

COVID-19 RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR RETURN TO COMPETITIONS

This document is designed as a recommended framework for equine and equestrian facilities to develop a return to competition operations plan based on protocols provided by provincial and federal health organizations.

Please note: This document may be used as a recommended guideline for local equestrian competition during the COVID-19 pandemic and is NOT a legal document. The recommendations and supporting documents found on Alberta Equestrian Federation’s (AEF) COVID webpage for the Equine Community remain the same at this time. Further, the AEF urges the equine community to continue to stay abreast of the changing landscape surrounding COVID-19 through credible media sources including federal, provincial and local government and health authorities.

Each individual, business, facility, etc. is responsible to ensure the safety of any guests, clients, staff, family – and of course, the horses in their care - at all times. Our recommendation is to follow the guidelines and best practices as set out by the Provincial and Federal governments and health authorities at all times and in any regard.

For the purpose of this document the term “competition” is used consistently in reference to all equestrian horse shows, competitions, or events taking place at the local level.

Horse and human safety are paramount when making amendments to common horse and human interaction routines.

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Introduction

The Alberta Equestrian Federation (AEF) is dedicated to promoting education, safety and welfare of all equestrians. AEF has provided the following guidelines (based on Equestrian Canada's (EC) more extensive guidelines) to support Wild Rose competition organizers, staff, volunteers and officials in an effort to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19. While there is no way to eliminate all risks related to COVID-19, the following guidelines are aimed to decrease spread.

These guidelines do not replace the recommendations and regulations of federal/provincial/territorial/regional or local government and health authorities.

Note: When hosting and attending competitions, you must take responsibility. AEF asks that in doing so everyone respects the guidelines to avoid causing further spread of COVID-19 which could impact the wider equestrian community/industry.

IMPORTANT: All approved AEF Wild Rose sanctioned competitions MUST be conducted in accordance with federal/provincial/territorial/regional and local regulations. Competition Organizers should implement best practices for mitigating risk related to the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Preparing for Competition

Signage:

Post signs at entrances and throughout the competition venue. Ensure these signs display up-to-date best practices and guidelines surrounding COVID-19.

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>
- <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-information.aspx>

Signs should clearly indicate that anyone who has a fever (temperature above 38 °C), exhibits any COVID-19 symptoms, has tested positive or is awaiting test results for COVID-19, or has been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, or has travelled out of Canada in the last 14 days, cannot enter the competition venue. Printable posters from the Government of Alberta can be found here: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17000.aspx>

Entries:

In order to limit exposure, all entries should be accepted through an online portal or over the phone. Entries, divisions and classes must be limited in size to meet the most current Government of Alberta guidelines and restrictions.

Monitoring who enters the venue/property is important in the event contact tracing is required. If competitors are planning on bringing support personnel (coach, groom, parent or guardian), have them provide names and contact information for each individual. Consider limiting the number of personnel each competitor is allowed.

Have a policy in place to provide competitors with a refund or credit towards a future competition, to allow anyone with COVID-19 exposure or symptoms the chance to withdraw at any time, even last minute.

Ensure all participants complete and submit the Acknowledgement of Risk Waiver. This waiver can be found in Appendix 1.

Venue Access:

Limit venue access to only necessary individuals such as:

- Competition Organizer, staff and volunteers needed to run the competition
- Competitors and necessary/designated support personnel
- Medical personnel, both human and equine
- Officials and support personnel (Judges, Stewards, Ring Crew, Announcer, Score Keeper, Scribes, etc.)

If a venue is accommodating spectators, be sure to review the current Government of Alberta regulations around sport, to ensure guidelines are met in regards to number of individuals allowed onsite.

Communication to Participants:

Well before your event, post online and/or circulate via email to all participants, the COVID-19 guidelines and plans in place for your competition. Communications and documents that can be made available online prior to the competition (class times, ride times, course maps, dressage tests, etc.) should be clearly relayed to all attendees and staff.

