

Mucking Out Procedure



The following template can be used by Riding Schools, Livery Yards and Riding Establishments and amended to be amended to reflect any features, procedures or layout that are specific to their Yard.

Why Hygiene in a Horse Stable is Important

Good stable hygiene promotes animal health and the well-being of the horses. Clean stables, paddocks, tack and feed rooms, and other yard areas reduces their suitability as a habitat for viruses, bacteria and parasites, and ensuring that pathogens spread less quickly, lowering the risk of illness.

To achieve good stable hygiene, the stable does not have to be cleaned to the last straw. The most important thing is the regular removal of roughage, soiled bedding and droppings that can harbour mites, mould spores or other pathogens and germs. Additionally, if bedding and manure remain too long in a damp environment, they can generate poisonous gas ammonia with its pungent smell. Ammonia can irritate the respiratory tract and mucous membranes of horses. Furthermore, when ammonia meets urine or water (for example, from a water bucket), it forms a strong alkaline solution that can attack hoof horn and skin. Regular horse stable cleaning and a good supply of fresh air counteracts the formation of ammonia.

Stable Cleaning and Disinfection: Cleaning Cycle

This procedure for stable cleaning divides the work into daily, weekly and biannual/annual tasks (including, where required, the disinfecting of stables). Routine daily and weekly tasks will be undertaken by staff within the normal Yard daily schedule and will be allocated by the Yard Manager. Larger tasks involving depth cleaning and disinfecting will be identified in the Yard diary and tasked by the Yard Manager when due.

- **Daily Tasks:** Stables are to be mucked out fully every morning daily and, if occupied during the day, part-mucked out in the afternoon. The following procedure is to be followed:
 - **What You Will Need:**
 - Wheelbarrow
 - Pitchfork
 - Shavings fork
 - Stable broom
 - Work gloves
 - Rubber/work boots
 - **Prepare the Stable:** Before mucking out the stable, ensure that the horse is removed from the stable and secured or removed to grazing or exercise. Remove any feed tubs, hay nets and water buckets.
 - **Prepare Your Equipment.** Assemble your cleaning equipment by the stable door so that you can easily access it. Park your wheelbarrow just outside the stable, facing in the direction that you will wheel it in when you have finished.
 - **Clean the Stable.** How you muck out the stable will depend on the type of bedding that has been laid. If the stable is bedded with straw, use a pitchfork to remove any manure or soiled

straw. Alternatively, if bedded with shavings or sawdust, use a shavings fork to remove the manure and wet bedding. Fork the manure and soiled bedding into the wheelbarrow. As you continue to remove the dirty bedding, scrape any unsoiled bedding to the side and check to ensure there is no soiled bedding underneath. When the wheelbarrow is part-full, empty the content on the designated manure heap. Ensure the manure heap is kept appropriately tidy through proper layering, flattening and squaring of the muck and bedding that is added to the heap.

- **Clean Bedding.** Once the manure and soiled bedding has been removed, spread any remaining clean bedding back over the stable floor. Add fresh bedding to replace any that has been removed. If you are using straw, then add portions of a straw bale as needed. If you are using shavings or sawdust, use the wheelbarrow to transport fresh bedding or bedding bags to the stable. Use your pitchfork to fluff and break up the compact bedding and spread across the stable floor evenly. How thick your stable bedding will depend on the season and the type of stable flooring. A thicker bedding may be used in cold weather. If the stable floor is a thick rubber matting, then the bedding can be made less thick. If it is laid on bare concrete floor, then it is likely that the bedding will need to be thicker to provide extra padding and to absorb urine.
- **Clean Alleys Doorways.** After you have finished cleaning and replacing the bedding in the stable, use your broom to sweep up any manure, straw or shavings that have been dropped in the stable alleys or doorways. Use the shovel to scoop up the spilled materials and toss them into the wheelbarrow or onto the manure heap.
- **Finishing Up.** When you have finished cleaning the stable, alleys and doorways, replace (as necessary) the water bucket cleaned and filled with fresh water. Return haynets and cleaned feed to the feed store. Tidy away the mucking out equipment to avoid any tripping hazards. Wash your hands thoroughly to avoid the risk of animal to human infections.
- **Weekly Tasks:** In addition to the daily chores, the following weekly tasks should be performed:
 - Clean, inspect and disinfect horse buckets and troughs
 - Ensure that drainage channels are clear of compacted bedding
 - Remove cobwebs
 - Inspect the stables for damage (doors, walls, partitions, fixtures and fittings) and report anything found to the Yard Manager
 - Inspect blankets for damage and report anything found to the Yard Manager
- **Biannual/Annual Tasks:** Where stables are used only in the winter months, tasks should be undertaken when the stables are taken out of use for the Summer. Where stables are used all-year, tasks should be undertaken in late-Spring and early-Autumn. The following tasks should be undertaken:
 - Cleaning should ideally take place on a warm day in spring or summer to allow the stable to dry adequately before re-use.
 - Lift any mats, remove buckets, rugs, stable licks, feed holders, equipment and ensure these are cleaned using a suitable stable hygiene cleaning product. Follow the instructions that accompany the item. When cleaning mats, placed in a well-drained area. Remove heavy

debris with a brush first. Wet each mat and leave for a few minutes to help soften any stubborn dirt before cleaning.

- Clean the stable, start from the top and work your way down, apply a stable hygiene wash to walls, doors and floors, and following the instructions that accompany the product. Be careful around painted areas, you may opt for a hose here instead. Clear any accumulated dirt from the upper timber structures, ledges, and partitions that separate each stable
- A pressure cleaner can be used to clean stables and mats. However, pressure cleaners can raise fine mists that can include dust and pathogens. Therefore, if used, respiratory and eye personal protective equipment should be used by staff undertaking the work.