



VETERINARY SERVICES MEMORANDUM NO. 591.72

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Veterinary Services

Washington, DC
20250

TO: VS Management Team (VSMT)

FROM: John R. Clifford
Deputy Administrator

SUBJECT: Approval of Permanent Privately Owned Horse Quarantine Facilities in the United States

I. PURPOSE

This memorandum provides guidelines for Veterinary Services (VS) to inspect and approve permanent privately owned quarantine facilities in the United States for quarantining imported horses.

II. GENERAL

Title 9 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (9 CFR), section 93.308(c), regulates the approval of permanent privately owned quarantine facilities for imported horses. These quarantine facilities must ensure adequate safeguards are in place to monitor the health status of the horses in quarantine, and to prevent the transmission of animal disease or disease agents into, within, or from the facility. VS must inspect and approve a proposed quarantine facility for imported horses before its initial use to ensure the facility is compliant with standards in 9 CFR 93.308. VS must re-inspect an approved facility on an annual basis to ensure it is in good repair and continues to meet all relevant standards associated with a compliance agreement.

The quarantine facility must provide the necessary level of biosecurity for holding horses in an indoor, vector-proof environment before the animals' entry (release) into the United States. Quarantine services associated with such facilities include testing or observation for regulated diseases, other livestock diseases exotic to the United States, and any other specified diseases.

Applications for quarantine facilities may not be approved solely to import the facility operators' horses. The operator or person responsibly connected with the business of the quarantine facility cannot act as a paid agent (broker) for importing or subsequently selling imported horses. A person is deemed to be responsibly connected with the business if he or she has an ownership, mortgage, or lease interest in the facility's physical plant; is a partner, officer, director, holder, or owner of 10 percent or more of its voting stock; or is an employee in a managerial or executive capacity. Any request to waive this requirement must be submitted to VS in writing.



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III. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

- A. An applicant (the owner or operator) seeking approval of a quarantine facility must submit a written application to the National Center for Import and Export (NCIE), VS, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, 4700 River Road, Unit 39, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231. Applicants should submit requests for approval to NCIE at least 120 days before applying for local building permits.
- B. The application must include:
 1. The applicant's full name and mailing address
 2. The facility's location and street address
 3. Blueprints or other technical drawings for the facility
 4. A description of the financial resources available for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the facility
 5. The average and maximum number of horses to be quarantined
 6. Expected frequency of shipments to the quarantine facility
 7. A contingency plan for the possible necropsy and disposal of horses held in the facility that die or must be euthanized
- C. Procedure for VS approval of facilities
 1. NCIE will review the initial application. If the application is complete, NCIE will contact the Regional Import-Export Coordinator (RIEC) and the Area Veterinarian in Charge (AVIC) for that facility's State to consult on the feasibility of the request.
 2. Regional Management, through the RIEC, must determine if sufficient VS personnel would be available to provide oversight of the proposed facility.
 3. If NCIE and the Region determine that an application merits further consideration, the applicant must enter into a service agreement with the AVIC to cover costs associated with further evaluation of the application and facility. User fees for these services are listed in 9CFR 130.30.
 4. NCIE will inform the applicant in writing of the result of the application review.

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5. The AVIC or VS designee must inspect the facility to determine compliance with 9 CFR 93.308, this memorandum's criteria, and the accompanying checklist.
 - a. The facility must meet any additional requirements imposed by the Administrator to ensure that the quarantine of horses will be adequate to determine their health status and prevent the transmission of livestock diseases into, within, and from the facility.
 - b. The Area Office will forward the inspection report to the Regional Office and NCIE for concurrence, then notify the operator in writing of the approval, with copies to the Regional Office and NCIE.
6. After VS has approved the facility, the applicant and VS must enter into a compliance agreement before horses can enter the facility. The operator and the AVIC will sign the compliance agreement.
7. After an initial approval has been granted, applicants must submit requests for future quarantines to their State AVIC.

IV. PHYSICAL PLANT REQUIREMENTS

A. Location

1. The facility must be located at a site approved by the AVIC. The AVIC must approve in advance the specific routes for moving horses to the facility from the port of arrival in the United States. These routes must not pose a risk of disease exposure to the domestic animal population.
2. The facility must be located within a reasonable proximity to a port approved by VS for importing horses. A reasonable proximity should not exceed 2 hours driving time under routine circumstances.

B. Construction. The facility must be constructed adequately and maintained in good repair. It must be designed to prevent quarantined animals from escaping and prevent animals outside the facility from entering.

