach/position->

[statements/statements/elective-and-non-therapeutic-veterinary-procedures-for-cosmetic-or-competitive-purposes-formerly-cosmetic-alteration/](#)

6. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (2019). Surgical Castration of Horses, Donkeys, and Mules - Position Statement. Available at: <https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/policy-and-outreach/position-statements/statements/surgical-castration-of-horses-donkeys-and-mules/>
7. Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (2019). Veterinary Dentistry – Position Statement (2018). Available at: <https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/policy-and-outreach/position-statements/statements/veterinary-dentistry/>
8. American Veterinary Medical Association (2012). Available at: <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/literature-reviews/welfare-implications-horse-tail-modifications>