



Notice to Industry 4

Requirements for grooms accompanying and working with horses at the Mickleham post-entry quarantine facility

Outcome

The intended outcome of this document is for grooms working with imported horses at the Mickleham Quarantine Facility (MQF) to understand and comply with the biosecurity requirements at that facility.

This document is provided for information only. To the extent that this document is inconsistent with any import permit, direction or authorisation to enter a quarantine facility, the terms and conditions of the import permit, direction or authorisation to enter a quarantine facility take precedence and will apply. Failure to comply with any condition of an import permit, direction or authorisation to enter a quarantine facility may constitute an offence.

Background

Each year, hundreds of horses are imported into Australia. Each consignment may pose a biosecurity risk from equine diseases such as equine influenza (EI), equine viral arteritis, contagious equine metritis, piroplasmiasis and surra. Additionally, the import of horses presents a plant biosecurity risk from weed seeds present in air stalls, equipment and animal faeces.

The import of horses is regulated by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department). The department has developed conditions for the import of horses to reduce the risk of diseases of biosecurity concern from entering Australia. Strict pre-export and post-arrival quarantine (PAQ) requirements apply to all imported horses (except those from New Zealand and New Caledonia). Strict requirements are also in place for people and goods in contact with imported horses.

The Biosecurity Act 2015 provides biosecurity officers with the authority to give decontamination directions to people if they are suspected to have been exposed to a disease of biosecurity concern to Australia.

Decontamination requirements

Grooms who have travelled or had contact with the imported horses but are not accompanying horses to MQF are required to:

- Present all baggage for inspection and treatment at the corral.
- Undertake a complete head to toe, full body 3-minute shower (including washing hair and cleaning under fingernails) before leaving the corral.
- Change into new/clean clothing and footwear after showering, immediately prior to leaving the corral.
- Surrender all worn clothing to a biosecurity officer for laundering, and footwear for cleaning (if required) and mandatory disinfection.

Grooms who have travelled or had contact with the imported horses and are accompanying horses to MQF are required to:

- Travel to MQF horse compound in the horse transport vehicle in the designated groom compartment (not the driver's cabin).
- Clearly label all personal luggage and present it for inspection (and treatment if necessary) after arrival in the horse compound.

All grooms attending the horse compound at any time are required to:

- Wear dedicated clothing including underwear, socks and footwear in the horse compound, which must remain in the compound until horses are released from biosecurity control.
- Undertake a complete head to toe, full body 3-minute shower before leaving the horse compound including washing hair, cleaning under fingernails and washing the change room access card with soap whilst in the shower.
- Change into clean clothing including underwear, socks and footwear immediately prior to leaving the horse compound.

Any personal effects (e.g. mobile phones, tablets, paperwork, eyeglasses etc) used on site at the corral or horse compound must either:

- Remain in the horse compound until horses have been released from biosecurity control, **OR**
- Be decontaminated prior to leaving the horse compound by wiping down the equipment with alcohol wipes **OR**
- For simple jewellery, it may be permitted to enter and leave the horse compound if it can be adequately disinfected.

Grooms are advised to only take essential equipment into the horse compound. Unauthorised equipment or personal effects are **NOT** permitted in the compound. Limited secure storage is available at the entrance to each compound for small personal items.

Note: Grooms are permitted to move from one horse compound to the other but must follow all personnel and equipment decontamination procedures when leaving each compound. Failure to follow decontamination procedures will be treated as a non-compliance.

Note regarding protective vests:

- Protective vests worn during the arrival and transportation/clearance of horses must be given to departmental personnel for decontamination prior to leaving the corral.
- Decontamination will include removal of any plant material and spraying with 70% ethanol.
- If a groom attends multiple clearances of horses heading to the same horse compound, their vest may be held at the corral by the department between arrivals without decontamination in between.
- Protective vests worn inside MQF after the arrival of horses, must stay in the facility until the horses are released from biosecurity control. Vests are not permitted to be moved between compounds at MQF.

