Transport of Horses by Sea

Guidance Material

[Document Date]

Title

Guidance Document: Transport of Horses by Sea

About this document

This document is guidance material relating to the export of live horses by sea. It contains information about how exporters can satisfy the legal requirements under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 for obtaining an Animal Welfare Export Certificate (AWEC) for the export of live horses by sea.

Any guidance on how to comply with the applicable requirements may not be the only way to achieve compliance. Stakeholders are encouraged to discuss departures from the approaches outlined in this document with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to avoid expending resources on the development of alternative approaches which may later be considered unsuitable.

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Disclaimer

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# Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to exporters on how they can satisfy the legal requirements for obtaining an Animal Welfare Export Certificate (AWEC) for the export of live horses by sea.

# Background

Good management of animal welfare is fundamental to the successful transport of horses by sea. High standards of welfare required by the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act), are important for the horses' well-being, and have direct economic benefits that ensure continued success in the international market.

The following physical, health, and behavioural needs of animals, as described in the Act, have been considered in developing this guidance document:

* 1. proper and sufficient food and water;
  2. adequate shelter;
  3. opportunity to display normal patterns of behaviour;
  4. physical handling in a manner which minimises the likelihood of unreasonable or unnecessary pain or distress; and
  5. protection from, and rapid diagnosis of, any significant injury or disease.

This guidance document does not include the requirements that apply to official assurances issued under Part 5 of the Animal Products Act 1999.

# Definitions

The following definitions apply in this guidance document, unless the context otherwise requires:

Container

A non-self-propelled receptacle or other rigid structure for holding animals during a journey.

Director-General

The chief executive of the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

Director MNZ

The person appointed to the position of Director of Maritime New Zealand under section 439 of the Maritime Transport Act 1994.

Euthanasia

The act of inducing death using a method that causes a rapid and irreversible loss of consciousness with minimum pain and distress to the animal.

Experienced horse handler

A skilled horse handler who does not necessarily have practical experience in transporting horses by sea freight. This person does not need to be registered with MPI, but should be approved by the exporter.

Horse

Domesticated members of the Equidae family (solipeds), including Equus ferus caballus (domestic horse) and Equus africanus asinus (domesticated donkey or ass).

MNZ

Maritime New Zealand.

MNZ Approved Surveyor

A surveyor of ships appointed or recognised as such under Maritime Rule Part 46.

MPI

Ministry for Primary Industries.

MPI Official Veterinarian

A veterinarian employed by MPI with authorisation to perform certain designated official tasks. In the context of this document it refers to an MPI veterinarian with delegated authority under the Animal Products Act 1999 to issue official assurances (Export Certificates) and/or with delegated authority under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 to issue Animal Welfare Export Certificates (AWECs).

Non-slip surfaces

A surface that will provide adequate footing for shod and un-shod horses. It includes rubber mats, carpet, slatted wooden floors and cleated solid wooden floors.

Notifiable incident

An abnormal event that has the potential to cause serious harm to the health and welfare of the horse.

Portable equipment

Includes boxes and containers.

Recognised Person

A person recognised under section 103 of the Animal Products Act 1999 for the purpose of performing specified functions and/or activities.

Senior Air Groom

A person who complies with the competencies described in Section 7.1 of the MPI Guidance document Transport of Horses by Air.

Senior Sea Groom

A person who complies with the competencies described in Section 7.1 of this Guidance document.

Stall

Space allowed for horses to stand in during transportation.

Supervising veterinarian

A veterinarian registered with the National Quality Veterinary Services for the purposes of the New Zealand Quality Assurance Programme for the use of prescription animal remedies by grooms travelling with horse by air or sea, and who dispensed restricted veterinary medicines to the senior sea groom.

Voyage

From the time the horse is loaded into a container at the port of departure until it is removed from the container at the destination port.

# International obligations

New Zealand is a signatory to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). The OIE is designated by the World Trade Organisation as the international animal health standard-setting organisation. The OIE produces a number of documents, including the Terrestrial Animal Health Code and in 2005 it adopted the welfare Chapter: *Transport of Animals by Sea.*

# Legal Considerations for an AWEC

Section 43 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 provides that the Director-General MPI must, in considering any application for an AWEC, have regard to such of the following matters as are relevant:

* 1. the manner in which the welfare of any animals previously exported by the applicant was attended to on the journey between New Zealand and the country to which they were exported;
  2. the capability, skills, and experience of the applicant in relation to the export of animals;
  3. the species or type of animal and the number of animals proposed to be exported;
  4. the ages, and the physiological state, of the animals proposed to be exported;
  5. the mode of transport proposed and the facilities provided;
  6. the length and nature of the journey proposed;
  7. the susceptibility of the animal to harm and distress under the conditions of transport proposed;
  8. any New Zealand requirements in relation to the export of the animal;
  9. any requirements of the country into which the animal is being exported;
  10. any relevant international standard;
  11. the date on which it is intended that the animal leave New Zealand; and
  12. any other matters that the Director-General considers relevant to the welfare of the animal.

Each application for an AWEC will be considered on a case by case basis.

All parties should be aware that there are certain factors, e.g. sudden change in the animal health status of New Zealand, sudden change in the importing country’s trade policy, events of a Force Majeure nature, which can preclude the issuing of an Export Health Certificate or AWEC on the intended day of export, even if this guidance document is strictly adhered to. MPI will maintain communication with affected parties, in as timely a manner as possible, concerning events or factors of this nature.

# Roles and Responsibilities

Many different people and groups are involved in the transport of horses by sea. Each has specific roles and responsibilities. The key roles and responsibilities are outlined below, but these lists are not necessarily exhaustive.

