



**EQUESTRIAN
CANADA
ÉQUESTRE**

EQUINE CARE PROGRAM

Facility Manual

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
INTRODUCTION	4
About the Equine Care Program	4
Who Can Participate?	5
About this Manual	5
Using this Manual	5
Benefits to Assessing Your Facility	6
Questions and Support	6
EQUINE CARE PROGRAM CRITERIA	7
Criterion 1: VCPR	7
Criterion 2: Herd Health Plan	8
Criterion 3: Boarding Agreement	14
Criterion 4: Hoof Care	15
Criterion 5: Health and Identification Procedures	17
Criterion 6: Handling and Training	21
Criterion 7: Caregiver Training	25
Criterion 8: Housing	27
Criterion 9: Risk Management	30
Criterion 10: Nutrition and Water	34
Criterion 11: Grooming, Blanketing, and Equipment	36
Criterion 12: Emergency Preparedness	38
Criterion 13: Transportation	40
Criterion 14: Euthanasia	42
REFERENCES	44



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) for funding this national program through the AgriAssurance Program.

We would like to thank the Equine Animal Care Assessment Program Committee members for their efforts, including:

- Dr. Bettina Bobsien (Yellowpoint Veterinary Services)
- Penny Lawlis (Professional Livestock Auditing Inc.)
- Dr. Allister Gray
- Dr. Cordy DuBois
- Jennifer Woods (JW Livestock Services)
- Doug Roe (Valley View Farms)
- Dr. Chris Berezowski (Moore Equine)
- Calandra Van Massenhoven
- Kelsey McDonnell (Equestrian Canada)
- Kristy Laroche (Equestrian Canada)
- Lindsay Nakonechny (Equestrian Canada)

We would like to thank ACER Consulting for conducting stakeholder engagements with our Canadian equestrian community, and Equine Guelph and the Ridgeway Campus Equine Program for their assistance in developing the program resources.



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 care and management. One of the simplest ways to do this is through an animal care program. These programs provide a level of assurance that animals are being cared for in a manner that ensures good health and welfare. While animal care programs currently exist for other species in Canada, the Equine Care Program is the first national animal care program designed for horses.

Through this program, equine facilities will have the opportunity to evaluate their horse management practices and make practical improvements where needed. It will also open the doors to future conversations about horse welfare and allow for continued growth and education. Below, you will be introduced to the program requirements, which are based on the standards 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

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 equestrians across Canada, including horse owners, facility owners, coaches and riders, veterinarians, 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.

The goals of the Equine Care Program are to:

- Provide a step-by-step method to easily identify strengths and improvements for equine facilities;
- Provide equestrians with a process to evaluate their facility against the NFACC Code of Practice for the Care of and Handling of Equines requirements;
- Start important conversations about horse welfare; and
- Provide educational resources to support evidence-based horse management practices.



Who Can Participate?

The Equine Care Program is designed for individuals who own or manage equestrian 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. Currently, the program is designed to be a self-assessment, meaning that you, as the facility owner or manager, can use the Assessment Tool to assess your facility and management practices.

About this Manual

Equestrian Canada has developed this manual as an easy-to-use, comprehensive resource to help you understand the program standards and how to achieve them, within the context of your facility and the services you provide. The manual contains 14 criteria related to horse management and care.

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

Using this Manual

The Equine Care Program contains different criteria related to horse care and management. 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. Some may or may not be applicable to your facility.
Templates	These are templates for protocols, records, and other program documents. All Templates can be found in the Resources section in EC’s ECampus.
Guidance Documents	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. All Guidance Documents can be found in the Resources section in EC’s ECampus.



Recommended Practices

Provides additional information that may be helpful for improving your own horse management and care practices. These are not program requirements, but optional standards to help elevate horse welfare. You are encouraged to implement these at your facility.