Biosecurity requirements

Requirements for the horse compound

- Only grooms nominated by the horse importer are eligible for authorisation to enter the horse compound.
- The department will only authorise personnel to enter the horse compound if they are essential to biosecurity and/or horse husbandry.
- All grooms attending the horse compound must be given authorisation by the department to enter MQF. A 12-month authorisation to enter the horse compound is only permitted if the grooms have completed all relevant department and site-specific training within the last 12 months.

- Grooms will be issued with an access card by security on the first day of duty for the intake. This card may be retained by the groom but will only be activated for set-up of the compound prior to a horse intake, for the duration of each quarantine period, and for cleaning the compound after the horses have been released from biosecurity control.
- Grooms' dedicated work clothes and footwear will be inspected by a biosecurity officer to ensure cleanliness on arrival into the horse compound. Clothes and footwear will be treated if necessary and must remain in the horse compound until the horses are released from biosecurity control.
- Personal effects (for example air pods, drink bottles etc.) will also be inspected by a biosecurity officer on arrival at the horse compound. Items such as these must remain in the compound until the end of the PAQ period.
- Equipment may only be taken into the horse compound if authorised by a department officer.
- All equipment used in the feeding, handling and treatment of the horses in the quarantine facility must be new, or cleaned and disinfected before use.
- All equipment must remain in the horse compound until the horses are released. The department will only consider and approve the disinfection and removal of equipment under exceptional circumstances, and only where acceptable disinfection can be achieved.
- Feed arriving with the horses without a valid import permit must be disposed of in biosecurity waste bins on the day of arrival.
- Grooms must not use the horse walker within each compound unless they have been trained in its use by a biosecurity officer.

Monitoring horse health during PAQ

Groom requirements for monitoring horse health

During PAQ, grooms are required to:

- Take and record each horse's rectal temperature on arrival (if not already done by the private veterinarian) and then twice daily (at least 8 hours apart) for the remaining time in PAQ.
 - Departmental staff will supervise the taking and recording of rectal temperatures at least once per day for the first 4 days of PAQ.
 - Random, unannounced supervision by a Biosecurity Officer will continue for the remainder of the consignment in PAQ.

Notes:

- If the 'on arrival' temperature is taken *before* midday, the second temperature must still be taken on that day, but does not need to be 8 hours after the first.
If the 'on arrival' temperature is taken *after* midday, a second temperature does not need to be taken that day.
- If a rectal temperature is not recorded on any occasion during PAQ, the groom **must** notify the private veterinarian and horse compound Biosecurity Officer on duty as soon as possible. If a horse's temperature cannot be taken for any reason on two consecutive occasions during PAQ, additional examinations and testing will be required.
- Carry out a thorough tick search on *all horses* in PAQ on the day following the horses' arrival, completing all relevant sections of the checklist provided by the department.

Notes:

- This tick search is in addition to the tick search performed on arrival by the private veterinarian.
- Tick searches must be performed by grooms between 6:00am and 6:00pm.
- Tick searches carried out by grooms will be randomly supervised by a Biosecurity Officer.

- When signing into the facility on the day of tick searches, the groom or head groom must advise the Biosecurity Officer of their plan for conducting tick searches, including what time they plan to commence the first tick search for the day.
- Tick searches must be completed in accordance with the instructions detailed on *the checklist provided by the department*.
- If a tick or other ectoparasite is found on a horse during PAQ it must be reported to the supervising Veterinary Officer, the horse compound Biosecurity Officer on duty and the private veterinarian immediately. The tick or ectoparasite must be removed under the supervision of a Biosecurity Officer or departmental Veterinary Officer and kept secure (such as in a vial) for identification.
- Before attempting to remove a tick, the horse must be moved to the wash bay area (or an area with a similar concrete surface). This is to ensure that the tick can be found if it is dropped during removal. The horse must not be returned to its stall until the tick has been removed.