Role of **MPI**:

* regulating the export process to ensure the risks are managed;
* assessing applications for an AWEC;
* drafting guidance material for facilities associated with the transport of horses;
* drafting guidance material for the competence of grooms and managers of facilities; and
* monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of its guidance material.

Role of **MNZ**:

* the inspection of the container and ship to monitor its compliance with safety and environmental protection standards, including the safe carriage of horses as cargo;
* approval for the placement of the container on the ship;
* approval of the method to secure the container to the ship;
* approval of lighting and ventilation for the container; and
* issuing a permit for the carriage of horses.

Role of **MPI Official Veterinarian** in verifying the following animal welfare parameters:

* being satisfied that the requirements of the export certificate and the conditions of the AWEC have been met;
* the horses are fit to travel;
* compliance of the container and consignment with this guidance document; and
* issuing the AWEC.

Role of **Recognised Person** in verifying the following animal welfare specifications during the pre-export preparation period:

* supply of fodder;
* supply of water;
* age of foal at-foot;
* stage of pregnancy;
* condition score;
* preconditioning;
* the weight of each horse; and
* fitness to travel (includes weaned and un-weaned foals).

The **vessel owner** is responsible for:

* ensuring that the vessel is appropriately designed, constructed, equipped, maintained and certified to carry horses as cargo.

The **Master of the ship** (hereafter referred to as “the Master”) is responsible for:

* ensuring the safety of the vessel, crew and cargo;
* ensuring the crew is able to assist the groom(s) during the voyage if required;
* welfare of the horses during the voyage; and
* ensuring that the vessel is loaded according to a loading plan that it has been approved by MNZ.

The **Exporter** is responsible for:

* making a timely and complete application to MPI for an AWEC at least 20 working days before the date the horses are due to be exported. (see section 42 of the Animal Welfare Act);
* obtaining an AWEC (see section 40 of the Animal Welfare Act);
* ensuring compliance with all AWEC conditions (see section 40 of the Animal Welfare Act);
* giving adequate notification to the Recognised Person and MPI Official Veterinarian regarding the consignment and of any issues requiring special consideration;
* giving adequate notification to MNZ Approved Surveyor;
* developing a consignment plan and ensuring that it is followed;
* providing or obtaining declarations requested by the Recognised Person and/or MPI Official Veterinarian;
* ensuring that there are suitable facilities at the port of departure where the horses can be safely and fully inspected by the MPI Official Veterinarian prior to loading;
* engaging a senior sea groom(s) and experienced horse handler(s) and fully briefing the groom on all aspects of the voyage;
* ensuring suitability of container, including that it meets all the requirements specified in this document;
* ensuring there are adequate provisions on the vessel before departure (including feed, water and veterinary supplies);
* providing a full list of key contact details to the groom and the Master;
* reporting notifiable incidents; and
* being actively engaged with MPI in the instance of consignment rejection.

The **senior sea groom(s)** accompanying the shipment is responsible for:

* demonstrating competency in the care and handling of the horses by means of a document from a government regulatory body, or successful completion of a programme recognised or sanctioned by a government regulatory body;
* humane handling and care of the horses during loading, time at sea and unloading;
* maintaining a journey log that is available for inspection should the need arise;
* secure storage and maintenance of the Veterinary Medicine Kit and associated records; and
* providing a copy of the modified Transport Restricted Veterinary Medicine Register (Appendix 4: Voyage Report Template ) to the exporter of the consignment on completion of the voyage.

# Competence

All individuals, including veterinarians, involved in transporting horses should be appropriately trained and competent to meet their responsibilities.

## Skills and experience for a Senior Sea Groom

A groom considered competent to accompany a consignment of horses being exported by sea freight is known as a senior sea groom and either:

* has accompanied horses being exported or imported on at least one shipment under the supervision of a senior sea groom, and has assisted with at least two loadings at a port of departure; or
* has been signed off as competent by a senior sea groom.

Or is:

* registered with MPI as a senior sea groom; or
* registered with MPI as a senior air groom.

The senior sea groom should possess the following:

* working knowledge of this document;
* certification allowing use of restricted veterinary medicines (RVM) under the Veterinary Operating Instructions for The Use of Restricted Veterinary Medicines (RVM) by Grooms Travelling with Horses by Sea or Air;
* knowledge of documents required by the countries of transit (if any) and destination;
* ability to recognise a horse that is ill or stressed and to understand the possible causes and how to manage them;
* experience in handling and caring for horses during loading, while at sea, and unloading (not necessary for a senior air groom to become registered as a senior sea groom);
* knowledge of the treatment of injuries, when and how to administer veterinary drugs and when and how to immobilize and euthanise a horse;
* have farrier skills;
* working knowledge of a ship’s operations and on-board activities; and
* a current passport, with visas (where required).

The application form for use by exporters to register veterinarians and grooms with MPI is in Appendix 1: Registration of Veterinarians and Grooms.

# Responsibility for horses during the sea voyage

The Master assumes responsibility for the management and care of the horses upon completion of their loading. It is strongly advised that the exporter provides details to the Master and senior sea groom of anything that may affect the health and welfare of the horses. This includes any notifiable incident that may have occurred during the pre-export preparation period and any relevant instructions for the care of the horses while at sea.

The responsibility of the Master ceases when the horses’ disembarkation at the port of the importing country is completed.

# Planning the consignment

**Guiding principle**

**Proper planning of the consignment is essential to ensure the safety of the horses and to reduce transport related stress.**

## Consignment plan

The exporter is responsible for preparing a consignment plan detailing the preparation and management of the consignment. The plan includes a communication plan and a contingency plan. The consignment plan consists of the tasks that need to be undertaken under the ‘who, what, where, when, and how’ headings.

