



March 20, 2020

COVID-19 and Equestrian Facility Operations

In an effort to minimize the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), Equestrian Canada (EC) and the Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations (PTSOs) ***recommend*** the following as best practices concerning equestrian facility operations, consistent with the recommendations of applicable health authorities. In Alberta specifically, the Alberta Equestrian Federation (AEF) does not have the authority to regulate facility operations, we have the responsibility to educate our community.

Due to federal, provincial/territorial and local government recommendations on the movement of individuals, as well as the current states of emergency declared by provinces/territories, **EC and the PTSOs recommend that all public and private facilities that host equestrian-related activities, including but not limited to stables and lesson barns, cease public-facing and non-essential activities until greenlit by the aforementioned government authorities.**

All levels of government in Canada have publicly and repeatedly communicated that everyone in the country should be practicing **social distancing** to reduce their exposure to other people and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau declared that “**all Canadians should stay home.**” Therefore, EC and the PTSOs ***recommend*** that facilities that host equestrian-related activities allow the personnel needed to take care of the facilities and the equines on their premises. This includes facility owners, facility managers, equine caretakers, providers of equine-related essential services (e.g. veterinarians, farriers), and boarders or owners providing equine-related minimum standards of care*. Non-essential personnel, including students, friends, family, the public, and boarders or owners who are not providing equine-related minimum standards of care*, ***are encouraged*** to remain off the premises.

**Individuals are to continue operating under the standards of care outlined in the [National Farm Animal Care Council Code of Practice](#) to ensure the proper feeding, care and movement of equines.*

Equestrian centres are encouraged to review their biosecurity plans and staff scheduling. Where possible, equestrian centres are encouraged to divide those caring for equines into at least two rotational teams to ensure continuity of appropriate care for the equines. Thus, if a member or team is required to self-isolate or enter quarantine, the other team(s) can ensure continuity of care for the equines onsite.

Additionally, EC and the PTSOs recommend the following as best practices:

- Adhere to applicable government requirements (e.g. those dictated by states of emergency); ([Government of Alberta](#))



- Adhere to applicable social distancing and hygiene recommendations from applicable local, provincial/territorial and federal health authorities;
- Individuals experiencing symptoms of illness must stay at home and self-isolate for 14 days as per guidelines from local, provincial/territorial and federal health authorities;
- The level of risk involved in equestrian **sport** is high; in order to alleviate pressure on an already overburdened healthcare system during this pandemic, precautions to reduce the risk of accidents should be taken; and,
- Contact your insurance provider with questions regarding your coverage. Factsheets from insurance providers are available at the AEF's website [COVID-19 Updates for the Equestrian Community](#) and in EC's [online statement on COVID-19](#).

As members of the Canadian equestrian community, we empathize with all those who are so deeply affected by this situation and are fully aware of the severe financial implications of a suspension to business operations. EC and the PTSOs are working diligently to understand and plan for the short- and long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the equestrian industry. We are examining and advocating for possible mitigations of financial losses with the appropriate regulatory bodies while prioritizing the health and safety of our community above all else.

EC and PTSOs are making every effort to ensure continuous, thorough and up-to-date [communication concerning the COVID-19 pandemic](#). For the running list of cancelled/postponed clinics and events, click [here](#).

Thank you for your cooperation and engagement as we work diligently to keep our community safe and informed. We are counting on each and every member of the Canadian equestrian community to make responsible decisions based on the information available, the conditions in your geographic area and the recommendations from your local public health authorities.

To the Alberta equine community that are riding outdoors, on your property or trails, you are encouraged to ensure your [AEF membership](#) is current and in good standing, as the insurance that is included will provide you extra peace of mind. Outdoor activity, when coupled with social distancing practices, is good for mental health during these uncertain times.

Stay well,
The Alberta Equestrian Federation