It is recommended that a detailed map/layout of the venue including all arenas and warm up rings, pertinent to the competition, is created. Highlight the COVID-19 guidelines in place at the venue and post on social media and circulate to all staff, volunteers, officials and participants.

Physical Distancing:

Install markers for spacing of 2m between individuals in high traffic areas (competition office, washrooms etc.). Providing visual markers on the floor or ground is recommended.

Sanitation:

Complete an extensive clean of the venue using high quality disinfectants. Be sure to clean all stables, offices, washrooms, judge's booth, venue equipment (ring equipment, fence materials, etc.), bleachers and stands, and other areas participants will be present in.

Provide hand sanitizing stations throughout the venue. This includes: venue entrances and exits, competition and warmup rings, all stables, washroom facilities, etc. Place garbage cans throughout the venue for hygienic disposal of items.

All equipment should be sanitized and disinfected, before and after each use, this includes radios, clocks, stop watches, whistles, computers, laptops etc.

For added security and peace-of-mind, a review of the best practices for equine biosecurity along with other useful resources, can be located on the AEF Website here:

<https://www.albertaequestrian.com/biosecurity/>

Protection:

Install where applicable, Plexiglas, or other type of protective shield in front of office and other areas where staff are present. Venues should ensure enough PPE (face masks, hand sanitizer and gloves) is available for all staff, volunteers and officials.

Liaise with local medical personnel and hospitals (human and equine), to ensure all current guidelines are being addressed. Touch base with local hotels regarding their COVID-19 policies and practices, ensuring the safety of those participants that require accommodations.

COVID-19 Compliance Officer:

Identify an individual who will be the COVID-19 Compliance Officer for the duration of the competition. This person will be responsible for ensuring the guidelines that have been put in place, are being followed and adhered to. This individual should be clearly identified and present for each day of the competition.

Key roles of the COVID-19 Compliance Officer may be, but not limited to:

- Maintain a log of regular monitoring of COVID-19 controls on site
- Ensure there is sufficient up-to-date signage throughout the venue
- Ensure that regular cleaning of washroom facilities, handrails, door handles, etc. is performed and all hand wash liquid/soap and hand sanitizers are replenished as required
- Report any areas of non-compliance (violations of physical distancing, sanitation, personal hygiene, and symptom acknowledgment etc.) to Competition Organizer
- Informing Competition Organizer if there is a confirmed case or if they have been made aware of an individual with COVID-19 symptoms and ensuring that this individual vacates the venue

Operations during Competition

Arrivals and Departures:

Entrances and exits from the venue should be clearly marked. If possible, provide a one-way system with a separate entrance and exit. Be sure to have attendants in place to check participants in and out of the venue. Anyone not on the participant list, should be asked to provide their name and contact information in case contact tracing is required.

Entrance attendants should ask everyone upon arrival if they are feeling ill or have any COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone exhibiting symptoms or feeling ill should not be allowed into the venue. Having signage located at the entrance indicating common symptoms, will help attendants manage check-in.

Horse arrivals and departures should be scheduled by appointment to limit interactions. Parking slots should be marked out in accordance with physical distancing regulations (5m between each space).

Competition Office:

Limit the number of individuals allowed in the competition office by discouraging walk-ins and instead, scheduling appointments. In addition to this, limit the number of people allowed in the office at one time.

Where possible, provide a separate entrance and exit door. Have hand sanitizer, and PPE for staff available. Install protective screens and ensure constant cleaning of common touch points (door handles, railings, etc.).

All equipment should be sanitized and disinfected, before and after each use, this includes radios, clocks, stop watches, whistles, computers, laptops etc.

Use radio, phone and online communication methods as much as possible and communicate important information consistently and frequently throughout the competition venue

Washroom Guidelines:

Assign dedicated and trained cleaning staff to disinfect all washroom facilities frequently. It is recommended to clean the facilities after every use with disinfectant cleaners. Encourage the use of disposable paper towels and have hygiene/sanitation stations setup outside washrooms when necessary (portable washroom facilities).