Planning of the voyage should take into account weekends and holidays in transiting and destination countries. It is strongly recommended that voyages are planned to keep the total time travelling to a minimum.

## Communication plan

The communication plan involves everyone associated with the different aspects of the consignment. The senior sea groom and the Master should be given a written list of contact details for key personnel. In the event of an animal health or welfare emergency the grooms should have access to the exporter, and an equine veterinarian who is providing technical support for the consignment, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Contingency plan

Contingency planning is important to ensure that adverse events are dealt with quickly and effectively by the appropriate people. The exporter is responsible for planning the actions that the relevant parties will take in the event of:

* horses not able to be loaded, or are unloaded, at the port of departure from New Zealand
* an outbreak while at sea of a disease that the importing country requires New Zealand to certify as having freedom from
* the groom requiring veterinary advice when a veterinarian is not on-board the vessel
* injury or death of a horse at any time during the departure, time at sea, or destination port
* injury to the groom
* other notifiable incidents.

It is the ship’s Master who has responsibility for the welfare of the horses once they are aboard the ship. However, the exporter should discuss with the Master how various emergencies at sea will be handled before the ship departs from New Zealand. As a minimum, it is strongly advised that both parties document the initial steps that will be taken for the following scenarios:

* mechanical breakdown of the vessel;
* feed or water shortage or contamination during the voyage;
* illness or incapacity of the groom(s) accompanying the horses;
* extreme weather conditions; and
* significant delay in unloading the horses at the overseas port of arrival.

These plans should include timely notification of the Verification Services Manager Live Animals and Certification.

## Notice of Intention to Load Horses

A notice of intention to load horses must, as per clause 24C.18 1(b) of the Maritime Rules Part 24 C 1998, be made to a MNZ Approved Surveyor no less than 48 hours before the ship is available for inspection.

This notice must include:

* the name of the ship;
* the date the ship will be available for inspection;
* the port where the ship will be available for inspection;
* a description of the horses to be carried, including the number and estimated average weight of the horses by class; and
* details of the proposed voyage, including estimated passage time, intermediate stop-over ports for replenishing fodder and freshwater and/or discharging horses (if any), and the final destination.

## Loading plan

A loading plan, developed in conjunction with the ship’s planner, should provide specific details about the loading and location of horses on-board the vessel. It should take into account:

* positioning of the container so that the horses are protected from machinery exhaust fumes, weather extremes, and sea spray;
* suitable access to the container(s);
* method of securing the container(s) to the deck;
* lighting and ventilation for the container(s);
* positioning of the hospital facilities; and
* location of food and water.

There should be sufficient space adjacent to the horses’ container to allow the horses to be safely removed from the container, and adequate covered space for the feed and the groom’s supplies.

## Animal Welfare Export Certificates (AWECs)

Section 40 of the Animal Welfare Act 1999 (the Act) states that it is an offence to export animals from New Zealand other than under the authority, and in accordance with the conditions, of an AWEC.

Section 42(2)(d) of the Act requires that applications are made at least 20 working days before the date on which the applicant proposes that the animals leave New Zealand.

Note that where a condition of an AWEC placed on a specific consignment provides for an action that is contrary or different to the recommendations in this document, the AWEC condition prevails.

# Selection and presentation of horses

**Guiding principle**

**Selection of appropriately prepared horses that are fit to travel is critical to achieving successful health and welfare outcomes during export.**

## Export of pregnant mares

It is recommended that pregnant mares are shipped as early in pregnancy as possible. Mares in the last 90 days of pregnancy should not be exported and it is highly unlikely that mares more than 250 days pregnant at the date of shipment would be granted an AWEC.

The Recognised Person will verify the stage of pregnancy by either:

* a declaration from a person with first-hand knowledge stating the last date of mating and/or
* results of a pregnancy test, supplied by a veterinarian on practice letterhead, stating the date and method of testing, and the stage of pregnancy at the time of the test.

## Condition and temperament of horses

It is recommended that horses are in moderate body condition prior to loading (Appendix 2: Body condition scoring for horses). Those with a condition score of less than 2 may have a health problem and those with a condition score of 5 are predisposed to laminitis. A body condition of 3 is recommended.

Because horses travelling by sea require intensive handling it is important that they are accustomed to people and obedient to basic handling. All horses, including weanlings and foals, should lead, not resent being touched on any part of their body and consent to being cross tied.

## Holding facility and preconditioning

As the horses are closely confined alongside other horses during the voyage, it is recommended that those travelling in the same consignment assemble at a holding facility for **at least 3 days** prior to the scheduled date of export. This will give them time to rest and begin socialisation with travel-mates. It will allow the exporter or senior sea groom the opportunity to determine the best loading arrangement based on observed relationships between the horses.

During this time the horses should be given a **minimum 3 day** period of preconditioning to on-board rations. It is recommended that if a horse is not accustomed to stall restraint that it is trained to enter and stand in a stall.

It is recommended that horses travelling for longer **than 4 hours** to the port are allowed off the truck to rest for **at least 12 hours** in a premise located in close proximity to the port. This helps ensure that the horses are adequately rested and that the time spent travelling within New Zealand and waiting to be loaded at the port does not contribute significantly to the overall length of the travelling time. The exporter should contact the Recognised Person responsible for the initial verification of the consignment to discuss the proposed arrangements in cases where the travelling distance to the port is longer than 4 hours.

While in the holding facility the horses being exported need to be kept isolated from horses not of the same health status. Their eligibility for export needs to be retained.

