



Chartered
Institute of
Environmental
Health



Health and safety in horse riding establishments and livery yards

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

KAREN and MICHAEL SINCLAIR-WILLIAMS

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FOREWORD TO THIS PUBLICATION

The CIEH published the original guidance document a number of years ago to help communication and ultimately enhance the safety of the sport and leisure time activity of equestrianism.

It was felt timely to update the publication and make it more useful to a wider audience in light of some changes and developments. There has been some very positive feedback from users since its original publication and therefore it is believed there is still a demand for information and knowledge in this subject. Following a period of consultation and useful feedback and input for which the authors are very grateful, the document has been updated in line with revised legislation, enhancements in good practices and developments in equipment that have improved safety protection. This version also includes a number of web links to relevant sources of information.

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THE AUTHORS

Michael Sinclair-Williams (Dr.) is a keen horseman with many years operational safety experience. He holds a first degree, an MBA and a Phd in Total Quality Management (TQM) and risk management. He is a Chartered Member of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (CMIOSH)

Karen Sinclair-Williams is a Chartered member of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CMCIEH) with an MSc. She is on the British Horse Society Register of Instructors and regularly teaches private clients and on behalf of local riding schools and the Pony Club.

Most importantly, both want their children to enjoy riding and return home safely.

Disclaimer

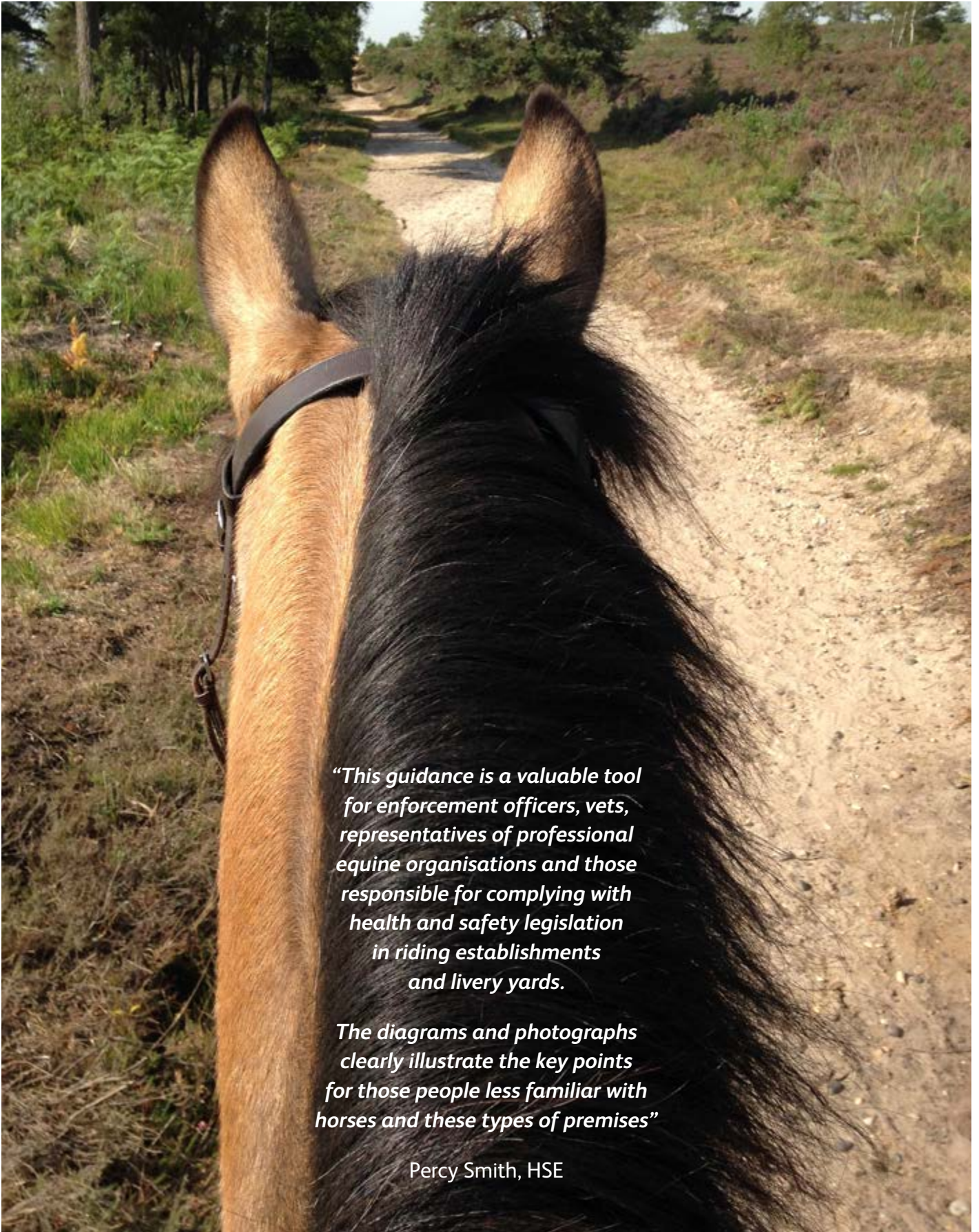
This document has been prepared in the best interests of animal welfare and health and safety and to advise those tasked with the inspecting, advising and licensing of livery and stable yards. No responsibility or liability for loss or consequential loss occasioned to any person as a result of making use of this publication (including the recommended best practice contained within), is accepted by the CIEH, or the authors of this publication. It should also be borne in mind that laws change and expert advice should always be sought as to the legal position.

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“This guidance is a valuable tool for enforcement officers, vets, representatives of professional equine organisations and those responsible for complying with health and safety legislation in riding establishments and livery yards.

The diagrams and photographs clearly illustrate the key points for those people less familiar with horses and these types of premises”

Percy Smith, HSE

INTRODUCTION

The horse as a social partner

The horse has been part of man's development over many thousands of years. The relationship began at a time when work and travel were the primary goals. Today there are mechanical aids which are faster and more effective, so the function of the relationship has changed to predominantly one of leisure and sport.

This also means that the user group has changed. Horses are now owned and ridden by people from all walks of life, with varying degrees of experience but who still benefit from that interaction.

For example, horses are regularly used as part of urban experience programmes where children from deprived areas are given access to a horse for a short period of time. Disabled groups also use interaction as a way of improving co-ordination skills and for therapeutic gain. Both the young and old also use the horse for gaining inner confidence, exercise and enjoyment. Therefore it is clear that horses play a vital role for many, both psychologically and physically.

To better understand the magnitude of the sector, the following facts are worth consideration:

- 2.7 million people in Great Britain rode horses in 2015
- There has been significant growth in the number of riders aged between 16 and 24, rising from 368,000 in 2011 to 403,000 in 2015.
- 74% of riders are female. In 2015, there were an estimated 962,000 female regular riders compared with 348,000 males.
- Riding for pleasure, at 96%, was the most popular equestrian activity, with 59% of riders taking part in non-affiliated competitions.
- The number of horses in Britain was 944,000 in 2015. This figure includes those owned privately but kept by others or owned by private establishments.
- There are an estimated 446,000 horse-owning households in the country
- In 2015, an estimated £3,600 was spent on each horse
- In 2015, indirect spending on equestrian items such as hats and body protectors, clothing, books and magazines stood at £560 million.

Source BHS <http://www.beta-uk.org/pages/news-amp-events/news/national-equestrian-survey-2015-shows-increased-consumer-spending.php?searchresult=1&sstring=equestrian+statistics>

The industry is supported by a dedicated and active trade association, the British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) (<http://www.beta-uk.org/>), which estimates that the UK equine industry supports a multi-billion pound revenue stream, employs a quarter of a million people and provides approximately 2.5 million people with a material leisure benefit.

Obviously, due to their size and needs, horses are not animals that can be kept in the average suburban garden. This has resulted in a vast cottage industry of livery stables and yards, ranging from simple fields to lavish self-contained stables. With few exceptions, most people wishing to learn to ride take lessons at local horse riding establishments (commonly referred to as riding schools). Those that maintain an interest in the sport may continue in this way for many years, while others may eventually purchase their own horse or share a horse with a second party. In the majority of cases they will keep the horse at some form of livery yard or riding school. To provide confidence in the quality of such establishments to members, the British Horse Society (BHS) has established an approval/rating system that evaluates how they are managed from an equestrian perspective. The Association of British Riding Schools (ABRS) also run their own approval system. It should be noted however that many establishments do not participate actively in such schemes.



