



USDA APHIS Veterinary Services Requirements for Horses Imported Under Contagious Equine Metritis Waiver for a Special Event

Contagious equine metritis (CEM) is a venereal disease of horses caused by the bacteria *Taylorella equigenitalis*. The United States considers CEM a foreign animal disease (not present in this country). Intact horses over 731 days of age seeking permanent entry into the United States that reside in countries APHIS considers CEM-affected within the 12 months prior to export must undergo CEM quarantine and testing as part of the import process. However, Title 9 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 93.301(f) permits horses from CEM-affected countries to temporarily import into the United States for competition purposes for up to 90 days without having to complete CEM quarantine and testing upon arrival (generally referred to as a CEM waiver). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS) or designated USDA Category II Accredited Veterinarian (AV) must directly monitor all CEM waiver horses during the entirety of their stay in the United States.

This document outlines the standards for APHIS/Vs approval to house and monitor CEM waiver horses during competitions (hereafter referred to as equine special events). Event coordinators and AVs must review these requirements and present a written plan to APHIS/Vs Port Services Equine Special Events Incident Management Team (equine.special.events@usda.gov) detailing how they will meet these requirements. APHIS/Vs will evaluate the plan based on the guidelines presented in this document. If the plan meets requirements, APHIS/Vs will formalize it in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be signed by the event coordinator, the AV (if applicable), and the APHIS/Vs Port Services Director. APHIS/Vs will not issue import permits for CEM waiver horses without a signed agreement.

Definitions

- Approved clinic: A veterinary clinic that APHIS/Vs has inspected and found to meet the requirements to hold CEM waiver horses.
- Approved CEM facility: A structure approved by APHIS/Vs to serve as a temporary CEM isolation facility for a horse or group of horses. An approved facility typically consists of all or part of a stable and may include a turnout area.
- Authorized designee: Qualified individual who has completed training in CEM monitoring and to whom the AV formally designates responsibility for direct monitoring of CEM waiver horses, as specified in the CEM monitoring plan.
- Authorized visitor: Individuals authorized to enter the designated area after having read and signed the CEM waiver acknowledgement form (see Appendix 1 for sample form).

Category II Accredited Veterinarian (AV): A veterinarian authorized by APHIS/VS to perform accredited duties described in 9 CFR 161.1(g)(2) on both [Category I](#) and [Category II animals](#).

- CEM waiver horses: Mares and stallions over 731 days of age imported into the United States for up to 90 days to compete in specified events in accordance with 9 CFR 93.301(f)(3-12).
- Closed hours: Hours specified in the event MOU when the CEM waiver horses may not be removed from the designated area.
- Designated area: The area outlined and approved in the MOU to serve as the temporary CEM isolation facility. The designated area may be a barn, a group of barns, a combination of barn and exercise area, or a section within a barn.
- Direct monitoring: The AV or their authorized designee is within eyesight of the CEM waiver horse(s).
- Egregious: Extreme violations of the requirements or actions outlined in this document and specified in the MOU that threaten the health and safety of other horses.
- Event coordinator: Individual or entity specified in the event MOU as responsible for organizing the equine special event and providing the facilities for CEM waiver horses.
- Event grounds: All areas where the CEM waiver horses will be competing, exercised, walked, rested, and/or stabled.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): A legal agreement between APHIS/VS, the event coordinator, and the AV (if applicable) responsible for monitoring the CEM waiver horses.
- Open hours: Hours specified in the event MOU when the CEM waiver horses may be removed from the designated area.
- Specified event: A competition or group of competitions for which CEM waiver horses temporarily enter the United States to compete.
- Verification activities (aka spot checks): Actions performed by APHIS/VS to verify that the requirements of the MOU are met and that the CEM monitoring plan provided by the AV is being implemented as written.

General Provisions

1. CEM waiver horses are not permitted to stay in the United States for more than 90 days. To be eligible for permanent entry, they must complete CEM testing and quarantine at an approved State CEM quarantine facility.
2. CEM waiver horses must be under CEM monitoring until exported from United States.
3. CEM waiver horses may not undergo any genital examinations or cleanings.