Benefits to Assessing Your Facility

There are many benefits to assessing your facility:

- Gain increased awareness of your facility, horses, and horse management practices;
- Document your observations and compare your facility to industry best practices;
- Showcase to your clients that you are dedicated to making continuous improvements; and

Have conversations with your clients and other stakeholders about optimizing horse welfare at your facility using the:

Questions and Support

Our team is here to help! If you would like more information about the program or if you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at equinecare@equestrian.ca.



EQUINE CARE PROGRAM CRITERIA

CRITERION 1: VCPR

Desired Outcome

A Veterinary-Client-Patient-Relationship (VCPR) with a veterinarian is established annually.

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 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>).</p> <p><i>Attending veterinarian</i> refers to the veterinarian who you primarily seek advice from about maintaining the health of horses at your facility.</p> <p>If your 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>The form must be signed and dated by the Attending Veterinarian and the facility owner annually.</p> <p><i>Client horses</i> 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>At minimum, the form must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
- Statement that 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

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 treatment 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
2.0	<p data-bbox="305 289 894 321">Facility has a Herd Health Plan Review Form.</p> <p data-bbox="305 373 1433 447">The form must be signed and dated by the Attending Veterinarian and the facility owner annually.</p> <p data-bbox="305 499 776 531">At minimum, the form must include:</p> <ul data-bbox="402 541 1464 888" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="402 541 1377 615">• Attending Veterinarian’s first and last name, clinic or business name and address, and phone number.<li data-bbox="402 625 1154 657">• Attending Veterinarian’s signature and date of signage.<li data-bbox="402 667 659 699">• Facility address.<li data-bbox="402 709 1159 741">• Facility owner’s first and last name, and phone number.<li data-bbox="402 751 1044 783">• Facility owner’s signature and date of signage.<li data-bbox="402 793 1464 888">• The Attending Veterinarian has reviewed the facility’s herd health plan and the protocols are appropriate for maintaining herd health. <p data-bbox="305 930 1406 1056">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.</p> <p data-bbox="305 1098 451 1129">Templates</p> <ul data-bbox="354 1140 805 1171" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="354 1140 805 1171">• Herd Health Plan Review Form
2.1	<p data-bbox="305 1232 813 1264">Facility has a Parasite Control Protocol.</p> <p data-bbox="305 1316 1464 1432">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).</p> <p data-bbox="305 1484 821 1516">At minimum, the protocol must include:</p> <ul data-bbox="354 1526 781 1600" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="354 1526 745 1558">• Parasite control method(s).<li data-bbox="354 1568 781 1600">• Frequency of method(s) used. <p data-bbox="305 1652 451 1684">Templates</p> <ul data-bbox="354 1694 724 1726" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="354 1694 724 1726">• Parasite Control Protocol



2.2 Facility has Parasite Control Records.

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

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

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

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 Requirement 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 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 are 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.
- 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

- Sick and Injured Horses Guide
- See the Assessment Tool for the Lameness Scoring Guide, Body Condition Scoring Guide, and Injury Scoring Guide

Recommended Practices

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

A **caregiver** refers to anyone who has responsibilities related to the care and handling of the horses at the facility. For example, caregivers may be individuals who are employees, volunteers, or working students.

2.6 Facility has an Infectious Disease Protocol.

At minimum, the protocol must include:

- New arrivals are segregated from resident horses for at least 7 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 in effect (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.

2.7 Facility has a 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
-



2.8
May
apply

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

Jennet refers to a female donkey.

If the facility has caregivers, the protocol must be included in the Caregiver 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

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	<p>Facility has a Boarding Agreement that is provided to and signed by all clients.</p> <p>At minimum, the agreement must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parasite Control Protocol (<i>see Criteria 2</i>)• Sick and Injured Horses Protocol (<i>see Criteria 2</i>)• Infectious Disease Protocol (<i>see Criteria 2</i>)• Heat and Cold Stress Protocol (<i>see Criteria 2</i>)• Hoof Care Protocol (<i>see Criteria 4</i>)• Humane Handling and Training Ethics Agreement (<i>see Criteria 6</i>) <p>And the following, if applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vaccination Protocol (<i>see Criteria 2</i>).• Newborn and Foaling Care Protocol (<i>see Criteria 2</i>).• Blanketing Protocol (<i>see Criteria 11</i>). <p>The above documents can be included as an appendix in the boarding agreement.</p> <p>Templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sample Boarding Agreement

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 soundness. All horses need regular hoof trimming and care to ensure proper hoof health.

