

Horse Transportation

Any person involved in the preparation of horses for transport and in transporting of horses by any mode should be knowledgeable about horse behaviour, adhere to the principles of animal welfare and comply with all pertinent regulations.

General Guidelines:

- 1) The driver is responsible for the continued care and welfare of the horse(s) during transport.
- 2) The handler should have easy access to each horse in the transport vehicle.
- 3) A driver should start, drive and stop the vehicle as smoothly as possible. A driver should practice defensive driving to avoid sudden stops. Turns should be negotiated in the smoothest possible manner.
- 4) Transportation of horses from point of origin to a final destination should be completed as safely and as quickly as possible.
- 5) A loaded vehicle should be checked before departure and periodically during transportation. During the roadside inspections, the driver should evaluate all animals for signs of discomfort. When the welfare of the horses is likely to be compromised with further transport, the situation must be corrected promptly.
- 6) Transportation is known to be a potential stress to horses. Horses stressed by transport should be closely observed for several days for signs of ill health.

Vehicles, Trailers and Equipment:

Vehicles used to transport horses should provide for the safety of horses and personnel during transport.

Vehicles should:

- a) Permit **easy loading** and unloading;
- b) Be **properly constructed** and maintained, with proper cover to protect against extreme weather conditions;
- c) Be **free from insecure fittings** or the presence of bolt heads, angles or other projections;

- d) Be **properly ventilated**. It must be adjustable from outside a loaded trailer to allow for weather changes or other untoward circumstances;
 - e) Be **free from engine exhaust fumes** entering the trailer or container.
 - f) Be **cleaned or sanitized regularly** to prevent the spread of disease and allow for regular evaluation of floor integrity;
 - g) Have **provision for the drainage** or absorption of urine. Horses transported in excess of 12 hours **must** be bedded with straw, wood shavings or other absorbent bedding material.
 - h) Vehicle floors must provide for **secure footing**. Bedding should be used to enhance and ensure the security of footing during transportation.
- Vehicle doors and internal gates should be wide enough to permit horses to pass through easily and without risk of injury.
 - Vehicles used to pull trailers or to carry horses must be appropriate for the safe movement of the load.
 - Vehicles must have sufficient power to smoothly accelerate the unit and have sufficient braking ability to stop safely.

Loading and Unloading:

Horses should not be rushed during loading and unloading. In a new situation or location, all normal, healthy horses are alert and investigative.

- **Load horses tail to the sun whenever possible.**
- Changes or disturbance in a horse's surroundings such as noises, breezes, sudden movement of objects and/or flashes of light should be avoided.
- Abrupt movements by drivers and loaders should be avoided.
- The loading/unloading surface should be level with the vehicle floor. Self-aligning docks are recommended if the loading surface and the vehicle surface are not level.
- A loose horse should not be required to step forward up or down a step of more than 25 cm (10 in.).
- If backing a loose horse out into an unfamiliar environment or unloading area, the horse should not be required to step up a step of any height nor down a step of more than 15 cm (6 in.).
- Horses familiar with trailering can safely negotiate a single step of 38 cm (15 in.).
- No gap should exist between the ramp, its sides, and the stationary vehicle to be loaded.

- If a handler leads a horse into a vehicle, there must be an escape avenue for the handler.
- The use of electric prods for handling horses is not acceptable.
- All alleys and ramps should be properly illuminated. Harsh contrast in lighting should be avoided.

Segregation:

- ❖ Different species and animals of significantly different age or weight must be partitioned separately from each other when transported. Small or young horses must be partitioned separately from mature horses.
- ❖ Suckling foals must be transported in the same compartment as their dams and must be separated from other animals.
- ❖ Mature stallions, aggressive horses and animals incompatible by nature must be partitioned separately from other horses.

Loading Density and Headroom

- Horses must be provided with enough floor space to ensure they are not crowded in a manner that is likely to cause injury or discomfort. Evaluation of the trailer for space must be made prior to loading horses.
- A partly loaded vehicle should have horses safely partitioned into smaller areas to provide stability for the horses and the vehicle.
- Each horse must be able to assume a natural stance standing with four feet on the floor and with a full range of head and neck motion without touching the deck or roof of the vehicle or container.
- It is recommended there be as least 2.5 cm (1 in.) of clearance for each hand of horse height at the withers.
- Halters and shanks must be removed from horses immediately if they restrict breathing or otherwise cause discomfort.
- Handlers must pay special attention to prevent horses' heads from coming into contact with the deck while moving from the upper to the lower deck of a possum belly trailer, and while exiting the trailer.

Holding Facilities:

- ❑ All places where horses are temporarily assembled for sale, show, transport, feed, water and rest, slaughter, or for any other reason must have sufficient facilities for the safe loading, unloading and holding of horses.
- ❑ In all places where horses are housed and handled, the walls and doors must be free of projections and the floors must have suitable traction.
- ❑ Horses must have protection from inclement weather.
- ❑ Areas where horses are housed must have sufficient illumination during normal operations to allow the animals to be easily inspected.

