



Notice to Industry 4: Grooms- Biosecurity Requirements

Movement and Quarantine of Live Non-New Zealand Horses

Outcome:

The outcome of this document is for grooms accompanying imported live non-New Zealand horses to be informed of their biosecurity requirements and their obligation to comply with these requirements.

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

Background:

The import of live horses is regulated by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS). Biosecurity Australia has provided recommendations regarding conditions for the import of horses to ensure that any potential quarantine risks, including equine influenza, African horse sickness, surra and Japanese encephalitis, can be managed. Strict pre- and post-arrival quarantine requirements apply to imported horses and all people and goods that come into contact with imported horses.

The primary disease of concern when handling imported horses is equine influenza. This disease can be transmitted via an infected horse, either directly or via people or equipment in contact with an infected horse. The equine influenza virus can be inactivated in a variety of ways, including by using soaps, detergents, acids and oxidising agents (such as Virkon).

Grooms accompanying imported horses on flights or in post arrival quarantine (PAQ) have the potential to transmit equine influenza virus. Grooms' personal effects and any equipment used in the feeding, handling and treatment of the horses also carry a risk of transmitting equine influenza. The *Quarantine Act 1908* provides AQIS officers with the authority to give directions to a person who is moving, dealing with or interfering with goods that are subject to quarantine, this may include taking appropriate decontamination measures.

Personal Biosecurity Requirements:

Grooms not accompanying horses to the PAQ are required to:

- have all baggage inspected and treated if necessary; and
- undertake a complete head to toe, 3 minute shower before leaving the 'corral' area at the airport; and
- surrender clothing to an AQIS officer for laundering; and
- change into new/clean clothing.

Grooms accompanying horses to the PAQ are required to:

- travel to the quarantine station on the horse float/truck;
- wear dedicated clothing and footwear in the quarantine station whilst contacting horses. This clothing and footwear must remain in the quarantine station (and must be laundered prior to release from the quarantine station); and
- have all baggage inspected and treated if necessary; and
- undertake a complete head to toe, 3 minute shower and change into fresh clothing and footwear immediately before leaving the quarantine station.

Grooms attending the PAQ at all other times are required to:

- wear dedicated clothing and footwear in the quarantine station whilst contacting horses. This clothing and footwear must remain in the quarantine station (and must be laundered prior to release from the quarantine station);
- undertake a complete head to toe, 3 minute shower and change into fresh clothing and footwear immediately before leaving the quarantine station.

⇒ Refer to the Technical and Operational Reference 'o.3 TOR - Personal Decontamination' for more information.

Any personal equipment (e.g. laptops, mobile phones, paperwork etc) used on site at the corral or quarantine station must either remain on the quarantine station until the end of PAQ or be decontaminated prior to leaving the quarantine station by wiping down the equipment with alcohol wipes. As such, grooms are advised to only take essential equipment in to the quarantine station. Secure storage is available at the gate for valuable items, not needed inside the quarantine station.

Biosecurity requirements

All grooms attending the PAQ must be authorised by AQIS. Grooms must complete training and sign '3.8a Form: Permission for a groom to enter, leave and take goods into and out of a quarantine station' to gain a 12-month permission to enter the quarantine station. If grooms have not completed the training, on arrival at the quarantine station, grooms must read and sign the form '3.8c Permission for an untrained groom to enter, leave and take goods into and out of a quarantine station for 24 hours' in the presence of a quarantine officer. A full training session must then be undertaken either within 24 hours or prior to re-entry to the quarantine station; and prior to resuming normal duties as a groom at the quarantine station. Grooms are required to comply with all requirements outlined in these documents.

Only grooms authorised by the importer of the horses will be granted permission to enter the quarantine station. The importer will provide AQIS with the relevant authorisation form for each groom.

Non-essential visitors will not be given authority by AQIS to enter the PAQ.

The official visitors register must be completed and signed in the presence of a quarantine officer upon entry.

Grooms' dedicated work clothes and boots will be inspected by a quarantine officer to ensure cleanliness on arrival into the quarantine station, treated if necessary, and must remain on-site for the duration of the quarantine period. Grooms' personal effects will also be inspected by AQIS officers on arrival at the station.

No items of equipment may be taken into the quarantine station except with the permission of the quarantine station manager. All equipment used in the feeding, handling and treatment of the horses in PAQ must be new or cleaned and disinfected before use and must be used only in the premises for the duration of the PAQ unless otherwise approved by AQIS.

All equipment must be disinfected to the satisfaction of AQIS prior to removal from the PAQ.

⇒ Refer to the Technical and Operational Reference '3.1 TOR - Cleaning and disinfection of equipment' for more detailed information.