Requirements:

Number	Requirement
4.0	<p>Facility has a 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>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.
4.1 May apply	<p>If the facility has client horses, the facility has a 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 are 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 provincial legislation.



Templates

- Boarding Agreement

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 provincial or territorial legislation.

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 an operator to perform castration on horses, and it is permissible by provincial legislation, the facility has a VCPR Castration Validation Form.</p> <p>Operator 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First and last name of the operator, business name (<i>if applicable</i>), 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 (<i>see below</i>). <p>The requirements in the Code of Practice include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 an operator to perform dental procedures on horses, the facility has a VCPR Validation Dental Form.

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 annually. 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 policies. Equine health and mortality insurance policies may be considered void if dental procedures are performed by an operator.

5.2 May apply

If the facility performs horse identification procedures, the facility has an Identification Protocol.

Identification procedures include hot-iron or freeze branding, tattooing, and microchipping.

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

At minimum, the protocol must include:

- Identification method(s) used.
- Handling, stress, and pain mitigation measures implemented (*see below*).
- 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 interacted with 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.

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

Requirements

Number	Requirement
6.0 May apply	<p>If the facility has caregivers, the facility has a Humane Handling and Training Ethics Agreement, and it is included in the Caregiver 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 (*see Requirement 6.3*).
- 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).
- Riding or driving 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.
- 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: excessive hitting, excessive kicking, throwing heavy objects at, beating, excessive whipping, excessive spurring, shanking, poisoning, burning, scalding, or suffocation.

Templates

- Humane Handling and Training Ethics Agreement

6.1 May apply

If the facility has caregivers, the facility has a factsheet outlining signs of fear and stress in horses, and it is included in the Caregiver Training Program (*see Criteria 7*).

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

- Factsheet: Signs of Fear and Distress in Horses

Recommended Practices



- Caregivers 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://www.equitation.com/ises-training-principles>

6.2
May
apply

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

If the facility has caregivers who tether horses, the protocol is included in the Caregiver 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: CAREGIVER TRAINING

This section only applies to facilities that have caregivers.

A **caregiver** is defined as anyone who has responsibilities related to the care and handling of the horses at the facility. For example, caregivers may be individuals who are employees, volunteers, or working students.

Desired Outcome

There is a comprehensive Caregiver Training Program that is used to successfully train caregivers.

Rationale

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



Requirements

Number	Requirement
7.0	<p>Facility has a Caregiver 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>).• Signs of Fear and Distress in Horses (<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>).• Euthanasia Protocol (<i>see Criteria 14</i>) <p>Templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equine Code of Practice Factsheet
7.1	<p>All documents in the Caregiver Training Program are translated into languages understood by all caregivers, as needed.</p>
7.2	<p>All documents in the Caregiver 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 Caregiver Training Records demonstrating that all employees have reviewed the Caregiver Training Program, as needed.</p>



Training should be conducted as frequently as needed to maintain employee knowledge and competency of the facility's protocols and standards.

At minimum, the records must include:

- Caregiver first and last name.
- Caregiver signature and date of review.

Templates

- Caregiver 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>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.</p> <p><i>Paddocks</i> refers to outdoor fenced-in fields or enclosures where horses are kept or exercised (e.g., pens, pastures).</p> <p>If horses are brought indoors overnight during muddy conditions, this is acceptable.</p> <p>Some examples of mud management include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pasture rotation.



