

New York Racing Association Biosecurity

Executive Summary For Horsemen

Biosecurity is a set of preventive measures to include physical barriers and hygiene practices designed to reduce the risks for introduction and transmission of an infectious disease agent.

The objective of this biosecurity toolkit is to provide horsemen with resources to recognize potential disease risks at the racetrack and to develop a biosecurity and infectious disease control plan to protect the health of horses and people living and working at the racetrack.

Role of Horsemen in Biosecurity

Horsemen play a vital role in biosecurity at the racetrack. Horsemen are, for the most part, the individuals who control movement of horses, stabling and management conditions in the barns, as well as training and racing programs. Horsemen should consult with their veterinarians to create an effective biosecurity plan to protect the horses in their stable. The first step is to perform a biosecurity risk assessment for your stable. Once the relative risk factors have been identified, horsemen need to create standard operating procedures (SOPs) to minimize exposure of their horses to infectious disease.

Prior to the occurrence of an outbreak of infectious disease:

- Create and maintain a current a health record for each horse in your stable.
- Monitor temperatures of each horse daily.
- Establish and follow daily routines for observing horses in the barn and while exercising.
- Create vaccination and deworming programs in consultation with your veterinarian.

In the event of an outbreak of infectious disease:

- In the event of a finding of abnormal behavior, appetite or manure output, or clinical signs of disease (e.g.: ataxia, nasal discharge, coughing or diarrhea), consult your veterinarian for diagnosis and treatment and to develop a disease response plan. Different types of infectious disease are managed according to their unique means of disease transmission and relative risk to other horses.
- Isolate of sick horses to whatever degree possible, even if it means simply

placing them at the far end of your barn and outside of the major traffic areas to limit direct horse-to-horse contact.

- Report sick horses to the Chief Examining Veterinarian of the racetrack, particularly if there is multiple horse involvement or if neurologic signs (ataxia, weakness, decreased tail tone or paralysis) are present.
- Handle healthy horses before sick horses. This simple process should be practiced daily and will reduce the chance for transmission of pathogens from sick horses to healthy ones.
- Emphasize the importance of hand washing to all of your employees when moving from horse to horse. Your stable employees will take their direction from you and you must set a good example.
- If a sick horse is removed from your barn, immediately empty the stall of all organic matter, clean and disinfect the stall. See Appendix A: Cleaning and Disinfection of a Vacated Stall. Do not put another horse in that stall until the laboratory and other diagnostic information confirms the cause of illness in the sick horse. Be sure to clean and disinfect the buckets, brushes, rakes, brooms, tack and any other equipment that came into direct contact with the sick horse.
- Keep a Horse Movement Log Book to include movement of individual horses into and out of the stable. Both dates of shipment and destination locations should be recorded.
- Plan horse movements to minimize risk. Make an effort to use horse movement protocols that minimize the opportunity for direct horse-to-horse contact.
- Minimize the risk of bringing an infection home when shipping by making your vaccinations are current, limiting direct horse-to-horse contact at training centers and other racetracks (bring your own buckets) and by cleaning and disinfecting your van or trailer between trips. Disinfectant sprays are well-suited to this purpose.
- Quarantine new horses on arrival to your barn for 2 to 3 weeks, if possible.
- Control public access to your stable and restrict access of all non-essential personnel.
- Control pets and pests. Observe leash laws for dogs and follow regular pest control measures (feed bags in secure containers, covering for hay bales to prevent contamination by bird droppings and use of rodent control services by licensed individuals).
- Communicate your biosecurity plan to all stable employees & visitors and post biosecurity signage where appropriate. It is particularly important for you to advise visitors who also have horses of their own or regularly come in contact with horses that you have biosecurity procedures in place.