

Horse Death & Euthanasia Procedure



Riding Establishment:

Horse Death

If a horse is found dead, we will take the following actions:

- **Ensure Safety:**
 - Do not approach the horse if there is any suspicion of contagious disease
 - If the death was unexpected or not immediately apparent, isolate horses in neighbouring stables or paddocks to prevent the potential spread of disease
- **Quarantine Area:**
 - If the cause of death is not immediately apparent, if in a stable, close the stable doors and do not allow staff or clients to approach or, if in a paddock, keep other horse away by erecting a temporary fence
- **Contact a Vet:**
 - Contact a veterinarian immediately. They can provide guidance on the next steps and may need to examine the horse to determine the cause of death.
- **Document the Scene:**
 - Before any intervention or removal of the horse, document the scene. Take photographs, if possible, as they may be useful for insurance purposes or any potential investigations.

Euthanasia

Euthanasia is the elective ending of life and it may be required for a variety of reasons – either in an emergency, such as where a horse has suffered a catastrophic injury, or because the horse's quality of life has deteriorated to the point that this is the correct and humane decision.

Where euthanasia must be performed, we will ensure that it is undertaken by a qualified vet, the details of which are on list of Yard emergency contacts. Euthanasia will be performed only with the horse owner's express permission unless it has been deemed necessary to prevent suffering by a qualified vet. Where a horse owner is not present and cannot be contacted, they may have expressed their wishes through an 'End of Life Options' form which will be held with the horse's documents and forms.

Disposal

If a horse dies or must be put down, the horse owner must arrange for disposal. This should be arranged through the veterinary practice, a licensed slaughterman or through a service such as the [Equine End of Life Service](#), [National Fallen Stock Scheme](#) or using the service detailed in the contacts list below.

Notifiable Disease

If the vet believes that the horse has, or suspected of having, a '[notifiable disease](#)', the vet will:

- Immediately contact the local animal health office or national agricultural department.

- Implement biosecurity precautions in accordance with the our Biosecurity Plan.

Passport

Within 30 days of the horse's death, we will return the horse's passport to the PIO that issued it. They will update their records and invalidate or destroy the passport.

Insurance

If the horse is insured, we will confirm whether policy covers euthanasia. The level of cover varies greatly and, in many cases, only a contribution will be made towards the costs involved. The horse owner must meet the rest of the expense. If the horse is being euthanised for non-emergency reasons, we will contact the insurance company before going ahead. For example, if an owner elect's euthanasia for their horse which has a chronic condition, such as arthritis, and the horse does not satisfy the BEVA guidelines, insurance companies can refuse to pay out. There may also be circumstances where the insurance company requests that a post-mortem is completed.

If the horse has been euthanised because of an emergency, we will contact the insurance company as soon as possible afterwards. In an emergency the euthanasia of a horse should never be delayed for insurance purposes.

Records

A 'Horse Euthanasia Record' is to be maintained. This is to detail horses euthanised (name and Unique Equine Life Number (UELN)), the identity of the individual that carried it out the euthanasia and the carcass disposal route. This record must be kept for 36 months from the date of the euthanasia.

Clean and Disinfect

One the horse has been removed, if in a stable, we will clean and disinfect the stable thoroughly in accordance with our Cleaning Procedure.

Useful Contacts:

Role:	
Name:	
Contact no:	
Out of hours no:	
Role:	
Name:	
Contact no:	
Out of hours no:	
Role:	
Name:	
Contact no:	
Out of hours no:	