



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

Notice to Industry 3

Horse transport vehicle drivers and imported horses – biosecurity requirements

Introduction

The purpose of this document is for horse transport vehicle drivers who move imported horses from the airport to a post-arrival quarantine (PAQ) facility to be aware of their responsibilities and obligations to comply with these requirements. This document excludes horse imports from New Zealand and New Caledonia.

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, industry notice or authorisation to enter a quarantine facility may constitute an offence.

Background

The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (the department) is responsible for regulating the import of horses and has developed conditions that manage the associated biosecurity risks. Strict pre-export quarantine (PEQ) and PAQ requirements apply to horses in addition to decontamination and disinfection requirements for people and equipment accompanying them.

Equine Influenza (EI) is a primary disease of concern to Australia because it is officially free from EI. PEQ and PAQ is in place to protect Australia from transmission by an infected horse, either directly or via people, or equipment in contact with it. Due to its contagious nature, people in proximity to imported horses can transmit EI virus even if they have had minimal contact with the horses themselves. Equipment used in feeding, handling and treating imported horses on arrival and during quarantine can also transmit the EI virus. A number of compounds will inactivate EI, including soaps, detergents, acids and oxidising agents (such as Virkon).

Horse transport vehicles and the drivers involved with the loading and unloading of imported horses are at risk of transmitting EI.

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* provides biosecurity officers with the authority to direct persons to decontaminate if they are suspected of exposure to a disease or pest of biosecurity concern to Australia. Horse importers and/or their agents, including horse transport vehicle drivers, must comply with all instructions given by a biosecurity officer.

Failure to comply with the below conditions may constitute an offence under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Requirements at the corral

Horse transport vehicle drivers must:

- Change into department issued overalls on arrival at the corral.
- Wear disposable overalls over the department issued overalls while in the corral area.
Note: transport drivers may wear two sets of washable fabric overalls, if preferred over one set of fabric overalls with one set of disposable overalls over the top.
- Provide a clean set of clothes to the biosecurity officer for sealing in a bag, then transport bag in the driver cabin to MQF or AA site.
- Remove disposable overalls after all horses and grooms are loaded into the trucks and the door seals are in place.

Note: If drivers do not wish to wear two sets of overalls in the corral, they may submit an alternative proposal for keeping the cabin of the truck clean. Alternatives may include either a plastic seat cover (washable/disposable) or showering out at the corral (complete head to toe, full body 3 minute shower including washing hair and cleaning under fingernails) prior to entering the cabin to drive to the Mickleham post-entry quarantine facility (MQF) or Approved Arrangement (AA) site.

Once the horses, equipment and personnel have been loaded into the horse transport vehicle, the doors will be sealed by a biosecurity officer.

Note: The door to the grooms' compartment must not be sealed for WH&S reasons.

Horse transport vehicle drivers must provide the department with their name, vehicle registration number and contact number.

The department will:

- issue a biosecurity direction to the horse transport vehicle driver for the horse transport vehicle to be cleaned and disinfected at MQF or AA site, and
- give the horse transport vehicle driver the contact details for the regional horse coordinator and the MQF horse compound manager (or delegate) or AA site PAQ manager (or delegate), provided on a completed copy of the Form: Contact details and information for the transport vehicle driver – MUST CARRY (2.05).

Requirements for transport to the MQF or AA site

While travelling between the airport and MQF or AA site, the horse transport vehicle driver must carry a copy of:

- Reference: *Emergency personnel decontamination information sheet* (4.01), **and**
- Form: Contact details and information for transport driver – MUST CARRY (2.05), **and**
- A copy of the biosecurity direction/s issued by the department.

Horse transport vehicle drivers must:

- Transport horses directly to MQF or the AA site using the route confirmed with the biosecurity officer.
- Immediately phone the contact listed on Form: Contact details and information for transport driver – MUST CARRY (2.05) if the horse transport vehicle stops en-route for any reason. Any issues on route will be managed by department staff on a case-by-case basis.

Requirements at an AA site

For horses travelling to an AA site to complete PAQ, the horse transport vehicle drivers will be supervised and directed on arrival at the facility by the PAQ manager (or delegate) of the relevant AA site.

Requirements at MQF

For horses travelling to MQF to complete PAQ, the horse transport vehicle drivers must stop at the security point and advise security staff that they are transporting horses for PAQ at MQF.

Note: Drivers and any passengers **must not** exit the vehicle until directed by a biosecurity officer when they reach the unloading zone of the relevant horse compound.

Horse transport vehicle drivers must be authorised to enter the MQF horse compound. To be eligible for authorisation they must have:

- Been nominated by the horse importer.
- Completed the MQF site induction and training.

Note: If horse transport vehicle drivers have not completed the required training for the MQF, a biosecurity officer will direct them to read and sign the Form: *Authorisation to access the horse compound at the Mickleham Post-Entry Quarantine Facility* (3.25). Horse transport vehicle drivers will then be escorted while on site.

Horse transport vehicle drivers must:

- Wait until a biosecurity officer has checked that all truck seals are intact and removed the seals before opening doors to unload the horses.
- Give documentation transported from the airport to a biosecurity officer on arrival.
- Give a biosecurity officer their bagged, labelled, clean change of clothes (including underwear and socks).
- Move the horse transport vehicle to the vehicle wash bay for cleaning once the horses have been unloaded and the biosecurity officer has given the direction.
- Wear department supplied personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times when outside of the vehicle, whilst in the vehicle wash bay. This includes disposable nitrile gloves, disposable coveralls (with hood pulled onto head), rubber boots, chemical goggles, P2 face mask and face shield.
- Clean the compartments of the truck to ensure all animal faecal matter and bedding has been removed.
- Wash off the disinfectant that was applied by the biosecurity officer after the minimum contact time has been reached and the biosecurity officer has directed the wash down.
- Follow biosecurity officer directions to surrender the department's overalls for laundering and footwear for cleaning and disinfection, then undertake a head to toe, full body 3 minute shower (including washing hair and cleaning under fingernails).
- Change into their own clean clothes (including underwear and socks) that was previously provided.
- Complete the Form: *Authorised attendee register for horse and ruminant compounds (Mickleham)* (3.07) once they exit the change room process.

Note: PPE is required to be worn by all horse transport vehicle drivers to minimise potential health hazards associated with the use of Virkon, the chemical used to decontaminate horse transport vehicles to mitigate biosecurity risk associated with imported horses. Potential health hazards associated with Virkon use include irritation to the skin, damage to the eyes, and harmful effects if inhaled or ingested.

Any personal equipment (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 the end of the PAQ period **OR**
- Be decontaminated prior to leaving the corral / horse compound by wiping down the equipment with alcohol wipes

Note: Simple jewellery may be permitted to enter and leave the horse compound if it can be adequately disinfected.

Document information

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Version	Date	Amendment details
4.0	14/04/15	Updated following internal audit. Updated on new template.
5.0	18/11/15	Updated for new quarantine facility.
6.0	16/6/2016	Updates to comply with the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i>
7.0	16/09/2020	Updated to remove instructions for department staff already covered in IM. Updates to names and terms. Improve readability.
8.0	21/12/2023	Update to include requirement to wear PPE at all times whilst in the vehicle wash bay.