

COVID-19 INFORMATION

GUIDANCE FOR EQUESTRIAN EVENTS

Overview

AN EXEMPTION MUST BE OBTAINED PRIOR TO PLANNING, ADVERTISING, OR CONDUCTING AN EQUESTRIAN EVENT.

For the purposes of obtaining an exemption to operate, an equestrian event is defined as an activity or series of activities performed between a trained team of solo horse and rider or multiple horses and riders for the purpose of showmanship, competition, or a combination of the two. Examples of events include horse racing, performance riding such as hunter/jumper, western, saddleseat, driving, etc., jumping, dressage, ranch riding, trail, reining, halter/showmanship, and gymkhana.

Equestrian operators, specifically limited to horse racing facilities, professional equestrians or community equestrian associations, who if compliant with the restrictions within this guidance document, will be eligible for an exemption to:

- permit equestrian activities indoors or outdoors without physical distancing; or
- permit competition between equestrian participants indoors or outdoors.

A horse racing facility, professional group or community association are able to proceed with their event if they can ensure compliance with the requirements in this guidance, and receive an exemption from Alberta Health.

All individuals directly involved in the equestrian activity (e.g., riders, trainers, grooms, horse owners, judges, outriders, racing gate crew, venue staff, event production staff) are considered to be equestrian participants, and are subject to the guidance in this document.

All COVID-19 testing must be accessed through private accredited laboratories (i.e., paid for by organizers). All positive cases of COVID-19 must be reported to Alberta Health Services, and equestrian participants must facilitate contact tracing efforts

It is important that measures are implemented to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. This includes, but is not limited to ensuring: physical distancing, barrier use (where appropriate), proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting, records management and building maintenance. Operators must also follow the requirements set out in the [General Operational Guidance](#).

COVID-19 Risk Mitigation

General Guidance

- All equestrian participants should be educated on COVID-19 protocols and expectations.
- Only the equestrian participants, judges, horse owners, venue staff, and equestrian personnel essential for operating the equestrian event are permitted in the venue.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No in-person audiences, household members or general public are permitted to be present during equestrian activities or events. ● Equestrian participants must maintain 2 metres' physical distance. This distance can only be breached momentarily if required to facilitate competition. ● Participants must mask at all times in indoor areas of the equestrian venue, except while riding during high-intensity activities. ● Participants in group or team equestrian activities who must come within 2 metres of one another for the purpose of the activity must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be members of the same household; or, ○ Undertake regular COVID-19 testing before the event - see the testing section of this Guidance. ● Participants should only be in one equestrian event at a time, but can participate in more than one equestrian activity as part of that event. ● Participants should avoid COVID-19 risk activities for the duration of the event, including reducing public contact. ● Participants should complete hand hygiene before and after completing an equestrian activity. <p>Note: A person's vaccine status does not provide any form of exemption, or otherwise remove or reduce any provincial requirements related to quarantine, isolation or other matters as prescribed by CMOH Orders at his time.</p>
<p>Protocols and Compliance Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Equestrian organizers must develop and implement on-site COVID-19 protocols, which should adhere to this guidance document and industry accepted best practices. These protocols should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A risk assessment of each equestrian activity as it relates to health and safety of different members of the participant group; and ○ Procedures related to infection prevention and control (including cleaning/disinfecting), daily symptom checks and testing schedule, contact tracing, rapid response plan and isolation, etc. ● Each equestrian event must have a COVID-19 Compliance Officer, whose responsibilities, at minimum, should include ensuring that all equestrian participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide their names and contact information for the purpose of assisting contact tracing investigations by Alberta Health Services. This information must be retained for a period of 28 days. ○ Complete a daily health screen and are not symptomatic before coming to the equestrian venue/event. ○ Have not arrived from out of the country within 14 days or have followed all Federal and Provincial requirements.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have not been in close contact with a confirmed case at least 14 days prior to commencing the equestrian event, or at any point while participating in the event. ○ Follow the testing schedule for the equestrian event, when applicable. ○ Receive a negative result on their pre-event COVID test, if applicable. ○ Ensure compliance with Guidance for Industry-Initiated Covid-19 Testing ● COVID-19 Compliance Officer should collect names and contact information of all participants for the purpose of assisting contact tracing investigations by Alberta Health Services. This information must be retained for a period of 28 days.
Pre-Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All participants, including staff and judges, must complete a daily symptom check prior to arrival to the venue. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individuals who report COVID symptoms must not attend the venue, and follow provincial requirements to isolate. ○ Consider temperature checks on all participants before allowing them to enter the venue. ● Equestrian committees/organizers must prepare a support plan for any participant denied participation in the event due to exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. ● Equestrian committees/organizers must prepare a rapid response plan in case an equestrian participant becomes symptomatic while on-site. See the General Operational Guidance for more information. ● All individuals should minimize their time in public before the equestrian and to limit contact for 2-7 days prior to the event/activity. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Avoiding contact with other persons; ○ Minimizing leaving the home for non-urgent errands (e.g., use delivery services wherever possible); ○ Avoiding public transportation; and ○ Avoiding participation in other group physical or recreational activities.
Spectators/Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No spectators or audience are permitted for indoor or outdoor equestrian events at this time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This includes, but is not limited to, other participants, family/household members, close contacts, the general public. ○ A coach/instructor/trainer and a horse owner may watch the participant, but must vacate the area as soon as the participant completes their event. ● Equestrian event participants, venue staff, essential personnel, judges, etc. are not permitted to spectate, and should leave the area when not actively engaged in their role.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judges judging an event are not considered spectators.
During Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants must not congregate in groups and must maintain 2 metres of physical distance from other participants. Racetracks should consider altering post times to extend time between races. Paddock staff to be limited to one person per horse, with trainers warming up their own horses. Starting gate staff must be kept to an absolute minimum. Track photographers are not allowed. Provide warm-up areas to stage riding event participants. Staging areas should be sufficient to allow for 2 metres of physical distancing between participants. Jockeys/Drivers lounges must be closed; showers, saunas and hot boxes must also be closed. Eliminate post-race winner's presentation.
Event Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The announcer stand (tables, seats, microphones, scoreboard, sound boards, etc.) shall be wiped down before and after each change in announcer, with a disinfectant solution. All event personnel must maintain 2 metres' distance from one another at all times, and mask in indoor areas. Access to the announcer stand must be limited to essential personnel only.
Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excluding horse racing events at exempted facilities, in order for participants from different households to be exempt from maintaining 2 metres' physical distancing at all times: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All equestrian participants are required to have a negative result from a lab-based PCR test administered within 72 hours prior to the equestrian event or activity. All equestrian participants must complete daily symptom checks, including temperature monitoring, prior to and during the equestrian activity. If available, a rapid point of care test can be administered daily to all equestrian participants before they enter the venue. A lab-based PCR test should be administered to all participants weekly, if the equestrian event is over more than 7 days. Any test subsequent to the pre-test should be scheduled to ensure the result is returned prior to the individual participating. For clarity, no testing is required for individuals that can maintain 2 metres distance and remain masked at all times.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All COVID-19 testing must be accessed through private accredited laboratories (i.e., paid for by organizers). All positive cases of COVID-19 must be reported to Alberta Health Services, and equestrian participants must facilitate contact tracing efforts. Exempted horse racing facilities may consider implementing rapid point of care tests to support safe operations. Facilities that implement point of care testing should follow applicable guidance.
Mask Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equestrian participants must wear a mask indoors at all times except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When actively participating in high intensity equestrian activity (participants and support persons/teams). When announcing equestrian events (announcers only). If a workplace hazard assessment determines that wearing a mask during a particular activity would put an individual at risk. Masks must be worn by all participants, staff, operators, and other individuals on-site, at all times in all other indoor areas of the venue, include entering and leaving, washrooms, elevators, etc.
Contact tracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The compliance officer must keep a record of all participants in the venue for each day of the equestrian event for contact tracing purposes. If requested as part of a case investigation, these lists should be shared with Alberta Health Services, for contact tracing purposes only. Any positive cases must be reported to Alberta Health Services and the equestrian participants should follow their instructions on contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine.
Food Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that participants bring their own food and beverages for the duration of the event. Any on-site food service providers must follow the Guidance for Food Service and Sales.
VENUE/FACILITY	
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow all current public health measures and applicable guidance on Alberta BizConnect.
Booking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the equestrian operator has a compliance officer when making the booking.
Cleaning & Disinfecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the venue is cleaned/disinfected during, pre- and post- use by performance groups, or any other rental/use. All stands, props, sets, wardrobes are to be sanitized after each use, with particular attention paid to frequently handled objects and surfaces.

