



Hiring out Horses - Pre-inspection information

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018

Before a licence can be granted, an animal licensing officer will inspect the facility to ensure compliance with The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018, Schedule 2 (General Conditions) and Schedule 5 (Specific Conditions: hiring out horses).

For more information about the conditions, visit the Gov.uk website and search [Hiring out horses - statutory guidance](#)

This is a Yes / No exercise to ensure that you are prepared for your licencing inspection and have all the necessary procedures in place to meet the minimum standards.

Requirement	Check
As a minimum, in stables, each horse should have sufficient room to lie down, readily rise and turn around in comfort.	
All passageways should be sufficiently wide to enable horses to be led safely past other horses.	
Where stalls are used (i.e. an individual compartment enclosed on three sides), stall positioning and dimensions must allow room for the horse to lie down but not turn around and have sufficient space behind the stall for the horse to be able to back out with ease.	
Timber must be of good quality, well-kept and any damaged areas sealed or over clad. Wood must be smooth and treated and properly maintained to render it impervious.	
Interior surfaces, including floors, should be even, impervious and able to be disinfected, Where appropriate. Floors must have a non-slip, solid surface.	
Doors must be strong enough to resist impact and must be capable of being effectively secured.	
Doors should be a suitable width for the occupying horse and must be bolted top and bottom.	
The height of the door must allow the horse to look out with the head comfortably over the door unless it can be shown that there is a valid reason to not allow heads out.	
Fields must be safe and securely fenced (ideally using post and rail, at least 1.25m (4ft) high, plain taut wire, well maintained hedging or electric fencing with gates).	



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Requirement	Check
Horses must have access to shelter in the form of purpose built or natural cover, when kept in fields.	
All horses in work must benefit from regular routine grooming and must be groomed prior to tacking up.	
The body condition of every horse must be monitored on a regular basis.	
Exercise or field time forms part of this enrichment.	
Horses are usually best kept in social groups.	
Horses must be interacting with people through daily grooming and exercise.	
There must be a muck heap located away from any stables, ideally at least 10 metres distant.	
The licence holder must hold a valid certificate of public liability insurance.	
Saddles and tack must be checked regularly for safety and for correct fit for the horse.	
All horses must have a dental check at least once a year.	
If shod, their shoes must be properly fitted by a registered farrier.	
The licence holder must register with a veterinarian	
There must be a designated key holder available in case of emergencies, details of this person need to be lodged with the Licencing authority	
An emergency contact name/number must be displayed on the outside of the premises	

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PROCEDURES / POLICIES NEEDED - Schedule 2 General Conditions:

Condition No.	Requirement	Check
8.2	A policy must be in place for monitoring the introduction of new horses to existing groups, to avoid stress to either new or resident animals.	
9.1	Documented procedures covering: a) feeding regimes; b) cleaning regimes c) transportation d) prevention/control of disease e) monitoring health/welfare f) death/escape of an animal; g) care following suspension/revocation of licence or emergency.	
9.3	The licence holder must have a biosecurity plan agreed with a veterinarian, which must include the ability to isolate a horse for up to 21 days. There must be a Control of Substances Hazardous to Health assessment for management of infectious diseases including coverage for zoonoses and use of Process Operation Management Systems.	
9.4	Procedures must be in place and understood by all staff to prevent introduction/spread of infectious disease. Preventative plan including grassland management and anthelmintics with faecal egg counts.	
10.1	A written emergency plan, acceptable to the local authority, must be in place, known and available to all the people on the premises used for the licensable activity, and followed where necessary to ensure appropriate steps are taken to protect all the people and animals on the premises in case of fire or in case of breakdowns for essential heating, ventilation and aeration or filtration systems or other	



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Condition No.	Requirement	Check
	emergencies. There must be a Preventative Fire Risk Assessment that includes location map re access/egress for people and horses. There must be awareness about entrapment of horses and the procedures to release them. There must be a plan for accommodation for the horses should the premises become uninhabitable even if just field provision is available. There must be contingency planning for extreme weather. There must be a portable human first aid kit available for use off property, where applicable, and a list of people qualified in first aid on display.	
10.2	The plan must include details of the emergency measures to be taken for the extrication of the animals should the premises become uninhabitable and an emergency telephone list that includes the fire service and police.	

PROCEDURES / POLICIES NEEDED - Schedule 5 Specific Conditions:

Condition No.	Requirement	Check
5.1	There must be a suitable annual pasture management plan for fields.	
6.2	There must be a preventative healthcare plan in place agreed with the appointed veterinarian or appointed veterinary practitioner. The health plan must demonstrate the measures taken to prevent and control disease alongside any medication or treatments for each horse.	

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RECORDS TO BE KEPT: Schedule 2 General Conditions

Condition No.	Requirement	Check
2.1	The licence holder must ensure that at any time all the records that the licence holder is required to keep as a condition of the licence are available for inspection by an inspector in a visible and legible form or, where any such records are stored in electronic form, in a form from which they can readily be produced in a visible and legible form.	
2.2	The licence holder must keep all such records for at least three years beginning with the date on which the record was created.	
4.1	Sufficient numbers of people who are competent for the purpose must be available to provide a level of care that ensures that the welfare needs of all the animals are met. Personnel with experience of working with horses must actively oversee daily horse care and ensure optimal welfare for all horses. Staff or at least one member of staff must have a recognised qualification such as a relevant OFQUAL regulated Level 3 qualification and/or suitable experience/training such as having run an equine establishment before.	
4.2	Suitable and sufficient training of staff must be demonstrated to have been carried out in the following areas with relevant records of induction: Animal welfare, including recognising poor welfare Animal handling Cleanliness and hygiene Feeding and food preparation Disease prevention and control Recognition and first aid treatment of sick or injured animals.	
4.3	The licence holder must provide and ensure the implementation of a written training policy for all staff. The training policy must be reviewed on an annual basis and updated as required and must include: o annual appraisal o planned continued professional development o recognition of knowledge gaps o Use of online courses and literature o If no staff are employed the licence holder must demonstrate their own knowledge development. It will be applicable to any members of staff. Training can be demonstrated by engagement with online courses and the documentation of the	

