

Horse Care Level 1 109 Principles of cleaning the stables and yard

1. Know how to clean stables and yard

1.1 State the horses' basic welfare requirements and how to maintain their health and well-being

Stable requirements - The stable must be big enough for the horse to be able to move around and lie down comfortably. The stable should have rubber matting and/or safe bedding such as clean straw or shavings that are suitable for horses. The stable should be well ventilated and should be able to keep out the rain, cold and also shelter them from the sun. It should also have no leaks or damage. The building should be constructed soundly, with no exposed surfaces or projections likely to cause injury. All surfaces should be capable of being cleaned and disinfected. If surfaces are treated, non-toxic paints or wood preservatives should be used.

The stable will need to have in it: a supply of fresh water for the horse to drink and also a hay net or other source of feed for the horse to graze on. The stable should be mucked out regularly and there should be enough bedding so that the horse does not injure themselves.

Fixtures and fittings such as tie rings, hay racks and water bowls should be free of sharp edges and positioned so as to avoid injury, particularly to the eyes. If used, hay nets should be fixed at the horse's head height, allowing the horse to eat comfortably yet avoiding the risk of the horse getting its feet or head collar caught in the net when empty.

Routines - Horses like routine and they should be brought into the stable, fed and turned out at similar times of the day.

Exercise/turn out - Horses should not be left in the stable for long periods and they should have access to grazing every day, where they can have enough space to exercise freely in the company of other horses.

Field environment - The area of pasture required per horse will depend on the type of grass, ground conditions, time of year, type of horse and degree of pasture management employed. As a general rule, each horse requires approximately 0.5 – 1.0 hectares (or 1.25 to 2.5 acres) of grazing of a suitable quality if no supplementary feeding is being provided. Each donkey requires a minimum of 0.2 – 0.4 hectares (a half to one acre). A smaller area may be adequate where a horse is principally housed and grazing areas are used only for occasional turnout.

A good pasture management programme is necessary to avoid over-grazing, to aid worm control, maintain good drainage and control weeds.

Fields should be kept clear of dangerous objects and poisonous plants.

Fences should be strong enough and of sufficient height to prevent horses from escaping.

Electric fences should be designed, installed and maintained so that contact with them does not cause more than momentary discomfort to the horse.

In muddy conditions it is important that a horse has an adequately sized, well-drained area in the pasture on which to stand and lie down, and on which to be fed and watered.

<http://adlib.everysite.co.uk/resources/000/263/388/PB13334.pdf>

1.2 List the types of bedding used in stabling to maintain horses' health and well-being

Straw - Although straw may not be as absorbent as wood based products such as shavings or wood pellets, it is still a good bedding choice for your horse. Stalls that are deeply bedded with straw can effectively keep the moisture level down by creating a protective barrier or "mat" between the horse and the urine. Advantages: Cheap, Breaks down to produce good garden manure, Aesthetically pleasing

Disadvantages: Bulky and messy to store, Soon makes a large muck heap, Can be difficult to dispose of, particularly if you are running a large yard. Cost of disposal can offset initial inexpensive price, Some horses are allergic to it, Some horses like to eat it.

Shavings - Purpose-produced shavings are a popular type of bedding, but the quality can vary enormously — particularly with regards to dust content. It is important that you only buy shavings that have been specifically produced as animal bedding.

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Advantages: Non-palatable, Widely available, Wrapped bales are clean and easy to handle and store.

Disadvantages: Can be difficult to dispose of – shavings take much longer to rot down, Needs constant removal of droppings and care has to be taken to ensure the bed does not become wet, causing a build up of ammonia, Cheaper brands can contain high dust levels, Price can fluctuate.

Paper - This tends to be a mixture of newspaper, magazine and other unwanted printed matter. It is often considered to be a cheaper option, but a large number of bales may be needed to create a thick bed. It is also worth considering cardboard, which has similar advantages to paper but is heavier and so less likely to blow around the yard.

Advantages: Dust-free and non-palatable — a good choice for allergy-suffering horses, Produces a warm bed, Wrapped bales are clean and easy to handle and store

Disadvantages: Can be costly, To start a bed it can take five bales, and then one or two bales a week for a horse that is stabled at night, Easily blown around, producing an untidy-looking yard, Disposal can be a problem, Care has to be taken to ensure bed does not become soggy.

Rubber matting - Wall-to-wall rubber carpet or tiles developed as a complete horse bed.