Who is this publication aimed at?

The primary purpose of this publication is to share knowledge and best practices that will enable more people to enjoy the sport in a safe and sustainable way. More specifically, this publication is intended to help bridge gaps in health and safety knowledge and understanding between those who regulate, those who are regulated and those who participate in the industry. It attempts to strike a practical balance between the costs and benefits of riding and the need to regulate what is essentially a high risk sport if taken to its highest level. In turn this should enhance individual benefits gained from riding and promote a sustainable industry.

Under the Riding Establishments Acts 1964 and 1970, all riding establishments must hold a licence which the local authority grants following consideration of an inspection report by a veterinary surgeon on the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)/British Veterinary Association (BVA) approved List of Riding Establishment Inspectors. See more at: <http://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-events/news/new-publication-for-riding-establishment-inspector-vets>

The main criteria for granting such a licence include the need to prove suitable qualifications and experience of horse management, and assurance that horses are for example:

- In good health and physically fit
- Suitable to be hired out and used for riding
- Provided with adequate food, drink and bedding
- Safeguarded in an emergency
- The establishment must also hold liability insurance that covers any injuries that result from people riding and
- Maintain a register of horses aged 3 years or under that are usually kept on the premises

Source (DEFRA) <https://www.gov.uk/riding-establishment-licence>

It should also be noted that in certain circumstances a licence may be required under the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 in relation to trekking. (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l177.htm>)

What is the challenge?

People like to take risks, but also like a degree of comfort that those risks are being controlled. The equine environment is no different. Although it is recognised as a high risk sport it is, inter alia, balancing the risk of falling off against the benefits and enjoyment gained.

To put structure around this management of risk there are multiple stakeholders and players including a regulatory framework; Health and Safety Executive (HSE), vets, local authorities, fire authorities, trade bodies such as BETA and organisations including the BHS and Pony Club; all of which play a role in making the sport safer and thus more enjoyable. Parents also play a vital role. Insurance company requirements have an ever increasing influence and there have also been a number of civil claims within the sector (eg Kear v Stockland 2011, Freeman v Higher Park Farm 2008).

However, ensuring the safety and health of staff, volunteers and members of the public is down to good management, good horses and competent instructors and riders. Some would argue that it is about having a positive safety culture, driven by the senior leaders/ instructors or owners of the establishment. Nevertheless, even with the best management, there remain instances where lines of responsibility or knowledge of what has to be done within equine establishments (this includes Livery Yards) are blurred. This is particularly the case when volunteers are used in the day-to-day activities in of both horse riding and care.

Given changes in public sector funding arrangements and HSE enforcement policy a further challenge to maintaining standards of safety and health is the approach to oversight and regulatory assurance of such establishments. Under the Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations 1998, local authorities are the designated enforcement authority for the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and its relevant statutory provisions for most riding establishments. The exception would be premises where the main activity is horse breeding (e.g. studs), horse training (e.g. racing stables), agricultural activities or veterinary surgeries. The adopted approach is now more about 'light touch' and targeting (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/enforce/enforcepolicy.htm>) high risk activities or breach of regulation. This means that the classical approach to routinely inspecting on a regular basis is no longer used.

The following chapters are to be considered guidance, but ultimately risk assessment and sound judgment should be used to demonstrate and manage significant risks in the establishment. It is hoped, however, that the guidance and sources in this publication provide a basis for sound decision making.

CHAPTER ONE – DEFINITIONS AND THE LEGISLATIVE OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide some definitions and to describe the general UK health and safety legislative requirements.

Definitions

Horses and ponies

There are differences between horses and ponies, the most obvious one being height, with ponies shorter than horses when measured at a certain point of their body, the 'withers'. However, the term 'horse' is used generically throughout the guidance for simplification. Another definition that often causes confusion is the difference between a 'livery yard' and a 'riding establishment'.

A horse riding establishment is defined as:

'a business of keeping horses for either or both of the following; the purpose of being let out on hire for riding or their use in providing, instruction in riding in return for payment'

This definition was taken from the Riding Establishments Act 1964 as amended by the Riding Establishments Act 1970 and the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Common functions of horse riding establishments/schools, are the provision of riding lessons, horse care and handling lessons ('stable management'), and accompanied rides 'treks' or 'hacks'. Although some will allow clients to take their horses for a ride without supervision from riding school staff, these premises are in the minority.

However, there are reports of a growing number of unlicensed yards which loan horses for a fee thus are using a horse for 'hire or reward'. This situation will need to be monitored and appropriate action taken where possible.

The other type of establishment is a livery yard, which is defined by the BHS as;

'the business of providing a range of facilities, service and supervision intended to care for a horse in return for reward or financial gain'

There are many different types of livery yard but these can be grouped into the following broad categories namely: full livery, part livery, do it yourself livery (DIY) and working livery.

Full livery

Generally this encompasses the complete care of the horse e.g. stabling and/or grazing, grooming, general care and in some cases exercise.

Part livery

The yard proprietor and horse owner/client share the duties of full livery. A typical example would be where the proprietor feeds the horse in the morning, places rugs on and turns the horse out into a field for the day. The client would do the remainder e.g. mucking out the stable and bringing it in from the field at night. Another example is where a client has limited time available and therefore out-sources the full range of care to the proprietor for the week but will then assume full responsibility at the weekend.

DIY livery

With Do It Yourself (DIY) livery the owner/client is responsible for all aspects of care. This would usually include horses said to be at 'grass livery', who stay in the field day and night or 'live out'.



Working livery

A further category is defined as "Working livery" which could be any combination of the above. In this form of arrangement the riding establishment or livery yard makes use of the client's horse for their own staff and/or clients in lieu of some aspect of payment or care arrangement. An example would be where a riding school has use of a client's horse for lessons and rides but the client can use it at all other times. To add to the complexity many riding establishments offer livery services and many livery yards will also offer riding lessons to some clients (irrespective of whether they are licensed to do so). A licence is not required if an instructor teaches the client on their own horse.



Does health and safety legislation apply?

Responsibilities to employees

Within the riding environment there are some difficulties in the enforcement of Health and Safety legislation. The first question that is commonly asked is whether the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 is applicable. Section 2 of the Act states,

'it shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees'

Where it is clear that there are employees, this requirement is absolute. For example riding establishments provide instruction to clients and usually employ riding instructors and other staff to assist. There is a clear employer/employee relationship. Some of the larger livery yards offering full or part livery will also employ a number of staff to assist with looking after the horses. Again the employer/employee relationship is evident and thus legislative requirements clearly apply.

Others who may be affected

In other cases there are complex contractual and legal arrangements related to the various scenarios. Often it is difficult to determine directly if a contract of employment exists as described above. In some instances the duty is via some form of obligation under Section 3 of the Act which states,

'it shall be the duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected thereby are not exposed to risks to their health and safety'

This applies to contractors, visitors, clients, the self-employed and volunteers etc.

Section 4 states,

'Persons in total or partial control of work premises must take 'reasonable' measures to ensure the health and safety of those who are not their employees'

This would relate to the landlord or managing agent of premises such as those offering DIY livery only. In most cases the DIY client does not own the premises and there will be a landlord/owner who has the responsibilities described above in terms of the premises and plant and equipment. Thereafter it becomes difficult to ascertain the extent of the legal obligation on, for example, each of the DIY clients. It can be argued that the client has a form of contract with the landlord, who has a duty to ensure

the premises are fit for purpose, but that person may not necessarily have any control over how those premises are being used. This presents a more complex arrangement. In addition there is commonly no relationship between each of the parties who share the premises and facilities. Many of the small livery yards are family run businesses or simply shared arrangements that enable a number of individuals to keep one or more horses. In such cases, where there is no employer/employee relationship or self employed person there is still a duty of care between each party under civil law and therefore exposure to civil proceedings and a compensation claim being made.

The term 'reward' can also complicate the issue. Although reward is mentioned in the definition of a livery yard (BHS) it can sometimes apply in the context of riding establishments too. For example clients will often be able to receive a 'free' riding lesson or services to assist with the care of their horse in exchange for assisting the proprietor. This can occur within any of the forms of livery services. In the context of health and safety such a term may be interpreted differently. For example does reward infer some form of contract and thus obligations under the legislation? Even where such individuals are not deemed employees the employer will still have responsibilities under Section 3 of the Act, i.e. duty to others. In the absence of case law such factors will need to be addressed at policy level.

The responsibility of employees

Employees also have responsibilities under various elements of legislation. For example they must attend health and safety training sessions, wear any personal protective equipment provided and abide by the safety management system rules that have been put in place.

