



# **Tasmanian Equine Welfare Guidelines**

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**Approved as an Animal Welfare Guideline under Section 44B of  
the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* by the then Minister for Primary  
Industries and Water, 20 November 2008.**

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## Tasmanian Equine Welfare Guidelines

This document has been developed by the Australian Equine Welfare Association, using other Codes of Practice currently in use in the UK, A.C.T and Victoria.

The process began with a workshop organized by the AEWA which involved several prominent Tasmanian Equine professionals, including vets, farriers and dentists. The draft was then released for public consultation for 3 months. During this time comments were received from all sectors of the horse industry in Tasmania and Australia wide.

This document has also been produced in conjunction with the Model Equine Code of Practice being produced by the Queensland DPI as part of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy.

After the public consultation period, the AEWA committee, along with the workshop participants made final changes to create this document.

Every effort has been made to consult widely and to seek advice from other State Governments to ensure that these Guidelines remain consistent with other guidelines in use around Australia.

## Introduction

These Guidelines are recommended for use to outline recommended levels of care for equines in Tasmania. It is intended for use as an animal welfare guideline under the Animal Welfare Act (1993), as well as being a guideline for equine industry stakeholders, such as horse owners, trainers and breeders.

Equine owners need to be aware of the basic needs of the equine, regardless of which husbandry system they adopt.

Equines have basic needs to maintain their health and wellbeing. These basic needs include:

- The need for social interaction with other equines
- Ready access to food and water
- Freedom of movement to stand, stretch and lie down
- Regular Exercise
- Accommodation which does not cause harm, and provides protection from the elements
- Regular hoof care
- Regular dental care
- Regular parasite control measures
- Rapid identification and treatment of illness and injury
- Freedom from confusion and conflict in training

Neglect of any or all of the above requirements can lead to health and welfare issues.

The responsibility of equine owners also extends to the breeding of equines. Unselective, random or over-breeding can produce animals of low economic value.

Many welfare problems arise when there is a ready availability of cheap equines. These equines often end up in unsuitable homes that lack the knowledge and/or funds to adequately provide for the animal. Selectively breeding equines for temperament, conformation and for specific uses can help ensure that fewer equines suffer neglect through ignorance and the inability to afford care.

Persons responsible for the welfare of equines should acquire the maximum amount of knowledge and skill required to keep and handle equines. Often the wellbeing and usefulness of the equine will depend on the skill and the attitude of the individuals handling them.

## **Production of the Tasmanian Equine Welfare Guidelines**

The Australian Equine welfare Association (AEWA) coordinated the production of this document, working from several existing codes of practice. It was produced in consultation with the public and a panel of Tasmanian Equine professionals. The expert panel attended a workshop in Hobart to produce the initial draft. Thanks is given to the following workshop participants and major contributors:

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# Tasmanian Equine Welfare Guidelines

## 1.1 Behavioral Needs

1. To be free of confusion and conflict in training
2. The application of sound principles of husbandry requires an understanding of animal behaviour.
3. Equines are social animals that establish a group hierarchy; also they may form social bonds with other animals, including humans. They breed, graze, and respond to fright and painful stimuli in predictable patterns, and can develop behavioural problems.
4. The design of facilities, the stocking density, and the composition of groups of equines must allow each equine to have an area of its own.
5. Subordinate equines must have an opportunity to escape from bullying by dominant animals in the group.
6. Colts, stallions, weanlings, pregnant and sick animals usually require segregation from other groups of equines, to reduce the risk of injury and disease.
7. It is recommended that equines are kept in compatible groups while grazing. It is also recommended that equines are not segregated from equine company for substantial periods of time.
8. Horses that are used to train for particular sports must be free of relentless pressure from reins, side reins and other training aids for extended periods of time. The use of spurs, whips etc in training should be for short-term correction only and then must be administered in a way deemed reasonable for the purpose. There should be no marking or injuries from spurs or bits or other gear used in training. Horses should not continuously show conflict behaviours as a result of enduring and persistent tension, such as bucking, rearing, shying, leaping or bolting.
9. Horses may develop stereotypies (repetitive abnormal behaviours) resulting from boredom, close confinement and inadequate exercise. Stereotypies include weaving, crib-biting, wind-sucking, aggression, pawing, kicking, and pacing, and lead to welfare problems.
10. Persons responsible for the supervision of horses should ensure that strategies are in place to prevent the development of stereotypies and reduce their incidence. Strategies include the design of stables and stalls to allow equines to see other equines and humans; providing toys and companion animals; appropriate feeding regimes; and immediate segregation of stereotypical horses from others susceptible to learning undesirable behaviours.

## **1.2 Air**

11. Equines should not be kept in or exposed to any situation where the air is so contaminated with dust or noxious chemicals, as to be harmful to the long term welfare of those animals.
12. Stables, stalls, horse trailers and trucks or anyplace an equine is confined in an enclosed space should give adequate natural ventilation. Air vents on opposite sides of the enclosure are preferred.

## **1.3 Water**

13. Equines should be provided with an adequate supply of fresh clean water.
14. Equines should not be deprived of access to water for more than 12 hours (in some extenuating circumstances this can be extended to 24 hours but all efforts should be made to offer water every 12 hours).
15. Equines should have free access to a supply of good quality water at all times.
16. Reticulated water should be inspected daily for normal function.
17. Water troughs and containers should be inspected frequently for cleanliness and freedom from contamination, function and replenishment.
18. Care should be taken in winter in the case of older equines, as they may be less likely to drink extremely cold water due to teeth problems, which can then lead to other health problems.
19. A bucket supply of water should be used only where equines are constantly supervised, and should be replenished at least twice a day.
20. Requirements for water vary widely, depending on age, bodyweight, air temperature and humidity, the work, state of health and type of diet of the equine. (See Appendix 1).
21. Where water is provided from open surface supplies, regular inspections should be made to ensure water is of acceptable quality and horses do not get bogged in mud from receding water lines. As water lines recede, these supplies should be fenced off or horses removed to prevent bogging.
22. Horses should not be given free access to water when they are hot or overheated. Following heavy exercise or heavy work, provision of water

should be carefully managed to avoid over-drinking which may lead to digestive disorders.

