

Horse Welfare Policy

This document is based on the Australian Horse Welfare Protocol (August 2011), which sets out how Australian horse organisations, collectively and individually, will voluntarily act to promote horse welfare and wellbeing.



The Australian Horse Welfare Protocol was developed by representatives from national horse organisations & State Horse Councils. It is applicable throughout Australia and its territories. The Protocol is collectively owned by the signatories.

Note: 'horse' refers to horses, ponies, donkeys (asses), hinnies, mules and other equids.

Acknowledgements:

National Equine Welfare Protocol (UK)
Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses (Victoria,
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Horses have been domesticated and selectively bred by humans for about 5000 years. They are socially organised and have been used by humans for work and food, but more commonly now are used as companion animals for pleasure and competitive sports.

Over the centuries people have selected horses according to traits such as conformation, speed, strength, endurance, and ability to be trained. However, in the now largely urban and mechanised society of Australia, fewer people access or spend time learning the art of horsemanship or the knowledge of husbandry necessary to select, sustain and educate horses.

The long and historic involvement with horses means that strong links to traditional practices exist, many which are not supported by science. Where new knowledge, techniques or technologies are available, even when welfare benefits can be demonstrated, adoption of improved practice has been slow or resisted.

Annexure A contains many traditional practices. The Australian Horse Welfare Protocol will provide an industry-wide platform for open engagement of horse organisations and their members with researchers and key stakeholders (including government) to continuously improve the health and wellbeing of horses in our care.

In the past, experienced horsemen would say “Do this, it works” -these days, we have so much more knowledge gained from research, that we are able to say: “Do this, it works because...” (Robyn Stokes).

The Protocol has two basic premises and is set out accordingly. The first premise is that we should take every reasonable step to advance horse’s welfare by providing information, advice and education.

The second is that when evidence of horse suffering is presented, we should take every reasonable step to alleviate that suffering as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Each State has animal protection legislation which makes it an offence to cause physical or mental suffering, whether by positive act or omission, to a protected animal (which includes horses) if the person knew or could be expected to know that an animal would suffer as a result. The Acts also place an additional responsibility on the keeper, owner or person otherwise responsible for an animal to ensure that its basic needs are met.

Many states have Codes of Practice, specific to an aspect of horse care or activity which may have a legal standing.

This Protocol recognizes the basic needs of horses, irrespective of the husbandry system or horse activity, including:

- access to food, water & shelter to maintain health and vigour
- freedom of movement to stand, stretch, turn around, walk forward, lie down and roll
- regular exercise not kept in free ranging/paddock conditions
- social contact with other horses
- accommodation that neither harms nor causes undue strain or discomfort
- protection from disease, and regular inspections to assess the need for attention to feet, teeth and parasite control
- rapid identification and treatment of injury and disease
- The promotion of ongoing education for those responsible for the care of horses.

The Protocol is a statement of intent and does not over-ride any state or national laws.

The individual signatories will retain responsibility for integrating the Protocol into their own programmes for the benefit of the horse.

The Pocket Guide for Horse Organisations & Clubs- Horse Welfare provides checklists to support committees, staff, officials and volunteers to develop an incremental continuous improvement model for horse welfare. Download the guide from www.horsecouncil.org.au

The Protocol provides information on how to report a horse welfare concern in Annexure H

2 BEHAVIOURAL NEEDS

Standards

The design of facilities, the stocking density and the composition of groups of horses must allow each horse to have an area of its own, sufficient for subordinate horses to have an opportunity to escape bullying by dominant animals in the group.

A person responsible for a horse displaying inappropriate behaviour patterns (stereotypies) including weaving, crib-biting, wind-sucking, self mutilation, pawing, kicking or pacing must provide appropriate intervention therapy or management regime based on veterinary advice or accepted industry practice.

- Intervention therapies should be aimed reducing the stresses that caused the inappropriate behaviour, not at restricting these behaviors by artificial aids. Humane alternatives such as windsucking posts should be considered along with management regime reviews which may include considerations such as more fibre to eat and more turn out time if possible.
- Horses are social animals that establish a group hierarchy. They may form social bonds with other animals, including humans. For these reasons, horses should not be kept in isolation from members of their own species.
- Colts, stallions, weanlings, pregnant and sick animals, or those in advanced age, may require segregation, from other groups of horses, to reduce the risk of injury and disease.
- Introduction of a new horse or reintroduction of a segregated horse into a group should be gradual and supervised.
- Horses may develop inappropriate behaviour patterns resulting from lack of stimulation, frustration, close confinement, isolation, and diet, bedding material, inadequate exercise or other unknown factors. Stereotypic behaviour may indicate a welfare problem, and may lead to further welfare problems, so needs to be addressed.

3 SUPERVISION

Minimum Standards

The person responsible for the supervision of a horse must be able to recognise signs of ill health.

The person responsible for the supervision of a horse must have access to a registered veterinary practitioner to diagnose and treat any serious illness or injury or access to a person able to humanely destroy the horse to prevent further suffering.

Horses confined in stables and yards must be inspected at least twice daily.

Aged horses, mares in late pregnancy and horses suffering from injury or disease must be inspected daily.

Contingency plans must be in place for emergency situations such as fire, flood, disease, injury and unexpected absences of the person in charge.

Guidelines

- Frequency and level of supervision should relate to the likelihood of risk to the welfare of each horse. Ideally, all horses should be inspected at least daily. Horses may need to be inspected more frequently depending on their physiological requirements.
- Mares in late pregnancy should be observed at least twice daily for signs of impending foaling.

- Contingency plans may include an evacuation plan where necessary and frequent handling of horses. Such plans should be practised regularly.
- Factors that can increase the welfare risk to horses include availability of suitable feed, the breed type, nature and disposition, age and pregnancy status, the quality of fencing and reliability of water supply.

Note: A horse is considered aged at 15 years old.

4 WATER

Minimum Standards

Horses must have free access to an adequate supply of good quality water.

Horses being transported need to have access according to the [Australian Animal Welfare Strategy Land Transport of Livestock \(Horses\)](#) requirements. (section B8)

Horses must have access to sufficient water to supply their daily needs to maintain good health of each horse present.

Water containers must be of a design that does not cause injury to the animals.

Where provision of sufficient water for health and vitality cannot be met, horses must be moved, agisted, sold or euthanased.

Guidelines

- Water containers and mechanical water sources should be inspected at least daily to ensure that they are functioning properly.
- Where water is supplied in buckets, the supply should be inspected at least every 12 hours to ensure the horse has free access to an adequate supply of good quality water.
- In colder climates, water troughs may freeze over therefore there will be a need to break the ice for horses to access the water supply
- Water containers should be secured and non-spillable.
- Water containers should be maintained for cleanliness
- Dams, if they have a stock access point, should be safe for horses.
- Dams should be free of rubbish and contaminants. Dam levels and water quality need close monitoring.
- Water volume requirements of horses vary widely, depending on age, bodyweight, air temperature and humidity, the work, state of health and type of diet of the horse.

