

RISK MANAGEMENT GUIDE FOR EQUESTRIAN PREMISES



This document is designed to assist
NFU Mutual customers in managing risks
associated with equestrian premises



NFU Mutual
RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Horse riding is a high risk activity and handling horses from the ground can be just as dangerous.

Equestrian yards vary significantly in type and, depending on the activities being undertaken, the level of risk can range from relatively low to extremely high. Whilst the fire and security exposures are similar across many equestrian premises, the risks of injury can vary depending on the yard activities.

This guide is intended to give a broad overview of the risks applicable at most yards and how the potential hazards can be minimized.

FIRE PROTECTION MEASURES

A fire breaking out at any premises can have devastating results but particularly where livestock is concerned.

1. Fire evacuation plans to be put in place and communicated to all members of staff and visitors to the premises. This should include how the alarm is raised and where stabled horses can be safely released. Fire action notices to also be displayed.
2. Smoking not to be allowed anywhere on the yard.
3. Premises to be kept clean and tidy. All doors to open readily and be unobstructed at all times.
4. Hay, straw and any other combustible stock to be stored in a separate building to the stables.
5. Suitable fire extinguishing appliances to be provided and maintained annually by a competent company/supplier.
6. The electrical installation to be inspected in accordance with the current edition of **BS7671 Requirements for Electrical Installations. IET Wiring Regulations** by a member of National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors (NICEIC), who is regulated for commercial installations. This to be completed at least every five years and any defects remedied. Residual Current Device (RCD) protection to be used whenever portable appliances, such as clippers, are used.
7. Laundry equipment, such as washing machines and tumble dryers, are a common cause of fires. If they must be used, ensure that they are regularly maintained and only used within a separate building to the stables. If the premises are protected by an Automatic Fire Alarm system, ensure the detection extends to the laundry environments.
8. Horses being 'hot shod' to be shod outside where possible, or within a designated area free from any combustible hay or bedding.
9. Equipment e.g. clippers being brought onto premises to be subject to Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) and servicing.

SECURITY

Tack rooms can prove attractive to thieves, as can machinery such as quad bikes.

Where possible, tack to be kept within a room constructed with solid brick or block walls. It is common for thieves to gain access through the roof, lining the roof joists with plywood reduces that risk.

Windows to be protected with steel grilles or bars.

Doors to be secured with five lever mortice locks conforming to **BS 3621:2017 - Lock assemblies operated by key from**

both the inside and outside of the door or a heavy-duty padlock conforming to European Standard **BS EN 12320:2012 - Building hardware. Padlocks and padlock fittings. Requirements and test methods** and achieving the security grade classification 5 or above.

Quad bikes to be kept within a locked building when not in use.

Consider installing an intruder alarm and/or a CCTV system. Details of systems appropriate for your premises can be supplied on request.

LIABILITY TO EMPLOYEES

To help reduce the risks of injury to employee's, visitors and other persons:

1. Ensure the premises are kept clean and tidy.
2. Provide adequate handwashing facilities with hot and cold running water.
3. Ensure the muck heap is easily accessible from the ground without the need for ramps. If using a trailer, make sure the ramp has non-slip surface and handrails.
4. Carry out risk assessments for each of the tasks employees are expected to carry out and implement safe systems of working.
5. Obtain references from previous employers when taking on a new employee. Do not take an employee's experience at face value and carry out your own assessment of their abilities to handle and ride horses. Keep a record of this assessment as it may be of use in the event of a civil claim being made.
6. Check whether the employee has any previous medical conditions which may affect their ability to carry out certain tasks.
7. Complete a young person's risk assessment if you have employees under the age of 18 and ensure that the tasks they are given, and supervision levels, are suitable for their age.
8. Carry out an induction with all new employees which incorporates brief manual handling training, information in relation to general health and safety, fire precautions and specific information on any horses which they are not permitted to handle or which require careful handling. The employee should sign and date the induction sheet to acknowledge that they have received and understand the training provided.

