

## **Equine Health And Biosecurity Guide for USEF Events (Includes Equine Disease Response Guide)**

The United States Equestrian Federation (“US Equestrian”) Equine Health and Biosecurity Guide has been designed to provide general equine health and biosecurity guidance as well as equine disease response guidance for US Equestrian Licensed Competitions. This resource guide is based upon science-based principles for equine health, biosecurity, disease prevention, response, and recovery. This is solely information for competition and facility management to consider for their competition and venue.

Because the Resource Guide is intended to provide general guidelines and recommendations, not all of its contents will apply to every US Equestrian Licensed Competition Organizer. The Recognized Affiliate for your breed or discipline may have resources that are specific to their competitions. References to US Equestrian’s rules are cited throughout this Resource Guide. Those rules can be found at [www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org)

***Disclaimer:*** *The safety of all equine and human participants is paramount to US Equestrian. This Resource Guide is provided solely as an informational and educational service to US Equestrian Licensed Competition organizers. Each competition’s policies, procedures, and protocols are the responsibility of the individual organizer. As such, US Equestrian cannot and does not accept responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of any information or material provided herein. This Resource Guide is not intended to, nor does it, constitute medical, veterinary, or legal advice or legal opinions and should not be relied upon as medical, veterinary, or legal advice or opinion. By using this Resource Guide, you agree to this disclaimer and recognize that it may be necessary to seek the advice of an attorney licensed to practice in the appropriate jurisdiction.*

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## **PART 1: General Equine Health and Biosecurity Guidance**

### **A. Introduction**

The introduction and spread of an equine infectious disease pathogen on the event grounds can have significant horse health and economic implications for all parties. Implementation of biosecurity measures reduces potential risks at the event. It is important to remember that evaluating risk factors prior to the event, implementing preventative biosecurity measures, developing a disease response plan, designing an isolation stabling area plan, promoting and observing best biosecurity practices, and enacting a response plan to a disease pathogen detection protects and promotes equine health and the continuation of the competition.

The information in this Resource Guide is comprehensive but is not intended to be exhaustive. Utilize the enclosed materials as appropriate for your Licensed Competition at your own discretion and judgment. In no way does this document supersede rules of organizations, such as US Equestrian rules, state, regional, or local ordinances, or others. The information and sample documents in this resource guide are offered solely as an informational and educational service to US Equestrian Licensed Competition Organizers.

If you are considering implementing additional health requirements, we urge you to contact USEF with your plans, biosecurity protocols and procedures for feedback.

This document is organized into biosecurity recommendations for planning before the competition, during the competition, post competition, and for a disease event at the competition.

### **B. Before the Competition**

1. **Identify Official Veterinarian:** The official veterinarian plays an essential role in ensuring the health and safety of the competition horses. The Federation has the following rules related to this position, which should be taken into consideration when selecting the official veterinarian.
  - a. **GR 1204** requires the individual to be a licensed graduate of an accredited veterinary school in good standing and have experience in equine veterinary practices.
  - b. **GR 1211.5a** states every competition with rated or non-rated division(s) or sections must have a qualified veterinarian present throughout the competition if the previous year's competition's entry number was 300 horses or greater. See individual breed/discipline rules (ex. HJ 105.1e, DR 125.5) that may require a lower threshold than listed above. At a multi-breed/discipline competition, the lowest threshold will prevail.
  - c. **GR 1211.5c** requires competitions without an on-site official veterinarian to have a written agreement for a veterinarian to be on call for the competition.

- d. **GR 901.8** requires competition management to submit to the Federation, through the Federation's Competition Dashboard, the designated official veterinarian or veterinary clinic contact information no less than seven (7) days prior to the start of competition. (Contact information includes name, email, and phone number).

Additionally, US Equestrian provides the following additional recommendations for selection of an official veterinarian.

- Strongly recommend contact information for a named individual veterinarian rather than generic clinic contact is provided to the Federation in advance of the event as that is the contact information USEF uses in the event of an equine health and safety emergency when immediate contact is essential.
- Recommend the written agreement to include role of official veterinarian in the event of a disease outbreak, specifically their role in implementing and enforcing biosecurity measures.
- An agreement with the local equine referral hospital in advance of event which states availability and willingness to provide emergency medical care for sick horses transported from the event.
- Veterinarians with questions or concerns regarding the roles and responsibilities of an official veterinarian should be referred to the USEF Veterinary Department.

Official veterinarians are required for the competition to be held. When a veterinarian is not secured for the competition, the competition must be postponed or canceled. USEF is conscious of the nationwide equine veterinary shortage, and the Equine Health Team ([Equinehealth@usef.org](mailto:Equinehealth@usef.org)) at the Federation is available to assist you in identifying potential equine veterinarians in the area.

2. **Draft and Submit Isolation Plan:** A critical component in preventing and controlling a disease outbreak is the immediate isolation of a sick horse. Federation rule **GR 874** outlines the requirements for an isolation plan and isolation stalls/stabling. Specifically, the rule states:
  - a. **Plans are required when there is overnight stabling of competition horses**
    - i. One-day shows where no competition horses stay overnight are exempt.
    - ii. Plans must be submitted to Federation 14 days in advance of the event.
    - iii. All plans require inclusion of the specific location of isolation stalls, namely the designated on-site barn/pasture/lot or the designated off-site location.
    - iv. Competition managers should have a written agreement for off-site locations.
  - b. **On-site isolation STALLS are required for:**
    - i. Events with more than 1,000 horses

- ii. Events longer than 10 days consecutive days at the same location (clock starts from the day horses are allowed to move into the stabling)

Every venue and every event include a unique disease risk. US Equestrian recommends competition management work with an official veterinarian or USEF Equine Health and Biosecurity Veterinarian in the development of the appropriate isolation stabling location and plan for the event. The USEF Competition Isolation Planning webpage has additional guidance documents and videos. <https://www.usef.org/compete/resources-forms/competition-management/competition-safety-biosecurity/isolation>

3. **Isolation Stabling Set Up:** Setting up the isolation stabling before a sick horse is identified saves precious time. Set up includes the following steps: identifying stock of personal protective equipment such as gloves, booties, disposable coveralls, designated feed tubs, water buckets, feed, hay, bedding, hoses, muck buckets, and pitchforks. It should also include posting contact information for emergency veterinary clinic. Signage should be placed on the exterior of the isolation stabling, identifying that the area has restricted access. You should contact off-site isolation stabling managers to confirm availability and make sure contact information for the designated hauler to that location is accessible.
4. **Set Equine Health Entry Requirement:** Ensuring healthy horses enter the competition grounds is essential for a healthy competition. Reminder that all out-of-state horses shall meet state entry health requirements. **GR 845** requires competition horses more than 7 months of age entering the grounds to be accompanied by documentation of Equine Influenza Virus and Equine Herpesvirus (Rhinopneumonitis) vaccinations within six months prior to entering the stables. Although review and verification by management is not required, these requirements are strongly recommended by US Equestrian.

