



Guidelines for mitigating the risk of **COVID-19 in equestrian establishments**

Supporting Horse, Donkey and
Mule Owners / Keepers during
the Coronavirus pandemic

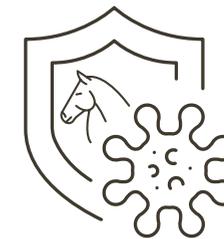


Why put measures in place?

The coronavirus pandemic is having an impact on how we all live our lives. Covid-19 is a highly pathogenic and infectious virus which is transmitted through close contact with a person infected with the virus or by environmental contamination from droplets spread by coughing or sneezing from an infected individual. We cannot predict when or if we will become ill with Covid-19, or if we will have to self-isolate. While horses, donkeys and mules cannot transmit the virus to humans, the environment they live in and increased interaction between people at commercial yards and private stables could increase the risk of the spread of infection. Planning ahead to make sure care is in place for the horses, donkeys or mules in our care is essential to protect their welfare and for our own peace of mind.

The purpose of these guidelines is to outline key areas for horse, donkey and mule owners and keepers to implement to mitigate the risk of Covid-19 within equestrian establishments. The guidelines provide a consensus based on a combination of research and government guidelines.

Covid-19 control measures that should be implemented across equestrian establishments



Hands

Keeping the yard clean and frequent hand washing reduces the risk of transmission of Covid-19:

- Wash / sanitise your hands when you arrive and before you leave the yard
- Regularly wash / sanitise your hands when you are on the yard
- Wash / sanitise your hands between handling different horses and equipment
- In the winter when you may be wearing gloves, wash your hands before and after use, and wash daily to prevent cross-contamination from the environment



Face

Masks are an important part of reducing the spread of Covid-19:

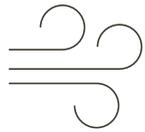
- Wear a facemask in shared and social areas e.g. tack room, American Barn stable blocks, hay barn, feed room
- Wear a mask when you are working with others
- Clean your hands before you put your mask on, as well as before and after you take it off, and after you touch it at any time
- Make sure your mask covers your nose, mouth and chin
- Store your mask in a clean bag when you are not wearing it on the yard to prevent it getting contaminated from the environment



Space

Limiting contact with other people will reduce your risk of becoming infected with Covid-19:

- Wherever possible when you are on the yard, keep 2 metres apart, if this is not possible keep a minimum of 1 metre apart and ideally wear a mask
- Limit your movement around the yard
- Stagger or allocate visiting times for owners and visitors to come to the yard to prevent crowding and increased risk of transmission
- In shared areas e.g. hay barns, American barns, feed stores – have a designated entrance and exit if possible, if not limit the number of people who can enter at any one time



Ventilate

Good natural ventilation can help reduce the spread of Covid-19:

- Open doors and windows to ensure good air flow in barns, stables and social areas
- Identify poorly ventilated areas (these will feel stuffy or smell bad) and avoid / reduce how many people can enter at any one time



Plan / avoid

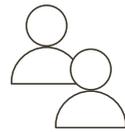
- Try to agree with others time slots to visit the yard to try to minimize contact with others, or visit the yard at times when you know the yard will be quieter



Be aware what you share

Shared equipment and spaces can increase the risk of infection:

- Disinfection protocols should be in place for shared areas and equipment
- Disinfect shared areas and equipment between use e.g. taps, kettle, brushes, wheelbarrows, door handles, tack rooms etc
- Limit the number of surfaces and equipment you touch / use when on the yard
- Avoid entering shared spaces and follow the 2m SPACE guidelines
- Avoid doing other people's horses, donkeys or mules unless absolutely necessary



Working with others

Working or being in close proximity with others can increase your risk of transmission:

- Work alone if you can, if you can't wear a mask
- If you need to pass others, pass back to back or side by side, not face to face
- Avoid shouting and singing as you work as these increase air flow and the risk of transmission
- Establish a workflow around the yard that reduces crowding



Keep it clean

Keeping your stable yard clean can reduce the risk of transmission of the virus from surfaces to you:

- Keep your stable, yard and storage areas clean and dust free
- Clean and disinfect shared areas after use



Visitors

Reducing the number of people of the yard will lower Covid-19 transmission:

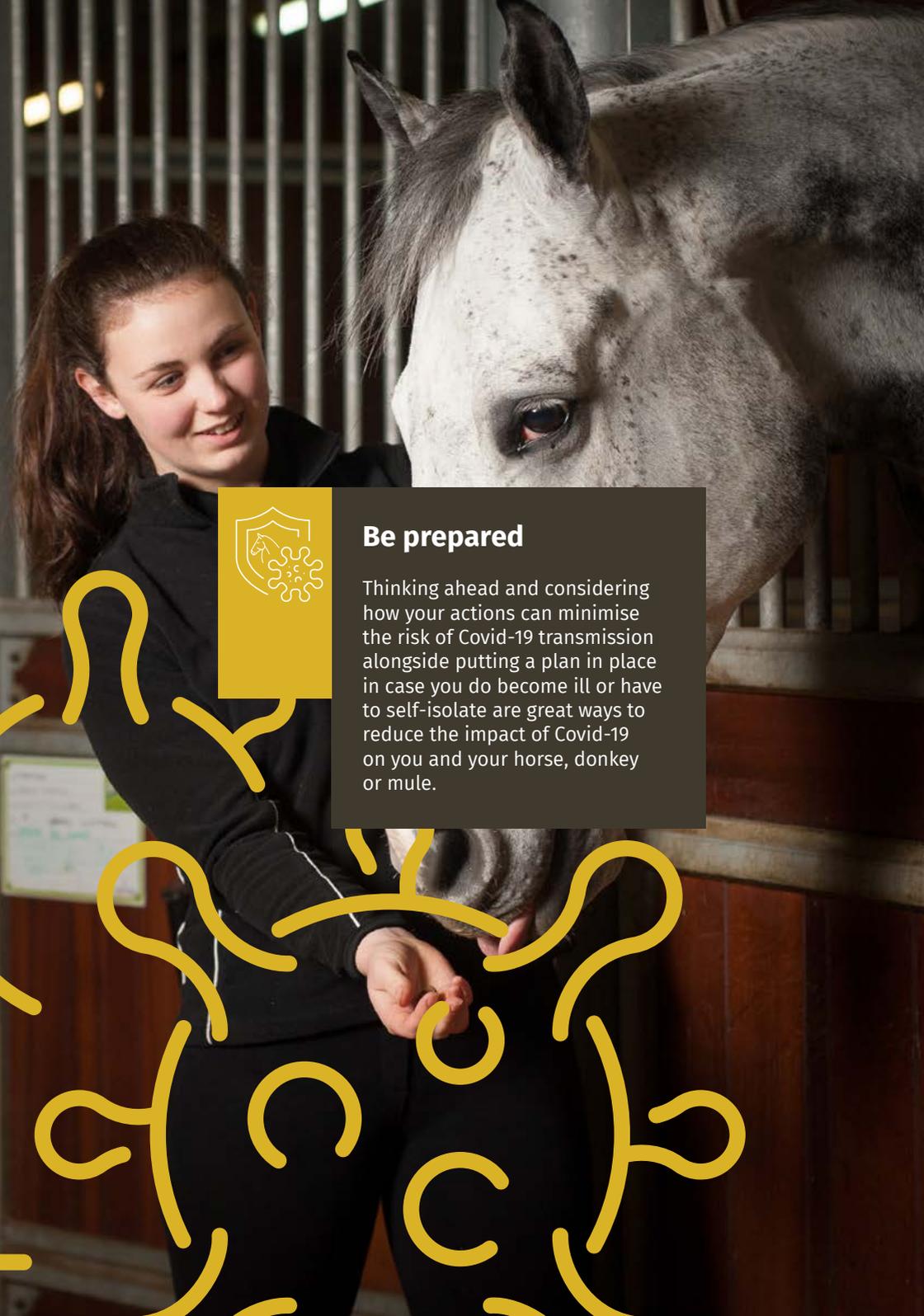
- Avoid unnecessary visitors on the yard
- Ensure visitors are aware of yard guidelines and adhere to them
- Ask visitors to wash / sanitise their hands when entering and leaving the yard, and to wear a mask



Offices and social spaces

- Remember to wear a face mask if you are working or entering yard offices, or when you are in social areas such as kitchens, tack rooms or toilets





Be prepared

Thinking ahead and considering how your actions can minimise the risk of Covid-19 transmission alongside putting a plan in place in case you do become ill or have to self-isolate are great ways to reduce the impact of Covid-19 on you and your horse, donkey or mule.

Risk assessment: objectively risk assess the yard environment and processes to highlight areas where Covid mitigation measures need to be put in place and communicate these to horse, donkey and mule owners

COVID plan: have a Covid plan in place with a buddy or your yard manager / staff, in case you have to self-isolate or become ill and cannot care for your horse, donkey or mule

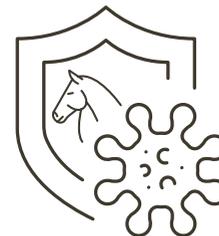
Buddy up: nominate and agree a buddy to care for your horse, donkey or mule in case you are not able to. Your buddy could be a member of staff on your yard or a friend, but they should be an adult and have sufficient equestrian experience to be capable of handling and caring for your horse, donkey or mule without putting them or themselves in any danger.

Stock up: ensure you have sufficient feed and bedding for your horse, donkey or mule to cover a 2 week period in case you have to self-isolate; this will reduce the burden on others if they have to care for your horse, donkey or mule.

Communication: keep in regular contact with each other and the yard owner / manager. Ideally give a copy of your Covid plan to your yard owner / manager so they know what arrangements you have put in place for your horse's, donkey's or mule's care. As a minimum, make sure you have told your yard owner / manager who your Covid buddy is and what they will be responsible for in your absence. You should also inform your vet and farrier etc as soon as possible if you have to use your Covid Plan, so they are aware who your Covid buddy is, in case they need to contact them in your absence.

Key contacts: ensure your yard and Covid buddy knows the contact details for your vet, farrier and you, and your next of kin.

Veterinary professionals: check with your vet, dentist, farrier and other professionals who may visit your yard, to make sure you know about any special arrangements they may have to be able to come onto your yard, so you can be prepared for their visit.



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These guidelines are based on research undertaken by Dr David Marlin, Dr Hayley Randle and Dr Jane Williams exploring UK horse owners experience and concerns during the coronavirus pandemic. Further details are available here: www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/10/10/1862

This document provides guidelines to assist horse owners and stable / livery yard owners. It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure they follow Government advice related to the coronavirus pandemic. None of the contributors take any responsibility for the application of these guidelines by users. Current coronavirus guidance can be found at: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