#### 1.4 Diet

23. Equines should be provided with adequate supply of good quality food that will maintain their health, vitality and welfare.
24. Food for equines should meet the requirements of maintenance, growth, pregnancy, lactation, work and cold exposure (see appendix 2).
25. Every equine must be offered daily an appropriate ration of food, to maintain its body condition at score 2,3 or 4 on the body condition score chart (See Appendix 3)
26. Due to their idiosyncratic nature, feeding requirements will vary for different breeds, types and individual equines. It is recommended that advice be sought from a qualified nutritionist or veterinarian as to the feed requirements for different equines.
27. Regular supervision should be provided to observe behaviour patterns and response to feed. Feed troughs for equines should be spaced to minimise bullying and allow subordinate animals access to feed.
28. Subordinate equines may require segregation at feeding times to ensure they can consume their full ration.
29. Equines are “trickle feeders” and should have access to forage feed for most of their non-active hours. This may be fresh grass or hay, as appropriate.
30. When an equine fails to thrive, the quantity, quality and availability of feed, and the health of the equine (including the state of its teeth and the extent of parasitism), should be evaluated.
31. Care should be taken to protect equines from food harmful to health, as well as from toxic plants and flowers (See Appendix 5).
32. Equines should not be overfed. Overfeeding some equines, particularly idle ponies, can induce laminitis or founder. Animals at risk should be treated according to professional veterinary advice, and should be closely observed.
33. Food containers should be sealed securely and stored away from equines to ensure that they cannot break in to feed supplies.
34. Feed containers should be kept clean at all times to prevent spoilage of feed.



35. To avoid health problems, rapid changes in feed type and quantity should be avoided. Any necessary changes should be made over a period of several days.
36. Working horses that are given a "rest day" should have the grain and/or concentrate portion of the ration reduced to avoid the incidence of "Tying-up".
37. In drought times horses should be regularly evaluated and fed to maintain body function and condition

## **1.5 Exercise**

38. Continuously stabled or yarded equines should be exercised daily except under exceptional circumstances.
39. Equines should not be overworked, overridden or overdriven. Equines must be able to cope with the workload imposed on them.
40. Equines on mechanical exercising devices, such as walking machines, should be supervised constantly.
41. Equines may be exercised by riding, driving, lunging or releasing them into a large yard for at least 1 hour a day.
42. There may be exceptional circumstances where, due to injury or convalescence, equines will need to be stabled for extended periods. Equines that are stabled long-term should be spelled outside at least once a year.
43. When introducing new or spelled equines to exercise, their workload should be increased gradually to prevent injury and stress.

## **1.6 Equine Accommodation**

### **1.6.1 Premises**

44. Premises should be designed to minimise the risk of injury to equines. There should be adequate numbers of paddocks or yards to permit compatible animals to be grouped together.
45. Overstocking, especially on small rural holdings risks soil erosion, parasitic worm infestation, weed infestation, loss of pasture and native vegetation, degradation and eutrophication of wetlands and waterways. Overstocking will therefore impact negatively on the health and welfare of the equine. Paddocks should be stocked according to land capability. Further details of land capability in your area can be obtained by contacting the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries and Water on 1300 368 550.

46. The risk of injury increases where equines are overcrowded and competition for food, water and space leads to fighting.

### **1.6.2 Fencing**

47. Suitability of fencing varies according to the breed, sex and disposition of the equines, stocking density and paddock size.
48. Fences should be readily visible to the equines and properly maintained. Fencing should be of a suitable height and be sufficiently sturdy to prevent escape.
49. Barbed wire, ring lock fencing, fencing using uncapped star pickets, and high tensile wire (2.8 mm or 2.5 mm) are prone to cause severe injury to equines and are particularly hazardous when used in small areas.
50. Electric fencing, properly fitted and maintained, provides a safe and effective barrier to equines. Electric fencing on its own should be used as interior fencing only, and external fences should be sturdy conventional post and rail or post and wire. Electric fencing should be highly visible and a sight wire is recommended.
51. Electric Fencing should never be used in conjunction with barbed wire.
52. Gateways and gate latches should be designed to give easy and safe passage of equines. Gateways should be a minimum of 1.2 meters.
53. Gates should be fastened with a secure chain or catch, to prevent escape of equines and possible injury.

### **1.6.3 Paddock Areas**

54. All reasonable and appropriate steps should be taken to minimise the effects of weather that produce either cold stress or heat stress in equines.
55. Healthy equines can tolerate extremes of heat and cold if they are acclimatised and have adequate feed, water and shelter. 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 equines are most susceptible.
56. Landscape features, such as windrows of trees, hedges, and gullies, provide shelter. All paddocks should be kept clear of hazardous material such as wire, rope etc that could be harmful to equines.