Feed, Water and Rest:

- ❑ Horses traveling longer than 24 hours must be fed, watered and rested for not less than five hours prior to restarting their journey. Resting horses should be able to move freely in a well bedded environment.
- ❑ During transport horses (excluding weanling foals) should not be without feed and water for longer than 24 hours. This time may only be exceeded if they will reach their final destination without being confined longer than 30 hours.
- ❑ During transport, weanling foals should not be without feed and water for longer than 8 hours.
- ❑ Any person transporting horses must plan long-distance trips by considering the availability and location of facilities that allow horses to be unloaded, fed, watered and cared for in a humane manner, and to be protected from extreme weather conditions.
- ❑ Nursing foals with dams should be allowed to nurse undisturbed at least every eight hours. Mares with nursing foals must be given appropriate feed and water every 12-18 hours during transportation.
- ❑ Before reloading a vehicle, the interior should be inspected, bedding added and any other corrective measures taken to assure continued safe transportation.

PROVINCIAL REGULATIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION OF HORSES

Saskatchewan: Livestock Manifest is required to transport a horse on Sk. highways. This may be obtained from Sk. Ag. & Food Inspection Branch or Rural Service Centre reps. Annual Permit - \$8.50 or Lifetime Permit - \$23.50.

US BORDER REGULATIONS FOR HORSES

Canadian Ports of Entry to the U.S.

North Portal, SK	306-927-2024
Boissevain, MB	204-534-6288
Emerson, MB	204-373-2346
Osoyoos, BC	250-719-6855
Abbotsford, BC	604-854-8034
Pacific Hwy., Surrey	604-541-3364

US Ports of Entry to Canada

Portal, ND	701-926-4281
Pembina, ND	701-825-6262
Dunseith, ND	701-263-3364
Sweetgrass, MT	406-335-2142
Eastport Idaho	208-267-2396
Oroville, WA	509-476-2635
Sumas, WA	360-988-5715

Paperwork Required:

- **Health Certificate:** Official document from CFIA (federal government), to be completed and signed by an accredited veterinarian and endorsed by CFIA veterinarian. Health Certificates are valid for 30 days. Certificate must be valid to cross over the border either direction.
- **Negative Coggins' Certificate:** within 6 months of crossing.
- **Proof of Ownership:** Bill of sale and/or registration papers.
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These regulations are subject to change. It is advisable to notify the port of entry of your crossing prior to your arrival to avoid any last minute delays.

REPORTABLE DISEASES Canada Health of Animals Act

Anthrax	Brucellosis
Contagious Equine Metritis	Dourine
Equine Infectious Anaemia (Swamp Fever)	Glanders
Equine Piroplasmiasis	Tuberculosis
Rabies	
Vesicular Stomatitis	

Injured, Sick and Disabled Horses:

Only horses fit to travel should be transported unless special precautions are taken to ensure they do not suffer.

- Animals in distress, injured or disabled during transport must be attended to at the first opportunity.
- Injured, sick and disabled horses should be unloaded in a way that causes them the least amount of suffering.
- When a vehicle accident or roadside emergency occurs, immediate action should be taken to minimize suffering of animals.
- Severely disabled horses (downers) must not be dragged. A veterinarian must be consulted prior to attempts to move a downed horse. Horses should be euthanised on the vehicle where there is little hope of recovery or taken immediately for slaughter.
- Pregnant mares must not be transported if likely to give birth during the journey.
- Blind horses should be haltered, handled individually and transported only with familiar pen mates or a compatible horse.

Horse Health – Vital Signs

Temperature (rectal) 37.5-38.5 C (38.0C average)
Pulse: 23-70 beats/minute (44 beats/minute average)
Respiration: 10-14 breaths/minute (12 breaths average)
Skin Pinch: Pinch skin out and away from body on neck. When released it should return to normal position in 1-2 seconds. Abnormal suggests dehydration.
Capillary Refill Time (CRT): 1-2 seconds. Press thumb against the gum above upper teeth of the horse, and release. Wait for light pink colour to return. Normal is 1-2 seconds to return to light pink colour.

Extreme Weather Precautions:

- Horses must be protected from exposure to severe weather conditions during transportation.
- During extreme or changing weather, horses should be inspected frequently for signs of discomfort or distress from exposure.
- In the event of vehicle breakdowns, traffic accidents or other delays during transportation,

appropriate action is required to ensure the welfare of horses.

During winter travel:

- increasing stocking density and bedding is not an alternative to proper protection from the external environment;
- all horses must be protected from wind during transportation to prevent wind chill and freezing; and
- precautions should be taken to protect foals. They must be kept dry and provided with an adequate supply of bedding.

During hot and humid weather: Precautions must be taken to avoid stress or death caused by the combination of high temperature and high humidity.

For Transportation during hot/humid weather:

- sufficient ventilation must be available as horses maintain body temperature under heat stress by evaporative cooling;
- horses must not be transported wearing blankets and/or hoods;
- whenever possible, journeys during hot, humid periods should be avoided;
- necessary movements should be scheduled at night and/or prior to the heat of the day;
- periods of intense traffic congestion should be avoided;
- vehicles containing horses should not be parked in direct sunlight. When needing to stop, the duration of the stop should be minimized to prevent the build up of heat inside the vehicle;
- loading density for loose horses should be reduced;
- the journey should begin immediately after horses have been loaded; and
- unloading of horses should be accomplished promptly, on arrival at their destination.

- The source for this brochure is the Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Horses, Canadian Agri-Food Research Council.



for the
TRANSPORTATION OF HORSES

A guide for
hauling the horse

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