1. A security fence that can be locked must surround the facility. The fence must be a minimum of 8 feet high to prevent unauthorized people or animals from entering and quarantined horses from escaping. Fencing should also prevent small animals from entering by crawling underneath.

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2. The quarantine area must be located inside a secure, self-contained building that can be locked. Access to horse holding areas (such as stalls, pens, etc.) must be from within the building only.
3. The facility may have either:
 - a. Separate loading docks for receiving horses and general use, or
 - b. A multi-use dock that may be used for both receiving and general use, but which must be cleaned and disinfected after each shipment. The operator must maintain a disinfection log for multi-use docks.
4. Each lot of horses (i.e., animals arriving as a single shipment) must be held separately. Physical barriers that prevent contact with other lots of horses and their discharges must be used to keep lots separate.
5. Separate isolation stalls must be available for horses exhibiting signs of illness.
6. The facility must provide VS with:
 - a. Adequate office space for VS personnel that can be locked
 - b. Examination space to safely restrain horses and collect test samples
 - c. A refrigerator and freezer to store samples
7. The facility must have adequate storage for supplies and equipment needed for the quarantine.
 - a. Feed and bedding must be stored in a separate area to prevent contamination.
 - b. There must be secure separate storage for pesticides and medical or other biological supplies.
 - c. Each lot-holding area should have its own separate storage space.
8. The facility should contain designated work areas for repairing equipment and cleaning and disinfecting equipment.

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9. The facility must maintain adequate feed and watering equipment for all animals.
10. Windows and other openings must be double-screened with a mesh size sufficient to prevent insects and other vectors of livestock diseases from entering or leaving the facility. The interior and exterior screens must be separated by a width of at least 3 inches.
11. The facility's flooring must be skid resistant and provide adequate drainage. All floors and walls that have contact with horses and their excrement or discharges must be impervious to moisture and able to withstand repeated cleaning and disinfecting without deteriorating. Floor and wall surfaces must be free of sharp edges that could injure horses.
12. Horse stalls must be of sufficient size to allow each animal to make normal postural adjustments and provide adequate freedom of movement.
13. Aisles for moving horses must be wide enough to prevent horses in facing stalls from physically contacting horses in access aisles and allow safe movement, including adequate space for horses to turn around.
14. Indoor heating and ventilation systems should control the ambient temperature, humidity, and odors at safe levels for horses and humans.
 - a. Air supplied to the quarantine area must not be recirculated or re-used for other ventilation needs.
 - b. Air handling systems for lot holding areas must be separate from air handling systems for other areas of the facility.
 - c. If the facility includes more than one horse holding area, the air handling system(s) must ensure no cross-contamination of air between separate lots.
15. Lighting should be adequate throughout the facility to visually inspect horses.
16. A fire alarm and voice communication system should be in both quarantine and nonquarantine areas such as break rooms, offices, etc.
17. There must be a dedicated necropsy area (either on-site or off-site) with an autoclave, freezer, hot and cold running water, drainage, and adequate storage for equipment.

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18. Showers must be located at the entrance of each quarantine area and necropsy area.
 - a. There must be clothes storage and changing areas at each shower.
 - b. This must include a receptacle to collect clothing worn in a quarantine area.
19. Both the nonquarantine and quarantine areas must have permanent restrooms.
20. The quarantine facility must have a laundry.

C. Sanitation

1. There must be adequate equipment and supplies to maintain the facility in a clean and sanitary condition and to control pests.
2. There must be a stock of disinfectant authorized in 9 CFR 71.10 (or otherwise authorized by VS) sufficient to disinfect the entire facility.
3. Each lot must have separate supplies and equipment for sanitation and pest control.
4. The facility must have an adequate supply of potable water for all watering and cleaning needs and must maintain an emergency supply of water.
5. The facility must be able to dispose of waste (including manure, urine, and bedding) by incineration or public sewer. Waste must be handled as regulated garbage while horses are in quarantine.
 - a. The facility must handle waste materials adequately to minimize spoilage and attracting pests.
 - b. If the facility includes an incinerator, the incinerator must be located in a separate building.
 - c. A VS representative must have direct oversight of any incineration at local sites away from the facility.
 - d. Waste may be held on site until all horses have completed quarantine, then disposed of as domestic waste.