HANDLING HORSES

1. When a new horse arrives at the yard an experienced member of staff to carry out an assessment of the horse before less experienced staff are permitted to handle it. Keep a record of the assessment and consider noting behaviour issues on a white board or on a notice outside the horse's stable.
2. When there are a large number of horses on the yard, consider having employees looking after allocated animals which are matched according to their experience.
3. Avoid lone working where possible. If it is necessary, ensure there is a procedure in place for checking on employees remotely.
4. Avoid mucking out horses whilst they are in the stable.
5. Implement safe working procedures for turning out/bringing in. Where possible turn out/bring in one horse at a time and certainly no more than two. Communicate to staff the order in which horses are turned out/brought in. Avoid having to lead horses through one field to reach another.
6. Turn the horse to face the gate before removing the headcollar to minimise the risk of being kicked or trampled.
7. Use a bridle or chifney when leading a strong or unpredictable horse.
8. Ensure staff are aware of how to work round/handle horses safely. This includes grooming, leading etc.
9. If you are using equipment such as horse walkers – ensure staff are trained and aware of emergency procedures e.g. dealing with a trapped horse. Also ensure the equipment is well maintained and serviced in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines.
10. Clipping to only be undertaken by experienced staff. Clip in a dry, well-lit area which is free from obstructions. Clippers should be serviced annually, and a visual check carried out before each use. If clippers are mains powered ensure they are used in conjunction with a Residual Current Device (RCD) rated to 30mA. If the horse is known to be difficult or being clipped for the first time a hat should be worn. Sedation to be considered if a horse is particularly difficult.

RIDING HORSES

1. When a new horse arrives at the yard an experienced member of staff to carry out an assessment of the horse before less experienced staff are permitted to ride it. Keep a record of the assessment.
2. Ensure an experienced person allocates horses which are suitable for the rider's experience.
3. Maintain manège surfaces in good condition and harrow or grade regularly. Record repairs on fencing etc.
4. When staff are riding out alone, ensure routes are well known/used, agree approximate return times, and where necessary maintain contact.
5. Avoid hacking out during busy times and during adverse weather conditions.
6. At least one person to have a working mobile phone with them for emergencies, switched to silent when riding. Emergency numbers to be programmed into the phone. Phones not to be used when riding or working with horses, this includes listening to music.
7. Ensure tack is maintained in good condition and regularly cleaned. Regular inspections to be made to identify any damage and repairs carried out promptly.

TRANSPORTING HORSES

1. Only experienced members of staff should load horses, particularly if they are known to be difficult to load. An additional person should be available to assist.
2. Check employees have the correct license to drive the vehicle including operator's license and have completed CPC training if applicable.
3. Always undertake checks to ensure the horsebox or trailer has no defects before attempting to load.
4. Load in an area which is clear of obstructions and ensure gates are closed.
5. Stand to the side of the ramp, not behind, when fastening shut in case the horse kicks out behind and never stand between the horse and the breast bar.
6. Ensure there is an agreed procedure in the event of breakdown, the horse falling or getting stuck in the horsebox/trailer.

PPE

1. Where your risk assessment requires the provision and wearing of PPE, e.g. turning out, lunging, loading and unloading, handling during covering etc., ensure staff are adequately equipped. PPE to include riding hats/helmets to current approved standards and a suitable body protector. Body protectors to be worn during all cross-country schooling and when backing and schooling young horses, and also recommended for general riding activities and lunging. Riding hats and body protectors to be fitted by a competent and trained person.
2. Suitable footwear to be worn at all times when working around horses. Boots with a small heel to always be worn when riding.
3. Hi visibility clothing to be worn by rider, and ideally horse, when riding on public roads. This helps other road users see you and slow down. You can also be seen more easily from the air in the event of air ambulance attendance.

ACCIDENTS

Horses are unpredictable and accidents can be difficult to avoid. To help reduce the consequences of an accident ensure:

1. At least one person is available to attend to a first aid emergency, whether this be a qualified first aider or a competent person who can take charge.
2. A fully stocked first aid kit is provided and topped up as necessary.
3. Grid reference coordinates are at hand in case air ambulance is required to attend. Consider using location app's on mobile telephones to identify specific locations.
4. All accidents and near misses are recorded in an HSE approved accident book. Take photographs and witness statements as soon as possible after an accident and review the circumstances to see whether lessons can be learnt.
5. Accidents are reported to the HSE if they fall under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences) requirements (see www.hse.gov.uk/riddor).

LIABILITY TO VISITORS

To help avoid accidents to members of the public ensure:

1. There is a contract in place between yourself and livery clients outlining the responsibilities for each party.
2. A signed agreement outlining your rules and codes of conduct is in place when hiring out facilities to other individuals or groups. Ask for evidence of public liability insurance and if they are bringing their own instructors, ask to see proof of insurance and qualifications.
3. Adequate warning signage is erected when electric fencing is used in the vicinity of public rights of way.
4. Visiting dogs are kept on a lead.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The information contained herein is designed for guidance only and NFU Mutual cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions arising from its use. Should further guidance be required please contact our local NFU Mutual Regional or Branch office, or telephone Risk Management Services on 01789 202425.



NFU Mutual

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