

## Press Releases

03/31/2020

### COVID-19 Guidance for Horseback Riding Schools Stables and Boarding Stables

HARTFORD, CT – In addition to implementing the Stay Home, Stay Safe protocols effective on March 23, 2020 at 8:00 p.m. through April 22, 2020; Governor Lamont's [Executive Order 7H](#) required the Department of Economic and Community Development to provide a [guidance document](#) to determine essential businesses.

The Essential Businesses or Nonprofits designated in the guidance are not subject to the in-person restriction set forth in Executive Order 7H. Item 7 *Services Including* contained: "Animal shelters or animal care or management, including boarding, grooming, pet walking and pet sitting" as an essential business.

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg), working in concert with the Connecticut Farm Bureau and the Connecticut Horse Council, recognizes that this is a challenging time for all – both equine boarding facilities and horse owners alike. It is our intent to ensure the health and welfare of animals is met, while mitigating the risk to the people engaged in those tasks. It is prudent for all of us to use common sense as we navigate the COVID-19 crisis. Every equine facility is unique with various capacities, services, and capabilities in providing the care essential to the wellbeing and health of the horses entrusted in their care.

Stables providing full-board services that meet all of the horses' needs may set their own policies about restricting access by owners seeking to visit or ride horses. The Department supports limitations imposed by stable owners. Specific concerns regarding care should be addressed between the horse owner and stable owner/manager.

All stables should set up a schedule of access times to ensure that there are no more than five (5) people at the barn at one time. It is imperative that the principles of social distancing, proper disinfecting, and sanitary practices are maintained. Stables are free to enact additional measures and controls as needed to ensure the safety of all.

*This guidance document cannot cover every single scenario. The following information is meant to clarify what equine activities may continue and which should be discontinued at this time.*

### **Essential Equine Care**

- Providing food, water, proper handling, health care (veterinary and farrier services), and proper housing
- Turnout and exercise necessary to an individual horse

### **Not Essential Equine Care**

- Riding lessons/programs/camps
- Club/organization meetings
- Visits to an equine facility by anyone other than an essential equine caregiver

### **Recommended Practices**

- Maintain the recommended social distancing protocols that include six (6) feet of separation between individuals
  - Limit gatherings to fewer than five (5) people
- Ensure proper handwashing
  - Limit access to and disinfect common areas regularly
  - Avoid sharing equipment and supplies between people
    - Non-porous materials (leather bridles/saddles/halters, nylon halters/lead ropes, gate latches, door handles, spray nozzle) harbor the virus longer than porous materials (cotton lead ropes, saddle pads)
    - Clean communal leather tack daily with tack cleaner
    - Disinfect gate latches, spray nozzles, cross tie snaps, pitchforks, wheelbarrows, and other frequently used items regularly or after contact with personnel
    - Stall door latches, hose ends, light switches and feed scoops should be cleaned and disinfected frequently

- Sporting events are prohibited

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*The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT DoAg) mission is to foster a healthy economic, environmental and social climate for agriculture by developing, promoting, and regulating agricultural businesses; protecting agricultural and aquacultural resources; enforcing laws pertaining to domestic animals; and promoting an understanding among the state's citizens of the diversity of Connecticut agriculture, its cultural heritage, and its contribution to the state's economy. For more information, visit [www.CTGrown.gov](http://www.CTGrown.gov).*