4. CEM waiver horses must be moved within the United States in accordance with the itinerary and transport methods specified in the APHIS/VS import permit.
5. CEM waiver horses must be kept in a stall separated from other horses by an empty stall, an open area across which horses cannot touch each other, or a solid wall at least 8 feet (2.4 meters) high, except when competing, performing, exercising, or being exhibited.
6. CEM waiver horses may not be used for breeding purposes/germplasm collection or have the opportunity for sexual contact with other horses, and may not undergo any genital examinations or manipulations, including cleaning.
7. The event coordinator and AV (if applicable) must enter into a MOU with APHIS/VS that details the roles and responsibilities of each party with regard to CEM monitoring.
8. The event coordinator and AV (if applicable) must work with APHIS/VS to ensure all facilities, areas, and plans specified in this document are approved and the MOU is fully signed prior to the permitting and arrival of CEM waiver horses. APHIS/VS will not issue import permits for CEM waiver horses until these elements are in place.
9. APHIS/VS inspection, approval and oversight activities are subject to user fees pursuant to [9 CFR 130](#) (see also [Veterinary Services Import/Export User Fees](#)).

Facility Requirements

The cooperator is responsible for ensuring there are one or more approved CEM facilities on the event grounds to house the CEM waiver horses during the course of the equine special event.

The cooperator is responsible for working with the exporter to ensure the stabling arrangements for the event do not negatively impact any requirements for exporting horses after the event(s).

The cooperator must also identify a veterinary clinic and work with APHIS to ensure that the clinic is approved to accept CEM waiver horses. All approved CEM facilities and the approved clinic must be specified in the MOU. APHIS/VS must inspect and approve each proposed CEM facility, as well as the proposed clinic, prior to signing the MOU.

An approved CEM facility:

1. Must be located within a designated area on the event grounds.
2. May consist of an entire stable (all stalls) or a grouping of stalls within a stable.
3. May include a turnout area for individual use by horses in the same designated area.
4. May house (a) CEM waiver horses and geldings originating from one or more countries; **or** (b) CEM waiver horses imported from a single country with geldings from the same country; **or** (c) CEM waiver horses imported from multiple countries with geldings from the same countries or countries with like health status. **U.S. domestic horses may not be stabled in an approved CEM facility.**
5. May not be used for equine breeding purposes, germplasm collection, or any genital examinations or manipulations (including cleaning) while under the MOU.

6. Must be clearly identified as a CEM isolation area by posted signs at all entrances, which explicitly indicate that entry of unauthorized personnel is prohibited.
7. Must provide stalls with impermeable surfaces that can be thoroughly and repeatedly cleaned and disinfected without deterioration and are of structurally sound and sturdy design to safely contain equines. Stalls must have solid walls at least 8 feet (2.4 meters) high.
8. Must maintain aisles for moving horses that 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.
9. Must provide adequate lighting, space, and flooring throughout to safely inspect horses.
 - a. Skid resistant flooring
 - b. Floors and wall surfaces free of sharp edges that could injure equines or humans
 - c. Stalls of sufficient size to allow each animal to make normal postural adjustments and provide adequate freedom of movement for horses and humans
10. Must provide a separate isolation stall for horses exhibiting signs of illness that prevents direct and indirect contact with other horses in the designated area.
11. Must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each use. If the facility will hold consecutive groups of CEM waiver horses competing in different disciplines or events, it must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between groups. All organic waste material must be removed and the entire facility thoroughly disinfected in accordance with APHIS/VS requirements, using an approved disinfectant as per [9 CFR 71.10](#) and the [APHIS approved disinfectant](#) webpage, under direct APHIS/VS oversight.
12. If the approved CEM facility consists of a grouping of stalls within a larger stable area, the designated stalls must be separated from the rest of the stable by an empty stall, an open area across which horses cannot touch each other, or a solid wall at least 8 feet (2.4 meters) high.
13. In the event that APHIS/VS determines an approved CEM facility is noncompliant with any of the above provisions during the course of an event, the cooperator must provide APHIS/VS with a corrective action plan within 2 hours, including but not limited to proposing modifications to achieve compliance.

An approved clinic must have standard procedures in place to ensure that:

1. All employees have read and understand the facility requirements as outlined by the MOU and this SOP.
2. CEM waiver horses are isolated from other horses on the property
3. Access is restricted to only trained clinic personnel and approved visitors

4. Cross contamination of equipment and personnel is prevented
5. Effluence is controlled to prevent contact with other horses

Designated Area Requirements

The cooperator is responsible for ensuring all approved CEM facilities are within a designated area on the event grounds. A designated area may encompass a single approved CEM facility (e.g., entire stable or group of stalls within a stable) or several approved CEM facilities. Each configuration may include a turnout area. The cooperator may request more than one designated area on the event grounds. The designated area(s) will be described in the MOU. APHIS/VS must inspect and approve the designated area(s) prior to the arrival of CEM waiver horses.