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6. The AVIC must approve the facility's plan to dispose of any carcasses of animals that die during quarantine to prevent disease spread.
7. The facility must be able to control surface drainage and effluent into, within, and from the facility to prevent the spread of disease. If more than one lot is present in the quarantine facility, each holding area must have a separate drainage system to prevent cross-contamination of lots.
8. Before and after each use of the facility, the AVIC must re-inspect the facility to verify the operator has cleaned and disinfected it adequately to ensure compliance with quarantine guidelines.

D. Security

1. The facility and security fence are kept locked and secure.
2. The facility displays easily visible signs at all entrances designating it as a quarantine area that prohibits entry of visitors or other unauthorized personnel.
3. The operator provides a telephone number that VS can use for contact at any time.
4. In the event of any security or biosecurity breaches VS becomes aware of, VS is authorized to place seals on entrances or exits to ensure security. If anyone other than a VS representative breaks the seals, the facility operator must notify VS immediately. A VS representative must then immediately account for all horses in the facility.
5. If a communicable disease is diagnosed in the quarantined horses, the Regional Director, AVIC, and NCIE may require that a bonded security company provide coverage to ensure the security of the facility.
6. The facility must either be guarded at all times by a bonded security company, or have an Underwriters Laboratory-approved silent electronic security system that contacts a remote monitoring site staffed by local police or bonded security monitoring personnel.
 - a. If an electronic security system is used, the operator must provide written instructions to the bonded monitoring agency stating that the local police and a VS representative must both be notified if the alarm is triggered.

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- b. The operator must immediately report any breaks or suspected breaks in security to the AVIC.

V. OPERATING PROCEDURES

VS representatives must be physically present to monitor all import quarantine operations. This includes but is not limited to inspecting arriving horses, identifying the horse and its accompanying import certification, required serologic testing, examining horses for external parasites and screwworms, and monitoring routine diagnostic tests. VS representatives may also perform the services required by the compliance agreement. VS representatives do not need to be physically present during routine facility operations.

The facility must follow the procedures below at all times. In addition to direct observation and spot-checking procedures to verify compliance, VS may ask to review log books and standard operating procedures.

A. Personnel

1. The operator must provide adequate personnel to maintain the facility and provide for proper care and feeding of the horses.
2. The operator must provide VS with an updated list of names and current addresses of all personnel with access to the facility.
3. All personnel with access must sign an agreement stipulating they will follow the terms of the compliance agreement and any related instructions from VS representatives pertaining to quarantine operations.

B. Authorized access

1. Only the facility owner or operator may grant access to the facility to VS representatives and others specifically authorized to work at the facility.
2. All approved personnel, except veterinary practitioners providing emergency care, must sign an affidavit before entering the quarantine area stating they will not have contact with any horses outside the quarantine facility during the quarantine period until the horses under quarantine are released for entry into the United States. Permanent employees must sign a new affidavit annually.

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C. Sanitary practices

1. All equipment must be dedicated to the quarantine facility or to a specific area within the facility.
2. All equipment in the facility or its specific areas must be cleaned and disinfected before use.
3. Vehicles must be cleaned and disinfected before entering or leaving the area within the security fence or any quarantine area.
4. The facility loading docks must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use.
5. Any area that has held quarantined horses must be cleaned and disinfected after each use and before a new lot may enter the area.
6. The operator must provide clean protective clothing and footwear for anyone who has been granted access to the facility, and those protective items must be available to personnel before they enter the quarantine area.
7. The operator is responsible for the proper cleaning and disposal of soiled and contaminated clothing used in the facility.
8. Anyone granted access to the quarantine area must:
 - a. Shower before entering and leaving a lot-holding or quarantine area and when leaving the necropsy area
 - b. Wear the clean protective work clothing and footwear provided
 - c. Wear disposable gloves when handling sick animals
 - d. Change protective clothing, footwear, and gloves when they are soiled or contaminated
 - e. Limit contact to only one lot of animals
9. Direct VS supervision of each cleaning and disinfection is not required once the operator has demonstrated how the procedures will be carried out and VS has verified those procedures.

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D. Handling of horses in quarantine

1. Each lot of imported horses must be placed in the facility on an “all-in, all-out” basis (i.e., none of the horses from a single lot can leave until all horses in that lot have satisfied the quarantine requirements).
2. The facility must provide sufficient feed and bedding for the horses.
 - a. Feed and bedding must be vermin-proof, fresh, and unspoiled.
 - b. *Feed and bedding must not originate from a region stipulated in 9 CFR 72 listed as affected with fever ticks.*
3. During quarantine, breeding the horses, including collecting semen, is prohibited.
4. Vaccinating horses prior to the quarantine’s completion is prohibited.
5. VS will subject quarantined horses to whatever tests and procedures deemed necessary to ensure they are free of communicable livestock diseases.
6. The operator must report to VS immediately any suspected illness or death of quarantined horses, and should notify VS as soon as possible regarding any other emergency.
7. Quarantined horses requiring specialized medical attention or necropsy may be moved to another quarantine site when authorized by VS. VS must approve in advance any movement of quarantined horses.