The legislative requirements

Within the UK a legal framework exists for managing the safety risks that individuals are exposed to. The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 remains the 'umbrella' legislation and is known as an enabling act. It provides the basic general duties which all employers and employees must adhere to but also enables other more specific regulations to be enacted. Of particular importance is the fact that the Act was supplemented in 1992 and beyond with a number of Regulations, which allowed the UK to meet the European Union Directive requirement for specific areas of concern. In broad terms these regulations focused on a more goal based approach than had previously existed, using the principles of good safety management and 'risk assessment' as the vehicles for setting and achieving those goals. The Regulations, introduced in 1992 as amended, include:

- Management requirements
- Manual Handling operations
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) requirements
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment requirements
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Display Screen Equipment (Computers)

There are other specific requirements that are topic based such as:

- Electricity at work
- First aid
- Asbestos at work
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
- Fire safety
- Dangerous substances and explosive atmospheres

In addition the scope of obligations for use of pesticides on land have changed in that a person who previously had grandfather rights to use pesticides must now attend a course if they are using pesticides/sprays for professional use. This would include a yard owner spraying grassland as part of the livery business. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/pesticides.htm>

The underlying principle of the legislation is self regulation which means individual proprietors have a duty to manage the risk to all those affected (see Roben's committee report for more details or David Eves: 'Two steps forward, one step back' A brief history of the origins, development and implementation of health and safety law in the United Kingdom, 1802–2014 by David Eves).

The basic requirements of legislation are for establishments to have systems in place to manage safety risks that are generated by the activities, communicate the controls and make sure those controls are followed. To manage risk successfully and comply with statutory requirements this means each establishment should have the following in place:

- a written health and safety policy (if employing five or more people);
- assessments of the risks to employees, contractors, customers, partners, and any other people who could be affected by the activities – and record the significant findings in writing (if employing five or more people). Any risk assessment must be 'suitable and sufficient' (called Risk Profiling later);

- arrangements for the effective planning, doing, checking and acting on the preventive and protective measures that come from risk assessment;
- access to competent health and safety advice (www.hse.gov.uk/competence);
- means of consulting with employees and provision of information about the risks in the workplace and how they are protected (worker involvement);
- instruction and training for employees in how to deal with the risks;
- adequate and appropriate supervision in place

(source: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg275.pdf>)

How these are managed is also a key element of ensuring compliance and providing confidence that the control measures are actually being used by all. The core elements of such a system are outlined below in figure 1:

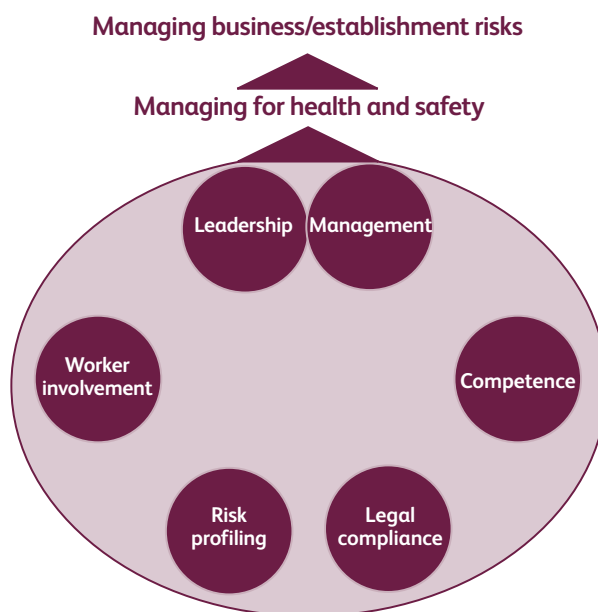


Figure 1 HSE management model (source HSE)

Most organisations will take a systematic approach to how they manage safety and business risks which generally can be classified as Plan, Do, Check and Act:

Source : <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg268.pdf> which will be discussed in more detail later.

The approach is actually quite straight forward, in that the person responsible should identify their policies to control the risks, devise arrangements to deliver the objectives and then implement them. This is followed by a process of performance review, which is where the establishment checks whether what is being done is still suitable and effective. For example, are risk assessments being carried out and are proper briefings being done, etc.

Risk assessment

In order to meet the requirements to control the risks, under the statutory obligations of the Management Regulations it is necessary to carry out a **suitable and sufficient** assessment of the risks associated with the activities or operations carried out. The HSE has provided guidance on how to do such an assessment in its publication on risk assessment' (INDG 163 rev 4) <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.htm>. In principle the process includes the following steps;

- Identify Hazards
- Identify who may be harmed and how
- Evaluate risks
- Record significant findings
- Regularly Review

There are many aspects of health and safety management that require the process of risk assessment (Risk Profiling) to be carried out. In determining what is suitable and sufficient this means only assessing those hazards which are significant and could cause harm if not controlled. In general terms this means asking basic questions:

Risk Assessment Examples		
1.	Who could be harmed?	Employee, client, visitor, contractor
2.	What tasks are dangerous?	Jumping, galloping, lifting heavy articles
3.	How often are those tasks carried out?	Daily, weekly or less frequently...
4.	Does the task need to be done at all. If so, how could it be made safer?	Mechanical lifting of hay bales rather than manually. Use of a mechanical lift rather than a ladder...
5.	What control measures are in place or would need to be put in place?	Making sure staff are properly qualified Implement manual handling training Write down procedural controls etc.

Answers to some of these questions can be found when looking at information/data on accident trends, for example the BHS accident map (<http://www.bhs.org.uk/safety-and-accidents/horse-accidents/view-incident-map>) and British Eventing (http://www.britisheventing.com/library-media/documents/Summary_of_Falls_2012_13.pdf) or specialist control measures such as BETA <http://www.beta-uk.org/pages/about-beta/committees/body-protector-and-safety-committee.php?searchresult=1&sstring=safety>).

In broad terms answers to such questions are largely common sense and the knowledge is generally available through the people who work at the establishment as they work with the hazards daily. To give an example often establishment owners will know which horse is easy to ride and as such a novice rider could use. They will also know which of their instructors is best able to supervise a nervous rider and who can operate plant and equipment safely.

It is also a requirement that the person undertaking the risk assessment is competent to do so, with sufficient training and experience or knowledge. They must be able to objectively strike a balance between risk exposure and benefit and evaluate the effectiveness of any measures to control the risks.

A further principle of UK law is that if a risk is foreseeable there is a duty to eliminate or reduce it **so far as reasonably practicable**. Case law has provided some guidance on how this can be determined by utilising the concept of grossly disproportional. The risk reduction must outweigh the cost if it is to be reasonable. Figure 2 illustrates this point.



Figure 2: The Balance of Reasonably Practicable

In general it is normally sufficient to comply with good or best industry practice and HSE Approved Codes of Practice and Codes of Practice. Best practices include those advocated by organisations such as the BHS, Pony Club and ABRS.

Factors to consider

It is worth noting at this stage that many of the riding establishments/livery yards operate on low margins and as such health and safety controls must be proportionate to the risks. Whilst there is not a single employer's association or federation some premises may be aligned with reputable equine groups such as the ABRS or BHS, who are very helpful in terms of providing advice and assistance to members.

Although there are many different types of models and proforma that can be used to profile risk, the main philosophy should be to keep it simple and focused. The application of this approach is now discussed in Chapter 2, where typical hazards are identified, groups at risk illustrated and examples of risk described.

CHAPTER TWO – GROUPS AT RISK AND TYPICAL HAZARDS

The previous chapters introduced the subject and provided an overview of the legal framework and obligations. Key to meeting those obligations is the process of risk analysis/profiling, of which determination of those exposed to the risk and identification of the hazardous situations are critical. This chapter draws on that theme by providing guidance on typical 'at risk groups', hazards associated with riding establishments and typical risks that remain after normal controls are put in place. Firstly the groups of individuals at risk are identified.

Who are the groups at risk?

The main groups of people exposed to hazards and consequent risks in and around riding establishments/livery yards are employees, riding school clients, contractors and members of the public including volunteers.

Staff

Staff include full and part time paid employees and those undertaking voluntary work. In terms of applying health and safety legislation a verbal contract rather than a written one is sufficient to demonstrate an employer/employee relationship. Generally employees that are a member of the same family as the employer are covered by the legislative requirements. Staff roles vary considerably, from assistance with handling or riding horses, mucking out stables, grooming, preparing for lessons, to instructing and administration.