## **Stables, Loose-boxes and Yards**

57. Yards, shelter-sheds and loose-boxes or stalls provided for equines should not restrict their freedom to stand, lie down, stretch and groom themselves freely in a normal position.
58. Where held together in groups, there should be sufficient space to allow the subordinate animals to escape bullying.
59. Loose-boxes for equines should have a floor area of at least 12 square metres and should be at least 3 metres high. Extra space should be provided for larger equines and mares in foal.
60. Clean good quality bedding - such as straw, sawdust or wood-shavings - should be provided for warmth, insulation and protection from abrasion.
61. Yards, shelter-sheds and loose-boxes or stalls provided for equines should not restrict their freedom to stand, lie down, stretch and groom themselves. Sheds should be constructed and maintained so as to provide adequate security and minimise risk of injury and disease.
62. The floors of yards, sheds and stalls should have surfaces that permit adequate drainage and allow equines to stand and walk normally.
63. The walls should be capable of withstanding damage. They may be lined with plywood sheets or rubber conveyor belting etc. to prevent injury to equines and also to protect the walls from pawing and kicking. The doorways should be at least 1.2m wide and 2.4 m high with no protrusions. Hinged doors should open outwards.
64. Stables and stalls should give adequate natural ventilation. Air vents on opposite sides of the box are preferred.
65. Equines should be accommodated singly in loose boxes (except for mares and foals and weanlings), and tied only under supervision.
66. Fire fighting equipment should be available and there should be ready access to equines to enable them to be released quickly in case of fire.
67. Dirty bedding and stale or contaminated feed and water should be removed each day. Disposal of washings, urine and dung should be made in compliance with the requirements of statutory authorities.
68. Where possible it should be possible for stabled equines to see other equines.

## 1.7 Agistment

69. A wide variety of agistment is available for equines and the degree of care and attention given to agisted equines is usually in direct proportion to the fee charged.
70. A written agreement defining conditions of the agistment should be made between the equine-owner and the agistment property-owner (see Appendix 6).
71. The owner of the agistment property should indicate the provisions made for safety of the animals, the supply of feed and water, and routine measures for control of parasites and prevention of overstocking.
72. In the absence of the equine owner, the duty of care falls to the agistment owner in the absence of any other written agreement.

## 1.8 Supervision

73. Equines kept under intensive management in stables and yards should be inspected, fed and watered at least twice a day.
74. Equines grazing under more extensive conditions require variable supervision, according to density of stocking and availability of suitable feed; breed type; nature and disposition; age and pregnancy status; and the nature of fencing and reliability of water supply.
75. Steps should be taken to ensure that equines can be attended to promptly in the event of fire, flood or injury. In any situation, the degree of supervision should be comparable with that practised by competent stockpersons for that type of husbandry.
76. Frequency and level of supervision should relate to the likelihood of risk to the welfare of each equine.
77. It is recommended that a foaling alarm be used in the latter stages of pregnancy.
78. Mares in pregnancy should be checked at least twice daily in the last month of pregnancy and far more regularly as the time of foaling approaches.
79. It is recommended that halters and collars are removed when the equine is unsupervised, as they can get caught on objects and cause injury.
80. Equines that are left unsupervised with halters or collars on should be checked regularly for correct fitting and comfort.

81. Only webbing halters should be left on unsupervised horses, as they usually break under pressure. Rope halters should never be left on unsupervised horses, as they do not break and can cause severe injury.

## **1.9 Tethering and hobbling**

82. Equines should not be tethered or hobbled permanently.
83. A swivel should be attached to each end of the chain to prevent knotting and injury to the equine.
84. The tethering site should permit a minimum tether radius of at least nine metres.
85. Mares in season should not be tethered near stallions.
86. Mares about to foal or with a foal should not be tethered.
87. Stallions should not be tethered near any other equines.
88. Tethering is not recommended. Tethered equines require constant supervision. Adequate feed and water should be provided. The area should be free of obstructions that may entangle the tether.
89. Tethering of equines should be a short-term practice only. Long-term tethering of equines is not acceptable.
90. Only those horses which have been appropriately trained should be hobbled or tethered. Horses should be constantly supervised during training for hobbling and tethering.
91. No horse should be tethered using a rope halter.

## **1.10 Protection against Weather Extremes**

92. All reasonable and appropriate steps should be taken to minimise the effects of weather that produce either cold stress or heat stress in equines.

### **1.10.1 Rugging**

93. Equines clipped during winter should be rugged, except when working or when weather conditions are very mild.
94. Rugs should be checked daily and should be appropriate to weather conditions and the physical condition of the equine. Care should be taken when rugging, as heat stress can occur if the equine is over-rugged.

95. If rugs are not used, then adequate shade and shelter from the elements should be provided.

### **1.11 General Husbandry Practices**

96. Husbandry practices that cause pain or suffering to an equine that, in the circumstances, are unjustifiable, unnecessary or unreasonable, should not be used.
97. Internal medication such as drenches, food additives, and external medications such as liniments, lotions and insecticides, should be used strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's or a veterinary surgeon's instructions. Overdosing may harm equines; under dosing may be ineffective. Treatments should be administered in a hygienic manner.
98. Practices such as firing, knicking, tail docking and blistering for any purpose are not to be performed.
99. Treatment practices causing considerable pain should be performed only under the influence of suitable analgesia or anaesthesia.
100. Where physical restraints are used on equines the operator should be competent in their use and the minimum necessary force applied during the task.
101. Persons responsible for the supervision of equines should be able to recognise signs of ill-health and should call a veterinarian when necessary to diagnose and treat illness or injury.
102. Equines should not be allowed to suffer for want of attention. They should be killed humanely when seriously injured or sick if proper care and attention cannot be provided, or removed to suitable facilities to permit adequate treatment, supervision and continuing aftercare.
103. Injuries occur more frequently where equines are overcrowded and facilities are inadequate.
104. Healthy equines:
- are active, move freely, eat and drink well
  - have clear eyes and nostrils, clean skins and coats
  - retain a body condition score of 2, 3 or 4. (See Appendix 3)
105. Sick equines may show the following signs:
- Loss of condition and lethargy; these signs are frequently associated with an inadequate diet, internal parasites or teeth problems
  - digestive upsets; seen as diarrhoea, with soiling of tail and hind legs, constipation or colic (abdominal pain) with restlessness,

pawing, kicking at the stomach or rolling, often accompanied by straining, teeth-grinding and patchy or generalised sweating.

- lameness; due to injury, laminitis or founder, foot abscess or improper hoof maintenance
- discharges from eyes, nostrils, or swollen glands under the throat.