An approved designated area is:

1. Surrounded by a physical barrier that can be secured against unauthorized access.
 - a. The perimeter must be of sufficient height and design, as determined by APHIS/VS, to prevent the unauthorized entry of people and animals, in addition to preventing the escape and/or unauthorized removal of CEM waiver horses. The perimeter must be maintained such that domestic horses cannot come within 12 feet of the designated area, including the turnout.
 - b. If a distinct security perimeter is not possible, APHIS/VS or the AV will seal the CEM waiver horses into the approved CEM facility and/or individual stalls during closed hours, as described in the MOU.
2. Subject to a security plan that restricts access to authorized visitors and authorized designees only. APHIS/VS will approve the plan as part of the inspection and approval process, prior to signing the MOU. APHIS/VS must approve any modifications to the plan prior to enactment. At a minimum, the security plan must contain provisions for:
 - a. Credentialling all individuals authorized to enter the designated area
 - b. Securing all access points
 - c. Logging individual entries and exits at all access points (horses and people)
 - d. Securing the perimeter during closed hours to prevent exit of CEM waiver horses
3. Clearly identified throughout the event as a CEM isolation area by posted signs at all entrances, which explicitly indicate entry of unauthorized personnel is prohibited.
4. In the event that the designated area is found to be noncompliant during the course of an event, the cooperator must provide APHIS/VS with a corrective action plan within 2 hours, including but not limited to proposing modifications to achieve compliance.

CEM Monitoring Plan

The entity directly responsible for CEM monitoring (APHIS/VS or AV), in conjunction with the cooperator as necessary, must develop a written CEM monitoring plan that, at a minimum, contains provisions to ensure:

1. Each approved CEM facility and designated area is clearly marked.
2. The security plan is effectively implemented.
3. Each CEM waiver horse is assigned a unique identification (ID) number.
4. A list of all CEM waiver horses and their unique ID numbers is provided to APHIS/VS and the individual(s) responsible for CEM monitoring.
5. The stall assigned to a CEM waiver horse is clearly marked with its unique ID number.
6. Each CEM waiver horse is clearly marked with its unique ID number whenever removed from its stall. This number is logged on entry and exit of the designated area. The ID number must be easily visible at all times when the horse is outside the designated area.
7. CEM waiver horses remain in the assigned designated area except when competing, performing, exercising, or being exhibited.
8. No U.S. domestic horses enter the designated area.
9. No breeding or germplasm collection, reproductive examinations, or genital manipulation (including cleaning) of CEM waiver horses occurs on the event grounds.
10. Equipment used on CEM waiver horses is cleaned and disinfected under the direct oversight of the AV or their authorized designee prior to being removed from the designated area.
11. All organic waste material is removed and the equipment thoroughly disinfected in accordance with APHIS/VS requirements using an APHIS/VS [approved disinfectant](#), under direct oversight of the AV or their authorized designee.
12. CEM waiver horses are only removed from the designated area during open hours. In the event that an effective security perimeter cannot be established, APHIS/VS or the AV will seal the CEM waiver horses into the approved CEM facility and/or individual stalls during closed hours. Seals must contain a unique identifier. Only APHIS/VS or the AV may break the seals.
13. APHIS/VS or the AV will seal the CEM waiver horses into the approved CEM facility and/or individual stalls during closed hours.
14. No CEM waiver horses are removed from the designated area during closed hours. Authorized visitors may access the designated area as per the security plan.

15. CEM waiver horses are directly monitored by the responsible entity or designee whenever removed from the designated area to ensure there is no direct contact with U.S. domestic horses and no sharing of equipment.

AV Responsibilities

In accordance with 9 CFR 93.301(f)(5), APHIS/VS will directly monitor CEM waiver horses unless the cooperator requests to delegate primary responsibility for monitoring to an AV, with APHIS/VS verifying the process. The AV is then responsible for developing the monitoring plan and providing it to APHIS/VS for consideration and approval. APHIS/VS will evaluate the plan based on the guidelines presented in this document and must approve the plan prior to facility approval, MOU endorsement, and issuance of import permits. Once approved, APHIS/VS will include the monitoring plan in the MOU as an addendum.