The basic maintenance requirement of water for horses is estimated to be approximately 52 mL/kg bodyweight/day:

- Ponies (200-300 kg body weight) require 10-15 litres daily
- Light hacks (300-450 kg body weight) require 15-25 litres daily
- Thoroughbreds (450-500 kg body weight) require 25-30 litres daily.

These requirements increase with growth, work and lactation. Two or three times as much water as shown above is needed by horses in work.

- Water requirement is closely related to the dry matter intake of food. Horses need 2-4 litres of water per kilogram of dry matter intake. This requirement increases as air temperatures or humidity rise.
- Illness associated with bowel disease, such as obstructive colic or severe diarrhoea, can result in substantial loss of water essential electrolytes (50 - 70 litres/day).

5 FOOD

Minimum Standards

Horses must be provided with a diet of sufficient quantity and quality to maintain their health and meet their physiological requirements.

A horse's body condition must not be allowed to become less than body condition score 2 (see Appendix A).

Horses must not be deprived of access to food for more than 12 hours.

Where provision of sufficient food for health and vitality cannot be met, horses must be moved, agisted, sold or euthanased.

Guidelines

- If there is not sufficient pasture for horses to graze, suitable and sufficient forage and concentrate feed and supplements as necessary, must be provided.
- Supervision during feeding should be provided to observe behaviour patterns and responses
- Feed troughs for horses should be well spaced to minimise bullying and allow subordinate animals access to feed. Horses that are in lighter condition and those that are subject to constant bullying should be segregated from the main group at feeding time.
- If a horse fails to thrive, the quantity, quality and availability of feed, and the health of the horse (including the state of its teeth, the extent of parasitism and the horse's age) should be evaluated.

- Horses should be fed according to body score condition. Over fatness compromises the health of horses. The efficiency of food utilisation will vary between individual horses and breeds of horses. Most ponies utilise feed efficiently but thoroughbred horses require substantially more feed per kilogram of body weight. Overfeeding some horses, particularly idle ponies, can induce laminitis or founder. Animals at risk should be exercised and their intake of food energy reduced to minimal maintenance requirements.
- Horses should be protected from access to food harmful to health, such as mouldy hay, lawn mower clippings, grains including wheat and poisonous plants.
- Changes to the horse's diet should be introduced gradually to reduce the risk of digestive disorders.
- All components of diet essential for growth, health and vitality should be readily available to horses.
- Supplying supplementary feed in no spill containers, rather than directly on the ground, will decrease the risk of sand colic and minimise wastage of food.
- Good quality pastures, containing suitable grasses and legumes, supplemented by mineral licks, can provide the nutritional requirements for most horses.
- Horses kept in smaller areas or on unimproved or minimal pasture may require supplementary feed for some part of the year, depending on requirements for their growth, stage of life, pregnancy, lactation, condition of teeth and work.
- Roughage (fibrous feed such as pasture, hay and chaff) should form a significant part of a horse's diet, to provide sufficient bulk and fibre to enable the digestive system to function properly. If fed processed feed or grains, these should be offered in addition to the appropriate amount of roughage.
- Persons inexperienced in horse care should consult a registered veterinary practitioner, or an equine health professional about selection of suitable foodstuffs for horses used for a particular purpose.
- Protein, mineral and vitamin supplements should be provided when required. Horses should have access to a source of salt when it is not provided in foodstuffs.
- Adequate, good quality food is necessary for growth of young horses. At six months of age horses require as much energy-rich food and more protein than out-of-work, adult horses.
- Lactating mares require about 70% more energy than idle, adult horses.

6 EXERCISE

Minimum Standards

Stabled or yarded horses must be exercised daily, except where the exercise may be detrimental to the health and welfare of the horse.

Horses must not be overworked, overridden or overdriven. The workload imposed must not exceed the horse's ability for its age, size, strength, and fitness.

Horses on mechanical exercising devices, such as walking machines, must be continuously monitored by a competent person to prevent excessive strain or injury.

Guidelines

- Horses should not be subjected to excessive strenuous exercise, particularly immature horses.
- Rider's size and weight should be appropriate for the size and condition of the horse.
- Horses kept in free range type accommodation (paddocks), will not need to have specific exercise programs to maintain general health and well being.
- Horses kept confined in stable or yard type accommodation, or are required to be trained or gain fitness for a sport or recreation pastime may be exercised in a number of ways, including by riding, driving, lunging, swimming or releasing them into a large yard or paddock.
- In some circumstances, due to injury or convalescence, horses may need to be stabled for extended periods. Horses that are stabled long-term should have an appropriate exercise plan developed in consultation with a veterinarian, which may include leading in hand, swimming and incremental releases outside into yards until spelling at pasture is achieved.
- When introducing new or spelled horses to exercise, their workload should be increased gradually to prevent injury and stress.

Minimum Standards

Premises must be designed and maintained to minimise the risk of injury to horses.

There must be adequate numbers of paddocks or yards to permit animals of similar age, sex, size and compatible temperament to be grouped.

Confined horses must not be overcrowded.

Yards and stables must have sufficient room to allow the horse to stand freely in the normal position with the head fully raised, walk forward and turn, lie down, roll, stretch and groom themselves without restrictions.

Appropriate clean bedding must be provided in stables for warmth, insulation and protection from abrasion.

Horses must have access to proper and sufficient shade & shelter at all times.

Properties used for the keeping of horses must be registered with a Property Identification Code (PIC) in the states where this is mandatory.

Guidelines

Accommodation of horses in stables is not likely to meet the full spectrum of horses' behavioural and social needs. If stabling is used, provision of exercise, time out at pasture, a high fibre diet, social interaction (such as allowing these horses to see other horses), and stimulation through environmental enrichment may reduce stress, boredom and the risk of stereotypic behaviour, and should be provided

- Biosecurity considerations need to be incorporated into horse housing design & management regimes
- Stable size should be not less than 12 m² for an average size horse with a height of not less than 2.4 metres
- Stable design should allow a horse to achieve visual contact with other horses, humans and activities in the stable surroundings.
- Sheds should be constructed and maintained in order to minimise risk of injury and disease.
- Stables should have adequate lighting that permits inspection of a horse.
- The floors of stables and yards should have surfaces that permit adequate drainage and provide firm footing for horses.
- Stables should give adequate natural ventilation. Air vents on opposite sides of the box are preferred. Dust levels in stables and stalls should be kept to a minimum to reduce the risk of respiratory disease.
- Horses should be accommodated singly if in stables. During weaning it is acceptable to have two weanlings together in a loose box.