Provide markers to indicate 2m physical distancing when in line. Limit the number of people allowed in the washrooms at one time to ensure distancing can be maintained. Consider closing additional washroom stalls if multiple are available to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.

Stable Guidelines:

Stables should be restricted to only competitors and essential support personnel. Set up a stable schedule and close stables at night. Having a stable attendant or security is an option to help enforce this. Provide hand sanitizing stations in and around the stabling area.

Stall assignments need to be distributed in advance. To ensure physical distancing, make sure stall assignments allow distance between each individual horse and/or stable group.

Stalls and hay/shavings should be prepaid in advance of arrival and should be delivered to stalls before competitors arrive onsite.

Competition Arena and Warm-up Ring:

Ensure the competition class schedule allows for physical distancing, this may mean offering smaller more frequent classes or limiting class size. Consider having a “show and go” framework (competitors compete and then leave the venue) in place or encourage competitors to go straight back to their stable

after their ride. Restrict the number of people accompanying a horse to the competition arena (e.g. competitor, coach and groom) and comply with physical distancing requirements.

In classes where competitors compete collectively (equitation and hack classes), determine and communicate the maximum number of horses permitted in each competition area at one time (these numbers will be based on the size of the competition area and the physical distancing requirements).

Restrict the number of horses in the warm-up ring, establish a timetable to ensure that there is a minimum of 5m between horses at all times. Examples include: staggered starts, assign opposite ends of arena for warm-up, competitor stations, markers visible to competitors for start and stop points, (e.g., visible spacing marks etc.).

Provide sanitizing stations at each competition ring and schooling/warm-up area. Advise all to wipe down any equipment after use and wear gloves while handling the equipment.

If the Steward, Technical Delegate or Judge discovers something of concern during a ride, they should inspect the horse or rider visually while maintaining physical distancing. If required the Vet, Medical Personnel, Technical Delegate or Competition Organizer can be called for closer inspection of the horse or rider outside the arena.

Awards and Prizes:

Formal award ceremonies should be discouraged. Either mail out awards after the competition, or create a method for virtual ribbons and awards (consider gift certificates and vouchers).

Competition Staff and Service Providers

Competition Organizers, Staff, Volunteers and Officials:

Review all COVID-19 guidelines prior to the competition and have all parties agree by signing off. Have back-up personnel available in case of illness. Stagger work hours and break times to help maintain physical distancing. Communication should be made through radio whenever possible.

There should be no main score board at the competition to discourage any physical gathering. Post scores online and circulate through email. Consider using a software system to make judging a touchless system.

Provide PPE to all staff, volunteers and personnel. Sanitize equipment before and after each use. Only the announcer should use the microphone system, which should be disinfected before, during and after the competition.

Special consideration should be given to seniors or anyone with an increased risk of contracting COVID-19.

Service Providers and Vendors: General vendors should be discouraged from attendance at this time. Advise any service providers (e.g. farrier, feed suppliers, waste disposal personnel) to take precautions in accordance with federal/provincial/territorial/regional, local and facility regulations.

If food vendors are in attendance, consider a grab and go-prepackaged option. Limit the number of people who can enter food areas at one time and provide markers (2m in spacing) to ensure physical distancing. Provide hand sanitizer stations or assign an individual to provide sanitizer upon entry into the food court/zone. Provide an 'entry' door and an 'exit' door (where possible).

Responsibilities of Competitors, Coaches and Support Personnel

All individuals participating are doing so at their own risk. They are liable and must take personal responsibility for the safety of others and themselves.

Regularly sanitize equipment and touch points such as: stable doors, bucket handles, light switches, tack, grooming items, stall cleaning items, etc. There should be no sharing of supplies to limit risk.

It should be communicated any competitor who chooses to wear PPE while on site and in the show ring, will not be penalized.