E. Recordkeeping

1. The operator must record in a daily log all personnel moving to and from the facility.
2. Signed affidavits stating approved personnel will not have contact with any horses outside the quarantine facility during the quarantine period until the horses under quarantine are released for entry into the United States must be retained at the facility for VS’ review.
3. *The operator must keep all records related to the quarantine for at least 2 years after the release of the animals.*

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4. The operator must make those records available to VS upon request.

VI. NONCOMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS

If VS determines at any point in the approval process that the facility does not comply with 9 CFR 93.308 or the provisions of this memorandum, VS may deny, suspend, or revoke approval until the facility applies appropriate remedial measures. VS personnel overseeing a facility should consult with the AVIC for issues of noncompliance. The AVIC will contact the RIEC, who will in turn contact NCIE. The AVIC, Regional management, and NCIE will determine whether denial, suspension, or revocation of approval is appropriate. The AVIC will issue denial-of-approval letters. Revocation or suspension of approval for existing facilities must be coordinated through the VS Management Team.

VII. VARIANCE TO REQUIREMENTS

Quarantine operators wishing to request any variance to these requirements must make that request in writing to VS through NCIE at least 30 days before horses arrive at the facility.

Attachment: Checklist for U.S. Privately Owned Equine Quarantine Facilities

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Checklist for Permanent Privately Owned Equine Quarantine Facilities

Name of Quarantine facility _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____

State _____ **ZIP** _____

Center Owner/Manager _____

Phone _____

Fax _____ **Email** _____

Inspecting Veterinarian (VS) _____

Inspection Date _____

Inspection Type: **Initial** _____ **Re-inspection** _____

Physical plant requirements for equine quarantine facilities

Location

- The facility's site is not likely to result in transmitting communicable disease to domestic horses.
- Route for moving equines from the port of arrival to the facility is not likely to result in transmitting communicable disease to domestic horses.
- The facility is located within 2 hours drive of the port of entry.
- Space is adequate for loading.

Construction

- The quarantine is in a secure and self-contained building.
- The facility is maintained in good repair and is designed to prevent the escape of quarantined animals.
- Either the facility has separate loading docks for receiving and loading animals and for general use, or the docks are cleaned and disinfected after each shipment.
- The facility is surrounded by perimeter fencing at least 8 feet high to prevent unauthorized persons or animals from entering or the quarantined horses escaping.
- If the facility can hold more than one lot of equines, the lots are separated by physical barriers that prevent contact with another lot of equines or their discharges, and there is no cross contamination of air between separate lot holding areas.

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- The facility has adequate, lockable office space for use by Veterinary Services personnel.
- The facility has adequate storage for supplies and equipment needed for the quarantine.
- The facility has adequate examination space for horses' safe restraint and sample collection.
- The facility has a refrigerator-freezer available for sample storage.
- Feed and bedding are stored in a separate area to prevent contamination.
- The facility has secure separate storage for pesticides and medical or biological supplies.
- The facility contains work areas for repairing equipment and for cleaning and disinfecting equipment.
- Windows and other openings are double-screened with screens separated by at least 3 inches to prevent insects and other vectors of livestock disease from entering or exiting.
- Each entryway into the quarantine is equipped with solid, self-closing double doors.
- Floors are skid resistant.
- Drainage is adequate.
- Surfaces that may come in contact with horses or their excrement or discharges are impervious to moisture and able to withstand frequent cleaning and disinfecting.
- Surfaces that will not come in contact with horses or their excrement or discharges can withstand cleaning and disinfecting between shipments.
- The heating and ventilation system controls the ambient temperature and humidity and keeps odors at safe levels for the health of equines in quarantine.
- Air from the quarantine area is not recirculated into other areas of the facility.
- Lighting is adequate throughout the facility.
- Stalls are large enough to allow each animal to move freely.
- Aisles are wide enough to prevent horses in facing stalls from physically contacting horses in access aisles and allow safe movement, including adequate space for horses to turn around.
- Isolation stalls are available to house any horse exhibiting signs of disease.
- Fire alarm and voice communication systems are in both the quarantine and nonquarantine areas.
- The necropsy area has an autoclave, freezer, hot and cold running water, drainage, and adequate storage for equipment. (If there is no on-site necropsy area, skip this question and ensure an appropriate alternate necropsy area is approved off site as per 9 CFR 93.308; describe this facility in your notes.)
- Each lot-holding area has separate storage space.
- Showers are located at the entrance to the quarantine area and necropsy area.
- Permanent restrooms are in both the nonquarantine and quarantine areas.