- Adequate firefighting equipment should be available and easy to access. Persons in charge of stabled horses should be trained and practiced in use of fire-fighting equipment. There should be ready access to horses to enable them to be released quickly in case of fire. A no smoking policy should be adopted at all stables with a 'no smoking' sign clearly visible.
- Dirty bedding and stale or contaminated feed and water should be removed at least daily. Disposal of washings, urine and dung should be made in compliance with the requirements of statutory authorities.
- Paddocks and yards should be kept free of noxious plants, rubbish and debris that may injure horses.
- Healthy horses can tolerate a wide variation of heat and cold if they are acclimatised and have adequate feed and water. However, steps should be taken to minimise the effects of climatic extremes and other factors producing either cold or heat stress. Young foals, very old, or sick horses are most susceptible.
- Landscape features, such as rows of trees, hedges, and gullies, can provide some shelter for horses.
- The risk of injury increases where horses are overcrowded and competition for food, water and space leads to aggressive behaviour.
- The Department for Primary Industries (or equivalent) manages Property Identification Codes for livestock properties.

8 FENCING AND GATES

Minimum Standards

Permanent and temporary fences must be properly maintained to adequately confine horses. Gateways must be designed to give easy and safe passage of horses.

Guidelines

- Barbed wire and conventional plain wire fencing must be well maintained. It is not the preferred option for a safe and effective barrier as wire has a higher likelihood to cause injury to horses.
- Electric fencing, properly fitted and maintained, provides a safe and effective barrier to horses, when used with conventional post-and-wire and post-and rail style fences. Horses should be supervised during the process of being introduced to electric fences, to ensure their education and safety.
- The addition of a laneway between paddocks separates groups of horses, providing opportunity to reduce fence related injury.
- Gates and doorways should be a minimum of 1.2 metres wide. Gateways should be fastened securely, to prevent escape of horses and possible injury.

- The strength and height of the fencing is particularly important for stallion enclosures. Fencing should prevent escape and minimise risk to the stallion, other horses, handlers and the general public.
- Suitability of fencing varies according to the size, sex and disposition of the horses, stocking density and paddock size.
- Injuries occur more frequently where horses are over-crowded and facilities are inadequate.

9 AGISTMENT

Minimum Standards

An agistment property owner must record the full name, street address and contact telephone number of the owner of every horse agisted on their property.

Guidelines

- A written agreement defining the conditions of the agistment should be made between the horse owner and the agistment property owner. The agreement should state the fee, the service to be provided, the name of the person responsible for supervision and provision of feed and water, the steps to be taken should the horse become sick or be injured, and a contingency plan for emergency situations such as fire, flood or disease outbreak.
- The owner of the agistment property should advise the horse owner, or the person responsible, about the provisions made for safety and care of the horse, the supply of feed and water, the treatment of injured or ill horses, general paddock maintenance, and routine measures for control of parasites and prevention of overstocking.
- A wide variety of agistment is available for horses and, usually, the degree of care and attention given to agisted horses is in direct proportion to the fee charged.
- Agistment agreements may also include supervision, rugging, grooming, stabling, individual feeding, removal of manure and provision of a higher standard of facilities and management.

TETHERING AND HOBBLING

For the purposes of this document, tethering is defined as the securing of an animal to an anchor point to confine it to a desired area. For horses, it is commonly used to prevent animals straying while grazing unfenced pasture. Tethering should not be confused with short-term tying up with a lead rope or with hobbling.

Minimum Standards

Horses must be tethered in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Tethering of Animals if a Code exists in your state.

Horses must not be hobbled for continuous periods of more than 12 hours in any 24 hour period.

Equipment used to hobble horses must be specifically designed for hobbling.

Equipment used to hobble horses must be well maintained.

Equipment and the method used to hobble horses must not cause injury or distress.

Hobbled horses must not have access to deep water due to the risk of injury or death, unless under direct supervision.

Guidelines

- Tethering and hobbling of horses is inherently dangerous and should be undertaken with extreme care and supervision.
- Hobble straps should be lined, or greased regularly.
- Tethering and hobbling of horses should only be a short term practice and should not be used to restrain horses constantly because fencing is inadequate.
- Hobbled horses should not be tethered.

11 RUGGING

Minimum Standards

Rugging must be appropriate for the weather conditions and not result in heat stress to the animal.

Horses wearing rugs must be inspected at least daily for any injury or entanglement caused by the rug.

Rugs must be removed at least weekly for inspection of the horse's body condition, skin health and rubbing or injury caused by the rug.

- Rugs should be fit for purpose, particularly in extremes of hot, cold or wet weather. Rugs used in wet weather should be waterproof.
- Rugs should be well fitting and in good repair.
- Any rug that has caused, or may cause, injury or disease should not be placed on a horse.
- Horses fully or partially clipped during winter may need to be rugged, except when working or when weather conditions are very mild.
- Horses should be familiarised with wearing rugs before being released into a paddock while wearing a rug.

12 HEALTH

Minimum Standards

Horses that are sick, suffering, injured or diseased must be provided with prompt veterinary or other appropriate treatment.

Sick or injured horses that cannot be provided with veterinary or other appropriate treatment, supervision and continuing aftercare, must be euthanased.

Horses losing body condition that do not respond to special feeding must be examined by a registered veterinary practitioner.

Guidelines

- Examples of conditions that may require prompt veterinary attention:
 - acute abdominal pain or colic seen as pawing, kicking at the stomach or rolling, often accompanied by straining, teeth-grinding and patchy or generalised sweating
 - serious injuries, including deep wounds, severe haemorrhage, suspected bone fractures, or eye injuries
 - straining for more than 30 minutes by a mare that has not foaled
 - inability or difficulty rising or standing
 - retained foetal membranes
 - marked lameness or injuries not responding to treatment within 24 hours
 - signs of respiratory disease (colds) such as discharges from eyes, nostrils, or swollen glands under the throat; these are indications of respiratory disease and may be accompanied by a cough, fever, loss of appetite
 - diarrhoea or persistent weight loss

- constipation
 - signs of laminitis, including lameness, increased pulse to the affected hooves, reluctance to stand on affected feet and reluctance to move
 - inactivity or unresponsiveness
-
- Unexplained symptoms, unusual signs or behaviours, or unexplained deaths should immediately be reported to a veterinarian or call the 24 hr Emergency Disease Hotline 1800 675 888
 - Routine vaccination of horses against tetanus is recommended. Owners should seek veterinary advice about vaccination against other diseases.
 - Prompt appropriate preventive treatment should be given to horses for diseases that may be common in a district or occurring in a mob.
 - A new horse to a property should be quarantined away from the established group for 10- 14 days to reduce the risk of introducing disease.
 - Appropriate regular treatment for internal worm parasites and early treatment of external parasites such as lice, should be practiced. The effectiveness of treatment should be evaluated by veterinary examination if the response to routine treatment is poor.
 - Good hygiene and cleanliness in and around stables, yards and paddocks, including disposal of effluent and litter, will reduce the risk of parasitism and disease.
 - Aged and geriatric horses should be assessed by a registered veterinary practitioner or person experienced in the care of horses for general health, and is given a full dental examination and treatment, every 12 months.
 - Paddocks used for grazing horses should be managed in such a way that contamination by parasites or other agents is minimised. Good management practices include spelling paddocks, or grazing with other species such as sheep and cattle.
 - Unhealthy horses should not be offered for sale.