Advantages: Provides a comparatively soft non-slip base, guarding against capped hocks, etc, Easy to muck out and can be hosed down, In theory, no extra bedding costs, although some prefer to use a light layer of shavings over the matting.

Disadvantages: Considerable initial capital outlay to install, Not aesthetic, Can appear cold and is slow to dry in the winter.

Adequate and suitable bedding material is necessary in all equine accommodation to provide warmth, protection against injury and to enable the horse to lie down in comfort. Bedding material should be non-toxic, free of mould and excessive dust, and allow effective drainage, or be absorbent enough to maintain a dry bed and assist in keeping the air fresh. Where rubber matting is used, a small amount of disposable bedding should be added to absorb urine. Whatever bedding is used (e.g. straw, shavings, rubber stable mats etc.) it should be well managed and changed or cleaned regularly.

<https://www.horseandhound.co.uk/features/best-horse-bedding-396589>

1.3 State how to handle horses and tie horses up safely and securely

Always approach a horse from the left and from the front, if possible. Speak softly when approaching, especially from behind, to let it know of your presence. Always approach at an angle, never directly from the rear. Horses have monocular vision which leaves them with a blind spot in front of their nose, under their head and directly behind them. Sudden sounds or movements, particularly within these spots, tend to frighten horses. When you are within reach, touch the horse first by gently stroking the shoulder or rump (if approaching from the rear) and moving calmly to the head. Don't walk up from behind and slap its rear end or suddenly lunge for its head. Carry a lead rope attached to the bottom noseband ring of a halter when you go to catch the horse. Once beside the horse's shoulder, slip the rope around its neck and secure it by holding both sides in the same hand. This enables you to exert control in the event the horse starts to walk away. Do not tie the rope around its neck! Grasp the horse's nose with your right hand, slide the halter up over its nose with your left hand and place the crownpiece behind its ears. Do not drag the halter over its nose. Some horses are tickled by the nosepiece when it bends the large hairs on the nose and face. This can cause them to raise their head or try to move away from the halter. Make sure the halter is fitted properly. The chin strap should be short enough to keep a foot from getting caught or prevent it from slipping over the nose, yet allow the horse to breathe comfortably while standing or galloping. The noseband should be loose enough to allow two fingers between the nose and the noseband. This allows the horse to open its mouth while limiting the space at which an object can become tangled. The cheekpiece should be long enough to allow two fingers between the noseband and the cheekbone.

Tie the horse up in a safe area that does not have any tools or equipment lying around. Use a quick release knot to tie the horse up with.

<https://nasdonline.org/1039/d000837/approaching-catching-and-haltering-horses-safely.html>

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1.4 List the types of equipment used when cleaning stables and describe how to use and store them correctly

Pitch Fork - A sharp four or five prong fork can be purchased with either a short or long handle (personal preference) and are used for mucking out and laying a straw bed. Two pronged pitch forks generally have a long handle and are used to shake up straw when bedding down. Garden forks are not a suitable option for mucking out.

Shavings Fork - A long handled, narrow multi-pronged fork used for mucking out shavings, paper, and hemp bedding. This fork is not suitable for straw beds.

Shovel - Used for picking up small amounts of muck and scraping dirt from the stable floor. The shovel can be made from either plastic or metal, plastic material is lighter to work with but not as robust as metal.

Yard Brush - Used to sweep the floor of the stable and yard. It should have stiff bristles and be hardwearing. Shorter head brushes are more suitable for sweeping the stable, whereas longer headed brushes are more efficient when sweeping large areas of the yard. A soft bristled brush can be used to sweep cobwebs from the walls and ceiling.

The wheel barrow is used to carry muck or heavy items, it should be strong, durable and lightweight. Designed with either one or two wheels, it is personal preference which is chosen. Made from either plastic or metal: plastic wheel barrows are weatherproof, but not as tough against general wear and tear. Metal wheel barrows may need to be treated with a rust resistance paint to protect them against the weather. They are more hard wearing than plastic.

Skip Bucket - Used for putting droppings in whilst skipping out. On professional yards a bucket may be left outside each stable. This enables skipping out to be done, quickly and easily, on a frequent basis throughout the day.

Pooper Scooper - Used for picking up droppings from the stable or ménage etc.

Skips are used to dispose of the dirty bedding and manure.