Many of the assistants and volunteers, particularly in the riding school environment will be teenagers, parents and children. It is a legal requirement under the Management Regulations that specific, rather than generic risk assessments are undertaken of young people (defined as under the age of 18) and children (below minimum school leaving age) to reflect their vulnerability and inexperience with regard to risk (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/law/>). These assessments should be discussed with their parents/guardians.

It is worth noting that a minority of establishments have sought ways around health and safety and other obligations towards volunteers, by describing them as club members etc. An evaluation of the exact circumstances will be necessary when consideration of the need for a licence is under debate.

Although many males work with horses, it is likely to be the case that most riding school and livery yard premises attract predominantly female staff.

In a similar vein to young people and children, a specific risk assessment is required for pregnant women and new mothers. (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/law.htm>).

Staff will have disabilities representative of the wider community but those with significant mobility problems may be less likely to physically work directly with horses. Where such individuals are in employment their needs should be incorporated in the general risk assessment and reasonable accommodation made (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/disability/law.htm>).

Furthermore, employers have a duty to take action where accidents are reasonably foreseeable.

Depending on the nature of their roles, staff etc. are potentially likely to be exposed to the entire spectrum of hazards including kicks, falls, manual handling injuries, exposure to substances hazardous to health.

Riding school clients

Although they are in essence members of the public, it is useful to include these in a separate category. Riding school clients are typically classified as the following:

- Beginners (Those new to riding or who have ridden for a short period of time)
- Novice (Those with more riding ability than beginners but still lacking in experience)
- Experienced (Those with reasonable ability and experience, usually familiar with areas such as show and cross country jumping. It should be noted that sometimes experienced riders will have had an absence from riding and may need a period of refreshing)

All of these may participate in group lessons, private lessons (1:1) or semi-private (usually 2 riders). Clients represent all races, ages, sexes, and may have various degrees of disability.



RIDING SCHOOL CLIENTS

Members of the public

This may include people keeping their horses at livery, children (including young persons) and other people visiting livery yards/watching riding lessons etc. There is likely to be a vast array of experience, from competent riders to those completely unfamiliar with horses and the associated risks. Again they will be representative of all sectors of the community with regard to age, sex, disability.

Children/Young people and those unaccustomed to horses may need particular protection under the safety management system due to their lack of understanding/experience of the hazards associated with horses and the riding school/livery yard environment. There is also an obligation to protect trespassers.

Contractors

In the context of riding establishments/livery yards, the contractors that are likely to visit on a frequent basis include vets, farriers or blacksmiths, suppliers of feed and bedding, maintenance contractors, and field contractors (to cut hay, maintain hedges and ditches). Whilst some would have knowledge and awareness of the relevant risks there are still steps that proprietors can take to control the risks. Other contractors may have no such awareness.

Having identified broad groups of individuals who may be exposed to risks during riding school/livery yard activities it is useful to focus in more depth on the types of hazards that they might be exposed to.

The hazards

A common definition used in safety literature is **“something that has the potential to cause harm or injury”**. In considering the typical activities that will be undertaken in a riding establishment/livery yard it becomes apparent that there are many which will, if not controlled adequately, present a level of risk which is not acceptable. Theoretically any horse has the potential to cause harm or injury, simply through application of its weight or its hooves coming into contact at force with a person’s body. They are also animals that have their own foibles, just like humans. They can be of differing temperaments, they react to different stimuli and can be quite volatile. It is also known that breeding affects the manner in which the horse behaves. For example it is often quoted, as a generalisation, that thoroughbred types can be flighty and strong-willed and cobs more hardy and calm. Ultimately horses are herd animals and can be unpredictable, so the risk is equally dynamic in nature.

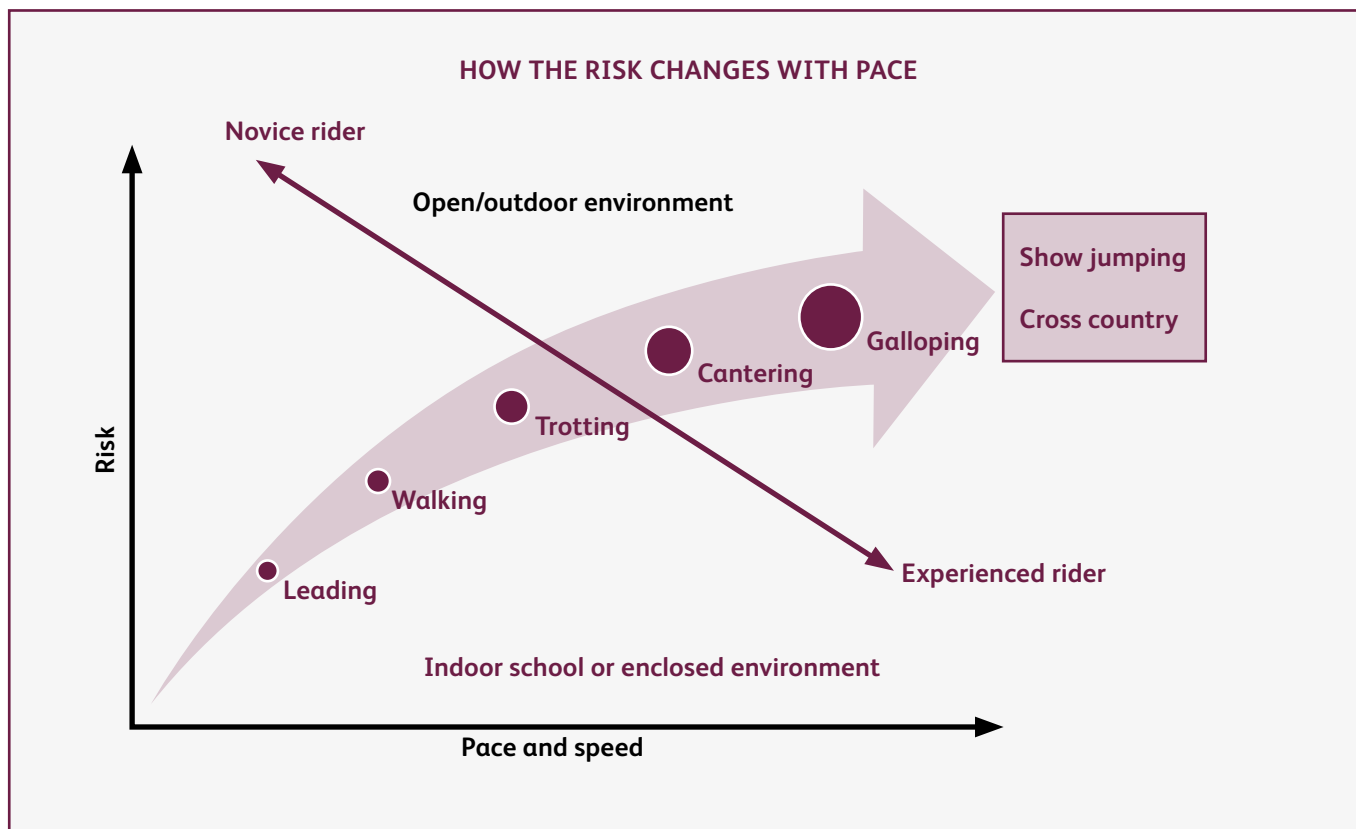
The riding environment typically includes uneven/cobbled floors, barbed wire fences, dark mornings/evenings as well as inclement weather, each of which presents its own hazards. In addition the typical operations that are carried out in any establishment present hazards. These can include loading and unloading into horse boxes, catching horses from the field, moving parts of equipment and the use of machinery.



The act of riding itself can present significant hazards. Riding can range from simply walking or trotting within a purpose built area, to galloping at speed along road side verges in close proximity to moving vehicles.

Figure 3 below illustrates that pace and speed can increase the risk as can the experience of the rider. Novices for example have much to learn and may not have established balance when riding, so could be more easily unseated than a more experienced rider.

Figure 3



It would be very easy to make assumptions about the types of hazards in question but as in any sector a hazard to one person is not always perceived as a hazard to another. The longer that people work with horses the more complacent they may become about the acceptability of the risk associated with any one hazard. Often falls from horses, particularly from very experienced riders, are deemed to be an intrinsic part of the job, as is being the recipient of the

occasional bite or kick. Although much endeavour has been made to improve accident reporting, within the equine industry, when compared with other sectors the numbers still appear to be proportionately low, which may be due to these factors.