Minimum Standards

Horses' hooves must be maintained to permit normal mobility and to maintain hoof shape and function.

Horses with a hoof injury, overgrowth, infection or laminitis must be provided with veterinary or other appropriate treatment.

Guidelines

- Horse industry organisations should promote the contracting of AQF qualified (or equivalent) hoof care professional or where appropriate, veterinarian.
- Horses ridden or driven on rough or stony surfaces should be shod or wear boots or have been accustomed to being unshod on such surfaces.
- Shoeing or trimming should not cause any abnormality of gait or conformation. Shoeing should be practiced only by experienced farriers.
- Hooves of horses in work should be inspected each day for signs of injury, loose shoes or impacted stones.
- Loose shoes and those with risen clenches (shoe nails) should be promptly removed, to prevent possible foot injury. Clenches remaining in the hoof should be promptly removed. The shoes should be replaced prior to work on roads, stony or hard surfaces.
- Shod horses should be inspected at least every six weeks for replacement or adjustment of shoes. Shoes should be removed or inspected regularly when horses are not in use for a particular purpose
- Unshod horses should be regularly inspected for the purposes of hoof care. Trimming may be required at least every six weeks

14 DENTAL CARE

Minimum Standards

A person must not provide any dental treatment that causes modification, damage or injury which results in a negative impact on the welfare of the horse.

A person must not attempt a dental procedure that they are not competent to perform.

The need for analgesia or anaesthesia must be considered before undertaking any equine dental procedure, and dental procedures likely to cause unreasonable pain must be performed with suitable analgesia or anaesthesia. Drugs used for sedation or other purposes must be administered in strict accordance with state legislation.

Guidelines

- Horse industry organisations should promote the contracting of AQF qualified (or equivalent) equine dental care professional, or a veterinarian, to undertake all dental examinations, routine procedures and treatments.
- Horses' teeth should be checked at least once a year by a person suitably skilled and experienced in equine dentistry. The frequency of checks should be increased for young horses, stable fed horses and aged horses.

15 TREATMENT AND SURGICAL PROCEDURES

Minimum Standards

Surgical and husbandry procedures likely to cause unreasonable pain must be performed only under the influence of suitable analgesia or anaesthesia.

Surgical procedures on horses of any age must only be conducted by a registered veterinary practitioner.

Docking of a horse's tail and any invasive procedure to alter the tail set of a horse is not permitted unless by a registered veterinary practitioner for therapeutic reasons.

Castration is a surgical procedure and must be performed in accordance with the state laws.

Guidelines

- Restraint methods used on horses should always be the minimum necessary to carry out routine management procedures. Prolonged use of restraints, such as nose-twitches, may cause severe reaction in many horses.
- Adequate facilities to provide a safe environment, and suitable equipment, should be available when horses are subjected to any procedure or treatment. Management and treatment procedures should be performed by competent persons.
- Treatment practices that cause pain should not be carried out on horses if painless or alternative methods of treatment can be adopted.
- Internal medication such as vaccines, drenches, food additives, and external medications such as liniments, lotions and insecticides, should be used strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions - overdosing may harm horses; under dosing may be ineffective. Treatments should be administered in a hygienic manner.

- Effective management and treatment of horses involves using various forms of restraint. These will vary with the temperament, disposition, and previous learning experience of the particular horse, the nature of the management procedure, and the skill of the handler.

16 IDENTIFICATION

Minimum Standards

Branding must be undertaken in accordance with state laws.

Microchips must be inserted by a registered and authorised veterinary practitioner or other qualified person in accordance with state laws.

Guidelines

- Unique identification of horses linking to an owner should be promoted by horse organisations and government agencies responsible for emergency response and animal health.
- Horse industry organisations should promote the contracting of AQF qualified (or equivalent) professional trained person to identify horses in the selected method, or a veterinarian.
- Branding using corrosive chemicals or hot irons may be prohibited in some states
- Microchipping with animal owner details recorded by a licensed microchip registry, freeze-branding, DNA profiling and blood type profiling are acceptable methods of permanent identification.
- Hoof fire branding is acceptable as a short-term procedure.
- Horses should be permanently identified as early as management practices will allow, by persons experienced and proficient in performing the procedure.
- Where horses are kept at unoccupied premises, the contact details of the person in charge of the horse should be clearly displayed or readily accessible.
- Horse owners should check that their contact details are correctly recorded with the licensed animal microchip identification registry

17 BREEDING

Minimum Standards

Behaviour management of horses during breeding, including for dangerous stallions, must not cause unreasonable or unjustifiable pain, suffering, distress or injury.

Facilities used for breeding must be constructed and maintained to minimise potential for injury to the horses.

Pregnancy testing and Artificial Insemination procedures must comply with state laws.

Guidelines

- Many welfare problems are created when owners neglect animals that may have little economic value. Indiscriminate breeding of horses and the breeding of horses of a type or temperament unsuitable for specific purposes should be avoided.
- Persons responsible for reproductively entire horses should have a planned breeding program, which incorporates managed health, housing, training and social interaction.
- Known or potentially inherited conditions should be taken into account when selecting horses for breeding.
- Where stallion behaviour endangers handlers or mares, the behaviour should be modified using an appropriate training method by a competent person, or the stallion gelded or humanely destroyed. Stallion behavioural problems may be minimised by training from a young age.
- Special nutrition should be provided to the mare to cope with the burden of pregnancy, foaling and lactation.
- Frequency of monitoring of mares should increase as foaling becomes imminent.
- Mares should be monitored perinatally to ensure they pass the placenta within three hours.
- Foals should be monitored perinatally (for the initial 24 hours after birth) to ensure meconium expulsion, urination and suckling are normal and that colostrum intake occurs.
- Foals orphaned at birth and under human care, should receive colostrum or a substitute within 24 hours of birth.
- Nurse mares should be supervised until they have accepted the foal.
- Foals should not be weaned before four months of age.

Minimum Standards

Training methods used must be humane and must not cause unreasonable pain or suffering to the horse.

Horses must not be beaten or abused.

Electronic prodders must not be used on horses.

On inspection of a horse's mouth fitted with a bit, there must not be any sign of injury, including pressure marks or bruising or other signs of ill fit or impact of ill use.

Electronic collars, such as anti-crib collars, must not be used on horses.

Guidelines

- Training methods should be adapted to suit the needs of the particular horse.
- Training methods should incorporate an understanding of horse behaviour, learning theory and training techniques proven through evidenced based research.
- Persons engaged in the education and training of horses should be experienced, or under direct supervision of an experienced person.
- Horses should be of the appropriate type, be adequately educated, fed and housed, and trained to the degree of fitness for the task to be performed. Veterinary attention should be sought if there is any doubt about the fitness of a horse for a particular purpose.
- Most horses respond best to firm but gentle techniques and to rewards when the horse responds correctly.
- Abnormal physiological and behavioural responses to training and confinement should be recognised and measures taken to correct the suspected cause of them. These responses may include aggression, biting, pawing, kicking, weaving, pacing, crib-biting or wind-sucking.
- Discipline has to be administered immediately following the act of misconduct, and should be minimal.
- Horses should only be given training schedules that are suited to their physical capabilities or level of maturity. Basic education of young horses is desirable; however it should not be strenuous, to reduce risk of injury and growth abnormalities.