<https://www.equineknowledge.co.uk/free-trial/bhs-stage-one-course/stage-1-care/mucking-yard-maintenance/mucking-different-types-bedding/equipment-used-yard-duties-2/>

1.5 Give reasons for personal hygiene as it applies to working on the yard

Bacteria such as *Streptococcus equi* which causes strangles, viruses, and parasites, can remain in a stable for considerable time. Horse handlers can also be a reservoir or source of the disease agent, either by harbouring disease agents such as salmonella or methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) or by carrying the agent on their clothing and shoes.

Personal Hygiene

To prevent the spread of disease, horse handlers should dedicate boots and clothing for use only on that farm. If this is not possible, boots should be cleaned prior to entering the premise and freshly laundered clothing should be worn. A freshly laundered pair of coveralls would also suffice. This is also true when returning from a horse show. Handlers should be encouraged not to wear the same clothing home or to at least change clothes before entering their stable, as there is the potential for them to carry a problem back to their farm.

Hand Washing - Hand-washing facilities should be suitably located around the farm to encourage the frequent washing of hands. The use of alcohol-based hand gel disinfectant may be an alternative. Dispensers could be attached to the handler's belt or outside of the stalls, allowing horse handlers the opportunity to disinfect their hands after working with an individual horse.

Hand washing is also important to prevent chemical contamination of the workplace when working with horse medicines. If workers are required to walk a long distance and open doors to reach a sink, the hand washing won't occur and door handles and other objects will become contaminated.

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/horses/facts/prev-disease-spread.htm>

1.6 State reporting procedures and to whom faults and defects should be reported

If you see something in a workplace that you think is breaking health and safety law and is likely to cause serious harm, you must report it. Always go straight to your supervisor or manager and explain to them what the issue is. You can also record this in the staff communication book and write down what the issues are. Never try to fix things yourself but always ask for help and advice first.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm>

2. Know how to work safely

2.1 State own responsibilities under animal welfare and health and safety legislation

There are codes of practice for the welfare of dogs, cats, horses (including other equidae) and privately kept non-human primates. They provide owners and keepers with information on how to meet the welfare needs of their animals, as required under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. They can also be used in courts as evidence in cases brought before them relating to poor welfare.

Riding Establishments Act 1964 and 1970

Riding establishments are licensed by local councils under the 1964 act. The council can impose conditions on the licence. The council, in the exercise of its discretion, may take into account: the suitability of the applicant or manager, the accommodation and pasture, adequacy of the provision for the horses' health, welfare and exercise, precautions against fire and disease, suitability of the horses with regards to the reasons they are being kept.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 ("the Act") requires you to ensure that any horse, pony, donkey or mule for which you are responsible, whether on a permanent or a temporary basis: has a suitable environment to live in. has a healthy diet. is able to behave normally.

Responsibility for an animal includes having an understanding of the specific health and welfare needs of the animal and having the appropriate knowledge and skills to care for the animal.

Those responsible for animals will also have to comply with the legislation and should be aware of the appropriate Code of Practice. They should also know when to seek advice and help and who to approach.

<http://adlib.everysite.co.uk/resources/000/263/388/PB13334.pdf>

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 is a long piece of detailed legislation and the first to address health and safety law in any serious capacity. It's a fairly old piece of legislation now, but it sets the groundwork for other health and safety legislation to build upon.

The act has 4 main sections, which are as follows:

- Employer's responsibilities
- Employee's responsibilities
- Enforcement of health and safety legislation
- Enforcement action

Employees also have health and safety responsibilities, including:

- Taking care of personal health and safety and that of others
- Not interfering with health and safety protocol or anything else related to it
- Cooperating on matters of health and safety

<https://www.bromleybusinesshub.org/health-safety-what-are-the-4-main-objectives-of-the-health-and-safety-at-work-act/>

2.2 List types of hazards which may be present in the stables and yard and state how these should be removed or controlled

Tools such as forks, shovels, brooms and rakes are frequently used around horses and you must ensure that these are put away in the correct place and not left lying around. A person or horse could trip over the tools and harm themselves so it is important to put them back after use. It is especially important that you do not leave them in the stable whilst the horse is in there as it will cause them injury if they trip up over them. Equipment

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such as riding tack, head collars and grooming kits should be put away in the tack room and not left out. Again, a person or a horse could potentially trip over them and sprain their arms or legs or even break a bone. Headcollars and bridles can be hung up outside the stable on a hook and saddles can be placed on a saddle rack.

