

Temporary Sheltering: Equine

The temporary sheltering of equine species (e.g., horses, mules, donkeys, etc.) may be a necessary action during an animal health emergency situation. Some practical considerations involved when setting up these sites for equids include shelter location and type; food, water, and shelter requirements; transportation details; and sanitation consideration.

Assessment and Planning

- Location and possible shelter sites:
 - Publicly owned lands
 - Fairgrounds
 - Abandoned or empty feedlots
 - Fenced pastures (climate permitting)
 - Other buildings such as airplane hangars, livestock auction markets, or building a shelter on a site
- Animals
 - How many?
 - Infected or not infected?
 - Food and water requirements
 - Housing requirements
- Food and water
- Waste management
- Personnel
 - Animal handling and care experience
 - Biosecurity
 - Site security
- Length of time

Shelter Requirements

- Containment
 - Containment: fencing, pens, stalls
 - Check for sharp objects
 - Spacing
- Shelter from elements
 - Wind breaks
- Ventilation
- Temperature control
 - Shade, fans
 - Warmth
- Bedding
 - Straw, wood chips

Supplies Needed

- **General Supplies**– halters, lead ropes, blankets, bedding, wheelbarrows, rakes, pitchforks, feed, hoses, disinfectant, bleach, buckets
- **Office Supplies**– release and identification forms, paper, pens, computers
- **Veterinary Supplies**– medications, vaccines, bandages, leg wraps, IV fluids
- Waste disposal
 - Prompt removal of waste
 - Daily cleaning of stalls
 - Clean and disinfect equipment after use
 - Use dedicated equipment for isolation areas
- Isolation area for sick animals
- Special needs
 - Juvenile animals (e.g., foals, yearlings)
 - Pregnant or lactating mares

Transportation

- Unload animals at a distance from the shelter
- Having a one way flow of traffic can aid in the “check-in” and unloading process
- Vehicles should be cleaned and disinfected

Housing Equine

- Avoid overcrowding
- Segregate animals based on:
 - Gender (e.g., stallions, mares)
 - Stallions should be housed separately
 - By herd
 - Mothers with offspring
 - Pregnant mares
- Isolate sick animals
- Appropriate density
- All animals should have some form of permanent identification
 - Brand, microchip, tattoo
- Can be housed in outside pens if climate allows
- Animals need ample room in holding pens
- Do not mix animals from different herds

Food and Water

- Feed: 1-2% of body weight
 - Open pasture
 - Grass or baled hay: 10-20 lb/1000 pound animal/day
- Water: 5 gallons/1000 pound animal/day
 - Water consumption will increase in hot weather conditions
- Grain may be needed for young, lactating or pregnant animals
 - Additional nutritional requirements
- Monitor feed and water intake
 - Animals not eating should be examined by a veterinarian

Waste Management

- Prompt removal of animal waste to ensure hygienic conditions
- Stalls and pens should be cleaned daily
- Equipment used for waste management should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Dedicated equipment should be used in isolation areas

Veterinary Care and Involvement

- Incoming and outgoing animals need to be thoroughly examined
- Incoming animals should be isolated from others
- Daily inspections of the animals in the shelter
- Animal disease recognition form should be posted
- Isolate sick animals
 - A separate area should be set up for sick or ill animals
 - Animals showing illness should immediately be examined by a veterinarian
 - Any confirmed diseases should be reported

within the Incident Command Structure

Additional Resources

- AVMA Disaster Preparedness and Response Guidebook
 - http://www.avma.org/disaster/emerg_prep_resp_guide.pdf
- Basics of Feeding Horses: Feeding Management. University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension
<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/pages/publicationD.jsp?publicationId=914>
- Emergency Treatment and Management of Horses Under Hurricane Conditions. Mississippi State Extension.
<http://msucares.com/pubs/infosheets/is1713.pdf>

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