1. The AV is responsible for ensuring the monitoring plan is effectively implemented.
2. The AV may delegate direct monitoring responsibilities to an authorized designee.
 - a. Authorized designees must have some professional knowledge of horses, CEM, and understand the monitoring responsibilities. Examples include veterinary technicians, veterinary assistants, veterinary students, and/or stewards associated with the event.
 - b. The AV will ensure all authorized designees have read and signed a document that outlines their responsibilities under the CEM monitoring plan (see example in Appendix 1). The signed documents must be kept with the entry/exit logbook and be readily available for APHIS/VS review upon request.
 - c. Designees report only to the AV or APHIS/VS for CEM monitoring responsibilities.
 - d. The AV is responsible for the designees and their actions.
 - e. The AV will provide the names of the authorized designees as part of their monitoring plan.
3. The AV is responsible for ensuring all visitors and authorized designees have reviewed and signed a CEM waiver acknowledgment form (see example in Appendix 1). The form must provide information on CEM and APHIS/VS requirements for CEM waiver horses, including the prohibition of breeding activities, urogenital exams, and direct contact with U.S. domestic horses, prevention of cross contamination of equipment, and direct monitoring of horses when not in the designated area. Authorized designees must also attest to receiving formal training on the AV's approved monitoring plan for the event. The signed documents must be kept with the entry/exit logbook and be readily available for APHIS/VS review upon request.
4. During open hours, the AV must be on the event grounds.
5. During closed hours, the AV must be immediately accessible (i.e., on call).

6. If multiple AVs are needed to ensure proper coverage, the primary point of contact (POC) must be specified in the MOU. The POC is responsible for organizing the schedule such that at least one AV is on the event grounds during open hours and providing the schedule to APHIS upon request.
7. If at any time APHIS/VS documents noncompliance with the monitoring plan or determines the actions of the AV or their authorized designees to be noncompliant with the requirements outlined in this document, the AV must take corrective action to achieve compliance. Repeated noncompliance may result in an AV not being approved by APHIS/VS to provide CEM monitoring of imported horses at future equine special events.

APHIS/VS Responsibilities

APHIS/VS will inspect the proposed CEM facilities and the designated area(s), review the security plan and the CEM monitoring plan, and approve these elements in accordance with this document. APHIS/VS will work with the cooperator and the AV as necessary to achieve approval. APHIS/VS will charge user fees to recover the cost of providing these services.

In accordance with 9 CFR 93.301(f)(5)(iii), APHIS/VS will perform spontaneous verification activities during the event to verify the monitoring process and accountability of all parties (i.e., spot checks).

1. Spot checks may include but are not limited to review of logbook, observation of CEM waiver horses and monitoring practices, and verification of horse location.
2. APHIS/VS will conduct daily verification activities until such time that APHIS/VS can confirm a pattern of compliance by the AV and others with official oversight responsibilities with all APHIS/VS requirements outlined in the MOU and the monitoring plan during stabling, training, and active competition. The frequency of verification activities may vary thereafter, based on compliance findings or changes in the status of the CEM isolation facility (e.g., addition of new horses). APHIS/VS will conduct all verification activities at unannounced and random times during open or closed hours.
3. APHIS/VS will confirm a pattern of compliance through review of inspection documents and written/verbal reports from field personnel performing the verification activities. Any observed noncompliance may prolong the requirement for daily verification activities.
4. APHIS/VS will increase the frequency of verification activities OR assume all monitoring duties if continuous or egregious violations are documented.

All APHIS/VS inspection, approval and oversight activities are subject to user fees pursuant to [9 CFR 130](#) (see also [Veterinary Services Import/Export User Fees](#)).

Movement and Transportation

1. The CEM waiver horse(s) must move within the United States in accordance with the itinerary and transport methods specified in the import permit.