## **Restraint of equines**

106. Effective management and treatment of equines involves using various forms of restraint. These will vary with the temperament, disposition, and previous learning experience of the particular equine, the nature of the management procedure, and the skill of the equine handler.
107. Restraint methods used on equines should always be the minimum necessary to carry out routine management procedures. Prolonged or over-zealous use of restraints, such as nose-twitches, may cause severe reaction from many equines and can also cause the equine injury. Ear twitches are not recommended.
108. Adequate facilities to provide a safe environment, and suitable equipment, should be available when equines are subjected to any procedure or treatment. Management and treatment procedures should be performed by competent persons.
109. Treatment practices that cause pain should not be carried out on equines if painless or alternative methods of treatment can be adopted. Treatment practices causing pain should be performed only under the influence of suitable analgesia or anaesthesia (as administered by a qualified veterinary surgeon).

## **1.12 Foot care**

110. Equines' hooves should be regularly trimmed as required to permit normal mobility. Shoeing, if performed, should not provoke any abnormality of gait or conformation
111. Equines ridden or driven on roads or hard surfaces should be adequately transitioned to barefoot or otherwise be protected by shoes or boots.
112. Shoeing should be practised only by experienced farriers. Hooves of equines in work should be inspected each day for signs of injury, loose shoes or impacted stones.
113. It is recommended that all farriery be carried out by a qualified farrier.

### **1.13 Dental care**

114. Equines' teeth should be inspected on a regular basis (i.e. at least annually).
115. A person should not provide any dental treatment to an equine that causes damage or injury to the equine, or results in inability of the equine to eat.
116. Equines teeth are susceptible to dental problems during growth, adulthood and old age. Annual visits are advised to check for painful dental problems and to maintain longevity.
117. When action needs to be taken, a competent horse dentist or veterinary surgeon should be engaged.
118. Use of motorised tools on horses' teeth should only be performed with the horse adequately restrained and under veterinary supervision.
119. When grain is a major part of the diet, teeth should be inspected every six months.

### **1.14 Veterinary Procedures and Treatments**

120. The use of restricted drugs should only be under prescription by a registered veterinary surgeon.
121. Surgical procedures should only be performed with the aid of an appropriate anaesthetic or analgesic and by or under the direct supervision of a registered veterinary surgeon, unless performed as emergency first aid.
122. Castrating a male equine is a significant surgical procedure and must only be performed by a registered veterinary surgeon, unless under circumstances specifically prescribed by State legislation. An appropriate anaesthetic or analgesic should be used for castration.
123. Owners/carers of equines that have had significant surgical procedures should monitor post-operative recovery and healing, and should seek or provide appropriate veterinary attention when needed.
124. Circumstances in which surgical first aid may be provided by someone other than a registered veterinary surgeon are: emergency procedures, remote locations, and unavailability of a veterinary surgeon.
125. People caring for horses should have ready access to contact details for a local veterinary surgeon.



126. Injuries or ill-health conditions suffered by a horse that require more treatment than basic first aid should be checked as soon as possible by a registered veterinary surgeon.
127. Injectable, oral and external medication should be used in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Any medication which does not bear specific instructions for treatment of horses should only be used on veterinary advice.
128. Acts of veterinary science can only be legally carried out by a qualified veterinary surgeon.
129. Persons responsible for the welfare of equines should seek immediate veterinary attention for equines showing the following signs:
  - acute abdominal pain or colic
  - serious injuries, including deep wounds, severe haemorrhage, suspected bone fractures, or eye injuries.
  - straining for more than 30 minutes by a pregnant mare that has not foaled
  - inability to rise or stand
130. Veterinary attention should be sought as soon as possible for equines showing the following signs:
  - marked lameness or injuries not responding to treatment within 24 hours
  - persistent signs of respiratory disease (colds) accompanied by loss of appetite
  - diarrhoea or persistent weight loss.

### **1.15 Protection from disease**

131. Horses should be treated for internal parasites at least every three months. External parasites such as lice should be treated as soon as possible after being observed.
132. Routine vaccination of equines against tetanus and strangles is desirable. Owners should seek veterinary advice about vaccination against other diseases.
133. Preventive treatment should be given to equines for diseases that may be common in a district or occurring in a mob.
134. It is recommended that faecal egg counts are carried out.
135. Good hygiene and cleanliness in and around stables, including disposal of effluent and litter, will reduce the risk of parasitism and disease.

136. Paddocks used for grazing equines should be managed in such a way that contamination by parasites or other agents is minimised. Good management practices include spelling paddocks for intervals of at least six weeks and preferably 12 weeks, or grazing with other species such as sheep and cattle.

### **1.16 Identification**

137. Corrosive chemicals should not be used to brand equines.
138. Freeze branding, tattooing, micro-chipping, DNA profiling and blood type profiling are acceptable methods for permanently identifying equines
139. Fire-branding is the least acceptable form of identification and all efforts should be made to use alternatives. If fire-branding is used, it should be done by an experienced operator

### **1.17 Education and Training**

140. Training methods involving cruelty should not be used.
141. Equines should not be beaten or abused.
142. Equines under 15 months of age should not be ridden.
143. Bits should not have rough or sharp edges.
144. Sharp or cutting objects should not be used in any training equipment.
145. Equines should not be struck around the head or genitals with any whip, lead or other object.
146. Spurs should not be used in a manner that causes abrasions or puncture to an equine.
147. The safety of the equine when educating and training is paramount at all times. Care should especially be taken in the following situations:
  - Riding on the road, with consideration from the rider/handler of other road users and the road conditions;
  - Equines and riders should be adequately trained to use and understand the equipment they are training with;
  - Equines should be conditioned to deal with situations and conditions that they are, or will be, regularly exposed to.

