
Equine Biosecurity Cleaning and Disinfection



Biosecurity is keeping your horse healthy. Biosecurity refers to the principles, actions, precautions and protocols that protect the health of animals by preventing the transmission of disease through physical barriers and hygiene practices. Follow a cleaning and disinfection protocol to help prevent risk, including the spread of disease.

Know the Difference

Cleaning

The presence of dirt and manure on surfaces lowers the germ-killing power of most disinfectants.

Clean as much debris as possible off your tools, boots and equipment, before you disinfect them.

Wash with soap and water and use a brush as needed. Rinse and dry thoroughly before you apply disinfectant.

Disinfecting

Disinfectants kill bacteria, but may not work well on viruses. Always consult with your veterinarian for an appropriate disinfectant to fight equine diseases.

Selecting and Using a Disinfectant

- Select a disinfectant that has documented effectiveness in the presence of 10 per cent organic matter. As well, select a disinfectant that works well with the water hardness you have at your location, and is safe to use around horses and humans.
- Follow label instructions for use.
- Note any warnings and requirements for proper use and disposal of the disinfectant.

- Do not mix disinfectants with other disinfectants or chemicals.
- Pay close attention to the contact time required for disinfection. Be aware that many disinfectants do not work when temperatures are close to freezing.

Common Disinfectants

Some common disinfectants include:

- **Household bleach:** Typical household bleach is 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite. Mix one part bleach to 10 parts water. This mixture works for shoes, grooming equipment, buckets, shovels and pitchforks. Bleach is readily inactivated by organic matter. Use only after thoroughly removing all dirt and manure.
- **Spray disinfectant:** Ensure the label says that the product kills bacteria and viruses. Sprays work well on clean shoes, tack and grooming equipment. Remove all manure and dirt before spraying.
- **Waterless hand sanitizer:** Washing with soap and water is more effective than hand sanitizer. However, gels or hand wipes are easy to use for cleaning your hands at a show or after visiting other horses. Be sure to clean between your fingers and under your nails.

- **Accelerated hydrogen peroxide:** Used according to label directions, this is an enviro-safe, low residue, low odour product with good disinfecting power.
- **Other commercial disinfectants:** Always mix and use according to the label instructions. Look for disinfectants that will work even if all dirt and manure can't be removed. These disinfectants are particularly good choices for disinfecting trailers and tires and for use in footbaths. They usually come as concentrates and must be mixed with water before using.



Footbaths

To make a footbath, you will need:

- a low plastic pan or bin, wide enough to fit an adult's foot and shallow enough to step into easily.
- a plastic doormat (the "fake grass" mats work well)
- a disinfectant that works well in the presence of organic material
- water

Mix the disinfectant with water according to the label instructions. Put the doormat in the plastic pan. Add the disinfectant so that the bottom of the mat is wet. Ask visitors to walk through the footbath, wiping their feet on the mat. The mat scrubs their shoes as they wipe them and applies the disinfectant. When the liquid starts to get dirty, empty the footbath and put in new disinfectant. Also, follow label instructions for the disinfectant's effectiveness time once it has been prepared. Wash your hands after handling.

Cleaning and Disinfection Protocol

1. Remove organic material from floors (e.g., move fecal material to a designated waste area or manure pile and handle infectious waste according to veterinary advice). Sweep floors, if applicable.
2. Thoroughly clean areas such as rails, chutes, stalls, stocks, walls, doors and floors (don't forget your horse trailer) to remove all organic matter. Consider using a dilution device such as a pressure washer, with hot water and detergent. You must scrub the area and keep it free from any debris for disinfectant to be effective.
3. Allow the area to dry completely before you apply the disinfectant. If you need to use the area before allowing time for it to dry, squeegee the area to remove as much water as possible.
4. Cover the area in disinfectant solution, following the manufacturer's guidelines for the minimum contact time needed for complete disinfection (e.g., Virkon 1% requires 15 minutes).
5. Leave the area to dry completely or squeegee off any residue after you've allowed the specified contact time.

Contact us

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For more information, you can also contact your veterinarian.