

Best Practices for the Horse Industry & Equestrian Community
Lesson Programs

In this Best Practices document for the Horse Industry and Equestrian Community, the Maryland Horse Council suggests best practices for Lesson Programs 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 lesson barn 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.

Lesson Programs—

Suggestions for Lesson Programs:

(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. Instructors and students should wear face masks/coverings and use hand sanitation, as required by state and local jurisdiction. Students should wear gloves.
3. Have visitors log in and out, install signage with posted rules, consider requiring COVID-19 specific liability waivers/agreements to be signed (check with legal counsel)
4. Schedule set times for lessons to ensure limitations on size of gatherings can be maintained.
5. Farm owners/barn managers should limit the number of students 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. 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.
7. All enclosed communal areas must follow all social distancing guidelines or be closed to the public. No congregating with other students, instructors, boarders, management or staff, in areas including but not limited to tack rooms, feed rooms, wash stalls, hay lofts, equipment sheds, offices, lounges, barn aisles, parking lots etc.
8. Observe social distancing during lesson check in, no sharing of pens, clipboards, etc.
9. 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.
10. Lessons should be taught in outdoor arenas/areas to the greatest extent possible.
11. Instructors should observe 6 feet distance from students and others during lessons.

12. Students riding horses they own or lease should bring their own tack (including halters) and grooming supplies, and should do their own grooming, tacking and untacking.
13. Instructors or barn staff should groom and tack, including bridling, for students riding school horses or horses in shared lease programs that use communal tack and grooming supplies. After the lesson, students should hand off the horse to the instructor or barn staff, who will untack the horse and wipe down reins, saddle seats and stirrup leathers.
14. Only one other person (e.g., a parent or friend) may accompany student to barn.
15. Mounting assistance, if needed, must be provided by the person who accompanied the student to the barn, not the instructor or staff.
16. 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
17. The facility should have a written emergency plan for handling injuries that is designed to maintain bio-security to the greatest extent possible.