



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

Notice to Industry 5

Requirements for veterinarians at the Mickleham Post-Entry Quarantine Facility for horses

Outcome

The intended outcome of this document is for private veterinarians to understand the biosecurity requirements and their obligations to comply when treating imported horses at the Mickleham Post-Entry Quarantine Facility (MQF).

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 a 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 may present a plant quarantine 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), which 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 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 of exposure to a disease of biosecurity concern to Australia.

Decontamination requirements

Veterinarians attending the horse compound at MQF are required to:

- Wear dedicated clothing, including underwear, socks and footwear. This clothing and footwear must remain in the compound until the horses have been released from biosecurity control.
- Undertake a complete head to toe, 3-minute shower (including washing hair, cleaning under fingernails and washing the change room access card) before leaving the horse compound.
- After showering, change into clean clothing, including underwear, socks and footwear (or clothing/footwear removed prior to entry) immediately before leaving the horse compound.

Any personal equipment (e.g. mobile phones, tablets, paperwork, eyeglasses etc) used on site must either:

- Remain in the horse compound until the horses have been released from biosecurity control
OR
- Undergo decontamination by a biosecurity officer, 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.
- Only essential equipment is permitted into the horse compound. Unauthorised equipment and/or personal effects are **NOT** permitted.
- Limited secure storage is available at the entrance to each compound for small personal items.
- It is not a biosecurity requirement for veterinarians to shower **prior** to entering the horse compound.

Note: Veterinarians required to attend horses in both compounds must follow all personnel and equipment decontamination procedures when leaving each compound, as per usual requirements.

General requirements for the horse compound

- Permission to enter the horse compound is only given to essential attendees.
- The importer must nominate a private veterinarian. Only nominated veterinarians are eligible to enter the horse compound once they have been inducted.
- Veterinarians must be registered with the veterinary board in the state or territory in which they live.
- The department may issue nominated veterinarians with a permission to enter the horse compound for 12 months provided they:
 - have completed all relevant department and site-specific training within the last 12 months; and
 - sign and comply with all requirements outlined in the authorisation form provided by a biosecurity officer before initial entry.
- In conjunction with the permission to enter the horse compound, security will issue each veterinarian an access card which may be retained by the veterinarian but will only be activated during each quarantine period.
- Non-inducted equine veterinary surgeons may enter for a veterinary emergency but must be accompanied at all times by departmental staff.
- All attendees must sign an entry and exit log in the presence of a biosecurity officer before entering and/or before leaving the horse compound.
- The horse compound manager (or delegate) must grant permission for any equipment to enter the horse compound. All equipment:
 - used for feeding, handling and/or treatment of horses during quarantine must be new or cleaned and disinfected before use; and
 - must only be used in the one horse compound for the duration of the quarantine period, unless otherwise specified by the department.
- Any attendee that breaches biosecurity procedures or witnesses a breach in biosecurity procedures must report the incident to the horse compound manager (or delegate) as soon as possible.
- 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.

- All attendees must be aware of and observe all relevant animal welfare legislation when handling horses within the facility.

Assessing, recording and reporting horse health

- During the quarantine period, veterinarians are required to:
- Record details of all health inspections, clinical findings, abnormalities, treatments and the reason for treatment on the forms provided by the department for each horse they examine.

Notes:

- Veterinarians must complete a clinical examination of a horse before commencing any treatment.
- All findings of the examination must be recorded, including a diagnosis or differential diagnoses, and any treatments prescribed with the reason for the treatment included.
- Records must be clear and legible and must include the name and signature of the attending veterinarian.
- Ensure the horse's temperature is taken and recorded prior to administration of any anti-pyretic medications.
- Ensure thermometers are disinfected between horses. This can be done using an isowipe.
- Collect samples for culture and sensitivity and/or testing for exotic disease exclusion prior to administering antibiotics.
- Liaise with the VO as soon as possible, either in person or by phone, if there are significant abnormalities in any horse. Abnormalities 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, or a sudden change in health or behaviour.
- Notify the VO in person or by phone if the rectal temperature of a horse is 38.5°C or higher (39°C or higher for foals under 6 months of age) on two consecutive readings.
 - The VO will advise whether an additional nasopharyngeal swab (nasal swab for foals under 6 months of age) is required to test for equine influenza virus if the horse is pyrexia on two consecutive readings or if the veterinarian prescribes medication that may mask clinical signs of disease.

Note: An additional nasopharyngeal swab does not need to be taken if swabs have been taken within the last 24 hours and sent for testing or if swabs are scheduled to be taken during the following 24 hours for testing.