## Supply of water

It is strongly advised that:

* all horses have access to a daily supply of drinking water that is sufficient for their needs, is palatable, and that is not harmful to their health;
* the water delivery system is reliable, and maintained, to meet daily demand;
* automated watering systems are monitored at least once every 24 hours, and any deficiencies corrected; and
* in the event of a water delivery system failure, remedial action should be taken to ensure that daily water requirements are met.

## Supply of fodder

It is strongly advised that:

* the exporter/operator has a documented feed plan for the Pre-Export period;
* the fodder is fit for purpose as described in the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (ACVM) (Exemptions and Prohibited Substances) Regulations 2011 (refer to <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2011/0327/latest/DLM3982210.html> for a description of fitness for purpose);
* all horses receive sufficient quantities of food and nutrients to meet their physiological requirements, and minimise metabolic and nutritional disorders;
* any medications sourced in New Zealand, used in the prevention and/or treatment of metabolic or nutritional disorders, must be authorised in accordance with the requirements of the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (ACVM) Act 1997, and the New Zealand Veterinary Council's Code of Professional Conduct; and
* feeding is managed so that any injury and/or conditions resulting in ill health, as a consequence of the fodder or feeding methods, are minimised.

## Age of horses at time of export

It is recommended that foals less than 4 weeks of age are not transported by sea and un-weaned foals over 4 weeks of age are transported with their dam.

Prior to export, weanlings should be given a period of at least 4 weeks after separation from their dam to allow for feed adjustments and for the mental and physical stress of weaning to subside.

## Shoes

It is the exporter’s decision whether to transport a shod horse and this will depend on the history of the horse, the duration of the voyage and the expectations of the consignee.

Because of the potential for self-injury if shoes spread or are inadvertently removed, or if a shod horse goes down in a stall, it is recommended that shoes do not have heels, studs or raised clinches.

## Clipping of horses

It is recommended that horses being transported into summer conditions during New Zealand’s winter months are clipped if they have a dense winter coat. Clipping prepares horses for moving to a warmer climate, it improves the effectiveness of any treatments for external parasites and allows the skin to be kept clean. Suitable covers should be available to protect the horses from inclement weather.

## Role of Recognised Person

The Recognised Person is responsible for verifying the following animal welfare parameters during the pre-export preparation period:

* supply of fodder;
* supply of water;
* age of foal (especially with respect to the minimum age);
* stage of pregnancy;
* condition score;
* preconditioning; and
* fitness to travel (including un-weaned and weaned foals).

If a horse has an injury or any other abnormality that is of concern to the Recognised Person responsible for the initial verification of the horse, the MPI official veterinarian should be notified and should be provided with a letter by a veterinarian, on practice letterhead, stating how the horse has been treated and that it is fit to travel.

# Transport to the port

Horses transported within New Zealand must travel in accordance with the relevant Code of Animal Welfare under the Animal Welfare Act 1999. At the time of writing this is the Animal Welfare (Transport within New Zealand) Code of Welfare 2011. This may be found at: <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/animal-welfare/codes-of-welfare/>

During transportation the horses being exported needs to be kept isolated from horses not of the same health status.

# Condition of the ship

**Guiding principle**

**The ship, and its facilities for managing the horses, is well maintained and fit for purpose.**

## Condition of the Ship

MPI will take into account information from previous voyage reports when determining the adequacy of a ship.

Evidence that a ship is well maintained and fit for purpose can be demonstrated by the Master providing copies of the following documents to the Authorised Person:

* a valid Ship Classification Certificate, and evidence that the surveys are up to date; **and**
* a valid Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate, and evidence that the surveys are up to date;

It is strongly advised that all fittings, fixtures and objects on a ship that may come into contact with the horses be manufactured, assembled and positioned to avoid causing injuries to the horses, and should be visibly clean.

It is recommended that records, for disinfection and disinsection since last carrying animals, are available for review by the MPI Official Veterinarian.

It is strongly advised that back-up systems be in place to ensure that the welfare of the horses can be maintained in the event of disruption to, or breakdown of, primary feeding, watering, and ventilation systems.

The effective maintenance of the power, propulsion and ventilation systems of a ship rests with the owner and Master of the ship.

# Condition of the container and on-board facilities

**Guiding principle**

**That the container and the facilities for managing the horses are well maintained and fit for purpose.**

## CSC Plate

The container must be certified by an agent approved by MNZ in accordance with International Convention requirements on construction of shipping containers. The certification takes the form of the CSC Plate attached to the outside of the container. The expiration date for the Plate must be current, and remain so for the anticipated entire length of the voyage.

Before horses are loaded into the container, the MNZ Approved Surveyor and the MPI Official Veterinarian both need to be satisfied that the container meets the requirements of Maritime New Zealand, and complies with the relevant information in this guidance document.

## Container design

**Guiding principle**

**The container is fit for purpose and allows easy access to the horses so that they can be well cared for.**

## Legislation

The Maritime Rules Part 24C, Appendix 2, 2.8 states:

* Portable equipment must not be used for the carriage of export livestock unless it is approved by the surveyor with the agreement of a Ministry for Primary Industries veterinary officer.
* Portable equipment containing livestock must be:
* stowed in a position—
  + that is suitably protected from the weather and machinery exhausts; and
  + that ensures suitable access to the portable equipment; and
* secured to prevent movement; and
* adequately lit and ventilated.

## Signage

It is recommended that the container displays a clear sign on its roof indicating that it contains livestock so it can be:

* handled with care
* kept in an upright position at all times.

## Construction

Internally, the construction of the floors, walls and internal divisions should provide appropriate strength and safety for the purpose of confining the horses. Materials should be able to withstand the weight of the standing horse in the case of floors, or repeated kicking in the case of walls, kickboards and internal partitions. Flooring should have a non-slip surface (rubber matting is preferred) and be constructed to allow drainage and cleaning.