Important:

- On the day following arrival, horses may be turned out into the sand yards whilst they are waiting for their tick search, to facilitate normal PAQ operations and help prevent colic and other travel related illness.
 - If a tick is found on a horse that has been turned out into a yard following arrival, notify a Biosecurity Officer so that the yard can be treated with a parasiticide as soon as possible.
 - When conducting tick searches, human safety must take priority at all times. If it is not possible to perform a thorough tick search due to safety concerns, details of the issue must be recorded in the appropriate section of the checklist.
- Notify the private veterinarian *and* the horse compound Biosecurity Officer on duty as soon as possible if at any time the horse's rectal temperature is 38.5°C or higher (39°C or higher for foals under 6 months of age).
 - A nasopharyngeal swab (nasal swab for foals under 6 months of age) to test for EI must be collected if the horse has two consecutive temperatures higher than 38.5°C (39°C or higher for foals under 6 months of age).
 - An additional test does not need to be taken if swabs have been taken within the last 24 hours and sent for testing or are scheduled to be taken during the following 24 hours for testing.
 - Observe horses and record signs of general health for each horse on the '*Horse temperature and monitoring record*' form. This is kept in a designated area within the horse compound and must be completed twice-a-day.

Note: Details of every horse must be recorded on the appropriate form during PAQ. This includes any abnormalities, treatment and/or supplements given, the reason for a treatment being given, appetite and farrier work (if carried out). The head groom may also provide additional detail about treatments and observations for injured/abnormal/unwell horses to Micklehamhorses@aff.gov.au and PEQVets@aff.gov.au.

Important: For any horse that is unwell or injured, updates on the horse's condition must be recorded *each day*. Once an unwell/injured horse is back to 'normal' (clinical signs have resolved), this must be recorded. From this point on, daily updates on the horse's condition are no longer required.

- Any abnormalities in the health of a horse during PAQ must be reported to the private veterinarian *and* the Biosecurity Officer on duty as soon as possible. Abnormalities may include (but are not limited to) nasal discharge, eye discharge, coughing, reduced appetite (for more than 3 days), diarrhoea/loose stools (for more than 3 days), signs of colic, wounds that may have been present on arrival, or a sudden change in health or behaviour.

- Notify the horse compound biosecurity officer on duty if a private veterinarian or farrier is required.
- Grooms may treat horses with **oral** non-prescription supplements as well as **topical**, non-prescription treatments used on the skin for minor abrasions/conditions without the treatment being prescribed by a veterinarian; however, grooms must *not* give any other treatment to a horse unless a private veterinarian has prescribed the treatment and directed a groom to administer it, in accordance with veterinary treatment requirements during PAQ.

Examples of **topical** non-prescription treatments include but are not limited to:

- White Healer®
- Cetrigen®
- MTG®

Examples of **oral** non-prescription supplements include but are not limited to:

- Pro-Dosa Boost®
- Restore®
- Drink-up®
- Electromix®
- Electro Paste®
- Re-Lyte®
- Twydil®

IV injections administered by nominated grooms

In exceptional cases where the private veterinarian is not present on site but considers the health of a horse to be compromised and requiring urgent treatment, they may direct a groom who has been deemed competent in administering IV injections to administer an IV injection to a horse. Examples of situations where this may apply include cases of acute illness or injury eg. colic, fractured limb etc. where the private veterinarian considers that the welfare of the horse and/or the prognosis for recovery will benefit from IV treatment administered before it is physically possible for them to be in attendance on site.

To prepare for such situations, the private veterinarian must draw a single dose into a syringe, of any of the following medications at the start of each intake:

- Flunixin
- Phenylbutazone
- Dexamethasone
- Buscopan®
- Dormosedan®

These doses must be clearly labelled with the name of the medication, the dose, the name of the veterinarian who prepared the injection and the date it was drawn up. These doses must be locked in the stable block veterinary office dispensing cupboard or fridge and stored in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines.