- All saddlery, harness and other equipment used with horses should be of sound condition, well-fitting, correctly adjusted, regularly cleaned and must not compromise the welfare of the horse. Horse industry organisations should promote the contracting of AQF qualified (or equivalent) saddlers, harness makers or saddle/harness fitting specialists for the provision of fitting and care services and advice.
- When accompanied by their mothers, foals less than four or five months of age may be handled to accustom them to being caught, tied up and led, to having their legs and feet handled and to being confined within a yard, stable or horse float. Handling of foals from the earliest possible age is recommended.
- Horses require regular exercise for a period of months before they are adequately conditioned for strenuous exercise. Experience and skill are required to ride or drive horses to their utmost ability in competitive horse sports without inducing distress, injury or illness.

19 TRANSPORT

Minimum Standard

Horses must be transported in accordance with the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy Land Transport of Livestock (Horses). Notes:

- The document can be found on www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au
- An excerpt of the specific section relating to horses is found in Annexure G. It is recommended that the specific section is also read in conjunction with Part A “General Standards and Guidelines for the Transport of Livestock”

20 EUTHANASIA OR SLAUGHTER

Minimum Standards

Euthanasia or slaughter must be performed humanely. The person responsible for the animal must ensure that the method results in immediate death or immediate loss of consciousness followed by death while unconscious.

Euthanasia or slaughter must be performed only by persons competent in the method used and licensed where appropriate.

A person humanely destroying an animal must take reasonable action to confirm the animal is dead or to ensure death.

Horses held at slaughter houses must be dealt with in accordance with state laws.

Horses held at sale yards must be dealt with in accordance with relevant state Code of Practice where they exist.

Guidelines

- The horse should be handled quietly before euthanasia or slaughter to ensure it is not unnecessarily distressed or alarmed.
- Acceptable methods of euthanasia or slaughter include:
 - rapid intravenous injection of concentrated barbiturate solutions; it should be noted that tissue residues will render the carcass unfit for human or pet consumption if this technique is used
 - shooting by a licensed person, using a registered firearm

Shooting:

- the firearm should be at least .22 calibre (long rifle)
- persons other than the marksman and a handler for the horse should be cleared from the area or should stand well behind the marksman
- a head collar or bridle should be put on the horse to enable it to be quietly restrained by an assistant, who must stand out of the line of fire
- never fire while the horse is moving its head; wait patiently for a quiet interval before firing
- to provide maximum impact and the least possibility of misdirection, the gun should be fired at a range that is as short as circumstances permit, but not in contact with the horse's head. Direct contact may be made with the horse's head when using a captive bolt pistol.
- the target area and direction of the bullet are as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

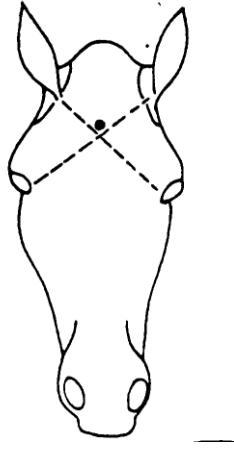


Figure 1 Target area for humane destruction of horse by shooting or captive bolt.
The target is just above intersection of broken lines.

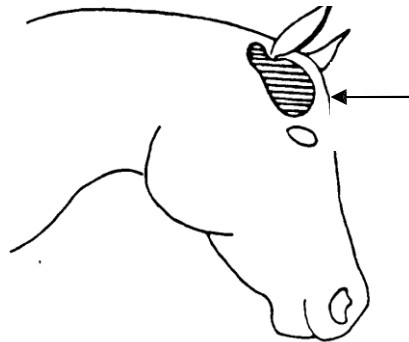


Figure 2 Direction (shown by arrow) in which bullet should be fired at the target area.

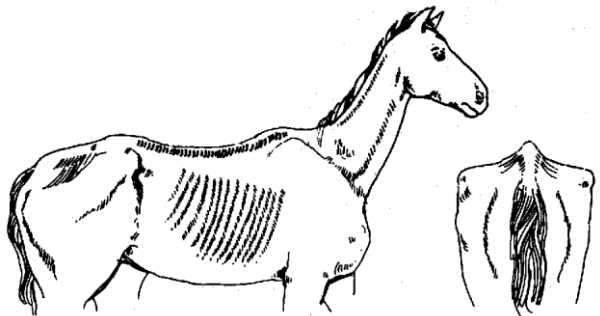
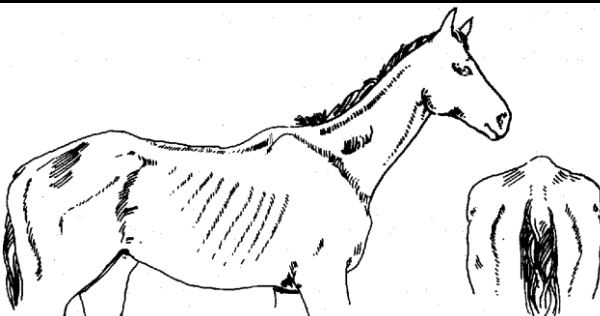
Annexure A Body Condition Scoring

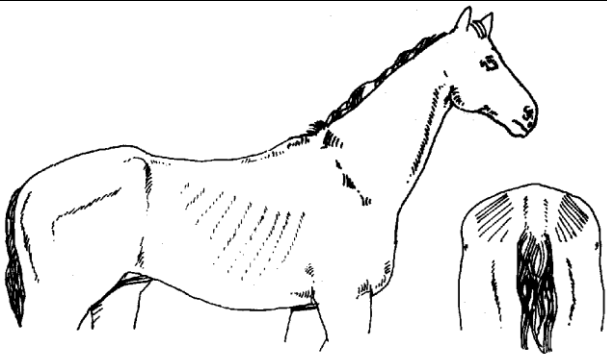
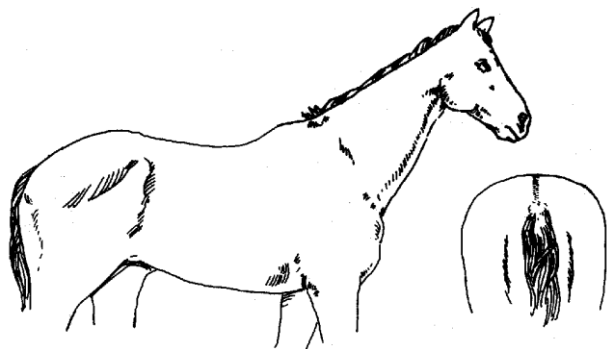
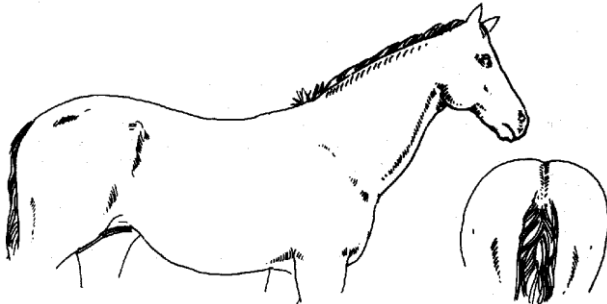
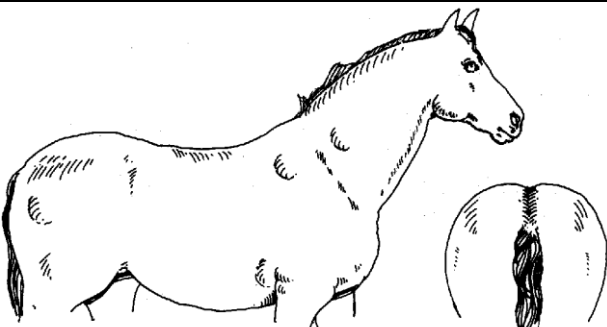
Body condition scoring provides a useful and objective method of monitoring body condition. Body condition, expressed as fatness, is the most reliable indicator of the suitability of a horse's diet.

