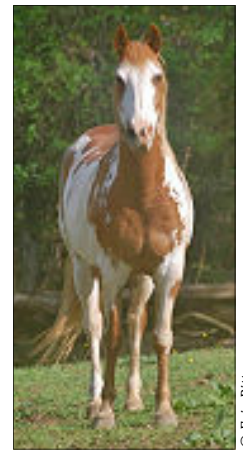




# Guide to Minimum Standards of Care for EQUINES

*Maryland State Law, Title 10, Subtitle 604 requires that any person having the charge or custody of an animal must provide:*

**Nutritious food in sufficient quantity | Necessary veterinary care | Proper drink | Air | Space | Shelter or protection from the weather**



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The Maryland Horse Council provides the definitions of these legal terms as the terms apply to the care of equines in the state of Maryland. The Maryland Horse Council considers these guidelines to be the minimum base of care necessary for equines as defined by the equestrian community in Maryland.

**Nutritious Food in Sufficient Quantity:** • Food shall be provided in sufficient quantity and be of adequate and appropriate nutritive value.

- Nutritious food of sufficient quality, i.e., wholesome, palatable and free from contamination, such as feces, mold, mildew, insects, etc.
- Diet shall be prepared with consideration for the age, breed/type, condition, size, work level, and quantity of equine(s).
- Equines should score, by veterinarian, no less than a body condition score of 3 on the Henneke Condition Scoring Chart to be considered of adequate weight.
- Equines shall have access to adequate natural forage or be fed daily or as recommended by a veterinarian.
- All storage and feeding receptacles shall be kept clean and free from contaminants, such as feces, mold, mildew, insects, etc.
- If more than one animal is fed at one time or in one place, it shall be the responsibility of the owner/custodian to ensure that each animal receives nutrition in sufficient quantity.

**Proper Drink:** • Proper drink shall mean clean, potable water available at all times for all equines. Exceptions shall be determined by veterinary consultation or professionally accepted practices for the safety and well-being of the equine.

- Equines that are being worked or are in transport shall be provided water as often as necessary for the health and comfort of the equine. Frequency of watering shall consider age, breed/type, condition, size and quantity of equine(s). Activity levels and climatic conditions must be considered.
- Equines that do not have free access to water must be offered water at least twice daily.
- All water receptacles shall be kept clean and free of contaminants and be positioned or affixed to minimize spillage.

**Air:** Enclosed areas should be constructed or modified to allow free flow of air to control temperature and humidity, and to prevent air stagnation.

**Shelter:** Shelter for equines shall have at least a roof and three sides and be kept in good repair and free of standing water, accumulated waste, sharp objects and debris. Proper shelter provides protection from inclement weather conditions (i.e., prevailing wind, sleet, rain, and temperature extremes). It is the responsibility of the owner/ custodian to ensure that each equine, taking into consideration age, breed/type, and health, has access to proper shelter or protection from the weather (i.e., relief from more dominant equines that may exclude him/her from the shelter). ... OR ...

All equines should have access to proper/appropriate shelter from weather extremes. Trees and natural weather barriers providing shelter may be considered adequate shelter.

**Necessary Veterinary Care:** An equine shall be afforded immediate veterinary care if known or suspected to have an injury, accidental or deliberate, or exhibiting such signs as shock, colic, founder, tremors, swelling, broken bones, open wounds, inability to eat or drink, blistering as a result of fire, acid, etc., irregular or abnormal breathing, partial or total paralysis, abnormal discharge or bleeding, signs of disease, severe parasitic infestation or infection, loss of appetite, weight loss, abnormal skin condition or hair loss, temperature fluctuation, persistent diarrhea, inability to bear weight on a limb or lameness, or other such signs.

The following are recognized as standard veterinary care guidelines for equines:

- Hoof care maintenance and trimming every six (6) to eight (8) weeks, or as directed by a veterinarian or a farrier.
- Parasites kept under control through worming every six (6) to eight (8) weeks or as directed by your veterinarian.
- Annual dental check-up and necessary treatment to ensure proper and adequate food digestion.
- Vaccinations as recommended by your veterinarian.
- Proof of testing for Equine Infectious Anemia (Coggins Test) is mandated by law in the following cases:
  - ◆ When equines are being transported across state lines
  - ◆ When equines are bought or sold
  - ◆ When equines are at shows or gatherings

**Space:** Space available to the equine must be usable and safe (i.e., must be provided an area free of standing water, accumulated waste, sharp objects and debris, and maintained in a safe and healthful manner). Fencing shall be well maintained and in good repair at all times.

Equines shall be allowed to exercise and have freedom of movement as necessary to reduce stress and maintain good physical condition. Space and provisions for exercise must be appropriate and sufficient for the age, breed/type, quantity, condition, and size of the equine(s).

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## Maryland Horse Council

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