Important:

- The private veterinarian may only direct a nominated groom to administer an IV injection if they have first trained, observed and confirmed that the nominated groom is competent to perform the procedure under their direction.
- The private veterinarian must complete written advice for each nominated groom and submit to the department annually, to confirm that they are competent, prior to directing the nominated groom to administer any IV treatment.

- With no exceptions, a nominated groom must only administer an IV injection to a horse if directed to do so by the private veterinarian. A new direction must be given by the private veterinarian for each individual IV injection that a groom administers.
- The private veterinarian must attend MQF as soon as practicable to examine the horse and provide further treatment as necessary.

Note: Grooms must only administer subcutaneous, oral or intramuscular medications. Grooms are *not* permitted to administer intravenous medications at any time unless directed to do so by the private veterinarian in exceptional cases as detailed above.

- All prescribed medication must be stored in the stable block veterinary office dispensing cupboard or fridge. Medication that has not been labelled and prescribed for a specific horse by the private veterinarian must not be stored in the dispensing cupboard at any time (with the exception of medications which have been prepared by a private veterinarian for IV injection by nominated grooms in the above-mentioned exceptional circumstances).

Note: The head groom or compound biosecurity officer on duty can provide access to the dispensing cupboard when necessary.

- Dispose of all waste and sharps in the designated containers within the horse compound. Dispose of all faeces and stable waste produced in the first four days of PAQ in the marked biosecurity waste bins. Faeces and stable waste produced after 4 days must be placed in the non-biosecurity waste bins. This waste should be placed in the 240 litre, maroon bins, prior to being disposed of into the larger skip bins, using the bin lifter provided.
- Clean/remove plant material from horse equipment accompanying the consignment, when directed by the Biosecurity Officer, and under the supervision of the Biosecurity Officer. Equipment must be cleaned over a biosecurity bin, with any material removed, to be disposed of in the biosecurity bin.
- Report any non-compliance in biosecurity procedures (by you or any other person) to the horse compound biosecurity officer on duty or department Veterinary Officer as soon as possible. Failure by grooms to comply with all biosecurity procedures and requirements for monitoring horse health during PAQ is considered a non-compliance and further action may result.
- Sign the entry and exit log in the presence of a biosecurity officer before entering and/or before leaving the horse compound, using the form provided at the entrance to each compound.

Horse husbandry and welfare

During PAQ the grooms' responsibilities for horse husbandry and welfare are to:

- Make all reasonable efforts to ensure that horses are under control at all times.
- Supervise the horse at all times when a horse is outside its stable, including when the horse is in an exercise area in the horse compound.
- Provide adequate equipment, feed, water, supervision and care to ensure the welfare of the horses held in PAQ, including:
 - Checking feed to ensure it is free from contamination.
 - Storing feed in the best practical way to prevent deterioration (e.g. in dry, rodent-proof bins).
 - Ensuring horses are able to easily reach feed and water containers.
 - Ensuring clean water is available at regular intervals.
- Maintain the hygiene of the horse compound by:
 - Providing appropriate, clean and sufficiently thick stable bedding.
 - Ensuring that soiled bedding and waste is deposited in the designated bin/area within the facility.
 - Cleaning out horse yards of manure and excess feed and raking after each use.
 - Hosing, sponging or brushing horses when required to remove sweat, sand and dirt.

Note: All required equipment, feed and therapeutics must be provided by the importer, and are subject to the department's requirements for entry into the facility. Feed arriving with horses may only be used if accompanied by an import permit and if appropriately treated prior to use.