- 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.
- Removing manure regularly.
- Soil stabilizers (e.g., grid systems).
- Providing dry bedding (e.g., shavings, straw, hay) in shelters or surrounding feed sources.
- Ensure appropriate stocking density (not overcrowding paddocks).

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.

8.1 Horses have opportunity for turnout or exercise, unless under stall rest for medical reasons advised by a veterinarian, or due to severe environmental conditions.

Turnout refers to “free time” or horses moving freely about in an indoor or outdoor areas, such as a dry lot, arena, or pasture.

Exercise 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.

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 hoses 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.

If there is no shelter in a paddock, the facility has a plan to protect horses from inclement conditions.



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).

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 61 cm (or 2ft) of clearance above the horse's head when standing, and ideally, should exceed 1 m (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.

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	Facility is designed, managed, and maintained to minimize risks to horses.
------------	--

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 (*see the provided checklist*).

Gates or doorways for the single entry and exit of horses, indoors and outdoors, must be at least 1.22m wide.

Examples of common **facility hazards** 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.



9.1

Paddock fencing is constructed and maintained to contain horses. Fencing is free from hazards that may cause injury.

Examples of common *fencing hazards* include protrusions (e.g., nails, screws), loose, unstable, or broken fencing, or electrical fencing that is touching or is in contact with water sources.

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.

9.2
May
apply

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.

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.

At minimum, the segregation area (indoors or outdoors) must prevent nose-to-nose-contact with other horses (*see Requirement 2.6*). If there is an existing segregation area, the assessor will view the area. If there is nowhere to segregate horses on the farm, refer to the Infectious Disease Protocol for an isolation plan.

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.



	<p>Recommended Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
<p>9.5 May apply</p>	<p>The application of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and farm manure is timed to prevent health risks to grazing horses or the contamination of ground water.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>9.6 May apply</p>	<p>If the facility uses fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides, the facility has Chemical Records of any fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides used at the facility must be kept annually.</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>Barns (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 air quality include fans, dehumidifiers, opening of windows or vents, and turning horses outdoors during stall or facility cleaning.</p>
<p>9.8</p>	<p>Bedding used in stalls is non-toxic.</p>



May apply	<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 toxic bedding for horses includes bedding derived from black walnut, maple, or red maple. Bedding derived of these materials are unacceptable.</p>
9.9	<p>Water sources (e.g., troughs, containers) are free from abrasive or sharp edges that could injure horses.</p>
9.10 May apply	<p>Concentrates are stored securely. There must be a safeguard in place to prevent horses from accessing concentrates.</p> <p>Concentrates are grains, cereals, minerals, vitamins, pelleted rations, supplements, or combinations of such, that are designed and formulated for horse consumption.</p> <p>Examples of safeguards 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>
9.11 May apply	<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 safeguards 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>



	Examples of <i>toxic chemicals</i> include cleaning solutions, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and pest control chemicals.
9.12	Facility has at least one No Smoking Policy posted in a location visible to all persons. Templates <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 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>



Haylage is feed cut as fresh forage and has been chopped and stored at a relatively high moisture content, undergoing a fermentation process.

Silage 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.

Straw is the dried stems of what or other grain products.

10.2 Horses are provided daily access to forage that is free from visible mould and has minimal dust.

Forage refers to bulky feeds such as grass or hay.

Recommended Practices

- 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 (*see Criteria 2*).
- Paddocks or areas where horses graze should be regularly inspected for toxic plants. Facility owners and caregivers 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 Feedstuffs provided to horses meets their daily maintenance and activity requirements.

The amount and type of feedstuffs provided to horses must consider:

- Environmental conditions (e.g., cold temperatures).
- Individual horse needs (e.g., activity level, age, size, breed, health conditions, reproductive status).

10.4 The body condition of horses must be monitored.

Actions must be taken to improve the horse's body condition (e.g., altering the horse's diet or feed intake) when a horse's body condition score reaches 3 or lower, as well as when a horse's body condition score reaches 8 or higher (on the 1-9 body condition scale). If the horse's body condition does not improve after actions are taken, a veterinarian must be consulted.