Coaches should ensure that all students are aware of and following guidelines for the competition put in place. In addition to this, they should be aware of who the COVID-19 Officer is and where they can be found, in the event they are needed. Coaches are key stakeholders, and expected to be familiar with all Covid-19 guidelines put in place by provincial and federal health associations as well as be familiar with rules established by the host venue to ensure compliance at all times. Coaches should ensure equipment is sanitized before and after each use.

Penalties for Non-Compliance

The Competition Organizer has the authority to remove any person who does not comply with the regulations of the competition, or those of the Government of Alberta when concerning COVID-19. Any removal of an individual, should be well documented for later use if needed. It is suggested that a non-compliance form be created to document these instances.

Appendix 1: Acknowledgement of Risk Waiver

The following waivers should be complete, signed and returned by all participants:

Waiver 1: Over the Age of Majority (18 and Above)

Waiver 2: Under the Age of Majority (Under 18)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RISK AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY

(AR-0103)

For Participants Over the Age of Majority in the Province or Territory in which the Equine Activities are Provided by the Host

WARNING: THIS AGREEMENT WILL AFFECT YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS. READ IT CAREFULLY!

Every Person Must Read and Understand this Waiver Before Participating in Equine Activities

The following waiver of all claims, release from all liability, assumption of all risks, agreement not to sue and other terms of this agreement are entered into by me (the Participant) with and for the benefit of: _____

_____, its directors, officers, employees, volunteers, business operators, agents and site property owners or lessees (collectively the "Host"). Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, "Equine Activities" includes but is not limited to, competitions, tournaments organized and /or operated by the "Host", riding instruction, coaching and training provided by the "Host" to the Participant.

Initial Each Item below after Reading and Understanding each item:

1. I am aware that there are inherent dangers, hazards and risks (collectively "Risks") associated with "Equine Activities" and injuries resulting from these "Risks" are a common occurrence. I am aware that the "Risks" of "Equine Activities" mean those dangerous conditions which are an integral part of "Equine Activities", including but not limited to:
 - (a) the propensity of any equine to behave in ways that may result in injury, harm or death to persons on or around them and to potentially collide with, bite or kick other animals, people or objects;
 - (b) the unpredictability of an equine's reaction to such things as sounds, sudden movement, tremors, vibrations, unfamiliar objects, persons or other animals and hazards such as subsurface objects;
 - (c) the potential for other participants to behave in a negligent manner that may contribute to injury to themselves or others, including failing to act within their abilities to maintain control over an equine.
 - (d) the potential of natural or man-made hazards being present that can cause me harm, including communicable disease.
2. I freely accept and fully assume all responsibility for all "Risks" and possibilities of any and all personal injury, sickness, disease, medical payments, death, property damage or loss resulting from my participation in "Equine Activities".
3. I agree that although the "Host" has taken steps to reduce the "Risks" and increase the safety of the "Equine Activities", it is not possible for the "Host" to make the "Equine Activities" completely safe. I accept these "Risks" and agree to the terms of this waiver even if the "Host" is found to be negligent or in breach of any duty of care or any obligation to me in my participation in "Equine Activities".
4. In addition to consideration given to the "Host" for my participation in "Equine Activities", I and my heirs, next of kin, executors, administrators and assigns (collectively my "Legal Representatives") agree:
 - (a) to waive all claims that I have or may have in the future against the "Host";
 - (b) to release and forever discharge the "Host" from all liability for any personal injury, death, property damage, or loss resulting from my participation in the equine activity due to any cause, including but not limited to negligence (failure to use such care as a reasonably prudent and careful person would use under similar circumstances), breach of any duty imposed by law, breach of contract or mistake or error in judgment of the "Host"; and
 - (c) to be liable for and to hold harmless and indemnify the "Host" from all actions, proceedings, claims, damages, costs demands, including court costs and costs on a solicitor and own client basis, and liabilities of whatsoever nature or kind arising out of or in any way connected with my participation in "Equine Activities".
5. I agree that this waiver and all terms contained herein are governed exclusively and in all respects by the laws of the Province or Territory of Canada in which the "Equine Activities" are provided by the "Host". I hereby irrevocably submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of that Province or Territory of Canada and I agree that no other court can exercise jurisdiction over the terms and claims referred to herein. Any litigation to enforce this waiver will be instituted in the Province or Territory of Canada in which the "Equine Activities" are provided by the "Host".
6. I confirm that I have had sufficient time to read and understand this waiver in its entirety. I understand that this agreement represents the entire agreement between myself and the "Host", and it is binding on myself and my "Legal Representatives".
7. I confirm that I have reached the age of majority in the province in which I am participating in "Equine Activities".