- In instances where a horse has a persistently elevated temperature (over 38.5°C for more than 4 consecutive days), the importer may apply to the Horse, Livestock and Bird Imports Program in Canberra to reduce the frequency of swabbing. The application must include all relevant details of the affected horse/s. Each case will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- All veterinary medicines are required to be:
 - labelled and stored correctly, including storage in the locked cabinet or safe (S8 drugs) within the horse compound.
 - prescribed and dispensed for use in the best interests of the animal.
 - recorded accurately in clinical records. Schedule 8: Controlled Drugs must be recorded in both the horse's clinical record and in a controlled substances register with all dosage amounts included.
- Dispose of all waste and sharps in the designated containers within the horse compound.
- Needles and syringes must not be re-used between horses.
- Needles must be capped at all times, when not in use.

- If the veterinarian is not giving the medication themselves, they may dispense the medications but must provide written administering instructions for the groom and be confident that it will be given appropriately. The veterinarian must:
 - label the medication and store it in the dispensing cupboard. Medication that has not been labelled and dispensed for a specific horse or horses in a specific intake must not be stored in the dispensing cupboard at any time.

Note: Grooms are not to have access to the safe or the locked cabinet holding restricted drugs.

 - only dispense medications that are Schedule 4 or lower.
 - only dispense medications for topical, oral, sub-cutaneous or intramuscular administration.
 - grooms are not permitted to administer intravenous medications unless in exceptional cases as outlined below.

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 nominated 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.

In all cases of IV administration of medications by nominated grooms:

- 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. The Sample letter for authorisation of IV injections by grooms can be downloaded from the Notice to Industry 5 webpage.
- The direction for the treatment and the effects of any treatment administered by the nominated groom is the responsibility of the private veterinarian.
- The private veterinarian must complete Form: Offsite prescription of treatment for horses at the Mickleham Quarantine Facility (MQF) – recording directions for administration of the prescribed medication in the section entitled ‘Authorisation for a nominated groom to administer an IV injection’.
- The private veterinarian must attend MQF as soon as practicable to examine the horse and provide further treatment as necessary.
- With no exceptions, a nominated groom must only administer an IV injection to a horse as directed by the private veterinarian. A new direction must be given by the private veterinarian for each individual IV injection that a nominated groom administers.
- The private veterinarian must ensure they comply at all times with the Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria legislation and guidelines.
- The storage of medications is the responsibility of the private veterinarian. All medications should be stored in accordance with the manufacturer’s guidelines at all times.
- Dispose of all waste and sharps in the designated containers within the horse compound.

To prepare for the administration of IV injections by grooms, the private veterinarian may draw a single dose into a syringe and label it in advance OR label the bottle in advance. This procedure is permitted for the following medications:

- Flunixin
- Buscopan®

Labelling requirements

Labelling of single dose syringes or the bottle must comply with [key requirements for Veterinary practitioners in Victoria](#) and include:

The following details which may be already pre-printed on the label:

- The approved name of the poison or controlled substance or a proprietary name that unambiguously identifies the poison or controlled substance plus the strength, form (e.g. tablets) and quantity supplied
- The words “KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN” in red on a white background
- If the medicine is intended for external use only, the word “POISON”, or the words “FOR EXTERNAL USE ONLY”, in red on a white background
- The name, address and telephone number of the practitioner (veterinarian) supplying the medicine
- The words “FOR ANIMAL TREATMENT ONLY”

And the following details which may need to be written by the veterinarian:

- horses in intake <number>
- the importer name
- the date it was dispensed and labelled
- Directions for use: refer to ‘Veterinary Health Record’ or ‘Offsite prescription form’.

Use of Medicine Cabinet and Safe

- The veterinary medicines cabinet must be used to store all veterinary medicines and remain locked when not in use by a veterinarian.
- The only medications that may be left in the fridge or outside the locked medicine cabinet are those labelled and dispensed for specified horses with written instructions for the groom on how it must be administered.
- Medications which have been prepared by a private veterinarian, for IV injection by nominated grooms in the above-mentioned exceptional circumstances, must be kept in the locked medicine cabinet (or locked fridge) and only accessed under the supervision of a biosecurity officer, and only when the private vet has:
 - labelled the medications for horses in that intake
 - issued an offsite prescription form with directions for administration of that medication for the specific horse
 - previously assessed and declared the nominated groom to be competent giving IV injections.
- If the locked safe is used to store controlled medications (Schedule 8 drugs) each veterinarian will use their own allocated section of the safe. Each veterinarian must maintain their own controlled drug register book to record the dosage use of their Schedule 8 drugs at the site and the register must be kept within the safe with the medicines.