Guidance Documents

- Sick and Injured Horses Guidance



- See Assessment Tool for Body Condition Scoring Guidance

10.5 Horses have daily access to salt, either provided in the horse's ration, or freely in the form of a block or loose salt.

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.
-------------	--



Equipment 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 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

- 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 caregivers who are responsible for blanketing horses, the protocol must be included in the Caregiver 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 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.

Restraint equipment must be free of sharp edges and protrusions, and padding is provided, as needed.



Examples of **restraint equipment** for horses include halters, lead ropes, leg hobbles, lead chains (shanks), stocks, or chutes.

- 11.3** 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.

The removal of burdocks may require veterinary assistance, in some instances.

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 | Facility has an Emergency Preparedness Protocol. |
|-------------|--|

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

At minimum, the protocol must include these types of emergencies:

- 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 taken. 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

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 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).|

Templates

- Client Contact List

12.2 Facility has emergency contact information posted in a location visible to all persons.

At minimum, this includes contact information (name, phone number) for the following:

- Facility owner or manager.
 - Local fire department, police, and ambulance.
 - Attending Veterinarian (or other veterinarian with emergency hours).
 - Farrier.
-



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.

Templates

- Emergency Contact Information

12.3 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.

12.4 Facility has at least one up-to-date and inspected 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).

Recommended Practices

- Caregivers 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 in Canada 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: [Health of Animals Regulations: Part XII: Transport of Animals-Regulatory Amendment Interpretive Guidance for Regulated Parties - Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(canada.ca\)](https://www.inspection.gc.ca/health-of-animals/regulations/part-xii-transport-of-animals-regulatory-amendment/interpretive-guidance-for-regulated-parties/2019-05-20/eng/15262422-8000-4960-9000-000119681880)



A summary of the regulations can be found here: <https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/humane-transport/horses/transporting-horses/eng/1363747385631/1363747449156> .

Transportation is not evaluated within the scope of this program, but the facility owner and caregivers (*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 May Apply	<p>Facility has a Transportation Protocol.</p> <p>If the facility has caregivers who are responsible for transporting horses, loading, or unloading horses, the protocol is included in the Caregiver 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.• Unfit horses are not transported, except to receive veterinary care on the advice of a veterinarian. Refer to the Transport Decision Tree under <i>Requirement 13.1</i> 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. <p>If the facility has gestating mares and/or mature stallions, the protocol must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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. <p>Templates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transportation Protocol
13.1	Facility has a 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 caregivers who are responsible for transporting, loading, or unloading horses, the decision tree is included in the Caregiver Training Program (*see Criteria 7*).

Guidance Documents

- Transport Decision Tree

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 May Apply	<p>If the facility uses a non-veterinarian (operator for the euthanasia of horses, the facility has a Euthanasia Protocol.</p> <p>Operator refers to the skilled individual who performs euthanasia of equines, who is not a veterinarian. They must be knowledgeable in the euthanasia method(s) used.</p> <p>If the facility has caregivers that perform or assist with euthanasia, the protocol must be included in the Caregiver 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



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 (2012) Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines: Review of Scientific Research on Priority Issues. 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>
9. Yeates J and Main D. (2009) Assessment of companion animal quality of life in veterinary practice and research. *Journal of Small Animal Practice* 50, 274-281.
10. Sischo WM, Kiernan NE, Burns CM and Byler LI. (1997) Implanting a quality assurance program using a risk assessment tool on dairy operations. *Journal of Dairy Science* 80, 777-787.
11. Kirchner MK, Westerath-Niklaus HS, Knierim U, Tessitore E, Cozzi G, Vogl C and Winckler C. (2014) Attitudes and expectations of beef farmers in Austria, Germany and Italy towards the Welfare Quality[®] assessment system. *Livestock Science* 160, 102-112.