**Additional recommended entry requirements include:**

- a. **Health Declaration:** To ensure healthy horses are entering, a health declaration signed by trainer/owner stating each horse has been afebrile (temperature below 101.5F) for the previous 3 days and have not been determined by a state animal health official to have been exposed to a confirmed case of an equine infectious disease (Equine Herpesvirus, Equine Strangles, or Equine Influenza) in the previous 21 days. Additionally, vaccination records/documentation supporting compliance with Federation rules should accompany health declaration. For sample document template visit: <https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/ixAP61AE9U8/sample-health-declaration>
- b. **Negative Coggins:** A negative Coggins test within 12 months prior to the entry to the competition grounds. If Coggins expires during the event, a new Coggins should be required before departure from home premises.

- c. **Healthy Horse Entry:** A horse with any visual signs of illness at time of offloading shall be prohibited entry or be placed in isolation until examined by a veterinarian.

**Entry requirements may need to be altered in the event of a disease outbreak.** When a disease outbreak is occurring in the area or in a population of horses who are likely to participate in the event, event management is encouraged to visit the Equine Disease Communication Center ([www.equinediseasecc.org](http://www.equinediseasecc.org)) for the most recent equine disease outbreak information and consult the official veterinarian to determine if additional entry requirements are warranted.

All health entry requirements for the show must be communicated to all participants in advance of the event, including, not limited to, publication in prize list, on event website, on social media, in email communications, **and** at show office bulletin board. Keep in mind that different participants look for time-sensitive communications in different places, so you need to use as many methods as possible to make sure you reach everyone.

5. **Schedule Arrival Time:** To ensure health documents are reviewed upon entry, coordinate arrival times with the availability of a show representative who can check paperwork. If possible, set up an electronic mechanism for receipt of health documentation for review and approval prior to event entry.
6. **Communicate with State Animal Health Official:** The state animal health official has authority over equine regulatory disease responses within their state. Certain diseases are reportable in each state, and the action taken by the state animal health official may vary. It is important to know what diseases are reportable and actionable by state animal health officials in the state where the competition is being held. Reaching out and having discussions with the state animal health official prior to the event may be beneficial, as a meet and greet during a disease response can be challenging. For contact information for the state veterinarian's office in each state visit: [https://www.usaha.org/upload/Federal%20and%20State%20Health/STATE ANIMAL HEALTH OFFICIALS.pdf](https://www.usaha.org/upload/Federal%20and%20State%20Health/STATE_ANIMAL_HEALTH_OFFICIALS.pdf)
  - a. **Reportable Diseases and State Regulatory Authority:** Each individual state determines their reportable disease list, and they do vary. The actions taken for a reportable disease range from no action, to monitoring, to quarantines. For example, equine influenza is reportable in many states, but very few states take actions on the reported cases.
7. **Draft Stable Layout and Stall Assignments:** Commingling horses at a competition always carries a risk for disease. The stable layout and assignment of stalls impact the level of risk. However, it is important to understand risk cannot be eliminated and competitions

are always at risk for infectious diseases. The key is to identify, understand, and mitigate the risk where possible. US Equestrian provides some considerations related to stabling.

- a. **Stable Layout:** How many horses are in one barn and how close barns are can impact the spread of disease. When possible, individual barns/tents should house a minimal number of horses and be well spaced from each other. This reduces possible exposure numbers within a barn.
  - b. **Stable Construction:** The materials of the stall and the design impact the potential respiratory virus or bacteria spread. Unsealed wood is porous and can harbor bacteria and viruses in the cracks and crevices, which require additional scrubbing in the cleaning process and a penetrative disinfectant.
  - c. **Stall Design:** Solid wall stalls prevent horse-to-horse exposure, whereas stalls with half solid walls and half bars allow for nose-to-nose contact, which increases the risk of exposure to respiratory pathogens. Designs which lead to increased exposure risks should be mitigated by limiting the number of horses in barn and restricting stabling groups to only healthy horses from one trainer rather than grouping horses from multiple locations close together.
  - d. **Stall Assignments:** To decrease risk of introduction and/or spread, horses of the same health status should be housed together (i.e., horses from the same barn or same geographic area). You may also choose to group horses participating in the same level/type of competition (i.e., hunters separate from jumpers). In the event of a disease outbreak, the stall assignments are essential for the quick identification of potentially exposed horses. Record actual horse names for each stall, rather than trainer name only, because this allows for quicker contact tracing if an infectious disease is found.
8. **Implement Biosecurity Plan and Protocols:** US Equestrian recommends each competition develop a written biosecurity plan which includes biosecurity protocols for staff, competitors, and public. Points to consider in the development of a biosecurity plan:
- a. **Equine Infectious Diseases are in the Environment:** It is important to know that some amount of bacteria and viruses are present in horses and in the environment, though the amount circulating varies with the time of year, weather, and the horses. During the fall and winter, there is typically an increase in equine herpesvirus and influenza (flu). The hot, dry summer environment usually results in lower levels of EHV.

Some diseases, such as EHV and influenza, circulate because they live dormant in most horses' bodies. Horses are typically exposed to them at a young age and show no symptoms, but the virus can reactivate in times of stress, which prompts an increase in viral loads in the horse and can cause them to shed the virus. Horses shedding the virus may show symptoms of illness themselves or

may be asymptomatic while they shed the virus. This higher level of virus coming from one horse is often what gets other horses sick. This is the reason biosecurity measures are so crucial – they are designed to limit the exposure of horses to each other, reducing the number who can be impacted by a high shedder.