Poor body condition is not always due to lack of feed; it could be related to parasite infestations, poor dental health, chronic injury or illness, advanced age, or lack of mobility affecting the horse's ability to forage.

Method of estimation

1. Assess visually and by feel, the horse's pelvis and rump, back and ribs and neck. During winter, a long heavy hair coat complicates visual appraisal. You need to run your hands over the horse to get an accurate score.
2. Give those areas individual scores using a scale of 0 (very poor) to 5 (very fat).
3. Intermediate assessments can be given half scores.
4. Using the pelvic and rump assessment as the base score, adjust that score by a half point if it differs by 1 or more points from the score for the neck or ribs.

Score		Description
0 Very poor		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very sunken rump • deep cavity under tail • skin tight over bones • very prominent backbone and pelvis • marked U shaped neck
1 Poor		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sunken rump • cavity under tail • ribs easily visible • prominent backbone and croup • U shaped neck - narrow and slack

2 Moderate		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flat rump either side of backbone • ribs just visible • narrow but firm neck • backbone well covered
3 Good		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rounded rump • ribs just covered but easily felt • no crest, firm neck
4 Fat		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rump well rounded • gutter along back • ribs and pelvis hard to feel • slight crest
5 Very fat		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very bulging rump • deep gutter along back • ribs buried • marked crest • folds and lumps of fat

Annexure B Published Information and Advice Regarding Horse Welfare

Organisation	Publication
State Government of Victoria	http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-legislation/victorian-codes-of-practice-for-animal-welfare/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-horses-revision-1
State Government of NSW	Caring for Horses http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/animal-welfare
Northern Territory www.nt.gov.au	https://nt.gov.au/industry/agriculture/livestock/keeping-horses-donkeys-and-mules
State Government of Queensland www.qld.gov.au	General horse information https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/animal-industries/horses
State Government of Tasmania www.tas.gov.au	http://dpiw.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/animal-biosecurity/animal-welfare/legislation-standards-guidelines/animal-welfare-standards-guidelines/animal-welfare-guidelines/horse-welfare
State Government of Western Australia www.wa.gov.au	https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/animalwelfare/animal-welfare-horses-donkeys-and-hybrids
State Government of South Australia www.sa.gov.au	https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/managing-natural-resources/plants-and-animals/Animal_welfare/Codes_of_practice/Animal_welfare_codes_of_practice
Australian Veterinary Association www.ava.com.au	http://www.ava.com.au/publicinfo
Equine Veterinarians Australia	http://www.ava.com.au/equine
RSPCA Australia	http://kb.rspca.org.au/ The RSPCA Knowledge Base is searchable with lots of information

Annexure C Animal Welfare Legislation

Horse Welfare Legislation in Australia - Check your state Government website

Each State has an animal welfare legislation that sets out the way in which animals should be treated by law.

There are also a number of horse welfare codes of practice and guidelines that exist to ensure the welfare of horses in a number of different situations.

The Role of RSPCA, Local Councils and the Police

Most RSPCA officers work in conjunction with local council authorities and the local police. However, animal welfare complaints are generally received only by the RSPCA.

In urgent situations or where the RSPCA are unable to be contacted, the Police can be called to attend to a complaint. The local police can also be informed of infringements of that state's legislation regarding animals.

Complaints handled by local councils generally specifically relate to land use and local planning laws and regulations. Local councils are generally unable to respond to animal welfare complaints. If a State of emergency is declared then both council officers and police officers may act as animal welfare officers.

Annexure D Other Horse Welfare Resources, Professional Advice and Assistance

Organisation	Service Provision
Animal Health Australia www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au	Animal health and welfare training Emergency disease response information
Australian Horse Industry Council www.horsecouncil.org.au	General horse Industry, disease and health advice Administers the Horse Emergency Contact Database (HECD)
Equine Veterinarians Australia www.eva.org.au	Equine health & disease information Register of Equine Veterinarians in Australia
International Society for Equitation Science www.equitationscience.com	Applied research into training and welfare of horses Knowledge sharing between the scientific community and horse owners and riders

Annexure E Reporting a Welfare Concern

All horse welfare concerns and complaints should be reported to the RSPCA in your area. Each State has an RSPCA equipped to deal with animal welfare concerns.

RSPCA Australia	www.rspca.org.au	
RSPCA Tasmania	www.rspcatas.org.au	1300 139 947
RSPCA ACT	www.rspca-act.org.au	1300 477722
RSPCA Darwin	www.rspcadarwin.org.au	08 8984 3795
RSPCA NSW	www.rspcansw.org.au	1300 278 3589
RSPCA VIC	www.rspcavic.org	03 9224 2222.
RSPCA WA	www.rspcawa.asn.au	1300 278 3589
RSPCA SA	www.rspcasa.asn.au	1300 4 77722
RSPCA QLD-	www.rspcaqld.org.au	1300 852 188

The RSPCA have welfare officers in each State dedicated to following up on animal welfare complaints. Officers will attend the scene of the complaint and make an assessment and take the appropriate action. This may entail issuing orders to owners regarding the improvement of the animals' welfare, keeping track of the situation, and/or seizing horses into their care.

Tips for reporting a welfare concern:

1. Gather as much information regarding the case as possible: location, type of animal, exact welfare concern and history of the case (if you are aware of it).
2. Take careful note of the condition of the animal and its deterioration over time if applicable.
3. Take photos of the case in question, ensuring that you do not trespass.

Reporting a Welfare Concern to a horse rescue organisation

Horse rescue organisations sometimes accept horse welfare complaints from the public. Each organisation works differently; some only accept horses surrendered to them and others will send their own officers or volunteers to assess a situation before approaching the owners and/or working with the RSPCA to bring about a resolution.