Consideration is now given to the data available to help assess the hazards and risks that might be present.

Hazard and accident data

Gaining a clear picture of incidents and accidents in the equine world is difficult due to the nature of the sport and the activities. However, the British Horse Society maintain a record of road accidents reported to them and estimate that at least 3000 road accidents every year involve horses. Furthermore they collate statistics relating to incidents reported to them involving horses being ridden and attacked by dogs. There is also concern that a number of accidents have been caused as a result of horses frightened by military helicopters conducting low flying exercises, for further information see https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/301496/low_flying_aircraft_guide_horse_riders.pdf.

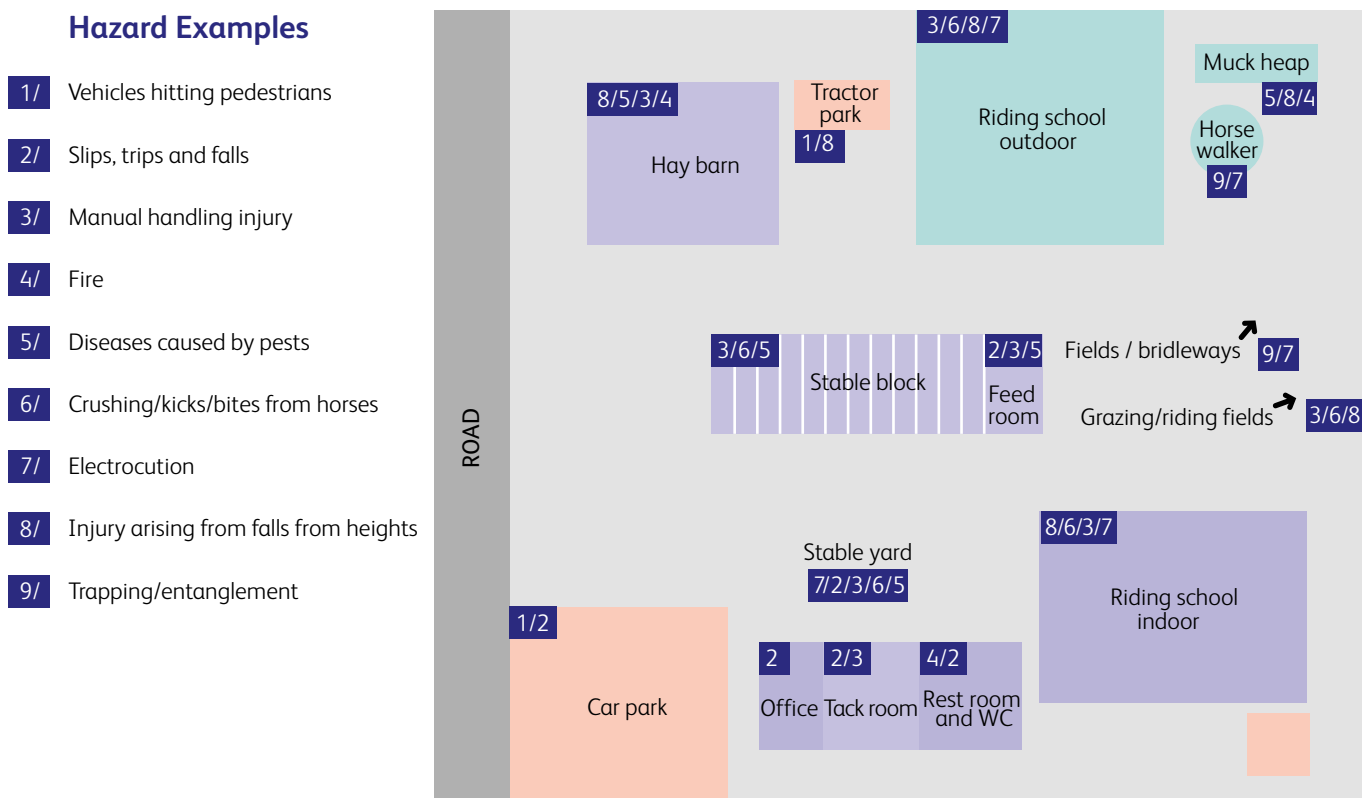
The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) also compile and make available certain industry statistics gathered from Reporting of Injury Disease and Dangerous Occurrence Reports (RIDDOR). For equestrian incidents it is difficult to compile or analyse data due to the nature of the data classification and probable under reporting.

There is also a discussion point about whether hazards and risks associated with the day-to-day running of a riding school/livery yard are sometimes assessed disproportionately in relation to the increased risk from hazards occurring during shows and other events which may be held once or twice a year. In these situations there may be particular hazards in relation to horses being amongst spectators and traffic not usually encountered.

Therefore, when determining the hazards that need to be assessed, it is important to understand the true nature of the tasks and the factors that contribute to the hazardous situation emerging.

This guidance suggests adopting an approach where individual parts of the riding establishment/livery yard are seen collectively as a system, with a group of associated activities. Figure 4 illustrates the layout and activities that take place in a typical establishment.

Figure 4



The approach adopted for this guide imagines a typical client or employee and tracks their passage around the establishment on a representative day. In this way it is possible to identify specific tasks and the specific hazards

associated with those tasks. Examples of the hazards that can be encountered and the environment in which they can be found are listed below. The control measures are to illustrate and are not a comprehensive list.

Example hazardous activities within a riding establishment			
Hazardous activity	Potential consequence	Control measures	Comments
Slippery floor surfaces	Slip, trip or fall	Surfaces to be maintained properly, non-slip surfaces to be used in high risk areas. Proper non-slip foot wear	This type of working environment is the ideal however many yards fall short of this
Lifting large or awkward objects such as hay bales, water troughs and feed etc.	Musculoskeletal injuries.	Mechanical aids such as fork lift trucks, minimising loads and manual handling training	Fork lift trucks present their own hazards in the workplace so must only be used by competent and authorised personnel
Working at height- changing light bulbs in indoor arenas, stacking hay bales or feed	Fall from height- minor injury to fatality.	Use of mechanical lifting devices such as 'cherry pickers' or similar	Once more these need to be operated by competent personnel
Use of portable electrical equipment such as clippers and electrified fencing	Electric shock - minor burns to fatality.	Portable electrical equipment to be visually inspected on a regular basis, the premises to have an electrical certificate and fencing to be maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use of residual current devices	
Working with horses as in tacking up, moving, loading, feeding and lungeing	Crushing injuries – weight of horse against a person and inanimate object. Biting injuries Impact injuries – being kicked Fracture of toes – being stood on by a horse.	Training of personnel, risk assessment of individual horse temperaments, personal protective equipment where relevant.	
Riding a horse	Musculoskeletal injuries from the horse pulling or the rider being unseated. Fracture of vertebra of the spine and neck from being unseated and falling. Multiple injuries from being dragged when unseated but foot caught in stirrup. Vehicle /horse collision on a public road	Training of rider, competence of instructor, suitable alignment of horse and rider	Unseating of riders is a frequent occurrence but the more severe injuries often occur when the rider hits another object or the horse rotates and lands on the rider.
Use of combustible material	Fire	Fire risk assessment, training of fire wardens and management of combustible materials	

There are what can be termed ‘environmental hazards’ in association with each of these areas, and process hazards. A typical hazard in relation to the car park would be the hazard presented by a moving vehicle to a pedestrian.

There are also process or procedure hazards, e.g. the hazard of falling from a horse and injury arising from impact with the ground.

These should systematically be collated in a list for the relevant environmental/process hazards in order to move to the next stage. (as in Figure 4)

The risks

Once an assessment of the hazards associated with a typical riding school/livery yard has been made and the people at risk identified, a risk assessment has to be undertaken to determine which of the hazards are likely to be realised.

Thereafter control measures have to be implemented to mitigate against those risks deemed significant. Risk is a term used through many industries and as such has many different definitions. For the purpose of simplicity it is defined in the Chambers dictionary as “chance of harm, loss” i.e. it is the probability or likelihood that the hazard will be realised.

The actual process of determining risks can become very complex if taken to extreme but it is important to focus on the reason why a risk assessment is being

carried out. Principally, it should be used as a tool to assist in determining those hazards which must be controlled as a priority over others.

As falls from a horse have been highlighted as a particular hazard, they will be used to illustrate the concept of assessing risk. In general terms, falls from horses are more likely to occur when riders are undertaking work at speed such as cantering and galloping or when riding over jumps, than at lower speed such as walk (see figure 3 previously). Risks also increase with turns, changes of direction etc. affecting the balance of horse and/or rider. External factors that cause horses to react either by jumping, rearing or fleeing may also alter the risk level for example wind blown objects, loose dogs, flapping carrier bags, cars, lorries and motorbikes.