148. First time road users should check the horse is accustomed to vehicles and shows no flight response when approached by vehicles.
149. Equines should be handled quietly, with care and patience.
150. Persons engaged in educating and training equines should be experienced, or under direct supervision of an experienced person.
151. Competent equine handlers will recognise the different behaviour patterns of equines and successful trainers adapt their training methods to suit the particular equine.
152. Competent persons are confident and instil this confidence in the equines they train. They recognise that most equines respond best to firm but gentle techniques, and to rewards when the equine responds correctly.
153. Abnormal physiological and behavioural responses to training and confinement should be recognised and measures taken to correct them. These responses may include aggression, biting, pawing, kicking, weaving, pacing, crib-biting or wind-sucking.
154. Occasional disciplinary measures may be necessary to establish dominance of the trainer and discourage bad habits, such as biting, in the equine. Discipline has to be administered during or immediately following the act of misconduct, and should be minimal.
155. Equines should not be beaten or abused. Repeated, or excessive force should not be used against the equine as a form of punishment.
156. Restraining devices are to be used humanely and with regard to natural movement. All equipment should be fitted with a method of quick release.
157. Basic education and handling of young equines is desirable, although strenuous training should be minimal to reduce the risks of injury and growth abnormalities. Training methods involving cruelty or repeated pain 'insults' should not be used.
158. Equines 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.
159. All saddlery, harness and other equipment used with equines should be of sound condition, well-fitting, correctly adjusted, and regularly cleaned, so that the risk of injury to equines is reduced.
160. Equines require regular exercise for a period of weeks before they are adequately conditioned for strenuous exercise. All equines, including well-conditioned animals, can be over-ridden. Experience and skill are

required to ride or drive equines to their utmost ability in competitive equine sports without inducing distress, severe illness, or death.

161. Inexperienced persons riding or driving equines have an obligation to use the equine in accordance with its fitness and, if in doubt, should seek advice from an experienced handler.
162. Equines should be at least four years old before starting jumping training.
163. Veterinary attention should be sought if there is any doubt about the fitness of an equine for a particular purpose.

### **1.18 Transport**

164. Equines should be handled and transported in accordance with the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals - Land Transport of Equines.
165. Equines are prone to injury during transport. Appropriate training and conditioning reduce the risk of injury. Protection such as float boots or bandages is also desirable.
166. Unhandled equines should not be transported alone in single or dual equine trailers. Equines unaccustomed to being transported should travel only in the company of other equines.
167. Young equines frequently travel best when loose-penned in small groups. Other equines should be fitted with head-stalls and the leads should be secured to the vehicle, using a quick-release knot, so as not to endanger the animals.
168. It is recommended to transport in separate pens:
  - groups of unhandled equines
  - stallions
  - mares in advanced pregnancy
  - mares with foals
  - equines significantly different in size or type, for example weanlings and adults, ponies, light hacks and heavy hacks and draughts.
169. Unweaned foals should be transported with their mothers. Care should be taken to prevent attempted escapes over tail-gates or under breast-rails of equine floats.
170. After 12 hours of road, rail or sea travel, a rest period of at least 12 hours should be provided before starting the next stage of the journey. Equines should be provided water every 6 hours and food every 8 hours.

171. Loading facilities should be constructed so that they are unlikely to cause injury to animals. The design and construction of vehicles should be suitable for equines. Floors of transport vehicles should be of solid construction and provide a non-slip footing for equines. Equines should not be transported in double-decker transport vehicles.
172. Inspection of equines should be carried out by either the driver or attendant not later than 30 minutes after commencement of the journey, and thereafter at intervals of at least every 2 hours. Equines should be unloaded as soon as possible after arrival at the destination.
173. Travel sickness is a possibility and it is advisable to check rectal temperature at 12 hourly intervals, as well as allow the equine to lower its head at all times in order to drain respiratory secretions. If any abnormality is detected then veterinary attention should be sought immediately.
174. Equines should not be fed whilst floating long distances.
175. Video surveillance is strongly advised to monitor equines whilst travelling.
176. Special precautions should be taken to provide shelter and ventilation during extremely hot weather.
177. Provision should be made for mares to suckle their foals during transit.
178. Equines should not be transported for more than eight hours unless they are in good health and have been preconditioned for prolonged travel.
179. Proper pre-conditioning of equines includes treatment for internal and external parasites and paring of feet if necessary. They should be adequately fed and watered before transportation.
180. Lamé and sick equines should not be transported except to or from a place for veterinary treatment.
181. Mares more than 10 months pregnant should not be transported for more than eight hours.
182. Mares with foals at foot should not be transported within seven days of foaling, unless it is to or from a place for veterinary treatment, or is for a journey of two hours or less. Mares foaled fewer than 14 days should not be transported for more than eight hours.
183. It is not recommended to transport pregnant mares within 14 days of their anticipated foaling date unless deemed necessary and safe by a veterinarian or person experienced in breeding equines.

184. All transport vehicle doors and ramps should be fitted with secure latches, and be close-fitting, to reduce the risk of injury and/or escape.
185. Floors of transport vehicles should be of solid construction and provide a secure footing for equines. Packing of hooves, or laying soft bedding should be considered before long journeys.
186. Transport vehicles should be cleaned thoroughly and inspected regularly for faults. Faulty vehicles should be repaired before further use.

### **1.19 The old and geriatric Equine**

187. Equines considered to be old or geriatric should have their health and welfare needs monitored regularly. Equines that are suffering, injured or diseased must be provided with prompt and appropriate treatment, or be humanely destroyed.
188. Equines over the age of 15 years are considered to be old. Equines over the age of 20 years are considered to be geriatric.
189. Geriatric equines should be assessed by a veterinary surgeon or person experienced in the care of equines at least once every 12 months for general health, the level of work performed and ability.
190. Old and geriatric equines should have a full dental examination and treatment every 12 months.
191. People caring for old equines should be aware of the changes in nutritional requirements for older equines and feed them accordingly.
192. When the general health and welfare of the old and geriatric equine is compromised, persons in charge should consult their veterinary surgeon immediately.

