

Best Practices for the Horse Industry & Equestrian Community **Barns**

This Best Practices document for the Horse Industry and Equestrian Community covers the best practices for Lesson and Boarding Barns during the COVID-19 "Maryland Strong - Roadmap to Recovery" Phases. All segments of the horse industry and equestrian community must abide by all the State's Mandated Guidelines at each Phase. All current mandates must be followed during each Phase, i.e. masks must be worn whenever required, limitations on the size of gatherings respected, and social distancing of 6 feet must be maintained.

Below are suggested Best Practices each sector can consider as they plan for reopening and take steps to help the public, themselves, and staff stay as safe as possible. We are fully aware that types of barn operations, locations and types of facilities, and other regional differences will influence both the practicality and necessity of implementing these Best Practices for our Maryland stables. Organizers are strongly encouraged to abide by guidelines provided by local governing entities and national organizations such as the United States Equestrian Federation in implementing chosen Best Practices. We encourage stable owners and managers to use this list as a guide, and to determine additional Best Practices specific to their circumstances.

Horse Industry Barns Best Practices:

Barns –

Suggestions for Barns:

Barn owners may choose to adopt more restrictive procedures than those set forth here.

1. Access should not be allowed to anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19, or anyone who has been exposed to a person with symptoms within the self-quarantine period.
2. Wearing face masks/coverings and hand sanitation is required
3. Have a visitor log in and out, install signage with posted rules, consider requiring liability waivers/agreements to be signed (check with legal counsel)
4. Schedule set times for staff, volunteers, participants and permitted family members on property to ensure limitations on size of gatherings can be maintained.
5. Farm owners/barn managers should limit the number of horse owners/clients and staff on the premises, consistent with the current maximum number of persons allowable in a gathering and requirements for social distancing. In implementing this rule, barn owners should consider the size and accommodations of the facilities, the number of clients, and the ability of the facility owner/manager to limit contact and interaction between and among clients and staff.
6. Require hand washing or sanitizing and possibly foot baths, by all persons entering and leaving the property, and after handling deliveries and equipment.
7. Tack, equipment and supplies should not be shared if possible, and should be disinfected between uses if sharing is unavoidable. Frequently handled surfaces such as doorknobs, gate and stall latches, light switches, hoses, spray nozzles, pump handles, cross tie snaps, feed scoops, trash cans, truck and tractor doors and controls, etc., should be disinfected regularly.
8. All enclosed communal areas must follow all social distancing guidelines or be closed to the public. No congregating with other horse owners, management or staff, including but not limited to tack rooms, feed rooms, wash stalls, hay lofts, equipment sheds, offices, lounges, barn aisles, parking lots etc.
9. Horse owners/clients may ride their horses if all of the above conditions are met and as follows:

- a. A horse owner/client may ride on open trails with other mounted persons, presuming at least 6 feet of distance is maintained between horses. No groups larger than allowed under applicable limitations on size of gatherings.
 - b. A Horse owner/client may ride in an arena (indoor or outdoor) with other mounted persons and instructors or other ground/unmounted person, as long as social distancing guidelines and limitations on size of gatherings are followed.
- 10. Stables/Farms may host instructional/training clinics for horse owners/clients provided that the ride times are scheduled so that there is a limited number of riders in each group (no more than maximum allowed gathering size including instructor and other ground person, if any) and so that there is sufficient time (15 minutes...) between groups to avoid congregating outside the ring.
 - a. For training/instruction/clinics, the only unmounted person permitted in the ring is the clinician, with the exception that for jumping clinics that clinician may have a jump setter in the ring as well (social distancing maintained). See limits on indoor use as above
 - b. Payment and releases should all be exchanged electronically beforehand; no sharing of pens, clipboards, paperwork, checks, etc.
 - c. Spectators/auditors are limited to the number of persons allowed under the current maximum number of people in a gathering (including riders and instructor/ground person) and must wear face masks and observe social distancing rules.
- 11. Barn owners/managers must make clear that only one other person (e.g., a parent or friend) may accompany a client to the barn. Guests and visitors must all be cleared by the barn owner/manager and adhere to social distancing guidelines
- 12. Lessons must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Number of students in each lesson and number of spectators must remain within applicable limitations on the size of gatherings.
- 13. Instructors should observe 6 feet distance from students and others during lessons.
- 14. To the greatest extent possible, maintain social distance for payment, e.g., payment deposit box in barn, digital payment apps, etc. No sharing of pens, etc. Online payments and scheduling is preferred
- 15. The facility should have a written emergency plan for handling injuries that is designed to maintain bio-security to the greatest extent possible.
- 16. Posted signs on safety/bio-security protocols and additional liability agreements.

For trail riding facilities:

Trail riding facilities may resume operations, subject to observance of the current social distancing rules and limitations on gatherings. Horses should be groomed, tacked and untacked by staff. Reins, saddles and other commonly touched surfaces should be cleaned with saddle soap or disinfected after each ride.

Stables offering therapeutic riding and/or interaction with horses

Equine Assisted Activities & Therapies (EAAT), such as hippotherapy, equine-facilitated psychotherapy, and therapeutic riding are considered essential health services, and this would apply to those appropriately credentialed equine facilities that do on-site and off-site therapies. However, the current restriction on social distancing/prohibition against large gatherings must be followed, as well as the Best Practices in terms of disinfecting/cleaning.