- a. Movement of the CEM waiver horse(s) to premises not listed on the import permit is prohibited, unless requested to and approved by APHIS.
 - b. If the owner or importer wishes to change the horse(s) itinerary or methods of transport as specified on the import permit, the owner or importer must make the request for change in writing to APHIS/VS no less than 15 days before the proposed date of the change.
 - c. APHIS will only approve the request if it will not endanger other horses in the United States and if sufficient APHIS/VS personnel or AVs are available to provide the services required.
2. The importer of record must arrange to transport CEM waiver horses in cleaned and disinfected vehicles as per 9 CFR Part 93. The vehicle must be sealed or escorted by APHIS/VS personnel or persons approved by APHIS/VS when enroute from the import quarantine to the approved CEM facility. The person sealing the vehicle should ensure it is clean and disinfected before animals are loaded.
3. CEM waiver horse(s) and geldings may share a conveyance if direct contact between them is prevented for the entire duration of the transport, including loading and unloading. The importer of record is responsible for confirming that all State and local regulations are met for both transit and destination States.
4. Immediately following unloading of horses at the approved CEM facility, the importer of record must arrange for cleaning and disinfection of the conveyance under direct APHIS/VS oversight in an APHIS/VS approved location or facility.
 - a. Organic material must be removed from the conveyance prior to disinfection.
 - b. Drainage from the vehicle must be away from horse holding areas.
 - c. All organic waste must be removed and the conveyance disinfected under direct APHIS/VS oversight in accordance with [9 CFR 71.10](#) and the [APHIS approved disinfectant](#) webpage.
5. If a CEM waiver horse becomes sick or injured or in the event of an emergency while in isolation, the importer of record may move the horse to the approved clinic specified in the MOU either under seal or escort by APHIS/VS personnel or persons approved by APHIS/VS.
 - a. The importer of record, event coordinator, or AV must obtain approval for movement of CEM waiver horses from APHIS/VS officials prior to transporting the horse. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, the importer of record, event coordinator, or AV may transport the horse under seal without APHIS/VS prior approval. If this occurs, the event coordinator or AV must notify APHIS/VS immediately.

- b. The importer of record must arrange for cleaning and disinfection of the conveyance under direct APHIS/VS oversight in an APHIS/VS approved location or facility. Drainage from the vehicle must be away from horse holding areas.
 - c. The importer of record must make provisions for the requested movement and will be responsible for all associated costs, including hourly user fees and subsequent monitoring.
- 6. In the event a CEM waiver horse dies or is euthanized while in isolation or at an approved clinic, the importer of record must arrange for the proper disposal of the carcass (incineration, auto-digestion, burial, etc.), while ensuring all State and Federal laws are adhered to.
 - a. The importer of record may elect to have the horse sent to a State or National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratory for the necropsy.
 - b. The importer of record is responsible for the costs, monitoring, and logistical arrangements associated with the biosecure movement of the carcass, after obtaining permission from the designated APHIS/VS representative(s). Transport of the carcass must occur in a sealed conveyance that prevents the leakage of refuse.
 - c. The importer of record is also responsible for the costs and logistical arrangements associated with APHIS/VS oversight of the necropsy, and eventual disposal, at the destination facility.
- 7. The safety of humans and horses is a priority. The importer of record, event coordinator, or AV may take extraordinary measures prior to contacting APHIS/VS in case of severe emergencies, such as fire or other natural disasters.

Appendix 1

CEM Waiver Acknowledgement

Contagious equine metritis (CEM) is a venereal disease of horses caused by the bacteria *Taylorella equigenitalis* that can be transmitted through sexual contact or shared equipment. The United States considers CEM to be a foreign animal disease. CEM waiver horses are intact horses over 731 days of age from CEM-affected countries that temporarily enter the United States for up to 90 days for competition purposes. The status of these horses for CEM is unknown and they may present a risk of introducing the disease into the United States. To address this risk, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) or designated USDA Category II Accredited Veterinarian (AV) must directly monitor all CEM waiver horses during the entirety of their stay.

While in the United States, CEM waiver horses:

- Are prohibited from breeding activities/germplasm collection, the opportunity for sexual contact with other horses, and undergoing any genital examinations or manipulations, including cleaning.
- Are prohibited from direct contact with non-CEM waiver horses.
- Must be clearly identified at all times.
- Must use separate equipment to prevent cross contamination.
- Are restricted to a designated area on the event grounds established by the cooperator unless they have been logged out and are being directly monitored by the AV or their authorized designee.

Visitors must sign in and out of the designated CEM area.

I understand agree to abide by the above guidelines.

Signature

Date

Authorized Designees Only

The accredited veterinarian, (insert AV name), provided me with a copy of the approved monitoring plan for (insert event name). I received formal training on implementing the approved monitoring plan on (insert date).

I agree to perform my duties as an authorized designee as outlined in the monitoring plan for (insert event name). Failure to perform my duties as an authorized designee may result in disciplinary action and/or APHIS assuming CEM monitoring responsibilities.

Authorized Designee Signature

Date