- b. **Identification of Disease Risk for Venue and Event:** A simple walkthrough of the venue and review of current management protocols can identify areas of risk for disease pathogen entry and spread. A Facility Biosecurity Risk Assessment tool can assist in this process. Here is a link to a good one:  
[https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal\\_Health/pdfs/A.pdf](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/pdfs/A.pdf)
- c. **Cleaning and Disinfecting of Stabling and Common Areas:** Decreasing the amount of virus and bacteria on the grounds is essential to preventing exposure. Prior to horse arrival, event officials shall inspect the stabling and common areas to ensure proper cleaning and disinfecting has been completed. For stalls with manure or soiled bedding remaining, additional cleaning should be performed before disinfection steps commence.
  - i. **Selecting the Appropriate Disinfectant:** There are several different categories of disinfectants, and they each have different properties and different activity. Selecting the proper disinfectant for the surface and pathogens of concern is critical.
    1. **Ex. Disinfectant with label claim for EHV-1 and Influenza:** Intervention®  
<https://www.viroxfarmanimal.com/products/concentrate>
    2. **Ex. Disinfectant with label claim for Strangles:** Companion™ by Neogen  
[https://www.neogen.com/49bdf6/globalassets/pim/assets/original/10032/433610-1\\_789703006068\\_synergize-rtu\\_en-us.pdf?srsltid=AfmBOorb0h70AkS1QuIh8j9Hz-GkuAMPVfNmnLJqrQaCjG0VwABrSOoP](https://www.neogen.com/49bdf6/globalassets/pim/assets/original/10032/433610-1_789703006068_synergize-rtu_en-us.pdf?srsltid=AfmBOorb0h70AkS1QuIh8j9Hz-GkuAMPVfNmnLJqrQaCjG0VwABrSOoP)
  - ii. US Equestrian has the following resources available to help you select the proper cleaning and disinfection tools and use them appropriately.
    1. Learning Center: Cleaning & Disinfecting 101  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IYfKOKaYGs>
    2. Choosing Appropriate Disinfectant Infographic  
<https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/i8FOBCRMGFs/safe-effective-disinfectant-use>
    3. Clean Before Disinfecting Infographic  
<https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/92c0Ng-Hfzk/cleaning-vs-disinfecting>

#### 4. Maintaining a Healthy Environment Infographic

<https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/C9MOME2OpsY/maintaining-healthy-equine-facility>

- d. **Vector Control:** Decreasing the prevalence of flies, mosquitoes, and rodents decreases the disease risk on the competition grounds. Key vector mitigation includes manure management, waste management, fly control, and environmental measures. Recommendations to achieve vector control on the venue include but are not limited to:
- i. Frequent removal of manure from the premises to eliminate fly breeding sites.
  - ii. Elimination of standing water on the premises to reduce mosquito breeding.
  - iii. Utilization of fly parasites around manure areas to feed on fly larvae to reduce fly burden.
  - iv. Use of baited traps to catch flies in high traffic areas.
  - v. Application of fly repellent solutions to the premises.
  - vi. Increase airflow in barns and stables to reduce stagnant areas where flies thrive.
  - vii. Grow fly repellent plants like marigolds near horse stables.
  - viii. Consult with local rodent and pest control agency for appropriate mitigation efforts for the specific venue.
  - ix. Visit the USEF sponsors page for discounts on vector control products such as fans and fly repellents.  
Additional resources available for vector control:
  - x. Infographics: <https://files.usef.org/assets/ytQD94jEkOo/protect-your-horse-premises-fly-prevention.pdf>  
<https://files.usef.org/assets/4iMsbeFyJ0s/protect-your-horse-fly-prevention.pdf>
  - xi. Learning Center Video: <https://www.usef.org/learning-center/videos/fly-insect-management>

9. **Distribute Pre-Event Biosecurity Communications:** Prevention is the best tool for an equine infectious disease outbreak. It's not enough for you to adhere to your biosecurity protocols; you also need your participants to do their part too.

With all communications, keep in mind that people rely on different communication platforms. Putting a message in one channel does not guarantee that all your participants will see it. You should be utilizing emails collected at entry in addition to social media and in-person tools like signage and PA announcements.

US Equestrian has prepared several resources – from infographics made for social media to posters that can be printed at or before the event – that you can use to help spread the word about best biosecurity practices.

- a. **Prize List:** Before participants begin arriving at the event, they should be made aware of what the healthy entry requirements are but also need to be provided with best biosecurity practices for their time on the grounds. Suggested language for the prize list is included in the appendix of this guide. You can also use this in emails or social media if desired.
- b. **Signage:** Once participants are on the grounds, there are several opportunities to remind them of best practices. Posting signs at the show office and in stabling areas and around in-gates is one more way to reach out to people. Be sure show office personnel and licensed officials are familiar with the guidance in case they are asked questions about it.

US Equestrian recommends biosecurity messaging signage be utilized on the competition grounds. We have created the following resources for your use:

- i. Fever Reporting: <https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/TiyPBDi68K8/fever-flyer>
- ii. Biosecurity Tips and Checklist: <https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/BAw-sGCDY0M/biosecurity-tips-checklists>
- iii. Top Tips for Keeping Horses Healthy (English and Spanish): <https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/h9Ye5pbckFM/top-tips-for-keeping-horses-healthy>
- iv. Exhibitor Biosecurity Pamphlet: <https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/Kgxcgp4ytKE/exhibitor-biosecurity-measures-pamphlet>
- v. Don't Share Equipment: [https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal\\_Health/pdfs/H.pdf](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/pdfs/H.pdf)

US Equestrian urges competition managers to email [equinehealth@usef.org](mailto:equinehealth@usef.org) with any suggestions for additional biosecurity signage or needs.

- c. **Email/Other Communications:** Biosecurity requirements and best practices can also be sent via email or on social media. Besides sending a list of what participants should be doing in the barn, it can also be helpful to let them know that you are required to have an isolation plan in place in the unlikely event of an infectious disease detection. (You are familiar with the licensing requirement for an isolation plan, but many participants may not be.)
10. **Set Competitor Biosecurity Protocols for the Event:** Clearly communicate required biosecurity practices to event participants and use a variety of communication mediums to ensure everyone receives the information. Participants shall agree at time of entry to abide by the biosecurity protocols, and failure to do so may result from removal from the event grounds.

Basic biosecurity policy recommendations include:

- a. **Temperature Monitoring:** An elevated temperature is typically the first sign of an infectious disease, and, in many cases, the temperature is elevated before the horse is shedding a virus or bacteria. Twice daily temperature readings are essential to protecting the health of all horses at the event. US Equestrian strongly recommends competitions encourage health monitoring with a temperature taking and recording requirement. This temperature log template makes it easy for competitors to track changes over time:

[https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/OBrQV\\_x6kNA/temperature-log](https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/OBrQV_x6kNA/temperature-log)

- i. Considerations when monitoring a horse's temperature:

1. Temperature over 101.5F is considered a fever.
2. Temperature readings should be taken 12 hours apart.
3. Temperatures should be taken 2 hours after exercise or trailering.
4. Temperatures should be taken prior to administration of any medications which may alter the temperature such as Bute or Banamine.
5. Horses on Firocoxib products (i.e. Equioxx) may have a longer temperature suppression, and in these cases, a fever should be considered anything higher than 100.5F
6. Not all fevers are due to an infectious disease. Horses with fever should be evaluated by a veterinarian to determine cause.
7. Biothermal microchips are a safe and efficient way to measure temperature. For more information on the biothermal microchip, visit: <https://www.merck-animal-health-usa.com/channel-content/species/equine/bio-thermo-microchip-for-horses>

- b. **Fever Reporting:** Per **GR 873**, any temperature over 101.5F must be reported to show official or official veterinarian and then to the USEF Equine Health and Biosecurity Veterinarian.