Young or inexperienced horses are usually less predictable than mature older ones. Other factors likely to increase the risks are linked to the individual temperament of the horse.

Some are more placid by nature while others are more likely to shy (jump away without warning), buck, rear etc. The risk of a fall is greater for a beginner or novice rider than a more experienced one.

Consequently it could be argued that an experienced rider walking and trotting on a quiet horse in an enclosed indoor school would be exposed to less risk from falling than a novice rider taking a younger inexperienced horse for a canter along roadside verges on a windy day. The principle is shown in the table below.

Higher Risk	Lower Risk
Inexperienced rider	Experienced rider
Working at speed e.g. Galloping or Cantering	Walk and Trot
Open field or areas such as beaches and moorland	Indoors school/enclosed outside areas
Jumping fences both show jumping and cross country	Working on the flat
Inexperienced horse or temperamental type of horse	Older experienced horse
Road traffic	None traffic environment

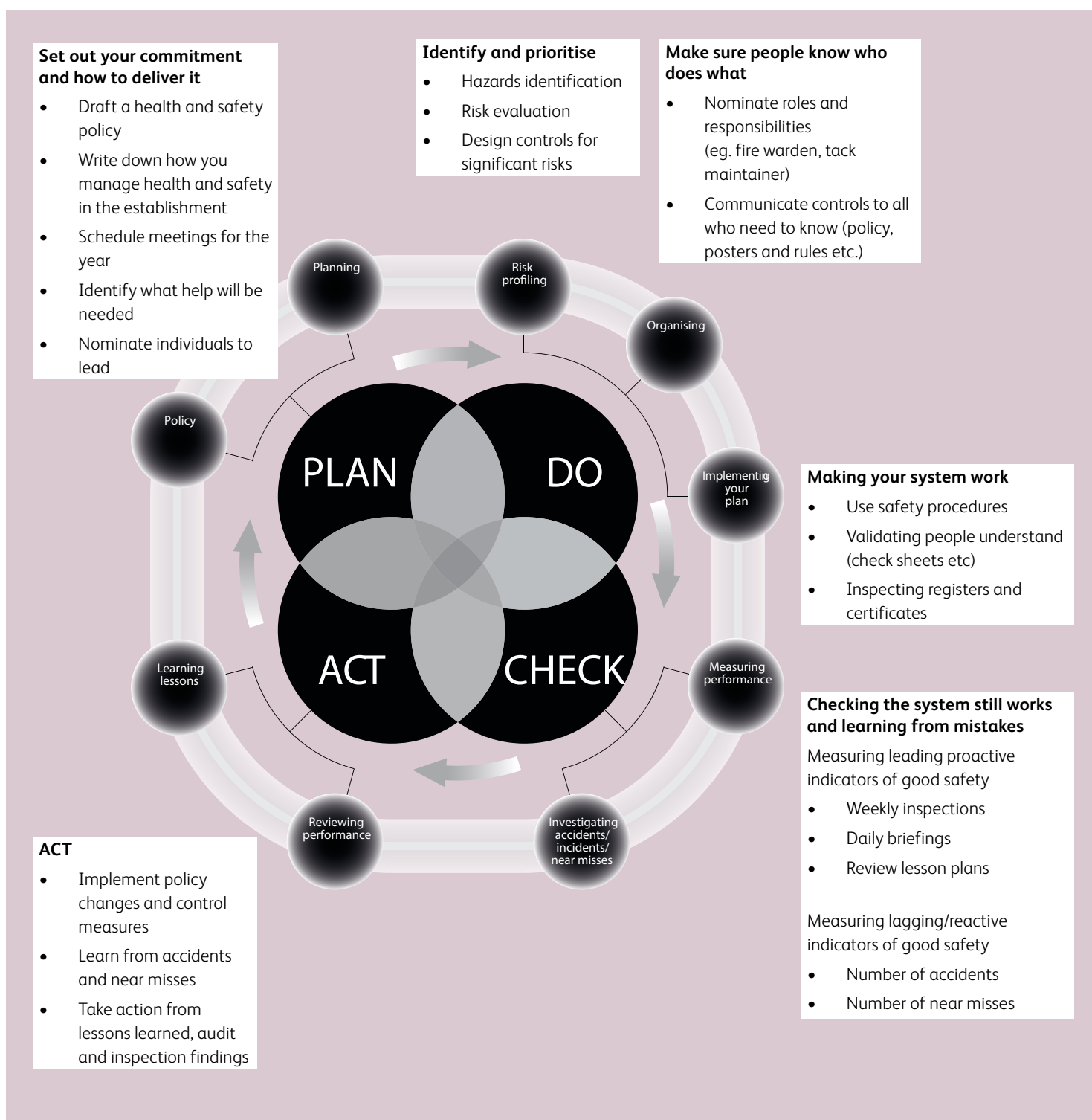
The next chapter deals with the typical controls found in place to mitigate any residual risk and as such should provide guidance as to what could be considered, so far as reasonably practicable, in the riding establishment/livery yard environment.

CHAPTER THREE – SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND CONTROL

As discussed in previous chapters, risks should be managed in a systematic manner, which means having what is generally termed a safety management system in place that is sensible and commensurate with the risk posed. Consequently the content and complexity of the system will alter depending on the size of the establishment and other factors. A small livery yard

with one or two part time employees would need a much simpler management system than a large riding establishment/livery yard with a larger number of full and part time employees. An accepted model used by the HSE is illustrated below in figure 5 but for more detail refer to <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg275.htm> and HSG 65 <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg65.htm>

Figure 5 Plan, Do, Check, Act. Source HSE



What follows is essentially the first two components of the model. The Health and Safety policy sets the overall commitment. Each establishment with five or more employees must have a written policy that sets out its commitments to meeting legal and moral obligations. Some simply list the basic requirements from Section 2 of the Health at Safety at Work etc. Act while others give more consideration and tailor it to their specific establishment. Whichever approach is adopted, there is a legal requirement that the policy is communicated to employees. This can be either directly or via a notice board, salary slip etc. Other basic obligations, irrespective of the number of employees, include the requirement to place a copy of poster 'Health and safety Law-What you should know' (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/lawposter.htm>) in a prominent position or provide employees with a copy of the information in leaflet form.

The second aspect of the safety management system is to make adequate arrangements for meeting the safety policy commitment. This will normally describe the WHO and WHAT-i.e. who is responsible for which key safety activities and what they are. Establishments with five or more employees must record the information but it is also good practice for smaller organisations to do the same.

Ideally establishments would have some form of safety manual containing the policy and all other key documents forming part of the safety management system. This could include copies of risk assessments, control measures, procedures and training records etc. It is now common practice to have electronic copies of such documents.

The overall policy and risk assessment inform the level of safety management system to be implemented. The next stage is to systematically produce the risk profile or in other words group the hazards and control measures relating to the individual parts of the riding establishment/livery yard.

It relates back to the hazard listing approach suggested in chapter 2, linking work areas with particular hazards. To summarise, staff/clients/members of the public enter the premises and follow a route through the establishment, undertaking relevant activities. During this path they may encounter a number of hazards that, for ease of description, are classified as Environmental Hazards (those that emanate from the surrounding conditions), e.g. a poor floor surface within the car park and poor lighting within stable areas. They may also encounter Work Procedure Hazards (those that emanate from the actual activities of handling horses, teaching, riding etc.) The safety management system should incorporate suitable controls for significant risks arising from these. It should also include controls for significant risks under general processes (for example training and communication or general regulations such as Manual Handling which apply in all areas), described as related safety processes. In some instances there will be slight duplication. Finally, there are 'management processes' including monitoring and review (check and act elements) of the safety management system.

PART A – ENVIRONMENTAL – GENERAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The environment for working with and around horses is an important factor to consider when undertaking either the management role or an inspection role. This section is based on the environmental hazards associated with the typical layout of a riding establishment (see figure 4). Certain parts may or may not be present and clearly only their presence would dictate the necessity for inclusion.



CAR PARK AREA

Although some larger premises may have extensive, well-marked, flat tarmac car parking areas, many others will not. Car parking at some premises may comprise a small area of grass or hard-standing, often with pot holes. A pragmatic approach should be taken with regard to the associated risks, depending on the numbers and type of user. The evenness of the surface and its drainage would be important considerations. An area with significant height differences between one part and another might be of concern both to vehicles and pedestrians accessing vehicles.