Each stall should have its own door at the front of the container, so that a horse can be attended to, and removed from and reloaded into the container without compromising the safety and security of the other horses.

It is strongly recommended that partitions are solid down to the floor to prevent a horse becoming casted should it go down. The partitions should be adjustable, so they can be placed in different positions depending on the type and size of the horses. All the partitions should be able to be removed from the container via the front doors of the stalls.

It is strongly recommended that external doors are secured such that they cannot be accidentally opened by the horses.

## Space allowance

The dimensions of the standard shipping container determine the length and height of the stalls when these are aligned across the width of the container. The width of individual stalls is the only variable able to be controlled through use of adjustable partitions along the length of the container. The external length of shipping containers are 2991 mm, 6058 mm, 9125 mm or 12192 mm, however most containers converted for the purposes of horse exports are 6058 mm in length. The internal measurements of this sized container are: width 2350 mm, height 2392 mm and length 5900 mm. They are normally divided into 5 or 6 stalls.

**Each horse should be able to stand comfortably within its stall with a natural stance and without touching the divisions, walls or roof of the container.**

It is strongly recommended that the breed, size, age, conformation, sex, and pregnancy status be taken into account when determining space allocation. These factors may indicate that more space per horse is required than is usually the case. The OIE Chapter 7.4 in the Transport of Animals by Air recommends that horses be provided with at least 21 cm of space above their heads to allow for the movement required to maintain the their balance. Where a standard container stall is too confined for a horse, the horse should be either given more space or it should be transported by other means.

For voyages over 48 hours, horses less than 1 year of age require sufficient space to lie down, readily rise and turn around in comfort.

**One stall per container, suitable for the largest horse in the consignment, must be able to be made available to provide extra space for a horse reacting adversely to confinement or to act as hospital pen.**

The provision of extra space may be achieved by either adjusting the partitions to allow a particular stall to be expanded (without compromising the space requirements of other horses) or by having one spare/empty stall that with the removal of a partition can provide the space allowance of two stalls. It is the responsibility of the exporter to demonstrate to the MPI Official Veterinarian how the extra space would be provided.

## Ventilation

It is essential for the horses’ welfare that uniform and adequate air movement is maintained in the container at all times, including during loading onto the vessel, unloading off the vessel and transportation on the back of a truck and any other time when the container should be totally closed. Uniform and adequate air movement ensures that there is enough free air space above the heads of the horses to allow ‘foul’ air to dissipate. It is strongly advised that ammonia levels do not exceed 25 ppm. As a guide, a level of 10-15 ppm of ammonia in the air can be detected by smell, and an ammonia level over 25 ppm will cause eye and nasal irritation in humans.

It is the responsibility of the exporter to **demonstrate** to the MPI Official Veterinarian that the horses always have adequate ventilation while in the container.

When crossing the equator the placement, near the breathing zone of the horses, of a wet and dry bulb thermometer to record temperature and humidity at regular intervals will provide information on the environment in the container. Monitoring and recording the temperatures of the horses will allow active measures to be undertaken to help ensure the horses maintain their body temperature within normal physiological parameters. Examples of active measures include, but are not limited to, the following: painting the container’s roof white, putting a container/something else on top of the horse container, regular hosing of the horses, hanging shade cloth across the area above the horses’ heads, and use of power ventilation.

## Lighting and fire safety

Sufficient fixed or portable lighting must be provided so that the horses can be viewed in their containers at any hour of the day and night. (Maritime Safety Authority Maritime Rules Part 24C Carriage of Cargoes - Specific Cargoes, Appendix 3, notes that 110 lux is considered sufficient lighting to view animals.)

It is recommended that the groom determines the location of the fire-fighting equipment on-board the vessel.

## Cleaning and disinfection

The container should be cleaned of all extraneous material and thoroughly disinfected prior to use.

## Exercise facilities

An exercise facility should be provided if the standard scheduled duration of the voyage exceeds 7 days. The exercise facility should be fenced or enclosed and comprise a minimum area of two void container spaces with a non-slip surface as flooring, for every two containers of horses within the consignment. Horses should be allowed daily access to the exercise area.

For voyages of 4-7 days standard scheduled duration an exercise facility comprising at least one void container space (enclosed and with non-slip surface as flooring) should be able to be created, for every two containers of horses within the consignment. Depending on the condition of the horses and the expected actual duration of the voyage, grooms should consider allowing the horses access to the exercise area during the latter part of the voyage.

For voyages where the standard scheduled duration is 4 days or less it is not necessary to provide an exercise facility.

# Final Inspections and Approvals

Before being loaded into the modified shipping container(s) the horses need to be inspected by an MPI Official Veterinarian and assessed as ‘fit to travel’. Examination of the horses prior to loading requires an undercover, escape proof, enclosed area, with adequate lighting, and facilities for cleaning and disinfection. Any bandaging and covers may need to be removed by the exporter/owner for inspection purposes. The MPI Official Veterinarian must also be able to inspect the horses once loaded into the container to ensure that they all have an adequate space allowance.

After loading the container(s) upon the ship, the MNZ Approved Surveyor and the MPI Official Veterinarian will undertake a final inspection. If additional measures are deemed necessary, as a result of the inspection, the ship’s Master needs to be able rectify these issues before departing.

Once the Marine Surveyor and MPI Official Veterinarian are satisfied that the requirements of MNZ and MPI have been met, he/she can issue a Permit for the Carriage of Horses and an AWEC.

