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Governor

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Commissioner

## **Interim Guidance for Equine Operations**

June 11, 2020

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*This guidance is provided for equine farms, consisting of recreational, boarding and breeding operations. This guidance does not apply to racing and other equine competition venues.*

On March 7, 2020, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo issued Executive Order 202, declaring a state of emergency in response to COVID-19. Community transmission of COVID-19 has occurred throughout New York. To minimize further spread, social distancing of at least six feet must be maintained between individuals, where possible.

On March 20, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued Executive Order 202.6, directing all non-essential businesses to close in-office personnel functions. Essential businesses, as defined by Empire State Development Corporation (ESD) guidance, were not subject to the in-person restriction, but were, however, directed to comply with the guidance and directives for maintaining a clean and safe work environment issued by the New York State Department of Health (DOH), and were strongly urged to maintain social distancing measures to the extent possible.

A phased re-opening of New York State is underway. Due to their open space and outdoor nature, activities associated with the equine industry are permissible so long they are consistent with the outlined requirements. The industry must adhere to all social distancing, cleaning, and sanitation guidelines.

For purposes of this guidance, equine activities include: the breeding, boarding, exercise, and transport of horses, the riding of personal horses at boarding facilities, and the oversight or instruction of riders.

### **Required Operating Procedures**

- Equine farms must:
  - Comply with all NY Forward, Phase One: Agriculture Guidance, including “Non-food Related Agriculture Summary Guidelines”, available at <https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/NonFoodAgriShortGuidelines.pdf>.
  - Read and affirm the detailed guidelines for non-food agriculture, available at <https://forward.ny.gov/industries-reopening-phase#phase-one--agriculture--forestry--fishing---hunting>.
  - Develop and implement a business safety plan, available at [https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/NYS\\_BusinessReopeningSafetyPlanTemplate.pdf](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/NYS_BusinessReopeningSafetyPlanTemplate.pdf).
- Viewing of horses for sale/breeding, conducting riding lessons, and any riding of horses may be done in an outdoor or indoor arena/area and by appointment only. There shall be no more than ten individuals in a group at any one time, including, but not limited to instructors, judges, owners, and customers/clients. All interactions must adhere to strict social distancing of six feet between individuals.
- Transportation of horses between equine facilities and/or trail systems should consist of only those passengers necessary to assure equine safety and well-being. Face coverings must be worn in the vehicle if social distancing cannot be maintained.

- Frequently clean and sanitize surfaces, including vehicles, trailers, and riding equipment. Particular attention should be paid to high touch surfaces, including door handles and shared equipment.
- Hand sanitizer, consisting of at least 60% alcohol, should be made available to customers.

### **Required Face Coverings**

On April 12, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued Executive Order 202.16, directing essential businesses to provide employees, who are present in the workplace, with a face covering, at no-cost, that must be used when in direct contact with customers or members of the public during the course of their work. Additional information can be found at [Interim Guidance on Executive Order 202.16](#).

On April 15, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued Executive Order 202.17, directing that any individual who is over age two and able to medically tolerate a face-covering must cover their nose and mouth with a mask or cloth face-covering when in a public place and unable to maintain, or when not maintaining, social distance. On April 16, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued Executive Order 202.18, directing that everyone using public or private transportation carriers or other for-hire vehicles, who is over age two and able to medically tolerate a face covering, must wear a mask or face covering over the nose and mouth during any such trip. It also directed any operators or drivers of public or private transport to wear a face covering or mask which covers the nose and mouth while there are any passengers in such a vehicle. Additional information can be found at [Interim Guidance on Executive Orders 202.17 and 202.18](#).

### **Signage**

Equine farms must post Stop the Spread [signage](#) (alternative languages for the [signage](#) are also available) in conspicuous locations and follow the proper hand washing/hygiene protocol:

- Regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds should be done:
  - Before and after eating.
  - After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing.
  - After using the restroom.
  - Before handling food.
  - After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated, including face, hair, cellphone, or clothing.
  - After using shared equipment and supplies.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of elbow.
- If soap and water is unavailable, using an alcohol-based sanitizer consisting of at least 60% alcohol.
- Dispose of soiled tissues immediately after use in a trash receptacle.

**For additional information, visit the links below:**

NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/coronavirus> (including Interim Guidance on Animal Care).

NYS Department of Health: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>