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- A laundry is in the facility.

Sanitation

- There is adequate equipment and supplies to maintain the facility in a clean and sanitary condition and control pests.
- There is a stock of disinfectant (authorized in 9 CFR 71.10) sufficient to disinfect the entire facility.
- There are separate supplies and equipment for each lot-holding area.
- There is a supply of potable water for cleaning.
- The facility can dispose of waste including manure, urine, and bedding by incineration or public sewer during quarantine.
- The facility manages waste materials to minimize spoilage and pest attraction.
- The AVIC has approved arrangements for disposing of the entire lot if the need arises.
- The facility is capable of controlling surface drainage and effluent into, within, and from the facility to prevent the spread of disease.
- Each holding area has a separate drainage system to prevent cross-contamination of lots.

Security

- The facilities and premises are kept locked and secure when equines are in quarantine.
- Signs are displayed on the premises and in the quarantine area indicating that the facility is a quarantine area and no visitors are allowed.
- The facility operator provides VS with a phone number for contacting the facility.
- The facility has a system in place that ensures that a bonded security company will guard the facility at all times, or that a silent-type electronic security system is installed, functional, and coordinated with the local police.

Operating procedures for equine quarantine facilities

Personnel

- There are adequate personnel to maintain the facility and provide proper care and feeding of equines.
- The operator has provided VS with a current list of names and addresses of personnel with access to the facility.
- The operator has provided VS with signed statements from personnel with access to the facility.
- Operators record daily in a log each person's entry into and exit from the facility.

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Authorized Access

- The facility has a system in place that grants access only to VS representatives and others authorized to work at the facility.
- The operator has provided VS with contact information for accredited veterinarians providing emergency services for sick horses.

Sanitary Practices

- The facility has a system in place that ensures all equipment is cleaned and disinfected before use in the quarantine area and is dedicated to the quarantine.
- The facility has a system in place that ensures vehicles are cleaned and disinfected before entering or leaving the quarantine area.
- The facility has a system in place to ensure loading docks are cleaned and disinfected before being used for equines, feed, and bedding in the quarantine area.
- The operator maintains a disinfection log for multi-use docks.

Sanitation

- The facility has a system in place that ensures the quarantine facility will be cleaned and disinfected after use and before a new lot of equines enters the quarantine facility.
- The facility has a system in place that ensures anyone granted access to the quarantine area:
 - Wears clean protective work clothing and footwear when entering the quarantine area.
 - Wears disposable gloves when handling sick animals.
 - Changes protective clothing, footwear, and gloves when the items become soiled or contaminated.
 - Will not have contact with any horses outside the quarantine facility during the quarantine period until the horses under quarantine are released for entry into the United States

Additional Sanitary Requirements

- The facility has a system in place that requires personnel to shower when they leave the quarantine area or necropsy area or before they enter a lot-holding area.
- The facility prohibits personnel from having contact with more than one lot of animals while in the quarantine area.

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- The facility provides a supply of clean protective clothing and footwear for use in quarantine.
- The facility makes an area available for cleaning, washing, and disposing of soiled and contaminated clothing used in the quarantine facility.

Handling of Equines in Quarantine Facilities

- There is sufficient fresh and unspoiled feed and bedding, kept in vermin-proof storage, available for the equines.
- Feed and bedding is from a region approved by VS.
- There is a regular supply of potable water, and an emergency supply of water, for all equines in quarantine.
- The facility has a system in place that ensures equines in quarantine are monitored to determine they are free of communicable livestock diseases.
- The facility has a plan in place for handling quarantined horses that may require specialized medical attention or relocation to a hospital.

Recordkeeping for Equine Quarantine Facilities

- The facility has a system in place that ensures all records will be maintained and available to VS for at least 2 years after the release date of the horses.

___ Yes ___ No I recommend approval of this facility.

Signature: _____
Inspector

Signature: _____
Area Veterinarian in Charge

Date: _____

Date: _____