# Management of the horses during voyage

**Guiding principle**

**The health and welfare of the animals is maintained throughout the voyage.**

## Number of grooms

It is expected that a **senior sea groom** accompany every consignment.

**For voyages of a scheduled duration of 4 days or less** it is recommended that there is at least one senior groom for 12 horses.

**For voyages of a scheduled duration of 4 days or more** where the provision of daily exercise is required, it is recommended that there is at least one senior sea groom for 6 horses and one senior sea groom and one experienced horse handler for 7-12 horses.

For more than 12 horses, the number of sea grooms and experienced horse handlers will be determined in conjunction with MPI.

A veterinarian with practical experience in accompanying sea voyages may act as a senior sea groom. The veterinarian should meet the competencies listed in section 7: Competence, of this document, and be registered with MPI to accompany horses being transported by sea freight. The application form for use by exporters to register veterinarians and grooms with MPI is in Appendix 1: Registration of Veterinarians and Grooms.

The decision whether a veterinarian is required to accompany the horses will be discussed between MPI and the exporter prior to the voyage. In the case of a proposed export to an established destination by an exporter with a good track record of successful voyages, it is unlikely MPI would require a veterinarian on the vessel.

The MPI Director-General may make it a condition of an AWEC that a veterinarian accompanies the horses if there had been a notifiable incident on a previous voyage, the port of destination is new, or if there are other factors associated with the proposed voyage that would warrant a veterinarian’s presence.

## Inspection of horses

It is recommended that the horses are inspected at least four times a day, at evenly spaced intervals. The frequency of inspection should increase in proportion to environmental demands such as rough seas, and extreme heat and humidity. The thermoneutral zone (heat production equals heat loss) for horses is between 5°C and 25°C. With extremely warm temperatures horses cannot dissipate body heat quickly enough to maintain homeothermy. Humidity is a major factor in the determination of the horse’s upper critical temperature. **Rectal temperature and appearance** of the horses are the most useful measures for determining crisis situations.

It is strongly recommended that appropriate remedial action (refer to active measures in section 15.5: Water) is taken if the horses show signs of distress. Water availability is essential to avoid dehydration.

## Restraint

A stalled horse needs to be fitted with a halter. In each stall two cross ties and suitable fastenings should be provided to enable a horse to be restrained from biting, rearing or attempting to jump out of the stall. The senior sea groom should be able to demonstrate to the MPI Official veterinarian an emergency procedure for removing fastenings if a horse goes down in the stall. This would require provision of bolt cutters if chains were used as fastenings.

Restraint of horses with their heads in an elevated position (cross-tying) during long journeys can contribute to the pathogenesis of lower respiratory tract disease, so the horses should be given as much freedom of movement of the head as is safe. Where it is possible, it is recommended that feed, including hay, should be provided at shoulder level so that the horse has to lower its head to eat.

## Food

It is strongly advised that food is provided at a rate no less than what is required for maintenance for the expected duration of the voyage taking into account season and weather pattern. Individual horses have varying digestive capabilities that influence maintenance requirements. Periods of extremely cold weather may increase maintenance needs by up to 30%. Temperament is a further factor to be taken into account, as nervous or highly strung horses consume more energy than quiet horses of the same bodyweight.

If fed to appetite, the average horse will consume 2% of its bodyweight as dry matter to meet daily maintenance requirements. Hay should be of premium quality, free of dust and mould. To ensure that intestinal problems do not occur the minimum amount of forage (hay, haylage and chaff) fed to a horse also receiving concentrated foodstuffs should not be less than 1% of its body weight in dry matter. Forage should be offered ad libitum.

The food should be fit for purpose as described in the ACVM (Exemptions and Prohibited Substances) Regulations 2011 (refer to <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2011/0327/latest/DLM3982210.html> for a description of fitness for purpose).

Any medications sourced in New Zealand, used in the prevention and/or treatment of metabolic or nutritional disorders, must be authorised in accordance with the requirements of the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (ACVM) Act 1997, and the New Zealand Veterinary Council's Code of Professional Conduct.

A reserve of an additional 12.5% of the total estimated food budget should be loaded in case the duration of the voyage is extended.

It is recommended that all horses have their own individual feeders, that they are fed at the same time and that the daily ration is split into at least three separate feeds. The groom should keep a record of abnormal responses to food and water provided.

The MPI Official Veterinarian, prior to signing an AWEC, should be satisfied that the exporter’s calculations used to arrive at the quantity of food being loaded are correct.

## Water

Adequate amounts of clean, palatable water should be available at all times for the horses throughout the voyage. The basic water requirement of horses for maintenance is 52ml/kg bodyweight/day. In order to accomplish this, it is recommended that the ship’s watering system has sufficient storage and generation capacity to provide water for the duration of the voyage plus 12.5%, based on the minimum requirements presented below in Table 1. Rapid loss of water and essential electrolytes can result from severe weather conditions, diarrhoea, obstructive colic, and other bowel diseases.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 1: Minimum daily water requirements according to weight | |
| Live weight (kg) | Litres per day |
| Up to 200 | 10 |
| 200 – 300 | 15 |
| 300 – 400 | 25 |
| 400 – 500 | 30 |
| 500 – 600 | 40 |

## Flooring and bedding materials

The flooring of the container should have an anti-slip surface (rubber matting is preferred). For voyages over 48 hours, horses less than 1 year of age should be given suitable bedding so that they can lie down in comfort. It is recommended that all stalls are cleaned out at least twice a day.

## Administration of Medication

The administration of restricted veterinary medicines sourced in New Zealand must be in compliance with the Veterinary Operating Instructions for The Use of Restricted Veterinary Medicines (RVM) by Grooms Travelling with Horses by Sea or Air.