### **1.20 Breeding**

193. Equines should not be bred when their body condition score is below score 2.
194. It is important persons involved in the action of breeding equines should be experienced and have an understanding of the reproductive systems of both the mare and stallion.
195. Physical restraints may be used to prevent injury to mares and stallions. Where physical restraints are used it is important to ensure the restraints are correctly fitted so as not to cause injury.
196. Stallions and mares should be inspected on a regular basis for any injury or possible disease that could interfere with the breeding process.

197. Facilities used in breeding should be well constructed, safe and functional for the purpose intended.
198. Semen collection, artificial insemination, embryo collection, embryo transfer, and associated operations should be performed only by or under the direct supervision of experienced operators with appropriate qualifications recognised by the relevant State/Territory authorities and in accordance with the relevant legislation.
199. Special cases such as lactating mares, orphaned foals and newly weaned foals require increased nutrition levels because of increased physiological demands.

### **The Mare**

200. Mares in pregnancy should be checked at least twice daily in the last month of pregnancy and far more regularly as the time of foaling approaches.
201. Mares should be of sufficient body score condition to handle the stress related to pregnancy, foaling and the raising of the foal. However, pregnant mares should not be overweight as this significantly increases the risk of foaling complications.
202. Mares in late pregnancy should not be kept in paddocks with dams or streams, due to the risk of the foal drowning.

### **The Stallion**

203. Only experienced persons, or persons under direct supervision of an experienced person, should handle stallions during the breeding process.
204. Stallions that are required to serve large numbers of mares require adequate nutrition to handle the extra work. This may require extra feeding to ensure the stallion does not fall below score 2 on the body condition scale.
205. Where over-dominant or dangerous behaviour occurs during the breeding process and the welfare of the animals concerned is compromised, persons in charge should take the appropriate action with suitable equipment to ensure the behaviour is corrected.

### **Weaning**

206. Weaning of foals should be carried out in a safe environment. All precautions should be taken to prevent the foal being injured by inappropriate fencing or other materials.

## **Orphan Foals**

207. Foals orphaned at birth should receive colostrum or a substitute within the first 24 hours of birth.
208. Veterinary advice should be sought to ensure that an appropriate health and feeding program is engaged for the foal.
209. Veterinary advice should be sought to ensure that a health program is appropriate to avoid disease.
210. Good hygiene is extremely important to prevent the incidence of disease in the foal, and therefore should be practiced.
211. The foal should be provided with appropriate accommodation, eg a loose box with clean dry good quality bedding is ideal.
212. The foal should have regular exercise.

## **1.21 Euthanasia or slaughter**

213. Euthanasia or slaughter should be performed humanely. Where euthanasia is necessary, the procedure must result in immediate unconsciousness and painless death.
214. Persons performing euthanasia should be trained or experienced in the method used, or under the supervision of someone so trained or experienced.
215. Acceptable methods of euthanasia are:
  - 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, using a fire-arm or humane killer
  - use of a captive-bolt pistol
216. Euthanasia or slaughter should be performed only by persons trained or experienced in the method used (see Appendix 7). Equines should not be overcrowded when held at premises for slaughter. They should have free access to water and sufficient food (hay or pasture) to provide normal energy requirements for maintenance.
217. Facilities for handling equines should be designed to:
  - minimise injury
  - provide security.



218. Yard surfaces should enable easy cleaning and provide safe footing for the equines.
219. The equine should be euthanased as soon as possible to reduce stress and suffering.

### **Use of Firearms/Captive Bolt**

220. When using a firearm to humanely euthanase horses, the aim is to shoot the animal through the brain at close range. For aiming, (Appendix 4) see Figure 1 (Frontal method) and Figure 2 (Temporal method) for firearm; see only Figure 1 (Frontal method) for captive bolt, as the Temporal method is unsuited to captive bolt.
221. The use of firearms must be in accordance with the relevant Tasmanian state legislation governing the use of such weapons.
222. Captive bolts will cause only stunning. Horses so stunned must be bled out prior to regaining consciousness. A .22 calibre rifle is adequate for humane euthanasia of most horses, however, use of these calibre firearms should be followed by bleeding out.
223. Safe Use of Firearms
  - Any use of a firearm is potentially hazardous.
  - Persons other than the marksman and a handler for the animal should be cleared from the area or should stand well behind the marksman.
  - Never fire the weapon while the animal 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 animal's head.

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AEWA committee 2006 and 2007

## Glossary

<b>Blistering</b>	Injection of an irritative substance into soft tissue in an attempt to create an inflammatory reaction.
<b>Equines</b>	Horses, ponies, mules, and donkeys.
<b>Firing</b>	The use of hot irons to create scar tissue.
<b>Geriatric</b>	Horses over the age of 20 years.
<b>Handlers</b>	People who are in charge of an equine.
<b>Knicking</b>	Cutting the skin or ligaments of the tail to ensure the tail is held high.
<b>Old</b>	Horses over the age of 15 years.
<b>Premises</b>	Premises where equines are kept. Can include a number of paddocks, yards and/or stables.
<b>Rugs</b>	Protective wear for equines. Can include stable rugs, summer rugs and paddock rugs. Usually made from synthetic lightweight material or canvas.
<b>Shelter</b>	Any natural landscape feature or manmade building that affords shelter from the elements to equines.
<b>Tail docking</b>	The practice of removal a portion of the equines dock.
<b>Tethering</b>	The practice of tying a horse on a long rope or chain for the purpose of grazing.
<b>Tying</b>	Securing a horse via a lead rope attached to a halter or headstall to a fence, tree, horse float or other fixed place.

## References

Agnotes Ag0005 DPI Victoria

Carroll, C.L. and Huntington, P.J. (1988) Body condition scoring and weight estimation of equines *Equine Veterinary Journal* 20, 41-45.

