



Equine Care Guide

Information on providing needed care for horses, mules, and donkeys





Disclaimer: The following are recommended best practices for equine care.

★ Shelter

Horses need adequate shelter, including:

- Protection from rain, snow, and high winds

- Shade in summer

- Natural light

- Bedding (straw, sawdust or wood shavings)

Indoor box stalls should be at least 10' x 10' with room for the horse to turn around and lie down. Clean (or “muck”) the stalls regularly by removing manure and adding more bedding as necessary.

Outdoor, open-air stalls or stables should have a minimum of three solid sides for protection from rain, snow and wind. If this is not possible, the horse should have a waterproof horse blanket in cold months. Blankets should be checked daily for proper fitting.

★ Feed

Horses need a diet of hay or a mixture of hay and grains (oats, sweet feed, or other grains). Do not feed only grains unless recommended by a veterinarian. A well-fed horse will finish all of their hay/grain and not look around for more afterward.

Horses require daily feeding by placing hay or grain in a hay rack or bucket. Do not throw feed on the ground, where it can attract dust, mold and parasites that harm the horse.

Keep fresh, clean water and salt blocks accessible to the horse at all times.

★ How much to feed?

Measure feed accurately and feed your equine consistently. Recommended feed amounts are 15-20 lbs of roughage a day. The percentages shown below are the portions of an average 55-60 lb 2-strand bale of hay.

Small (including ponies, miniature horses, miniature donkeys): feed at least 2x per day: $\frac{1}{8}$ am and $\frac{1}{8}$ pm = $\frac{1}{3}$ of a bale/day

Medium (including standard horses, donkeys, mules): feed at least 2x per day: $\frac{1}{4}$ am and $\frac{1}{4}$ pm = $\frac{1}{2}$ of a bale/day

Large (including Clydesdales and Draft horses): feed at least 2x per day: $\frac{1}{2}$ am and $\frac{1}{2}$ pm = 1 bale/day

Note: Stallions and lactating mares need additional feed (consult a veterinarian).





Laws and regulations governing equine care may vary depending upon jurisdiction.

★ Veterinary Care and Grooming

1. Vaccinations	To maintain good health, horses need annual vaccinations (shots) for Rabies, Tetanus, West Nile Virus, Encephalitis. Under state law, Rabies vaccinations must be administered only by a licensed veterinarian. Other vaccinations can be administered by a veterinarian or can be bought at veterinary supply stores.
2. Deworming	Give deworming drugs (paste given into the horse's mouth) at least twice per year (spring and fall), though every three months is better. Deworming drugs can be administered by a licensed veterinarian or can be bought at equine or farm supply stores.
3. Teeth	A horse's teeth should be checked annually by a veterinarian or equine dentist. The teeth may need to be "floated" (filed down) every year.
4. Gelding	Gelding (the castration of male horses) is necessary in all cases unless the foal is specifically raised as a stud by a regulated horse breeder. Uncastrated stallions are often aggressive, cause property damage, and can injure themselves. Contact a licensed veterinarian to perform a gelding procedure. The operation should be performed in spring, fall, or winter to minimize risk of infection.
5. Coggins Test	A Coggins Test for blood disease is inexpensive and should be performed by a licensed veterinarian every year.
6. Hoof Care	Horses require regular cleaning of their hooves with a hoof pick, especially in winter months to prevent buildup of ice and snow. Contact a professional farrier to check and trim hooves every six to eight weeks.





★ Disaster Planning

Pre-Planning Can Save Lives

Identify and plan with friends or neighbors who can respond in emergencies (release horses from stalls, call veterinarians, temporarily house horses, etc.)

Make a list of instructions to emergency workers in a waterproof envelope and post in multiple locations such as barn walls, exterior house walls, etc.

Create a list of necessary items to bring with the horse in an emergency (water, feed, buckets, halters, lead ropes, medication, etc.)

Anticipate and be prepared for food or water shortages from power outages, road outages, etc.

Some Necessary Paperwork

Keep copies of the following paperwork in a waterproof envelope:

- Bill of sale
- Most recent vaccinations record
- Most recent Coggins test
- Other veterinary records
- Hauling permit
- Photographic proof of ownership

For More Information

If you have any questions about horse care or need help providing for your horse, contact us.

We may be able to help. Call us at 505-803-3770 or email epf@apnm.org



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