Sometimes organisations are able to monitor situations closely and inform the RSPCA when the situation becomes more urgent. Check with your local horse rescue organisation to see what their capabilities are; and remember that the RSPCA are the only body able to legally seize an animal.

Annexure F Australian Qualifications and Professional Associations

Through contracting of a trained, qualified contractor who is a professional member of their industry association, horse owners are more likely to receive a higher level of health care for their horse. This includes appropriate advice and the expectation to receive early referral to a specialist if required along with having some foundation for recourse should a service be provided below standard or worse, compromise the health and well being of the horse in their care.

Australian Qualifications

Australian citizens can train to attain a vocational qualification from Certificate One to Advanced Diploma under the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF).

All of the relevant qualifications relating to horse care (including farriery & equine dentists) and racing are the responsibility of Agri-Foods Skills Australia. www.agrifoodskills.net.au

Vocational qualifications relating to equestrian coaching and trail ride leadership are the responsibility of Service Skills Australia www.serviceskills.com.au.

Vocational qualifications relating to the manufacture of goods, including saddlery and leather goods are the responsibility of the Manufacturing Skills Council www.makeit.net.au

Persons gaining a qualification overseas can request to have their qualification recognised in Australia under this framework through an evaluation process. A range of qualifications relating to veterinary science, horse nutrition and related areas are available through Australian Universities.

The levels of the qualification outline the skills & knowledge for different job roles and tasks for which a person is expected to be competent. Continuing education after receiving any level of qualification is highly valued.

Many horse industry organisations have their own certificate programs designed for volunteer coaches, officials and administrators who may or may not be acting in a professional capacity.

Professional Associations

Persons providing services for a horse owner, including veterinarians, farriers and dentists, are encouraged to be members of their industry professional associations. This enables easier access to up to date training, information about business practices and laws and to receive information about horse welfare from industry networks.

If you are a horse owner (consumer) and need assistance to find a professional association for advice on industry standards, a list of trained and qualified persons in your area or want to find out procedures for making a complaint contact the Australian Horse Industry Council www.horsecouncil.org.au

Annexure G AAWS Land Transport for Livestock (Horses)

The excerpt guidelines for horses should be read in conjunction with “Part A” found in the full version of the AAWS Land Transport for Livestock document.

Part A includes chapter areas for Responsibilities and planning, Stock-handling competency, Transport vehicles and facilities for livestock, Pre-transport selection of livestock, Loading, Transporting and unloading livestock and Humane destruction.

The AAWS Land Transport for Livestock can be downloaded from www.australiananimalwelfare.net.au

B8 Specific requirements for the land transport of horses

Standards

General standards in Part A also apply to minimise the risk to the welfare of horses during transport.

SB8.1 Time off water must not exceed the time periods given below:

Class	Maximum time off water (hours)
Horses over 6 months old	24
Lactating mares	12
Foals less than 6 months old	12
Mares known to be more than 7.5 months pregnant, excluding the last 4 weeks	12

SB8.2 Journey time may be extended for horses to 36 hours only under the following conditions:

- i) horses must be watered and fed on the vehicle every 5 hours
- ii) horses are not exposed to the natural elements
- iii) there must be sufficient space to allow a comfortable standing position
- iv) flooring must be suitable including drainage to remove urine
- v) regular assessments must be made that the horses are fit for the remainder of the intended journey
- vi) horses must have a mandatory spell for 24 hours before starting another journey.

SB8.3 If horses have been off water for 24 hours, they must have a mandatory spell for 12 hours before starting another journey.

If lactating mares, foals and pregnant mares known to be more than 7.5 months pregnant excluding the last 4 weeks have been off water for 12 hours, they must have a mandatory spell for 12 hours before starting another journey.

- SB8.4 Mares known to be in the last 4 weeks of pregnancy must be transported under veterinary advice unless the journey is less than 4 hours.
- SB8.5 Horses kept in yards for more than 12 hours or that will be transported for more than 12 hours must be provided with water and feed and space to lie down before loading.
- SB8.6 Foals and young horses being transported for more than 5 hours must have sufficient space to suckle and lie down.
- SB8.7 Moderate to severely lame horses of lameness score 4 and 5 (see below) must not be transported unless veterinary advice is obtained.
- SB8.8 All vehicles must be constructed in a way that ensures each horse stall or pen can be accessed easily for feeding, watering and visual inspection. All vehicles must contain nonslip flooring and walls of sufficient strength to withstand horse activity.
- SB8.9 Fully enclosed, environmentally controlled vehicles must have effective airflow, with fans and other equipment providing at least 12 air changes per hour.
- SB8.10 A vertical clearance of at least 2.2 m between the livestock crate floor and overhead structures must be provided in any vehicle used for horse transport.
- SB8.11 Unbroken stallions must be segregated from other horse categories.
- SB8.12 Electric prodders must not be used on horses.
- SB8.13 Dogs must not be used to move horses in livestock-handling facilities.
- SB8.14 Horses travelling across Bass Strait must be individually stalled, except for mares with foals at foot, which must be stalled together.

Note

Horses are able to be fed and watered on many vehicles.

Guidelines

General guidelines are also recommended in Part A to minimise the risk to the welfare of horses during transport.

Fitness

- GB8.1 Additional considerations for horse welfare should be made for long-distance travel:

for horses over 6 months old after 12 hours off
water for lactating mares after 8 hours off water

for foals under 6 months old after 8 hours off water

for mares in the third trimester of pregnancy after 5 hours off

water. These considerations should include:

- i) that the horses are fit for the remainder of the intended journey
- ii) that prevailing or predicted weather conditions are favourable
- iii) additional spell times during the journey
- iv) a longer spell time at the end of the journey
- v) the recent management of the horses before first loading.

- GB8.2 Conditions that could adversely affect horse welfare during transport and should be considered in the assessment of fitness for the intended journey. Such conditions might include any signs of colic, raised or lowered body temperature, lethargy, and profuse diarrhoea, disease, or wounds or abscesses. A decision to transport a horse with the above conditions should be made only after considering the welfare of the animal concerned and the treatment and management options.
- GB8.3 Mares in the last trimester of pregnancy and those in early lactation should not be transported for periods longer than 8 hours to reduce the risk of metabolic disease and herpes virus related abortions. They should be spelled for 12 hours before reloading.
- GB8.4 Mares in the last month of pregnancy should not be transported unless under veterinary advice, which should include the following provisions:
- water-deprivation time should not exceed 5 hours
 - feed and water should be provided immediately before loading and on unloading additional space should be provided on the vehicle to enable the mare to lie down
 - the mare should be separated from other horses
 - veterinary advice should be sought.
- GB8.5 Mares that have given birth should not be transported within 7 days of foaling except when under veterinary advice or travelling for treatment. In this case, adequate space for lying down, and bedding, feed and water should be provided. Horses should also be able to be inspected.
- GB8.6 Horses should be at least a body condition score of 2 before transport, as described in the table below. Horses below condition score 2 should only be moved after veterinary advice and for the shortest distance necessary.