Furthermore areas with poor drainage may give rise to pooling of water and areas of mud, creating the potential for vehicles to become stuck and individuals to slip.

Traffic movement must be an important factor. Many incidents, such as collision with a vehicle, a person, object or a horse, occur because there is insufficient separation between them. Typically, consideration should be given to providing a safe route for pedestrians that is separated from vehicles. Larger vehicles such as horse boxes are more likely to impede visibility. Particular attention should be given to visitors or users who are unfamiliar with the premises and the activities that go on within its confines.

Obviously this will depend very much on the usage and layout of the premises. It may be necessary, e.g. where small events or shows are held, to 'steward' the car parking arrangements and ensure safe usage and separation of pedestrians/horses as appropriate

To comply with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996, clear signage should be used which can be purchased from any good safety signage company, the internet or through the advice of the enforcing authority <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l64.htm>. In a similar manner, consideration should be given to the access road or drive to the car park, particularly if not a public highway. It may be necessary to impose speed restrictions.

Office

Many of the larger premises will have some form of office and/or client waiting area, although typically only with a single table, chair and telephone. There is increasing use of computers but smaller establishments may still use paper based systems. Offices tend to be used for relatively short periods of time e.g. when clients arrive or to arrange visits from the vet.

Consequently they will usually be an area of comparatively low risk, where basic lighting levels, cleanliness and routine housekeeping to eliminate obvious tripping hazards will suffice.

In the premises which have a computer, an assessment under the Display Screen Equipment Regulations (see later section) may be necessary. The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 specify minimum requirements relating to the provision of welfare facilities such as toilets and washbasins and the provision of drinking water.

Some livery yards or smaller unlicensed riding establishments will not have basic facilities, including toilets. However, the legal requirement is that toilets must be provided-a ratio of 1 for 5 people at work or two where there are between 6 and 25 at work. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/faqs/toilets.htm>. Separate facilities for men and women will not usually be required, provided they are in a lockable room intended for use by one person at a time. The facilities and rooms they are in must be kept in a clean condition. Suitable and sufficient washing facilities should be in the immediate vicinity.

Not all premises will have mains supplies of water, although the requirement is there should be a supply of clean hot and cold water. Where there is no mains supply, it should be provided by an alternative solution such as bottled water etc. Rest areas and facilities where staff are required to change clothing should be provided. In some premises these will be combined with the office facility.

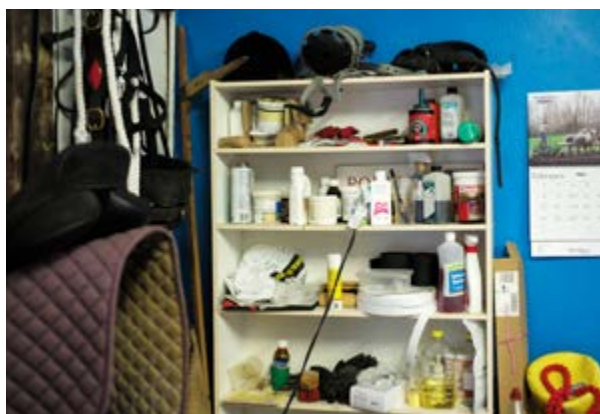
As with office areas, separate rest areas will need to meet minimal requirements with regard to lighting

levels, cleanliness and basic housekeeping to eliminate tripping hazards.

There should be adequate arrangements for staff to get warm during rest periods.

Typically a portable gas heater will be utilised and so the issues associated with Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) should be incorporated in the risk assessment. There is guidance available on LPG use which should be referred to (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/lpg/>). When not in use LPG cylinders should be stored in a safe place in the open air or an adequately ventilated building/room and must be adequately secured. They must be protected from external heat and ignition sources, clearly marked to indicate the contents. Children in particular will need to be supervised where LPG heaters are used.

Some staff will smoke and employers should consider the provision of separate smoking areas to protect others from the effects of passive smoke as part of the fire safety risk assessment.



TACK ROOM/GENERAL STORAGE ROOMS

Depending on the size of the premises these areas may be separate or combined.

Feed rooms or feed areas are where horse feed such as oats, horse and pony 'cubes' and chaff are kept and 'feeds' (meals) prepared for the horses.

The tack room is the area used to store 'tack'-primarily saddles and bridles. Other storage of significance relates to horse rugs and blankets which horses sometimes wear for protection against the weather/knocks and abrasions.

The main hazards of these areas relate to manual handling, e.g. where feed sacks or saddles are lifted by hand (see separate section on manual handling), and to the diseases caused by pests such as rats and mice attracted to the feed (also see section under COSHH).

Therefore sufficient lighting should be provided for the tasks and floors should be level to minimise the risk of tripping. Careful arrangement e.g. the location of racks to store saddles to avoid excessive reaching or twisting is an important factor to be considered under the risk assessment in relation to manual handling. Feed should be adequately stored and spillages removed as soon as possible. Where applicable there must be appropriate facilities for the safe disposal of needles used to administer veterinary medicines.

Stables

These are where the horses are kept when not in fields, some horses being stabled 24 hours a day. Most equestrian literature relates to ensuring that conditions are acceptable for the horses but the focus of health and safety legislation is on the protection of people.



Of primary importance is adequate space to reduce the risk of hazards arising from dealing with horses, such as being crushed or kicked. There should be adequate provision within the stable to tie up the horse and work around it e.g. to muck out, fill water buckets.

Alternatively horses can be tied up outside the stable, not to the door itself, while these functions are undertaken. In such circumstances the horse should be tied in a way that should the horse panic it can break free. Also, it should be noted that where American barn type stabling is used, a safe access and egress system for other users must be adopted. There should also be sufficient light to undertake the tasks, small yards in particular often rely on natural lighting for the purpose. Electrical lights should be safely installed to prevent the horses accessing cables and wires, i.e. well out of reach in the ceiling or preferably encased.

The internal stable construction will usually comprise bricks/blocks or wooden partitioning and there should be no obvious snagging points e.g. from protruding nails or pieces of wood. Stable doors should open outwards to enable the horses to be safely taken in and out. They should be sufficiently maintained so that they open freely and do not involve staff trying to lift awkwardly where they have dropped on the hinges.

Yard/handling areas



TYPICAL LIVERY YARD FLOOR SURFACE

The area outside the stables/feed room etc. is referred to as 'the yard' in both the context of the horse riding establishment and livery yard and is usually where activities such as veterinary examinations take place. There should be sufficient space for the tasks in question, remembering that horses are large animals. Risk assessments need to strike a balance between the costs of extensively surfacing areas versus the practical benefits in terms of preventing tripping hazards. The principal areas used to tie horses, put on tack etc. should be the priority. Well drained areas of fields may be adequate for this in some cases, whereas in others it will be necessary to provide an area of hard-standing. These surfaces need to be designed to allow water to drain away and thus minimise pooling. Puddles may not appear to be a significant hazard but the effects of ice may increase the



risk of slipping both to horse and rider. To minimise risk of ice, concrete surfaces should not be completely smooth but should have a degree of serration. General good housekeeping practice is required in yards and handling areas e.g. the correct storage of forks and rakes.

Depending on the proximity of the washing facilities it may be advisable to have additional washing stations or at least sources of antibacterial wash in these areas for those coming into contact with the horses.

Often mounting blocks are used to aid riders and reduce the strain on the horses' backs. When used they should nevertheless be properly constructed and be easy to carry if movable.



MOUNTING BLOCK

Hay/straw/bedding storage areas

These storage areas tend to be larger than other storage areas because of the bulk nature of the products used for horses e.g. bales of hay/haylage, bags of woodshavings. Some premises will have purpose built barns while others will rely on partial cover. The main hazards occur in relation to falls from height and falling object such as hay bales (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg125.pdf>). In addition it is often necessary to take steps to prevent unauthorised personnel, such as members of the public gaining access by way of signage and supervision requirements.



TYPICAL HAY STORE



STACKING HAY

Other hazards relate to the diseases transmitted by pests such as rats which may nest in the area. (see section on COSHH). These areas are clearly a high priority area with regard to the fire risk assessment due to the combustible

nature of the products stored. They are likely to require clear signage and fire extinguishing equipment (Fire risk should be covered under a separate fire risk assessment).

Muck heap

The muck heap is the area where the soiled bedding is stored. It can grow to a considerable size, as each horse may be responsible for one or two wheel barrows full of manure per day. This soon accumulates where a large number of horses are kept.