- i. **Signage for Fever Reporting:**

1. <https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/Hw2khquid8s/reporting-fever-horse-owner-flowchart>
2. <https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/TiyPBDi68K8/fever-flyer>

- ii. **Fever Reports to the Federation:** The fever case can be either reported via phone at 859-225-6991 or email to [equinehealth@usef.org](mailto:equinehealth@usef.org). A form is available for fever reporting <https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/o6eLg7qWGzk/temperature-reporting-form>

1. The key information to report is the location of the horse on the show grounds, clinical signs, if the horse was moved to isolation, and any plans for testing or further evaluation.

- iii. **Management of the Fever Case:** The official veterinarian should evaluate each case to determine potential cause of the fever. See the flowchart in Appendix.
- c. **Reporting of Sick Horses in Isolation:** Per **GR 874**, any horse moved to isolation or off-site to a veterinary hospital as a suspected infectious disease case shall be reported to the USEF Equine Health and Biosecurity Veterinarian. All potential infectious disease cases should be placed in isolation. The criteria for placing a horse in isolation shall be communicated to all parties in advance of the event.

US Equestrian recommends the following criteria for a horse to be moved to isolation as a potential infectious disease case: profuse diarrhea for more than one day, cough or significant nasal discharge of more than one day, and neurologic clinical signs such as wobbling or uncoordinated gait, urine dribbling, head tilt.

- i. **Anyone who fails to move a horse to isolation upon request should be required to leave the premises.**
- d. **Testing of Febrile or Sick Horses:** It is strongly recommended that any febrile or clinical horse who may have an infectious disease be examined by a veterinarian and tested at the owner's expense. Horses that have not yet been tested should be placed in isolation and remain there until they are cleared to leave the property.
- e. **Compliance and Enforcement of Biosecurity Protocols:** Per **GR 870**, *competitors are required to follow biosecurity protocols mandated by competition management.* US Equestrian will pursue enforcement action for any participants who fail to comply with competition biosecurity written protocols. Please note: For USEF to pursue enforcement action, the biosecurity protocols must be in writing and must have been provided to the participant in advance or at the time of entry to the event.

**11. Designate Biosecurity Personnel:** For successful implementation of biosecurity measures at a competition, individuals responsible for the specific actions should be designated and notified of responsibilities in advance of the event. The individuals should be designated based on their skills for the responsibilities related to general biosecurity and response to a disease detection. Consider having a designated individual to perform the following core functions:

- a. **Isolation Set Up:** Set up isolation stabling, equipment, supplies, and PPE.
- b. **Isolation Security:** Restrict access to the isolation stabling.
- c. **Emergency Hauler:** To move horse to off-site stabling or emergency equine hospital.
- d. **Carcass Removal:** To remove dead/euthanized horse to appropriate disposal.
- e. **Emergency Veterinary Clinic:** To provide emergency medical care for sick horses.

- f. **Communications Point of Contact:** To contact USEF and/or regulatory officials.
- g. **Biosecurity Compliance:** To oversee biosecurity protocols for exposed horses.

12. **Develop Weather and Environmental Preparedness Plan:** Horse health can be negatively impacted by certain environmental conditions. Plan ahead for any adjustments you may need to make to show management in anticipation of weather changes.

- a. **Air Quality:** The EPA calculates the air quality index for five major air pollutants which pose a risk to human health. The air quality index is a scale from 0-200. An air quality over 150 is unhealthy for all, where 101 to 150 is unhealthy for sensitive groups. When the air quality index reaches 151 or above the competition is suspended or canceled. There is no authority which maintains an air quality rating system specifically for equine health, so we use the EPA rating designed for humans.
  - i. The AirNow website (<https://www.airnow.gov/>) provides the air quality index by zip code.
  - ii. Competition managers should consult state and local health authorities for more specific regional guidance.
- b. **Heat:** Elevated temperature and humidity can cause heat illness in horses. The heat index should be used as a guide for mitigating potential health risks on the competition grounds. The heat index can be calculated by adding together the temperature reading and humidity level. If the total is over 180, we recommend canceling competition or scheduling alternative competition times when the heat index is lower. At heat indexes 150 and 180, you should implement heat mitigation measures and monitor horses and riders for stress.
  - i. Important note: The heat index can vary from location to location at different times during the day, so it is important to consistently check the temperature and humidity for the venue.
  - ii. Consider facility shade, facility air flow/ventilation, type of competition, and type and number of horses participating when making a heat mitigation plan.
  - iii. Mitigation measures to be considered include: increased shade, increased air flow with fans, increased access and availability of water for cooling of horses, modification of schedule, or cancellation of the event.
  - iv. This infographic can help you communicate the information above to participants: <https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/fFAHn5FVDvQ>
- c. **Inclement Weather:** Severe weather such as hurricanes, tornadoes, flash floods, and wildfires can occur with limited warning. In the event of a natural disaster, competitions should have a plan for sheltering in place and evacuation of the venue if need be. Some general recommendations include:
  - i. Identification of an alternative location for event

- ii. Identification of alternative stabling in the event of an emergency for horses which can't be returned home immediately. (Potentially a nearby fairgrounds, empty farm, or university facility)

### C. During the Competition

1. **Conduct Venue Walkthrough:** As many event grounds are shared by various types of events, it is important to walk through the event grounds before competitors arrive. Oftentimes, a walkthrough of the barns, temporary tents, and common areas may identify disease risks such as organic material remaining in the stalls or dirty stalls which may not have been cleaned and disinfected. Early identification allows time for steps to be taken to address the risk. A walkthrough also allows for adequate distribution of biosecurity signage.
2. **Implement Horse Arrivals Protocol:** Ensuring only healthy horses enter the competition is essential to the health of the competition. If health documents are not reviewed and verified in advance of arrival, review on arrival is strongly recommended. Any horse which does not meet the health entry requirements should be prohibited entry or placed in isolation until such time as the requirements are met.
  - a. **Examination/Inspections on Arrival:** A disease outbreak in the area of the competition or in horses of the same discipline where there is potential exposure may warrant on-site examination of horses at the time of arrival to ensure the health of the animal.
  - b. At a minimum, competition staff and licensed officials should be observing horses on the show grounds for any obvious clinical signs of disease.
3. **Ensure Maintenance of Healthy Competition Grounds:** Biosecurity protocols should be implemented for the duration of the event, including (but not limited to) cleaning and disinfecting of common areas, vector control measures, manure management, weather and environmental monitoring, and monitoring disease events in the area.
  - a. **Restocking, Cleaning, and Disinfection:** Encouraging biosecurity practices requires event officials to do their part in ensuring supplies are available. Restock hand sanitizing stations and verify common areas are routinely cleaned prior to application of appropriate disinfectant for the surface.
4. **Continual Monitoring of Horse Health**
  - a. **Temperature Log Review:** If temperature logging is required by the competition, log reviews should be conducted by a designated event representative. Review of the logs can lead to early identification of sick horses. Any horse with rising temperatures should be noted and monitored throughout the competition. Reviews of the charts also identify noncompliance issues.
  - b. **Observe Biosecurity Practices:** A dedicated biosecurity officer or an event official with responsibilities for walking through the event grounds acts as eyes and ears for biosecurity lapses or early identification of an infectious disease introduction