During PAQ the grooms' responsibilities for biosecurity include:

- Taking and recording the horses' rectal temperatures four hours after arrival and then twice daily for the remaining time in PAQ. AQIS staff will monitor all taking and recording of rectal temperatures for the first 4 days of PAQ. Random monitoring by AQIS will continue for the remainder of the horses' time in quarantine with a minimum of one check per week.
 - *Note: if no rectal temperature is recorded on any given day during PAQ, or two or less (total) recording of rectal temperatures are made on consecutive days during PAQ, you must notify the AQIS veterinarian or quarantine station manager and arrange for a thorough clinical examination by a registered veterinarian. The veterinarian will need to provide written certification that the horse is showing no clinical signs of respiratory disease.*
- The AQIS veterinarian must be notified if at any time the rectal temperature is 38.5°C or higher or the temperature of any 'foal at foot' is 39°C or higher - a nasopharyngeal swab for a PCR test for influenza A virus (or equine influenza virus) is required.

- An additional test does not need to be taken if swabs have been taken within the last 24 hours and sent for testing.
- In instances where a horse has a persistently elevated temperature (over 38.5 for more than 4 consecutive days), the importer may make an application to reduce the frequency of swabbing. The application must be made to AQIS Canberra via the AQIS vet and the quarantine station manager, in writing with the details for this 'case', which may include details of any other relevant horses in the quarantine station. Importers should note that there is no guarantee that the frequency will be varied after the 4-day period and each case will be assessed on its merits.
- Observing horses for and recording signs of general ill health, including nasal or eye discharge, coughing, diarrhoea and reduced appetite, at least twice daily.
- Ensuring that any abnormalities in the health of the horse, diagnosis or treatments implemented is detailed on the horse's health record. Health records for each horse are held in a designated area within the horse compound. Any health problems affecting horses or other stock on the premises during PAQ must be promptly reported to the supervising AQIS Veterinarian, the quarantine station manager or delegate.
- Ensuring that for the first 4 days of post arrival quarantine, the horse faeces is placed in the marked quarantine bin/bunker. Faeces produced after 4 days must be placed in the non quarantine area.
- Notifying the quarantine station manager if a private veterinarian or farrier is required;
- Reporting any breach or suspected breach of quarantine procedures (by that or any other person) to the quarantine station manager.
- Signing in and out of the quarantine station using the official visitors register for every entry or exit.

Horse Husbandry and Welfare

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

- You must make all reasonable efforts to ensure that horses are under control at all times;
- At all times when a Horse is outside its stable, grooms must supervise the Horse, including when the Horse is in a paddock at the quarantine station.
- Providing adequate equipment, feed, water, supervision and care to ensure the welfare of the horses held in quarantine, including:
 - Feed must be checked to ensure it is free from contamination such as mould and other substances that could be toxic.
 - Feed should be stored in the best practical way to prevent deterioration (eg in dry, rodent-proof bins).
 - Horses must be able to easily reach feed and water containers.
 - Clean water is to be available at regular intervals.
- Maintaining the hygiene of the horse compound.
 - Providing appropriate stable bedding that is clean and sufficiently thick;
 - Ensuring that soiled bedding and waste is deposited in the designated bin/area within the station;
 - Hosing, sponging or brushing horses after working to remove sweat, sand and dirt.

All required PAQ equipment, feed and therapeutics must be provided by the importer.

General requirements while in the quarantine station

Grooms are required to comply with the following general requirements:

- Absolutely no smoking in any building - this includes the entirety of the grooms' quarters and stables.
- Cigarette butts are to be placed in appropriate bins/buckets provide.
- The quarantine station, as an Australian Government facility, is an alcohol free site.
- Disorderly and antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated. Such behaviour will result in grooms being removed from station for the duration of the quarantine period.
- All gates are to be kept closed and locked.
- No visitors are allowed onto the quarantine station, including the grooms' quarters.
- Loss of keys or damage to property must be reported to AQIS immediately.
- Grooms' vehicles are to be parked in main car park only.
- Grooms are responsible for maintaining cleanliness of the quarters.

- All garbage must be placed in the bins provided.
- Please respect other people on site at the quarantine station by keeping noise to a minimum and by leaving and entering the site quietly.

AQIS will pursue individuals, for costs, where their negligent actions have resulted in damage or loss.

Failure to follow these instructions, or specific directions by AQIS staff, will result in grooms being removed from the station.

VERSION	DATE	REASON FOR ISSUE	AUTHOR
1.0	23 Sept 2008	To inform grooms of their biosecurity requirements, to incorporate comments from AQIS regions, the HICC and information from the Dec 2007 SOP.	Amy Guihot
2.0	12 November 2008	To incorporate legal advice and comments from AQIS staff at the workshop held in Oct 2008.	Michelle Blowes
3.0	19 January 2009	Final editing and checks with legal	Michelle Blowes
4.0	25 June 2009	Amended following meeting 13 May 2009	Michelle Blowes
5.0	11 February 2010	Amended following advice from BA regarding swabbing	Michelle Blowes