Participant Name _____ Date of Birth _____ Tel # _____

Address _____ City _____ Province _____ Postal _____

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20____

(Signature of Participant)

(Print Name of "Host" Witness to Signing and Initialing)

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20____

(Signature of "Host" Witness)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RISK AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY

(AR-0103)

For Participants Under the Age of Majority in the Province or Territory in which the Equine Activities are Provided by the Host

WARNING: THIS AGREEMENT WILL AFFECT YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS. READ IT CAREFULLY!

The Parent/Guardian Must Read and Understand this Waiver Prior to Infant Participating in Equine Activities

The following waiver of all claims, release from all liability, assumption of all risks, agreement not to sue and other terms of this agreement are entered into by me on behalf of the Infant Participant named below with and for the benefit of:

_____, its directors, officers, employees, volunteers, business operators, agents, and site property owners or lessees (the "Host"). Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, "Equine Activities" includes but is not limited to competitions, tournaments organized and /or operated by the "Host", riding instruction, coaching and training provided by the "Host" to the Infant Participant.

Initial Each Item below after Reading and Understanding each item:

1. I am the Parent/Guardian of the Infant Participant and am executing this waiver on behalf of the Infant Participant in my capacity as Parent/Guardian and with the intent that this waiver be binding on myself and the Infant Participant for all legal purposes.
2. I am aware that there are inherent dangers, hazards and risks ("Risks") associated with "Equine Activities" and injuries resulting from these "Risks" are a common occurrence. I am aware that the "Risks" of "Equine Activities" mean those dangerous conditions which are an integral part of "Equine Activities", including but not limited to:
 - (a) the propensity of any equine to behave in ways that may result in injury, harm or death to persons on or around them and to potentially collide with, bite or kick other animals, people or objects;
 - (b) the unpredictability of an equine's reaction to such things as sounds, sudden movement, tremors, vibrations, unfamiliar objects, persons or other animals and hazards such as subsurface objects; and
 - (c) the potential for other participants to behave in a negligent manner that may contribute to injury to themselves or others, including failing to act within their abilities to maintain control over an equine.
 - (d) the potential of natural or man-made hazards being present that can cause me harm, including communicable disease
3. I freely accept and fully assume all responsibility for all "Risks" and possibilities of any and all personal injury, sickness, disease, medical payments, death, property damage or loss resulting from the Infant Participant's participation in "Equine Activities".
4. I agree that although the "Host" has taken steps to reduce the "Risks" and increase the safety of the "Equine Activities", it is not possible for the "Host" to make the "Equine Activities" completely safe. I accept these "Risks" and agree to the terms of this waiver on behalf of the Infant Participant, even if the "Host" is found to be negligent or in breach of any duty of care or any obligation to myself or the Infant Participant in the Infant's participation in "Equine Activities".
5. In addition to consideration given to the "Host" for the Infant Participant's participation in "Equine Activities", I and my heirs, next of kin, executors, administrators and assigns, as well as the Infant Participant and his/her heirs, next of kin, executors, administrators and assigns (collectively our "Legal Representatives") agree:
 - (a) to waive all claims that the Infant Participant has or may have in the future against the "Host";
 - (b) to release and forever discharge the "Host" from all liability for personal injury, death, property damage, or loss that I, the Infant Participant, or our "Legal Representatives" might suffer as a result of the Infant Participant's participation in "Equine Activities" due to any cause, including but not limited to negligence (failure to use such care as a reasonably prudent and careful person would use under similar circumstances), breach of any duty imposed by law, breach of contract or mistake or error in judgment of the "Host"; and
 - (c) to be liable for and to hold harmless and indemnify the "Host" from all actions, proceedings, claims, damages, costs demands, including court costs and costs on a solicitor and own client basis, and liabilities of whatsoever nature or kind arising out of or in any way connected with the Infant's participation in "Equine Activities".
6. I agree that this waiver and all terms contained herein are governed exclusively and in all respects by the laws of the Province or Territory of Canada in which the "Equine Activities" are provided by the "Host". I hereby irrevocably submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of that Province or Territory of Canada and I agree that no other court can exercise jurisdiction over the terms and claims referred to herein. Any litigation to enforce this waiver will be instituted in the Province or Territory of Canada in which the "Equine Activities" are provided by the "Host".
7. I confirm that I have had sufficient time to read and understand this waiver in its entirety. I understand that this agreement represents the entire agreement between the "Host", myself as Parent/Guardian, and the Infant Participant, and it is binding on myself, the Infant Participant and our "Legal Representatives".