and spread. This action demonstrates the importance competition management is placing on protecting equine health during the competition.

5. **Continual Biosecurity Messaging:** Continued biosecurity messaging through social media, event announcer, or signage emphasizes the importance of biosecurity to the competition management. For events with video screens, USEF biosecurity videos and short clips are available for use.

The five top tips are quick and easy to share:

- a. Limit horse-to-horse contact.
- b. Limit human-to-horse contact to essential personnel.
- c. Avoid sharing equipment unless it has been cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- d. Avoid communal water.
- e. Monitor horses' temperatures twice daily and report any temperatures over 101.5F to a veterinarian.

## **PART 2: Equine Disease Response Guidance**

### **A. General Infectious Disease Reminders**

1. **It is expected that some horses will be febrile on the competition grounds.**
2. **Not all fevers are due to an infectious disease.**
  - a. Colic, cellulitis, and abscesses can cause a horse to be febrile.
3. **All fevers must be investigated to determine potential causes.**
  - a. Fever may be the first sign of infectious disease when the horse is not yet shedding virus or bacteria.
4. **EHV-1 is endemic and in the environment. Cases of EHV-1 are routinely diagnosed.** All horses have been, and will be, exposed to EHV-1.
  - a. A single detection of EHV-1 in one horse warrants biosecurity measures but not panic.
  - b. Multiple cases of EHV-1 on a premises is cause for significant concern, as that is indicative of spread of the virus.

### **B. Response to an Equine Infectious Disease**

1. **Initial Response to a Sick Horse: Within the First Hour**
  - a. **Identification of a Sick Horse:** A horse with a fever, nasal discharge, or diarrhea can shed a virus or bacteria into the environment and may pose a risk to all horses on the event grounds. Immediate reporting by the horse's responsible party to a show official and or official veterinarian is critical.
    - i. **Per GR 873. unexplained temperatures over 101.5F are required to be reported to the official veterinarian.**
    - ii. See Appendix for USEF Flowchart on management of a febrile horse.

- b. **Veterinary Evaluation:** A veterinarian examination of the sick horse provides critical insight into the potential infectious disease risk of a sick horse.
  - i. If the veterinary exam determines a **non-infectious cause** of clinical signs, the horse may be able to remain in the stabling area and competition.
  - ii. If the veterinary exam reveals potential for the horse to be **infectious** or contagious, moving horse to isolation for further diagnostic testing is the best precaution.
  - iii. **Per GR 873, the official veterinarian must report the febrile horse and infectious disease case to the USEF Equine Health and Biosecurity Veterinarian.** The USEF Equine Health and Biosecurity Veterinarian is available to advise or assist in the management of febrile or clinical horse.
  - iv. USEF Flowchart provides guidance for veterinarian on management of a febrile horse. <https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/UDQg27InV-Q/reporting-fever-veterinarian>
- c. **Diagnostic Testing:** Diagnostic testing is strongly recommended for any potential case of infectious disease. A diagnostic testing plan is dependent upon what is available at the time of the identification of the sick horse, as confirmatory testing by at an approved laboratory may not be available on the weekend.
  - i. **Screening Tests** (i.e. Fluxergy) Some veterinarians may have access to on-site screening tests for equine infectious disease. These types of tests are in the development stage and should be used with caution. They must be followed up with confirmatory testing. Any screening test positive should be handled as positive infectious disease case and moved to isolation.
  - ii. **Confirmatory Tests:** Confirmatory tests are done at a laboratory and will provide confirmation of the status of the horse on the day the sample was taken.
    - 1. For febrile horses testing negative on initial test, some cases may warrant additional sampling 24-48 hours later.
      - a. **Note: We have seen cases of horses who are negative for EHV-1 on the first test, but positive for EHV-1 on subsequent testing.**
    - 2. **Recommended testing for febrile horses:**
      - a. Blood and nasal swab submitted for Respiratory PCR panel testing (EHV-1, EHV-4, Equine Influenza, Equine Rhinitis, Strangles)
      - b. Quantitative results should be requested from the laboratory to assist in the development of appropriate response plan.
- d. **Activation of Isolation Plan:** Removing the sick horse from general population to isolation is a critical control step in stopping disease spread. Isolation stabling set up prior to the event should be equipped to immediately accommodate the movement of the sick horse. Once isolation is activated, dedicate personnel to restrict access to isolation stabling to designated individuals. If isolation stabling

is off-site, contact should be made with the transport company for the sick horse.

- e. **Care of Isolated Horses:** Horses in on-site isolation will require a designated individual to care for the horses. The individual shall not enter any other areas of the event grounds after entry to isolation stabling unless he/she has showered, changed clothes, and changed footwear. All equipment shall be designated for isolation area and not shared with any other horses or areas of the competition venue.