- GB8.7 Lameness assessment should be made using the lameness scoring system described in the table below.

Score	Lameness assessment
0	Lameness not perceptible under any circumstances
1	Lameness difficult to observe, not consistently apparent regardless of circumstances (eg weight carrying, circling, inclines, hard surface)
2	Lameness difficult to observe at a walk to trot in a straight line (eg weight carrying, circling, inclines, hard surface)
3	Lameness consistently observable at a trot under all circumstances
4	Lameness obvious, marked nodding, hitching and/or shortened stride
5	Lameness obvious, minimal weight bearing in motion or rest, inability to move

Source: American Association of Equine Practitioners Scale of Lameness Grading (1984)

Food and water

- GB8.8 Adult horses should be fed and watered at floor level every 5 hours and as soon as possible after unloading, with a suitable quality and quantity of feed and water to minimise colic risk.

Loading density

General standards in Chapter 5 apply to horses to ensure that the loading density is appropriate and is managed to minimise the risk to the welfare of livestock.

- GB8.9 The following minimum space allowances should be provided:

Class of livestock	Floor area (m ² /head) ^a
Adult horses	1.2
Horses 18–24 months	1.0
Horses 12–18 months	0.9
Horses 5–12 months	0.7

^a Figures may increase by up to 10% for adult horses and up to 20% for young horses and foals.

- GB8.10 The number of bays provided on the vehicle should be selected according to the duration of travel; the airflow capacity of the vehicle; the size, class and condition of the horses; and whether feed and water is to be provided during the journey.
- GB8.11 Mares with foals at foot and young horses should be provided with additional space to allow the foal to suck, and both foals and young horses to lie down as required.

Vehicle and facilities

- GB8.12 Pens or stall partitions should be strong and safe, allow air flow and be removable if an animal collapses.
- GB8.13 Stalls should be at least 700 mm wide and 2350 mm long to accommodate larger horses and those over 15 hands tall

- GB8.14 Walls should be padded or constructed using a suitable material to avoid rubbing or injury, from a level of 75 cm above the floor to a height level with the animal's back. Padding may be required to protect the animals' head.
- GB8.15 Bows on body trucks and single-deck semitrailers should be at least 2 m high and padded to their full length to a thickness of 2 cm of soft material.
- GB8.16 A mechanical means of forcing air circulation should be installed for enclosed vehicles, unless vents with natural airflow are provided and are effective. Effective airflow may reduce the impact of heat during transport and travel sickness in horses.
- GB8.17 For controlled environment vehicles, temperature gauges and the airflow system should be checked before transport and every 3 hours during transport. Alarms or a monitoring system should be fitted to alert the driver to any problem.
- GB8.18 Horses may baulk from hollow sounds caused by walking on ramps. This can be alleviated by using matting or providing earth, sand or sawdust on the floor of the ramp and vehicle.
- GB8.19 Flooring should be cleaned before transport. Floors should be drained, absorbent or covered with material to absorb urine when transporting for longer durations.

Two-horse trailers

- GB8.20 Where a single horse is being transported in a two-horse trailer, the horse should be placed on the driver's side of the trailer or float.
- GB8.21 Where two horses are travelling in a two-horse trailer, the larger or heavier horse should be penned on the driver's side.

Handling

General standards in Chapter 5 apply to horses to ensure that the loading density is appropriate and is managed to minimise the risk to the welfare of livestock.

- GB8.22 Horses that are unfamiliar to each other may become aggressive or stressed during the journey and should be segregated. The group should be assessed before loading to determine likely aggressive behaviour and whether segregation is needed.
- GB8.23 All stallions should be segregated.
- GB8.24 Unbroken horses, pregnant mares, mares with foals at foot and animals that have health conditions should be segregated.
- GB8.25 Horses should not be routinely sedated for travel. If sedation is necessary, it should be administered by a veterinarian. Sedated horses should be stabilised if possible, segregated and not unduly affected by the motion of the vehicle. Action should be taken immediately on identifying a recumbent horse to separate it from other horses to avoid injury.
- GB8.26 Where horses are rugged, airflow should be appropriate so that horses do not overheat and become dehydrated. Fitted hoods, blinkers, knee or hock caps, pads and bandages may protect horses during transport.
- GB8.27 Where there are no partitions on the vehicle, or where horses are travelling in groups, hind shoes should be removed.

- GB8.28 Manual lifting of foals is permitted for animals that may have difficulty in negotiating ramps.
- GB8.29 Unbroken horses should be trained in basic handling practices before transport.
- GB8.30 Horses should be unloaded during spells to allow exercise.
- GB8.31 Dogs should not be used to move horses.

Humane destruction

- GB8.32 The recommended methods for humane destruction of horses include:
- i) for horses over 6 months old — a firearm aimed in the frontal position or lethal injection
 - ii) for foals under 6 months old — a firearm aimed in the frontal position or lethal injection.
- GB8.33 A rifle shot by the frontal method (see Figure B8.1) is the preferred method of humanely destroying horses. For adult horses, a rifle should deliver at least the muzzle energy of a standard 0.22 magnum cartridge. For foals, a rifle should deliver at least the muzzle energy of a standard 0.22-long rifle cartridge.

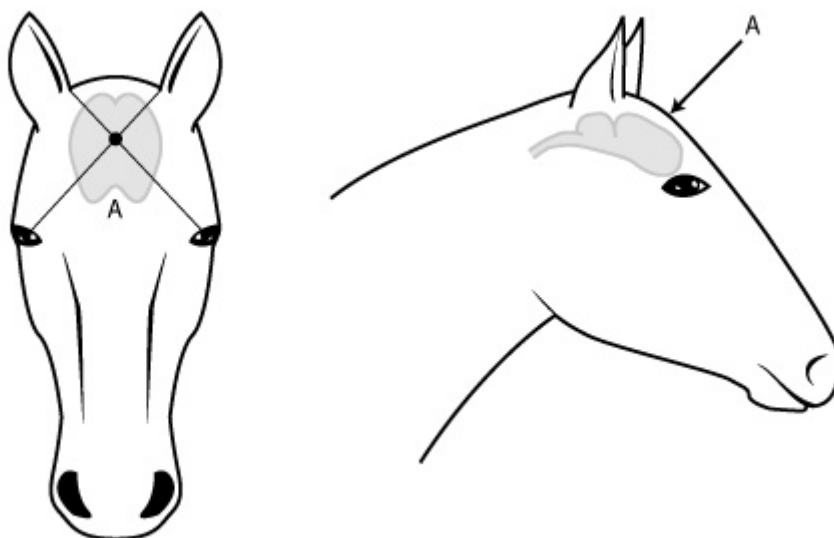


Figure B8.1 Humane destruction of horses using the frontal method

Note: (A) indicates the frontal method. The dot indicates the point of aim and the arrow indicates the direction of aim.