Infant Participant's Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____ City _____ Province _____ Postal _____

Parent/Guardian's Name _____ Date of Birth _____ Tel # _____

Address _____ City _____ Province _____ Postal _____

(Signature of Parent/Guardian of Infant Participant) Signed this _____ day of _____, 20____

(Print Name of "Host" Witness to Signing and Initialing)

(Signature of "Host" Witness)

Appendix 2: Alberta Health Daily Checklist

COVID-19 INFORMATION

COVID-19 ALBERTA HEALTH DAILY CHECKLIST

Overview

This tool has been developed to support activity organizers and facility operators in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among attendees. The tool is meant to be used to assist with assessing attendees who may be symptomatic, or who may have been exposed to someone who is ill or has confirmed COVID-19.

Attendees should fill out this checklist prior to participating in the activity or program. If an individual answers **YES** to any of the questions, they **must not** be allowed to attend or participate in the activity or program. Children and youth will need a parent to assist them to complete this screening tool.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, this screening tool will be updated as required.

Initial Screening Questions

		CIRCLE ONE	
1.	Do you/your child have any new onset (or worsening) of any of the following symptoms:		
	• Fever	YES	NO
	• Cough	YES	NO
	• Shortness of Breath / Difficulty Breathing	YES	NO
	• Sore throat	YES	NO
	• Chills	YES	NO
	• Painful swallowing	YES	NO
	• Runny Nose / Nasal Congestion	YES	NO
	• Feeling unwell / Fatigued	YES	NO
	• Nausea / Vomiting / Diarrhea	YES	NO
	• Unexplained loss of appetite	YES	NO
	• Loss of sense of taste or smell	YES	NO
	• Muscle/ Joint aches	YES	NO
	• Headache	YES	NO
	• Conjunctivitis (commonly known as pink eye)	YES	NO
2.	Has the person attending the activity/facility travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3..	Have you/your child had close <u>unprotected</u> * contact (face-to-face contact within 2 meters/6 feet) with someone who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days and who is ill**?	YES	NO
4.	Have you/your child attending the program or activity had close <u>unprotected</u> * contact (face-to-face contact within 2 meters/6 feet) in the last 14 days with someone who is ill**?	YES	NO
5.	Have you/your child or anyone in your household been in close <u>unprotected</u> * contact in the last 14 days with someone who is being investigated or confirmed to be a case of COVID-19?	YES	NO

* "unprotected" means close contact without appropriate personal protective equipment

** "ill" means someone with COVID-19 symptoms on the list above.