# Veterinary equipment

**Guiding principle**

**The vessel has enough veterinary equipment for the number of horses being transported.**

It is recommended that the veterinary kit is assembled in consultation with the supervising equine veterinarian, so that an adequate quantity of drugs, syringes and needles is available for the number of horses in the consignment. Appendix 3: Veterinary Medicine Kit contains a list of the recommended equipment.

The groom is responsible for the drug inventory, disposal of expired drugs or drugs acquired off-shore. Used needles and syringes need to be appropriately disposed of, with needles placed in a sharps (biohazard) container.

# Humane destruction

**Guiding principle**

**When required, euthanasia of a horse is carried out promptly and humanely.**

## Euthanasia

At a minimum a captive bolt pistol, and sufficient charges of the appropriate size to humanely destroy all the horses on-board, is required. The pistol should be serviced and cleaned as described in the manufacturer’s instructions. It is recommended that the instruction manual for detailed operation and maintenance is kept with the device. MPI may check maintenance records.

Where it is necessary to destroy a horse to prevent further suffering, euthanasia needs to be carried out promptly and humanely by either the senior sea groom or veterinarian using one of the following methods:

* A captive bolt pistol with a penetrating bolt, placed in direct contact with the head, followed by an immediate bleed-out (thoracic or neck stick). The calibre and cartridge size of the captive bolt pistol should be appropriate for the animal according to the manufacturer’s recommendations.
* A .22 calibre rifle or larger with a ‘magnum’ bullet; discharged between 5cm and 25cm from the head, followed by an immediate bleed-out (thoracic or neck stick).
* Euthanasia solution administered by a veterinarian.

The two pictures below indicate the correct target for the humane destruction of horses by captive bolt pistol or .22 calibre rifle. The optimum position is at right angles to the frontal surface, well above the point where imaginary lines from eyes to ears cross.



Signs of successful stunning using a mechanical instrument are:

* the animal collapses immediately and does not attempt to stand up
* the body and muscles of the animal become tonic (rigid) immediately after the shot
* normal rhythmic breathing stops
* eyelid is open with the eyeball facing straight ahead and not rotated.

## Disposal of a dead horse

A horse that dies or is euthanised before loading or is dead on arrival at the port of embarkation should be removed from the port and disposed of in compliance with local health and environmental requirements. If the death occurred during pre-export isolation the Recognised Person will decide whether a post-mortem is required, and if dead on arrival at the port of departure the decision regarding the export of the other horses in the consignment is at the discretion of the MPI Official Veterinarian.

For a death occurring during the voyage it is advised that the carcass is not disposed of within 12 nautical miles of the coastline of any country. A carcass being disposed of between 12 and 100 nautical miles off land should be cut up into small portions or have its thoracic and abdominal cavities cut open. If over 100 nautical miles off land the entire carcase can be disposed of overboard. It is strongly recommended that the decision to euthanise a horse, and/or perform a post-mortem, is made in consultation with the equine veterinarian who is providing technical support for the consignment.

# Voyage reporting

**Guiding principle**

**Timely and accurate reporting upon completion of the voyage is an essential component of ensuring continuous improvement in the export of horses by sea.**

## Voyage report

The exporter is strongly advised to submit a voyage report (refer Appendix 4) for all shipments to MPI within 5 working days of the completion of the voyage (or as required by AWEC condition).

The information contained in these reports is relevant to the consideration of subsequent AWEC applications from the exporter.

## Reporting notifiable incidents

A notifiable incident includes, but is not limited to:

* any serious injury, illness or death of a horse
* rejection of the consignment at the port of arrival
* breakdown of the vessel, requiring assistance to return to port
* an act of terrorism or piracy
* a sea voyage that takes longer than 20% of the anticipated duration.

It is strongly advised that the exporter report all notifiable incidents to MPI as soon as is practical after the incident and within 24 hours of its occurrence.

# Appendix 1: Registration of veterinarians and grooms

**Application to MPI to register veterinarians and senior sea grooms trained to accompany horses being exported by sea freight**

**Exporter**

Name:

Contact details:

I request …………………………………………………. (Applicant’s full name) be put on the MPI register of veterinarians and senior sea grooms who are recognised as eligible to accompany horses being exported by sea freight. He/she fully complies with the following specifications detailed in the MPI guidance document ***Transport of Horses by Sea*:**

Registered veterinarian who has:

* accompanied horses being exported or imported by sea freight on at least one voyage or is a senior air groom registered with MPI
* working knowledge of this document
* knowledge of documents required by the countries of transit (if any) and destination
* experience in handling and caring for horses during loading, while at sea, and unloading
* farrier skills
* working knowledge of a ship’s operations and on-board activities
* a current passport, with visas (where required).

A senior sea groom who **either**:

* has accompanied horses being exported or imported on at least one shipment under the supervision of a senior sea groom and has assisted with at least two loadings at a port of departure
* has been signed off as competent by a senior sea groom,

**And has the following competencies:**

* working knowledge of this document
* certification allowing use of restricted veterinary medicines (RVM) under the Veterinary Operating Instructions for The Use of Restricted Veterinary Medicines (RVM) by Grooms Travelling with Horses by Sea or Air
* knowledge of documents required by the countries of transit (if any) and destination
* ability to recognise a horse that is ill or stressed and to understand the possible causes and how to manage them
* experience in handling and caring for horses during loading, while at sea, and unloading (not necessary for a senior air groom to become registered as a senior sea groom)
* knowledge of the treatment of injuries, when and how to administer veterinary drugs and when and how to immobilize and euthanise a horse
* farrier skills
* working knowledge of a ship’s operations and on-board activities
* a current passport, with visas (where required).

