

Equine Biosecurity and Access Management



Having a farm biosecurity plan is important for maintaining the health of your horses. One crucial aspect of your biosecurity plan will be controlling how horses, humans, and equipment are able to move into and around your farm. This is known as “access management”.

Access management is described as “the use of physical barriers and/or procedural barriers to reduce transmission of pathogens onto, within and between horse farms and facilities by people, horses, equipment, materials and vehicles.”

Proper access management will help you to...

- Identify and block pathways for disease transmission
- Control unwanted and unnecessary access to the facility and horses
- Manage movement of people, horses, equipment, materials and vehicles
- Reduce the risk of spreading disease in the event of an outbreak

Establishing biosecure zones will allow for the separation and protection of horses, humans and areas within a facility. There are two types of zones: controlled access zones and restricted access zones.

A **controlled access zone** contains facilities that are indirectly involved in caring for horses and areas such as laneways and storage buildings. **Restricted access zones** are areas within a controlled access zone where horses commonly reside, such as barns, paddocks and quarantine areas. Restricted access zones will have stricter biosecurity measures and will restrict access to horses. **Controlled access points** are entry points to each zone.



This figure demonstrates the different biosecure zones. The yellow perimeter fencing creates a controlled access zone. Restricted access zones, like paddocks and stables, are marked in red. Controlled access points are shown in purple.

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Best practices for horse and facility access

- Review the facility to determine biosecurity risks and create controlled access and restricted access zones.
- Create segregated areas for horses returning from off property, new introductions and for treatment of sick horses.
- Keep all zones free of debris and manure which may pose a potential disease risk.
- Ensure all biosecurity equipment, such as hand sanitizer and disinfectant, are provided at designated access points.
- Post signage to inform and direct people of biosecurity zones and measures.
- Only allow outside equipment, tools and vehicles into controlled access zones if it is unavoidable.



Best practices for people access

- Ensure staff, boarders, and outside professionals (such as vets and farriers) understand and follow biosecurity practices, including the use of zones.
- Limit non-essential traffic, especially to restricted access zones.
- Visitors should not be allowed into controlled access zones if they have had recent contact (less than 48 hours) with horses known to be or suspected of being infected with a contagious disease, or if they have recently returned (less than five days) from a foreign country where they had contact with equines or other livestock.
- Visitors should be informed of biosecurity practices before entering the facility. A visitor log can be used to document visitor access, which can be helpful in the event of a disease outbreak.

This fact sheet was assembled with information from the National Farm - Level Biosecurity standard. The committee for the standard was comprised of equine owners, subject matter experts, provincial government officials, representatives from regional and sector - specific equine industry organizations, the public sector and academics; including representatives from Equine Guelph. [Follow this link to view the draft copy.](#)

To learn more about equine biosecurity and to access tools such as Equine Guelph's Biosecurity Risk Calculator, [visit our biosecurity page.](#)