## 2. **Management Response to Confirmed Case of Equine Infectious Disease: Day 1**

*NOTE: All responses are dependent upon the disease agent. If it is reportable, the state animal health official will coordinate activities. If it is not reportable, then the show management and the official veterinarian are responsible for the following activities.*

- a. **Receipt of Positive Diagnostic Test:** Upon receipt of positive diagnostic test for an equine infectious disease, official veterinarian communicates with competition management.
- b. **Follow Up with USEF Equine Health and Biosecurity Veterinarian:** Official veterinarian shall contact USEF Equine Health and Biosecurity Veterinarian with confirmatory testing information. USEF Equine Health and Biosecurity Veterinarian is available to assist in management of the case and in communications with state animal health officials.
- c. **Regulatory Official Notification (If Reportable):** For reportable diseases, the state animal health official must be contacted and provided details of the situation. The state animal health official will determine if regulatory action will be taken and if they will take over the response at the competition grounds. If the state animal health official takes over the response management, they will provide instructions to competition management and official veterinarian on how to proceed.
- d. **Identification of Exposed Horses:** Exposed horses for reportable diseases will be identified and managed under state authorities. For non-reportable diseases, exposed horses are managed by the competition management and veterinarian. Determining which horses may be exposed depends on the disease agent identified and the mode of transmission of that agent. Casting a wider net at the onset can significantly limit the duration of the quarantine or monitoring period. Failure to identify an exposed horse may leave that horse incubating and subsequently shedding disease pathogens, further expanding the disease outbreak. Typically, identification of exposed horses traces back 14 days to horses with potential exposure based on proximity, shared equipment, travel, and shared personnel. On an event grounds, exposure may include shared:
  - i. **Personnel:** trainer, riders, grooms, braiders, feeders, night watch
  - ii. **Equipment:** tack, bridles, rags, stall cleaning supplies, hoses

iii. **Areas with potential horse-to-horse contact may include tack or wash areas.**

Shared personnel identified should be met with individually to determine which horses they had direct contact with after working with infected or exposed horses. Discussion of biosecurity measures taken by the individual will either eliminate or expand the exposed horse list.

e. **Management of Exposed Horses:**

1. **Movement Restrictions:** Exposed horses shall be restricted to the stabling area and not moved from the assigned stables. The only movement of exposed horses permitted should be off the event grounds to isolate at a home premises with permission of the competition management in consultation with USEF and state animal health officials.

2. **Minimum Requirements:** At a minimum, the exposed horses should be segregated and have twice daily temperature taking. A normal temperature recording 8-12 hours after the administration of an NSAID should be required prior to removal from stabling for exercise or competition of an exposed horse.

i. Entering the ring, they should limit the horse-to-horse contact and distance themselves from other horses as much as possible.

ii. In some cases of high risk, exposed horses would be restricted to exercise in a designated area to limit potential exposure to other horses during an incubation period.

f. **Quarantine or Hold of Infected and/or Exposed Horses:** Depending on the disease detected, the state animal health official may quarantine or place a hold order on infected and potentially exposed horses. If a quarantine is placed, designated biosecurity measures will be required for those horses under the quarantine. Failure to adhere to a state quarantine can have significant consequences.

For diseases where no state action is taken, the event or USEF may recommend hold or quarantine actions be taken by the venue grounds to best protect the health of the competition horses.

3. **Communications Response to an Infectious Disease**

a. **Activation of Communication Plan for the Event:** Communication should be in accordance with the communication plan outlined in the recommended biosecurity plan developed specific for the event. Rumors and misinformation are commonly spread about infectious disease cases. Transparency and early communication with all parties is encouraged.

The following order of communications is recommended:

- i. **In-Person Communication with Trainer of Infectious Disease Case:**
  - 1. Goals: To outline biosecurity requirements and movement restrictions, identify potentially exposed horses, develop monitoring plan, and plan for competition of exposed horses.
- ii. **In-Person Communication with the Trainers in the Same Barn**
  - 1. Goals: To outline biosecurity requirements and movement restrictions, develop monitoring plan, and plan for competition of exposed horses.
- iii. **General Email Communication to All Competitors:** In the age of social media, word about a sick horse can spread quickly. Competitors often lose trust in competition management if they feel they are not notified quickly about a potential risk; at the same time, we don't want to panic people if there isn't a genuine threat. It can sometimes be better to get ahead of the dialogue and provide information proactively

Suggested communication templates are provided in the Appendix for various points in a theoretical disease outbreak, including the identification of a sick horse before test results are back, after a horse has tested positive but before contact tracing is complete, and after the state has completed its investigation. Additional templates are available for situation updates or in case of a deceased horse.

Remember to use more than one method of communication when sending out these updates. Designate one person on your team who will be responsible for sending communication and receiving questions from participants. Keep your messaging clear, concise, and consistent across platforms. When there is an update to a disease outbreak, keep staff and volunteers informed.

- iv. **In-Person Town Hall-Type Meeting:** An in-person meeting should be scheduled for all participants to answer questions. Remember to schedule this promptly and use multiple channels to alert competitors about it (email, PA announcements, show office posters) Goals: To have open communication to hear concerns and issues to ensure all are working together to limit the spread.
- v. **For Reportable Disease Events:** State animal health official will need to be involved in communications with all parties.
- vi. **Equine Disease Communication Center:** For reportable diseases the state animal health official will report the case to the Equine Disease Communication Center. Due to the potential for rumors, the reporting of non-reportable disease by competition to the Equine Disease

Communication Center (<https://www.equinediseasecc.org/>) is recommended.

- vii. **A single case of infectious disease MAY NOT warrant communication** if there is no evidence of spread or exposure risk. However, the protocol to not notify of a single infectious case where there is no evidence of spread or risk must be communicated in advance of the event to the participants to ensure there is no misunderstanding. If you choose to go this route, this information should be in the biosecurity announcement in the prize list.

#### 4. **Movement and Monitoring During Infectious Disease Outbreak**

- a. **Exposed Horses Departing the Venue:** Exposed horses under a state quarantine will need permission from the state animal health official for removal from the venue. The state will determine requirements for monitoring exposed horses off-site. If the period for monitoring is beyond the length of the event, exposed horses leaving the event grounds should be provided a document with recommendations for monitoring after leaving the venue.
- b. **Monitoring of Rest of the Event Grounds:** Show officials should ensure consistent observations of compliance and be prepared to take enforcement action for noncompliance.

**PART 3: Appendix**

**Sample Equine Infectious Disease Response Plan**

Competition Name:

Competition ID:

Dates:

Facility Address:

**Designated Parties**

Role	Name	Cell Phone
Show Manager		
Veterinarian Receiving Report of Sick Horse		
Biosecurity Compliance		
Isolation Set Up		
Isolation Security		
Emergency Hauler for Off-site Isolation		
Carcass Removal Services		
Emergency Veterinary Clinic		
Off-site Isolation Point of Contact		
USEF Point of Contact for Disease Outbreak		
State Animal Health Official		
Communications Spokesperson		

**Isolation**

Isolation Location *(If on-site provide specific location):*

Supplies For Isolation Stabling *(see checklist):*

Supplier Contact Name:

Website:

Email:

Phone:

Sick Horse Reporting Criteria:

*(List the criteria to send horse to Isolation)*

On-site Diagnostics Available:



## Template for Prize List Biosecurity Reminders

### Keeping Horses Healthy at Events is a Shared Responsibility

Before you arrive, here are a few reminders about the best ways you can keep your horses safe and healthy:

- **Temperature Monitoring:** Twice daily temperature monitoring is required while on the competition grounds. In the event of elevated disease risk or an infectious disease incursion, management will notify competitors of mandatory twice daily temperature monitoring and recording (ideally 12 hours apart and prior to any temperature-reducing medication (i.e. Bute or Banamine). Temperature logs will be provided for placement on the stall door for recording of temperatures.
- **Limit Horse-to-Horse Contact:** Direct contact between horses from different home facilities should be prevented, and horse-to-human contact between facilities should be limited.
- **Avoid Shared Equipment or Water Sources.** Do not share equipment between horses, and do not use communal water sources. Make sure horses have their own buckets, feed pans, grooming equipment, and rags, and limit or eliminate other equipment that touches more than one horse. Fill water buckets without submerging the hose in the buckets.
  - **Reporting a Febrile Horse:** Any horse with a temperature over 101.5F is required to be reported immediately to the official veterinarian, who will examine the horse to determine the next steps. Any horse suspected of an infectious disease will be required to immediately enter isolation stabling or be removed from the property.
  - **Reporting a Sick Horse:** Report any horse with observable signs of illness, including, but not limited to, nasal discharge, abnormal gait, change in feed or water consumption, or change in behavior to the official veterinarian.
  - **The official veterinarian** for this event is XXX, and they are available at 888-8888 during this event to take reports of fevers or illness.

### If an Infectious Disease is Suspected:

- **The official veterinarian may** require a potentially sick horse to be tested for infectious disease at the owner's expense. If the owner/trainer chooses not to submit to testing, the horse may be asked to leave the competition venue.
- **Per USEF requirements,** we have a biosecurity plan in place for where and how to isolate any potentially sick or exposed horses, and we will work closely with state animal health officials to assist with contact tracing and any additional health and safety measures they require.
- **Failure to Comply with Biosecurity Measures:** Individuals who fail to comply with any biosecurity requirements will be reported to USEF for enforcement action and may be removed from the premises.

## Communication Templates for Infectious Disease Outbreaks

### Report of a Sick Horse Initial Statements

1. **Febrile Horse:** This (morning/afternoon/evening) a horse with a temperature of XXX stabled in Barn XXX was reported to the official veterinarian. Further examination and diagnostics are being performed to determine the cause of the fever. Fevers can be signs of an infectious disease, but also commonly appear in noncontagious conditions such as colic, cellulitis, and abscesses. If an infectious disease is suspected, the horse will be moved to isolation stabling and tested as a precautionary measure.

Show management encourages everyone to practice good biosecurity during the competition, which includes limiting horse-to-horse contact, limiting horse-to-human contact across stables, limiting shared equipment, and monitoring horses' temperatures twice daily.

A second update will be provided when we have more information. In the meantime, if you have specific questions, please contact XXX at 888-8888.

2. **Neurologic Horse:** This (morning/afternoon/evening) a horse stabled in Barn XXX was observed displaying neurologic signs of (hindlimb ataxia/urine dribbling/uncoordinated gait/decreased tail tone) and was reported to show management. The horse has been moved to isolation for veterinary examination and diagnostic testing.

Neurological symptoms can show up in a range of medical conditions, some of which are contagious and some of which are not.

Show management encourages everyone to practice good biosecurity during the competition, which includes limiting horse-to-horse contact, limiting horse-to-human contact across stables, limiting shared equipment, and monitoring horses' temperatures twice daily.

A second update will be provided when we have more information. In the meantime, if you have specific questions, please contact XXX at 888-8888.

### Confirmed Case of Equine Herpesvirus

Note: Messaging should be coordinated with the state animal health official if the EHV-1 response is under their authority. The message should also be discussed with USEF Equine Health and Biosecurity Veterinarian

1. **Initial Report:** This (morning/afternoon/evening) a horse displaying fever/neurologic signs of (hindlimb ataxia/urine dribbling/uncoordinated gait/decreased tail tone) was

confirmed positive for Equine Herpesvirus-1 by XXXXXX laboratory.

The horse has been moved to isolation, and the investigation into exposed horses has been initiated. Any horses determined to have been exposed to the index case will be required to go into isolation per state requirements. As required by USEF, we have isolation stabling available and have coordinated in advance with XXX veterinary facility to assist with medical care of impacted horses if needed.

Additional information will be provided by (XXXX Date/Time).

Show management encourages everyone to practice good biosecurity during the competition, which includes limiting horse-to-horse contact, limiting horse-to-human contact across stables, limiting shared equipment, and monitoring horses' temperatures twice daily.

This event is enhancing biosecurity with increased cleaning and disinfection of common areas. XXX

Equine Herpesvirus (EHV) is also known as rhinopneumonitis and is a respiratory disease caused by a virus. Almost all horses have been infected with the virus at some point in their lives, often asymptotically, and carry the virus in their bodies afterwards. Most of the time, horses are not actively shedding the virus, but stressful situations like travel or competition can prompt horses to begin shedding it again. At this point, they may or may not have symptoms of illness themselves and may infect others. You can learn more about EHV and best biosecurity practices on the US Equestrian website [here](#).

Show management encourages everyone to practice good biosecurity during the competition, which includes limiting horse-to-horse contact, limiting horse-to-human contact across stables, limiting shared equipment, and monitoring horses' temperatures twice daily.

We understand this news is very concerning for our competitors. An additional update will follow with more details. In the meantime, if you have questions, you can contact XXX at 888-8888.

- 2. Follow-up Report:** The EHV-1 positive horse remains in isolation under veterinary care. As of now, XXX number of horses have been deemed exposed to the positive horse. Those horses are being monitored with enhanced biosecurity and will be required to record twice daily temperatures. Any horses who test positive must remain in isolation until they have produced two negative test results.

After consultation with USEF (and state animal health officials if applicable), the remaining horses on the grounds who have been determined to be not exposed to the virus will be permitted to leave the grounds or if they have a temperature below 101.5F,

they may continue participating in the competition.

The best place to get confirmed information about the current outbreak is the Equine Disease Communication Center, which collects reports of confirmed infectious diseases from state officials and practicing veterinarians. You can access the EDCC [here](#). Please be aware that social media reports which do not come through official channels may not be accurate.

Equine Herpesvirus (EHV) is also known as rhinopneumonitis and is a respiratory disease caused by a virus. Almost all horses have been infected with the virus at some point in their lives, often asymptotically, and carry the virus in their bodies afterwards. Most of the time, horses are not actively shedding the virus, but stressful situations like travel or competition can prompt horses to begin shedding it again. At this point, they may or may not have symptoms of illness themselves and may infect others. You can learn more about EHV and best biosecurity practices on the US Equestrian website [here](#).

Show management encourages everyone to practice good biosecurity during the competition, which includes limiting horse-to-horse contact, limiting horse-to-human contact across stables, limiting shared equipment, and monitoring horses' temperatures twice daily.