A.C.T Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses

Andrew Crane, Tas DPIWE

## Appendix 1 - Water Requirements

The basic maintenance requirements of water for ponies and equines are about 52ml/kg bodyweight/day (Agnotes Ag0005 DPI Victoria).

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Ponies 200-300 kg bodyweight require 10-15 litres daily

Equines 300-450 kg bodyweight require 15-25 litres daily

Equines 450-500 kg bodyweight require 25-30 litres daily.

These requirements are significantly increased with growth, work and lactation. Two or three times as much water as shown above is needed by equines in work or lactation. Water requirement is closely related to dry matter intake of food. Equines need 2-4 litres of water per kilogram of dry matter intake. This requirement increases as air temperatures rise (15-20% increase for 13oC to 25oC temperature change).

Water troughs and containers should be inspected regularly for function, replenishment, cleanliness and freedom from contamination. Water should always be clean.

## Appendix 2 - Feed Requirements

Good quality pasture, containing suitable grasses and legumes, can provide the food requirements for most equines, except those doing hard work (Agnotes Ag0005 DPI Victoria).

Equines should be fed according to body condition and work. It is undesirable for any equine to be overweight. The efficiency of food utilisation will vary between particular equines. Thoroughbred equines require substantially more feed per kilogram of body weight than other breeds. Most equines kept in smaller areas require supplementary feed for some part of the year, depending on stocking density and their requirements for growth, pregnancy, lactation and work.

Approximate minimum feed requirements of ponies and adult equines are shown in the table. Equines in hard work have special feeding requirements, and information is available in books such as Hawcroft's *The Complete Book of Equine Care* (1989).

Body weight of equine (kg)	Idle equine (maintenance only)	Moderate work (jumping, stock work, some eventing). Equine needs both hay and grain	
	hay* (kg)	hay* (kg)	grain (oats)(kg)
300	5.0	4.0	1.0
400	7.0	5.0	3.5
500	8.0-9.0	5.5-7.5	4.0-6.0

\* Good quality pasture hay rich in clover, or lucerne hay

Inexperienced people should consult a veterinarian or an experienced equine handler about selection of suitable foodstuffs for equines used for training and racing.

Protein, mineral and vitamin supplements should be provided when required.


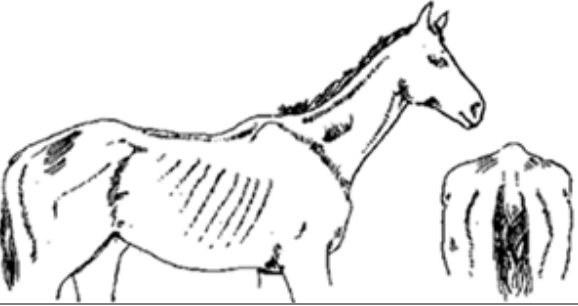


Adequate, good quality food is necessary for the growth of young equines. At six months of age equines require as much energy-rich foods and more protein than idle, adult equines.

Lactating mares require about 70% more energy foods than idle, adult equines.



## Appendix 3 – Body Condition Score Chart

**Table A3.1. Body Condition Scoring System**

Score	Neck	Back and ribs	Pelvis
0 Very poor	Marked ewe neck. Narrow and slack at base.	Skin tight over ribs. Spinous processes sharp and easily seen.	Angular pelvis - skin tight. Deep cavity under tail and either side of croup.
1 Poor	Ewe neck. Narrow and slack at base.	Ribs easily visible. Skin sunken either side of Backbone. Spinous processes well defined	Rump sunken, but skin supple. Pelvis and croup well defined Deep depression under tail.
2 Moderate	Narrow but firm	Ribs just visible Backbone well covered Spinous processes felt	Rump flat either side of backbone. Croup well defined, some fat. Slight cavity under tail
3 Good	No crest (except stallions) Firm neck	Ribs just covered No gutter along the back. Spinous processes covered but can be felt	Covered by fat and rounded. No gutter. Pelvis easily felt
4 Fat	Slight crest	Ribs well covered – need firm pressure to feel Gutter along backbone.	Gutter to root of tail. Pelvis covered by soft fat – felt only with firm pressure
5 Very fat	Marked crest Very wide and firm. Folds of fat.	Ribs buried - cannot feel. Deep gutter Back broad and flat.	Deep gutter to root of tail. Skin distended. Pelvis buried – cannot feel

<p>0 Very poor</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very sunken rump</li> <li>• Deep cavity under tail</li> <li>• Skin tight over bones</li> <li>• Very prominent backbone and pelvis</li> <li>• Marked ewe neck</li> </ul>
<p>1 Poor</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sunken rump</li> <li>• Cavity under tail</li> <li>• Ribs easily visible</li> <li>• Prominent backbone and croup</li> <li>• Ewe neck - narrow and slack</li> </ul>
<p>2 Moderate</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flat rump either side of backbone</li> <li>• Ribs just visible</li> <li>• Narrow but firm neck</li> <li>• Backbone well covered</li> </ul>
<p>3 Good</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rounded rump</li> <li>• Ribs just covered but easily felt</li> <li>• No crest, firm neck.</li> </ul>



<p>4 Fat</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rump well rounded</li> <li>• Gutter along back</li> <li>• Ribs and pelvis hard to feel</li> <li>• Slight crest</li> </ul>
<p>5 Very fat</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very bulging rump</li> <li>• Deep gutter along back</li> <li>• Ribs buried</li> <li>• Marked crest</li> <li>• Fold and lumps of fat</li> </ul>

**Figure A3.1** Body condition description for equines

## Appendix 4 – Euthanasia Procedures

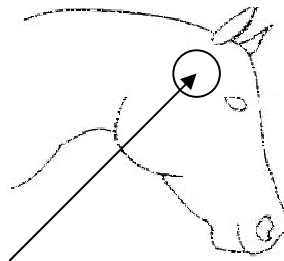
Adapted from Australian Model Code of Practice of the Welfare of Animals - Equines

### Frontal method:



**Figure A4.1 - Frontal method:** The captive bolt pistol or firearm should be directed at the point of intersection of diagonal lines taken from the base of each ear to the opposite eye. The bullet should be directed horizontally to ensure the brain is damaged.