Testing and horse examination requirements

Veterinarians must examine each horse and collect all diagnostic samples required by the import permit under supervision by the department. As a minimum, this includes:

- Blood samples taken on arrival to be stored at the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness.
- Nasopharyngeal swabs (nasal swabs for foals under 6 months of age) collected on designated days of the quarantine period for EI testing and any additional tests if requested by the VO.
- During collection of nasopharyngeal swab samples, the swab must be inserted to a sufficient depth to ensure that the sample is collected from the nasopharynx and not the nasal cavity.
- An examination of each horse within 24 hours of arrival at the horse compound. This must incorporate a thorough examination for ticks and ectoparasites, including:
 - close examination of ears, nostrils, under-body areas (axilla, inguinal region, submandibular), perineum, mane and tail and general examination of all other areas
 - a manual inspection of these sites using fingertips to feel for ticks including any lumps, swellings, bumps and scabs on the skin
 - conducting the examination in a systematic fashion beginning at the head and working towards the tail (on both sides), to ensure no areas are missed
 - close attention should be paid to any pre-existing wounds, for signs of screwworm fly larvae infestation (myiasis). Such wounds may exhibit draining, suppuration and/or enlargement; signs of infestation with serosanguineous discharge often accompanied by distinctive odour. Surveillance for such wounds should continue throughout the PAQ period, noting that they are likely to become most apparent during the first week of PAQ.
- The veterinarian must report any ticks or other ectoparasites found during the arrival examination to the supervising VO immediately.

Note:

- A second, thorough tick search will be performed by a groom, on all horses in PAQ on the day following the horses' arrival.

Important:

- On the day following arrival, horses may be turned out into the sand yards prior to tick searches being completed, to facilitate normal PAQ operations and help prevent colic and other travel related illness. Any other testing or examinations as directed by the department biosecurity officers or VO's.

Note: Any additional testing for equine diseases by the veterinarian requires approval by the VO, prior to the collection of samples. Disease testing permission will not be given for horses being prepared for direct export on release from quarantine (e.g. onward movement to New Zealand at the end of the quarantine period). Blood profile testing for health checks not relating to biosecurity is permitted, however the laboratory, VO and the horse compound manager (or delegate) must be notified.

Version history

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

Version	Date	Amendment details
6.0	18/11/2015	Updated on new template; updated for new quarantine facility.
7.0	16/06/2016	Updates to comply with the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i>

Version	Date	Amendment details
8.0	30/08/2017	Updated contingency entry for equine veterinary surgeons in the case of an emergency
9.0	21/07/2020	Updated to include new requirements to ensure proper use of Scheduled medications in accordance with relevant legislation and guidelines. Updated requirements for tick and ectoparasite examinations. Updated department name. General updates to improve readability.
10.0	7/08/2020	Addition of drug and alcohol condition.
11.0	15/2/2021	Removal of requirement for prior permission before administering certain medications. General edits.
12.0	27/10/2022	Update note regarding timing of NPS if two consecutive high temperatures are detected. Update notes on tick inspection requirements.
13.0	12/01/2023	Addition of notes on the administration of IV injections by nominated grooms.
14.0	10/10/2023	Add direction to wash the change room access card whilst in the shower. Clarify horse health details to be recorded on forms. Update reporting/notification requirements for horse health issues. Add detail on mandatory tick searches to be performed by grooms on the day following the horses' arrival. Various other minor updates/edits.
15.0	14/02/2024	Addition of note regarding surveillance for any pre-existing wounds, for signs of screwworm fly larvae infestation.
16.0	27/09/2024	Clarification of veterinary medicine labelling requirements.
17.0	18/02/2025	Addition of instructions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of and observe all relevant animal welfare legislation • Ensure that thermometers are disinfected between horses • Ensure that needles and syringes are not re-used between horses and needles remain capped when not in use • Ensure that the depth of swab insertion when collecting nasopharyngeal swabs for EI testing is sufficient • Minor formatting changes

Attachment 1 – Private veterinarian letter template to document competency of nominated groom to administer IV injections

(Insert Private veterinarian letterhead)

(Insert Date)

This letter is to confirm that (insert groom name), a groom employed by (insert importer), has been trained in the administration of intravenous (IV) injections and has been deemed competent in the procedure.

On-the-job training to perform this procedure has involved the groom observing the administration of IV injections performed by private veterinarians, as well as performing IV injections themselves under direct veterinary supervision at the Mickleham Quarantine Facility (MQF) for horses.

In addition to on-the-job training, the groom has also been made aware of, and understands the potential complications of IV injection including perivenous hematoma, venous thrombosis, phlebitis and thrombophlebitis. They are also aware of potentially fatal complications associated with improper IV drug administration including intraarterial injection, overdose and the IV injection of drugs not intended for IV administration.

I am satisfied that (insert groom name) has received adequate training and has adequate practical skill and theoretical knowledge to administer intravenous injections without direct veterinary supervision.

I understand that the direction for a nominated groom to administer an IV injection, and the effects of that injection on the equine patient, are the responsibility of the private veterinarian.

(Insert private veterinarian name and signature)