We understand this news is very concerning for our competitors. If there are additional positive tests, we will communicate them through these same channels. In the meantime, if you have questions, you can contact XXX at 888-8888.

- 3. Subsequent Reports:** We want to provide our participants with an update on the current EHV outbreak. To date, XX number of additional cases have been confirmed, bringing the total to YY as of this writing. All confirmed cases are in isolation and are under the care of veterinarians. State animal health officials continue to ensure that any exposed horses are placed into isolation to protect the remainder of the population on the grounds.

In the meantime, we are implementing the following biosecurity protocols: XXXXX

We want to remind you to continue practicing good biosecurity by limiting horse-to-horse contact, limiting horse-to-human contact across stables, limiting shared equipment, and monitoring horses' temperatures twice daily.

The best place to get confirmed information about the current outbreak is the Equine Disease Communication Center, which collects reports of confirmed infectious diseases from state officials and practicing veterinarians. You can access the EDCC [here](#). Please be aware that social media reports which do not come through official channels may not be accurate.

We understand this news is very concerning for our competitors. If there are additional positive tests, we will communicate them through these same channels. In the meantime, if you have questions, you can contact XXX at 888-8888.

4. **Euthanized Horse:** It is with great sadness that we announce that Y, a X-year-old BREED gelding/mare/stallion was humanely euthanized as a result severity of EHV-1 infection on (DATE). We send our condolences to all those who loved Y.

To date, XXX number of confirmed cases of EHV are on-site in isolation, where they are being cared for by their veterinary teams. State animal health officials have identified the horses who have been exposed to any positive EHV cases, and those horses have been placed into isolation.

We want to remind you to continue practicing good biosecurity by limiting horse-to-horse contact, limiting horse-to-human contact across stables, limiting shared equipment, and monitoring horses' temperatures twice daily.

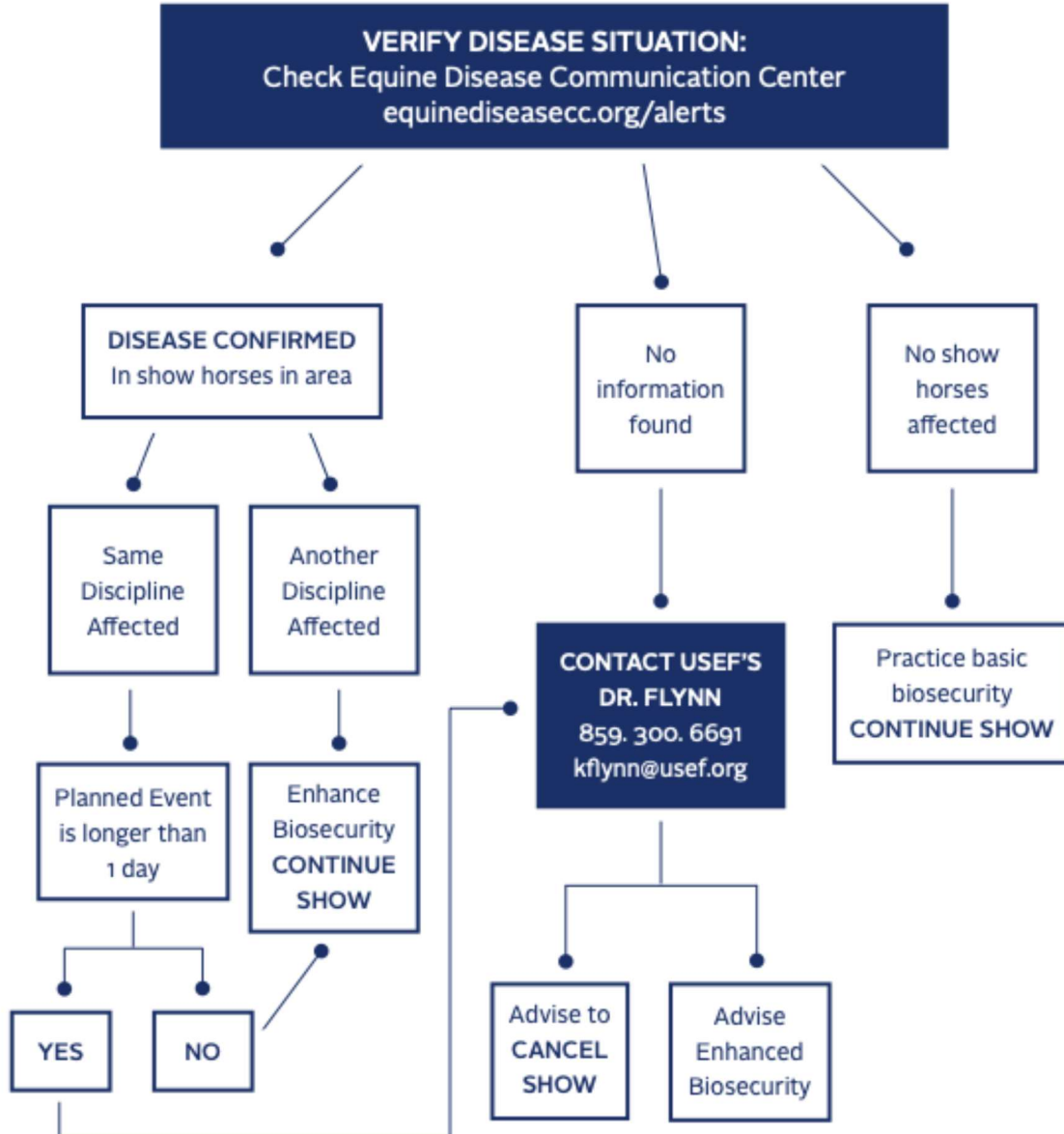
#### **Additional Resources**

1. Equine Diseases Fact Sheets: <https://equinediseasecc.org/infectious-diseases>
2. First 15 Minutes of Disease Response Guidance: <https://www.equinediseasecc.org/biosecurity/response>
3. Fever Flowchart
  - a. Horse owner: <https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/Hw2khquid8s/reporting-fever-horse-owner-flowchart>
  - b. Veterinarian: <https://www.usef.org/forms-pubs/UDQg27InV-Q/reporting-fever-veterinarian>



# CANCEL OR CONTINUE SHOW?

FLOW CHART FOR COMPETITION MANAGEMENT



**ENHANCED BIOSECURITY**  
Healthy Horses Only • No fever prior 3 days • No exposure last 14 days (EHV, Flu, Strangles) •  
Vaccination Verification (EHV, Flu) • Require Temperature Monitoring • Clean and Disinfect