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Condition No.	Requirement	Check
	annual appraisal. Evidence of staff attendance or completion of the training must be provided	
5.1	Accommodation must be regularly inspected for damage and potential injury or escape points and the results of these inspections recorded. Damaged accommodation must be repaired or replaced immediately.	
5.9	A documented system of recording observation for illness, injury or behavioural problems must be maintained.	
6.1	A plan/record of the type, quantity, frequency of food each horse receives must be kept.	
7.3	The behaviour of individual horses must be monitored daily and changes in behaviour and/or behaviours indicative of stress, fear, pain and anxiety must be recorded and acted upon.	
9.2	All people responsible for the care of the animals must be made fully aware of the condition 9.1 procedures. The procedures must demonstrate how the conditions outlined in this guidance are met.	
9.4	If there is evidence of external parasites (fleas, ticks, lice, mites) the horse must be treated according to best practice and using a product authorised for use by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate where necessary. Records of such treatment must be kept.	
9.7	Routine and documented treatment must be in place for internal and external parasites. Consideration must be given to biosecurity and horse travel movements in determining a vaccination plan.	
9.9	Any medication given must be prescribed/recommended for the individual horse by a veterinarian, and each instance must be recorded. Records of POMs administered must be recorded in horse passports by the veterinarian or owner where required.	
10.1	Emergency drills must be regularly practised and practices recorded with any failings noted and addressed in the procedures. Drills must be undertaken at least annually, or as determined by fire risk assessments. All new members of staff must have this as part of their induction programme.	



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RECORDS TO BE KEPT: Schedule 5 Specific Conditions:

Condition No.	Requirement	Check
6.1	All horses must have a structured management and care programme including foot care, worming and veterinary care. This must be set out on an annual calendar or diary.	
6.3	A daily record of the workload of each horse must be maintained and available for inspection at any reasonable time. This record will set out hours of work that each horse has undertaken and must be maintained over the course of that year.	
6.4	There will be records to demonstrate that each horse workload/regime is balanced to meet the needs of each individual horse including maximum weight of rider.	
6.6	If shod, their shoes must be properly fitted by a registered farrier. The frequency of trimming and shoeing for each individual horse must be recorded and available for inspection.	
6.9	The licence holder must keep a register of all horses kept for the licensable activity on the premises and each horse's valid passport showing its unique equine life number and microchip number (if any).	
7.1	Riding hats must meet current safety standards and be worn at all times when mounted and any hats provided must be stored, clean and fit for purpose with clearly documented records of regular safety checks.	



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STAR RATINGS:

Scoring Matrix		Welfare Standards		
		Minor Failings (existing business that are failing to meet minimum standards)	Minimum Standards (as laid down in the schedules and guidance)	Higher Standards (as laid down in the guidance)
Risk	Low Risk	1 Star 1yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period	3 Star 2yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 24 month period	5 Star 3yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 36 month period
	Higher Risk	1 Star 1yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period	2 Star 1yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period	4 Star 2yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 24 month period

As part of these regulations, each premises will receive a star rating following their formal inspection.

New businesses

New businesses are automatically classed as high risk as there is no compliance history.

A new business must meet all minimum standards to be granted a licence. All minimum standards must be met to achieve a 2 star/1 year licence.

If all REQUIRED higher standards **and** at least 50% of OPTIONAL higher standards are met, it is possible for a new business to achieve a 4 star/2 year licence.

Existing businesses

All minimum standards, (including having consents, policies and procedures in place) must be met to achieve a 3 star/2 year licence.

If all REQUIRED higher standards **and** at least 50% of OPTIONAL higher standards are met, it is possible for a new business to achieve a 5 star/3 year licence.

If an existing business has any minor failings, it will be issued with 1 star/1 year licence.



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Required Higher Standards (all required)	Description	Check
Permanent individual turnout paddock/pen	Horses must have their own area for grazing/turnout if needed.	
Out-of-hours inspection	Horses inspected at least once between 6pm–8am.	
Structured management & care programme	Includes exercise needs and alternatives (grooming/physiotherapy).	
Individual care plans	Each horse must have a care plan detailing age and health conditions.	
Training plans	Records showing monitoring/training plans for horses with training needs; evidence of regular saddler checks.	
Rider assessments	Initial assessments for new riders must be recorded.	
Equipment risk assessments	Documented risk assessments for clippers, blowers, horse walker, arena leveller, therapy machines.	
Activity risk assessments	Includes PPE requirements for different tasks/situations.	

Optional Higher Standards (minimum 2 required)	Description	Check
Veterinary inspection area	Separate secure, clean, well-lit area.	
Purpose-built feed room	Must be well-lit, lockable, with water available, and supplement storage.	
Competent person on site at all times	Continuous supervision.	
Health plans and feed charts	Individual health plan for each horse and monitoring of dietary needs. Monthly body condition scoring must be recorded. Legible feed chart on display showing correct feeding amounts for each horse.	