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ACCOMMODATIONS

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Trailers and other mobile accommodations must be parked at least 2 metres away from any other trailer/mobile accommodation.Only members of the same household are permitted in their trailer/mobile accommodation.Only individuals essential to the operation of the equestrian event should attend (e.g., to the extent possible, immediate families should not attend).Households should not share food or other items.
Contact Tracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">If required, these lists should be shared with Alberta Health Services, for contact tracing purposes only.Any positive cases must be reported to Alberta Health Services and the equestrian participants should follow their instructions on contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine.
Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">At this time, outdoor gatherings are limited to 5 individuals in areas with high case numbers, with 2 metres distance between households, and 10 individuals in areas with low case numbers with 2 metres distance between households.No indoor gatherings are permitted.

This document and the guidance within it is subject to change and will be updated as needed.

Last Revised: May 2021

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APPENDIX A:

EQUESTRIAN ACTIVITY EXEMPTION APPLICATION PROCESS

Equestrian committees/organizers must submit exemption requests to Alberta BizConnect at <https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>. **Please submit your request at least three weeks prior to your event.** Submissions must include a plan to demonstrate how the equestrian committee/organizer will follow the health protocols listed above, as well as the following applicant information:

- The name of the event, and the name and contact information of the equestrian committee/organizer.
- A description of the equestrian event or activity that will be occurring.
- Whether the equestrian committee/organizer is seeking an exemption to conduct the event only, or whether an additional exemption is needed from the 2 metres' distancing requirements.
- A detailed list of the precautions that will be put in place before and during the event to meet the requirements laid out in this guidance.
- Dates and duration of the equestrian activity.
- Total number of equestrian participants and their roles in the equestrian event.
 - The name and contact information of the COVID Compliance Officer must be identified.
- The total number of workers (venue staff, event staff, contractors) required on-site to support equestrian activity, and their roles.
- The venue required for the equestrian activity and venue protocols to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Horse Racing facilities are required to submit an exemption request. They may submit a request for the duration of their racing season, as long as all races comply with the same protocols.