**Or:**

* is a senior air groom registered with MPI

**And has the following competencies:**

* working knowledge of this document
* certification allowing use of restricted veterinary medicines (RVM) under the Veterinary Operating Instructions for The Use of Restricted Veterinary Medicines (RVM) by Grooms Travelling with Horses by Sea or Air
* knowledge of documents required by the countries of transit (if any) and destination
* ability to recognise a horse that is ill or stressed and to understand the possible causes and how to manage them
* knowledge of the treatment of injuries, when and how to administer veterinary drugs and when and how to immobilize and euthanise a horse
* farrier skills
* working knowledge of a ship’s operations and on-board activities
* a current passport, with visas (where required).

(Delete the sections that are not applicable)

**Exporter’s declaration**

I endorse the applicant as competent to accompany horses being exported by sea freight.

Signature:

Name: Date:

# Appendix 2: Body condition scoring for horses

(Based on the Carroll and Huntington Method - Carroll CL, Huntington PJ. Body condition scoring and weight estimation of horses. Equine Veterinary Journal, 20(1) 41–45, 1988)

To obtain the condition score for any horse: first score the pelvis, then adjust the pelvic score up or down by 0.5 if it differs by 1 or more points from the back or neck score.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 0 (Very poor)  Pelvis  Angular, skin tight Very sunken rump Deep cavity under tail  Back and ribs  Skin tight over ribs Very prominent and sharp backbone  Neck  Marked ewe neck Narrow and slack at base |  |  |
| 1 (Poor)  Pelvis  Prominent pelvis and croup Sunken rump but skin supple Deep cavity under tail  Back and ribs  Ribs easily visible Prominent backbone with skin sunken on either side  Neck  Ewe neck, narrow and slack at base |  |  |
| 2 (Moderate)  Pelvis  Rump flat either side of backbone Croup well defined, some fat  Slightly cavity under tail  Back and ribs  Ribs just visible Backbone covered but spines can be felt  Neck  Narrow but firm |  |  |
| 3 (Good)  Pelvis  Covered by fat and rounded No gutter Pelvis easily felt  Back and ribs  Ribs just covered and easily felt No gutter along back Backbone well covered but spines can be felt  Neck  No crest (except for stallions) firm neck |  |  |
| 4 (Fat)  Pelvis  Gutter to root of tail Pelvis covered by soft fat Need firm pressure to feel  Back and ribs  Ribs well covered - need firm pressure to feel Gutter along backbone  Neck  Slight crest Wide and firm |  |  |
| 5 (Very fat)  Pelvis  Deep gutter to root of tail Skin distended Pelvis buried, cannot be felt  Back and ribs  Ribs buried, cannot be felt Deep gutter along back  Back broad and flat  Neck  Marked crest Very wide and firm Fold of fat |  |  |

# Appendix 3: Veterinary Medicine Kit

Kit should contain:

* Xylazine (at least one 50 ml bottle)
* Flunixin (at least 50 ml)
* Phenylbutazone paste (at least 30 x1 gm sachets per 6 horses)
* Procaine penicillin (one 250 ml bottle for 6 horses)
* Tetanus anti-toxin – optional
* Syringes (number will depend on size of consignment) - 3ml, 10ml, 20ml
* Needles (number will depend on size of consignment) - 18g, 20g
* Thermometers x 2
* Scissors
* Wound treatment (swabs, bandage, disinfectant, purple spray)
* Gamgee gauze, Elastoplast, dry cotton swabs
* Captive bolt pistol, cartridges and post mortem knife (There should be sufficient charges of appropriate size to humanely destroy all the horses on-board.)
* Torch
* Chain shank or chiffney bit
* Blindfold
* Restraining collar
* Spare head collar
* Spare rope
* Twitch
* Personal protective equipment
* Groom’s current Certificate of Accreditation
* Modified Transport Restricted Veterinary Medicine Register (Appendix 4)

**Note:** Any Restricted Veterinary Medicines sourced in New Zealand, such as Xylazine, antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs must be authorised for sale and use by a New Zealand registered veterinarian in accordance with the requirements of the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (ACVM) Act 1997, and the New Zealand Veterinary Council's Code of Professional Conduct.

# Appendix 4: Voyage Report Template

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of senior sea groom: |  |
| Date: |  |
| Vessel name: |  |
| Destination: |  |
| No. of horses in consignment: |  |

**Drugs in Veterinary Kit**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RVM name | Trade Name | Concent-ration | Volume in | Batch # | Expiry Date | Dispensed by | Volume Out |
| **Xylazine** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Flunixin** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Phenylbutazone paste** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Procaine penicillin** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Tetanus anti-toxin** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Incident Report (continue on following page if necessary)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Horse’s name / ID** | **Drug used, volume & route** | **Time** | **Reason** | **Outcome** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Horse’s name / ID** | **Drug used, volume & route** | **Time** | **Reason** | **Outcome** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |  |

A**dditional questions (please put a response in each section):**

**1 Did any horses need special attention during loading, the time at sea and unloading and why?**

**2 Were any of the horses not 100% clinically fit when unloaded? What was the concern?**

**3 How many days during the trip would the sea been described as rough?**

**4 For voyages of 4 days or more in length were all the horses able to have daily access to the exercise facility?**

**5 Did any notifiable incidents occur on the voyage?**

NB: A notifiable incident includes, but is not limited to:

1. any serious injury, illness or death of a horse
2. rejection of the consignment at the port of arrival
3. breakdown of the vessel, requiring assistance to return to port
4. an act of terrorism or piracy
5. a sea voyage that takes longer than 20% of the anticipated duration.

Signature of senior sea groom on this voyage:

# 

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