All rubbish must be placed in a bin and should be divided up into recycling, non recycling or compost. Recycling rubbish such as cans, plastic and cardboard must be put into the blue bin and non recycling products should be placed in the green bin. Compost waste should be placed in the brown bin or placed on the muck heap. The majority of rubbish on a yard will come from feed bags and these can either be reused to put manure in for compost or should be neatly folded up and placed in the recycling bin. Baling string should be rolled up into a small ball and can be placed in a bag in the feed room so that the string can be used. Never leave baling string lying around as someone or a horse could trip over it.

<https://www.hay-net.co.uk/stable-yard-safety/>

2.3 State health and safety implications associated with drains and muck heaps and how to dispose of waste safely and correctly

Horse manure is not considered waste if all of the following apply:

- it is used as soil fertiliser
- it is used lawfully for spreading on clearly identified pieces of agricultural land
- it is only stored to be used for spreading on agricultural land

If you store or spread horse waste near to water, it can be a health hazard and could harm the environment. You will need to follow rules on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones and follow rules on the pollution of groundwater.

Getting rid of solid waste

Solid waste includes things like:

- contaminated bedding
- food containers
- horse manure (if not used as soil fertiliser)
- empty pesticide and other chemical containers
- plastics such as silage wrap, bags and sheets
- tyres, batteries, clinical waste, old machinery and oil

You must use a licensed facility to get rid of solid waste - it's against the law to dump or burn it. Contact the Environment Agency or your local authority for information on how to get rid of solid waste. Some biodegradable waste can be composted. Composting plants must be registered with the Environment Agency. You may need an environmental permit for on-site composting of some materials.

<https://www.gov.uk/farm-and-livery-horses/dealing-with-waste>

To keep the drains unblocked you must ensure that the yard is swept up regularly and that there are no bits of straw and hay blocking the drain as it could potentially cause flooding to the stables and therefore putting the horses at risk. Keep the yard surface clear of dirt and detritus which can be a trip or slip hazard – it is also unhygienic and piles of muck can harbour disease and bacteria. Ensure that there is adequate drainage and that the drains are kept clear and unblocked, a challenge with all the hay and straw and horsehair that can accumulate on the ground. Pooling water is always a danger particularly in freezing conditions and it can be hard to see black ice if the surface of the yard is dark in colour.

<https://seriouslyequestrian.com/horse-barn-safety/>

2.4 State the correct use of disinfectants and legislative requirements that apply to their use

It is essential that very high standards of hygiene are implemented in stables. In accordance with the FEI Veterinary Regulations, it is necessary that stables are cleaned and disinfected before the arrival of new horses to ensure they are free from contamination and disease. Horse transporters and stables must also be

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cleaned and disinfected before they are used between different horses.

Dilute a phenolic disinfectant according to the manufacturer's instructions and apply it to the walls and floor. This can be carried out using a hand held sprayer or garden sprayer. Always ensure that suitable protective clothing is used when handling disinfectants.

Do not rinse the stable with water after applying the disinfectant. The stable should be left to dry as the contact time between the disinfectant and surfaces allow it to work effectively.

There are a number of disinfectants available for use however it is important that the most appropriate and effective disinfectant is used with respect to the horse's environment.

The ideal disinfectant must be biodegradable, safe for animals and humans, ensure it is suitable for farm use, effective in the presence of organic matter and effective with respect to the local water hardness and ambient temperature.

<https://knowledgebase.fei.org/index.php?action=attachment&id=232>

COSHH is the law that requires employers to control substances that are hazardous to health.

When working with disinfectants you should always follow and comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002. Dispose of detergents and disinfectants down the drain and always place the top on the bottle correctly and place in a locked cupboard. Use the disinfectant according to manufacturers instructions.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg136.htm>

2.5 State the procedures in icy and adverse weather conditions

The biggest problem with snow is when it compacts and turns to ice. Ice is a serious slipping hazard for horse and human alike, and much harder to get rid of. Clearing the snow first thing isn't a particularly appealing job, but it should be a priority.

Always get the snow shovels out first thing to clear paths to the stables, the horse walker, the muck heap and the fields, and then salt it immediately. You have to do it straight away because as soon as you walk on it, you compact it to ice. Use rock salt on the yard, but table salt on the horse walker to avoid damaging the rubber flooring. Similarly, be careful when there's a thick frost — it can be just as dangerous as snow. Always ensure you have plenty of grit — it keeps for years and it's always better to have it in stock rather than have to chase around for it when you desperately need it.

Stables will need to be mucked out more frequently in the event of horses being unable to access the field.

<https://www.horseandhound.co.uk/features/how-to-prepare-your-stable-yard-for-snow-521709>