General requirements while at MQF

All personnel are required to comply with the following general requirements:

- Smoking is not allowed. MQF is a non-smoking, drug and alcohol-free site. If alcohol or recreational drugs are found on site or personnel are suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or recreational drugs, they will be removed from MQF and further investigations conducted.
- Disorderly and antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated. If such behaviour occurs, the offending party will be removed from MQF and further investigations conducted. CCTV is in operation 24 hours a day.
- All gates are to be kept closed and locked.
- Loss of keys or access cards, or damage to property must be reported to department officers immediately.
- Vehicles are to be parked in the designated car park spaces only.
- Driving speed limits must be obeyed.
- Grooms are responsible for maintaining cleanliness of the amenities within the horse compound.
- All garbage must be placed in the bins provided.
- Please respect other people on site by keeping noise to a minimum and by leaving and entering the site quietly.
- All relevant WH&S control measures must be applied at all times.
- All WH&S incidents must be reported to the head groom and a biosecurity officer in a timely manner.

Note: The department will pursue individuals for costs where their negligent actions have resulted in damage or loss.

- Night grooms – when working alone at night after the biosecurity officer on duty has left the compound the security team will perform regular welfare checks via radio on grooms throughout the night for safety reasons. If grooms are required to enter stables to attend to the horses, they must advise the security team prior to entering the stable, so their activity can be monitored for their own safety.

Non-compliance with these conditions

Failure to follow these instructions, or specific directions by department staff, will result in removal from the facility and further investigations conducted. Additionally, failure to comply with the above conditions may constitute an offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* or *Biosecurity Act 2015* and penalties may apply.

Version history

The following table details the published date and amendment details for this document.

Version	Date	Amendment details
10.0	11/9/2017	Updated details on groom's exotic disease training. Updated compound as a non-smoking site.
11.0	10/11/2017	Updated to accommodate for AA site operated corral commencing operation.
12.0	29/03/2018	Updated to add in groom protective vest advice.
13.0	29/07/2020	Updated to include requirements for grooms administering treatments prescribed by a veterinarian. Updated department name. General updates to improve readability.
14.0	23/08/2022	Updated department logo. Updated department name. Update to allow grooms to administer topical, non-prescription treatments without prescription from the private veterinarian. Update referral to horse health monitoring form to be more general.
15.0	27/10/2022	Note to clarify when temperatures need to be taken on the day of arrival. Note regarding the timing of NPS in the case where two consecutive high temperatures are detected. Further information on recording details of horse health, including the requirement for daily updates. Addition of examples of topical non-prescription treatments and oral non-prescription supplements.
16.0	12/01/2023	Updated to include section on IV injections administered by nominated grooms.
17.0	21/07/2023	Updated to: Clarify the frequency of monitoring rectal temperatures by department staff during the first 4 days of PAQ. Update relevant details for recording on monitoring forms during PAQ. Update line of reporting for horse health issues. Update to include instructions for mandatory tick searches on all horses on the day following the horses' arrival. Other various updates.

Version	Date	Amendment details
18.0	20/12/2023	<p>Add instruction to wash the change room access card with soap whilst in the shower.</p> <p>Include instructions for mandatory tick searches on all horses on the day following the horses' arrival.</p> <p>Clarify the frequency of monitoring rectal temperatures by department staff during the first 4 days of PAQ.</p> <p>Clarify details for recording on monitoring forms during PAQ.</p> <p>Change the line of reporting for horse health issues.</p> <p>Add detail on decontamination of horse equipment accompanying a consignment.</p> <p>Add detail on reporting WHS incidents.</p> <p>Other minor updates/edits.</p>
19.0	14/02/2024	<p>Updated to add the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tick searches must be performed by grooms between 6am and 6pm. • When signing into the facility on the day of tick searches, the groom or head groom must advise the Biosecurity Officer of their plan for conducting tick searches and what time they plan to commence the first tick search for the day. • Before attempting to remove a tick, the horse must be moved to the wash bay area. • When conducting tick searches, human safety must take priority at all times. • Wounds that may have been present on arrival must be reported to the private veterinarian and the Biosecurity Officer on duty as soon as possible.