### Temporal method:



**Figure A4.2: - Temporal method:** This is only suitable for firearms; the equine is shot from the side so that the bullet enters the skull midway between the eye and the base of the ear on the same side of the head. The bullet should be directed horizontally.

### Lethal Injection

- These drugs are administered by intravenous injection of the jugular vein to suitably restrained animals.
- The uses of these drugs are strictly controlled by state legislation. When used they must be administered by a registered entity under relevant state legislation for animal welfare.

- The equine must be monitored to ensure that all signs of life have expired before leaving the area.
- Where there is a risk to scavenging animals of accidental poisoning, this risk should be minimised by secure disposal of the carcass (by burning or burial).

## Appendix 5 - Poisonous Plants and Flowers

**Andrew Crane, DPIWE Tasmania**

A large number of plants that are common to Tasmania's roadsides, pastures and gardens are potentially toxic to equines. Plants can contain an enormous variety of substances that are considered poisonous, either on their own or when combined. This range is significant when trying to determine if an unwell equine is suffering from plant poisoning.

The type of poison will determine:

- The symptoms of poisoning
- The time taken for symptoms to appear
- The amount required to cause poisoning
- The appropriate treatment and the chances of full recovery

Added to this, the time of year, the health of the plant and obviously the health of the equine can also mean the difference between mild and severe poisoning. For all these reasons it perhaps isn't surprising that poisoning from plants may go undiagnosed in a large number of cases. We now know a great deal about the poisonous principles of many plants from Europe and North America, and their effects have been studied rigorously. But in Australia there has been far less testing of native plants, so that their effects on equines (and other domestic animals and livestock) are not always understood. Equine owners can play a valuable part in increasing our knowledge of native plant poisons by passing on their own experiences with poisoned animals.

Despite the gaps in our knowledge it is possible to identify a number of plants found in Tasmania that are known to be toxic to equines. Of course, it is far better to avoid plant poisoning, rather than trying to determine possible causes. For this reason there is a very simple principle to be followed:

In general, equines don't find poisonous plants very tasty, but if the available forage is insufficient – most often because the pasture has been overgrazed or the equine neglected – hungry equines will resort to eating whatever foliage they encounter. Unfortunately, after this occurs a equine can acquire a taste for a toxic plant they initially found unpalatable, and may even seek out the plant later despite the presence of safe and nutritious forage. This kind of “addiction” can result in an accumulation of toxins, so that plants considered mildly poisonous can have just as severe an effect as highly toxic plants that may be ingested only once. Not only that, but symptoms may not be very obvious until it is too late. The most prominent examples in Tasmania include ragwort, capeweed, Paterson's curse and bracken fern. These plants are common in many parts of the state.

In addition to being at risk in a poorly managed paddock, equines may also be in danger of plant poisoning if they:

Eat grass clippings or hay that contain parts of toxic plants. There are two important aspects to this scenario. Firstly, some toxic chemicals become more concentrated when a

plant is severely stressed or dead. Animals should never be fed plant matter that might have been sprayed, and hay should be clean. Equines have died from eating hay contaminated with the dried leaves of poisonous plants. Secondly, the part of the plant that is poisonous varies depending on the plant. In some species toxins are found only in the leaves, but in others they are found in all parts of the plant, including the fruits/seeds and the root.

Equines should never be allowed to browse in domestic gardens. The list of ornamental trees, shrubs and smaller plants that can harm equines is very long, and includes some of our most common garden plants, such as rhododendrons, azaleas, oleander, hellebores (winter rose), cherries, walnut (colic, depression, convulsions) and lantana (jaundice, liver failure). Some ornamental maples are particularly toxic.

Equine should be prevented from foraging on native plants and weeds when trekking, for it is then that they may inadvertently ingest something poisonous without the rider even being sure of what they have eaten. Many of the plants that are found along tracks and roadsides are introduced plants from the Northern Hemisphere. The most poisonous of these include St John's Wort, which causes photosensitization (sensitivity to sunlight) and Paterson's curse.

## Appendix 6 - Agistment and Stabling Agreement

It is recommended that the following components form the basis of any agistment agreement (adapted from Code of Practice – Welfare of Equines in the A.C.T)

- 1 Equine description and identification: name, sex, age, breed, height (hh approx), colour/s, marks, brands like (n/side, off/side) and any other distinguishing features.
- 2 Equine owner's name or equine lessee's name, address(es), contact phone number(s).
- 3 Property owner's name, address(es) and contact phone number(s).
- 4 Location and name of holding paddock or stable.
- 5 Statutory age limit of parties entering into agreement (must be 18 years or over).
- 6 Interpretation of terms used.
- 7 Extent of services provided by property owner for agistment or stabling.
- 8 Holding period (if no fixed period write "indefinite").
- 9 Payment rate.
- 10 Payment date(s).
- 11 Notice periods for variation.
- 12 Rights of property owner if fees are owing, rights to detain or power of sale, etc.
- 13 Warranty by equine owner/licensee of equine's suitability for agistment/stabling, including its health, statement of responsibility of equine owner to maintain the equine in good health with particular attention to parasite control, hooves and teeth.
- 14 Indication of circumstances in which property owner may call for veterinarian attention, name and phone number of veterinarian surgeon used by equine owner.
- 15 Circumstances in which agreement may cease.
- 16 Rules for use of facilities provided, including health, hygiene and cleaning.
- 17 Limits of liability and indemnity, including third parties.