Careful consideration must be given to the location of muck heaps with regard to contamination of drainage courses, given the high nitrogen content. Similarly they should be sited as far away as possible from nearby residential accommodation to prevent smell nuisance and the problems caused by flies, particularly during hot weather. Some premises arrange for muck heaps to be removed on their behalf while others may-illegally or otherwise-burn them. There are obvious implications with regard to fire safety here.

Depending on the size, it may be possible to load from the ground using implements such as garden forks (although there may be manual handling implications), or it may only be possible to load by walking onto the heap itself. Whilst some proprietors take pride in the condition of their muck heap, making an art of ensuring it is rectangular in shape, others do not. The latter may result in a pyramid shape with unstable areas and increase the risk of falls from anyone walking over it. In order to access the top of muckheaps, it is fairly common practice to provide some form of ramp arrangement which should be purpose built. Again the risk assessment must take into account factors such as the strength and stability of the ramp, its height and ability of user. Where access can't be controlled fencing around the muck heap can be used.



EXAMPLE OF A MUCK HEAP

Horse walker

Horse Walkers are a useful aid provided in some larger premises to assist with exercising horses. They work on similar principles to roundabouts, the horses being placed in an enclosed metal pen and then made to walk in a circular movement by the motion of the machinery. Anyone required to operate them must be adequately trained to do so. The equipment is regulated under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations. The main hazards to people relate to entanglement between the moving parts and the fixed areas and crushing injuries from the horse whilst being trained to use the walker. Adequate controls to safeguard against this should be put in place. There are also potential hazards from electricity and from lightning strike. There should be clearly visible and accessible isolator switches to enable the machine to be stopped quickly in the event of emergency.

Indoor school

In most establishments there will be some form of riding area, often known as a school or manege. Where these are under some form of cover they are known as an indoor school. The riding surfaces can be made of a number of materials such as waxed surfaces, fibre, rubber and sand. These should be levelled on a regular basis to prevent tripping of both pedestrians and riders on horses. There are also many hazards associated with harrows and levelling machines that will be discussed later. A well run establishment will have arrangements in place for the surface to be visually checked on a daily basis and perhaps raked to ensure that accumulations in corners and along the edges are smoothed out. The philosophy behind an indoor school is to be able to ride all year round, and, if electric lighting provided, both during the day and evenings.



AN INDOOR SCHOOL

However, many schools are not fully enclosed, and the rain may drive in from certain areas or from leaks in the roof, causing pooling of water and an increased likelihood of horses slipping or tripping. If this is the case, the risk assessment may still deem it safe for the

session to continue with appropriate control measures, examples being walking exercises only or restricting access to areas considered too deep to safely ride on.

The risks arising from riders being injured in the event of a fall or their legs crushed against a wall when mounted can be minimised through careful design. There should be no upright supporting columns within the school area itself. Upright columns or the equivalent should either be located externally to the inner riding area or protected by smooth boarding which preferably slopes outwards. Some indoor schools use mirrors along the walls to help riders assess their riding positions. These must be securely placed at appropriate height and in good condition.

Gates and access points can be a concern. In some instances heavy sliding barn doors may be present and these in particular must be maintained to ensure they are not unduly difficult to open and close. Other entrances must also be sufficiently wide to allow either horses and riders through and with no protruding catches or objects which could injure either. All entrances should be kept closed whilst horses are being ridden, with systems in place to safely permit opening.

It is important that there is adequate spectator separation when horses are ridden, particularly where members of the public and children are concerned. Some indoor schools have purpose built seating areas. Non-riders within the riding arena itself should be kept to a minimum, only people such as riding instructors or assistants being permitted.

Suitable access equipment should be used for maintenance e.g. changing light bulbs. In some instances ladders will be sufficient, which themselves are work equipment (see later section) and must only be used by adequately trained staff. In very high locations it may be necessary to employ competent external contractors for the tasks.

Many indoor schools will have the facility for show jumps (these are portable jumps which are called this irrespective of whether used for shows). They comprise of 'wings' at each end, which support long poles on 'jump cups'. To meet the BHS requirement the following should be demonstrated:

- Well maintained and free from sharp and broken materials
- No protruding nails or screws
- Spring loaded back rail safety cups/safety wing strips

- Jump cups stored safely when not in use
- Stored in a designated area allowing enough room for safe stacking

Source: <http://www.bhs.org.uk>

There may be hazards arising from the manual handling of these loads (see later section). Many are now designed of more lightweight materials to aid lifting and manoeuvring. Some newer designs are constructed so that in the event of a horse hitting the poles, the jump cups give way. The poles then fall safely, rather than the horses becoming trapped over them, panicking and injuring the rider.



FENCE THAT IS LIGHT IN WEIGHT

Outdoor schools

As the name suggests, these are riding areas which are not under cover, also sometimes known as maneges. The riding surfaces range considerably, from sand to rubber, bark, chippings and more modern surfaces. Again careful design and maintenance are critical. The issues around drainage and protection from the effects of rain and water pooling are particularly pertinent. Post and rail fencing is the most common design and must be constructed so that upright posts are external, with the horizontal planks along the inside to protect riders. There should be no other obstructions within the riding area, such as tree trunks or other natural obstacles. Some outdoor schools have the use of electrical floodlights to facilitate riding during dark mornings and evenings. Cabling must be encased and preferably routed underground to ensure protection from the elements. As with indoor schools it may be necessary to employ competent external contractors for their maintenance. The issues around show jumps, spectator segregation and gateways etc are similar to those of indoor schools.



EXAMPLE OF ADEQUATE SPECTATOR SEPARATION

Riding fields

Some establishments will not have indoor or outdoor schools but will rely on riding/exercising horses in fields or on the roads. Fields should be checked before use or on a daily basis to ensure that they are not too muddy or hard to use and thus more likely to result in the horses slipping or becoming injured. Often riders will use particular 'tracks' e.g. circular patterns to ride and these may become particularly slippery underneath.

Control measures could include restricted access or only allowing horses to walk in certain areas. Other hazards may include overhanging branches, rabbit holes, mole hills etc. which can create serious tripping hazards. There should be an ongoing maintenance programme to remove such hazards.

Once again the issues of spectator separation, show jumps and gateways are pertinent as with indoor and outdoor schools.

It is imperative that riders are not allowed to ride in fields fenced with barbed wire or other inappropriate forms of fencing.



FIELD Paddock

Cross country jumping areas

Some premises may have a small number of obstacles or a full cross country course of jumps/fences. Cross country jumps are of a more permanent nature than show jumps and usually in more open areas with fewer of the space restrictions of indoor and outdoor schools. Consequently horses can gather a faster pace between fences.

The fences themselves vary in nature but often incorporate natural components such as logs, ditches and water courses. They should be designed/constructed by people competent to do so e.g. British Eventing's use of professional designers <https://www.britisheventing.com> but obviously the degree of sophistication should be related to the risk (difficulty and size of jumps etc.)

An important aspect of portable fences is ensuring they are properly fixed, guidance is provided by various equestrian organisations such as the Pony Club <http://www.pcuk.org/uploads/news/Clarification-Securing-Portable-XC-Fences-2014.pdf> and British Eventing.

The condition of the ground around cross country obstacles is important in all cases, but particularly at the take-off and landing points where surfaces are more prone to compaction and being slippery due to mud. Instructors/employees should make ongoing visual assessments and take appropriate steps including adequate reporting if they feel particular jumps are not usable due to the surfaces. Jump judges are often used who, if properly briefed, can act in this capacity. More thorough checks should form part of a weekly or more frequent checklist by staff. Checks should also include hazards such as overhanging branches, litter and rabbit holes, with those of most significance removed/in-filled.



FRANGIBLE PIN SAFETY DEVICE



WATER JUMP



TYPICAL CROSS COUNTRY JUMPS

Local bridle paths/riding tracks

Bridle paths and tracks are generally a safe environment for hacking out. However, as they change due to weather and other activities such as woodland management the lead rider should constantly check the path ahead and alter the route and/or pace as appropriate .



BRIDLEWAY

Fields for grazing

Certain parts of the fields used for horses to graze are more susceptible to becoming muddy or slippery due to rain or ice than others. These would include the areas around which horses congregate e.g. water troughs, gates and feeding areas. Staff expected to catch or turn out horses in such conditions may be more likely to slip as a result, particularly, if they are leading horses and trying to manoeuvre others out of the way.

Control measures could include restricting use of fields, moving gates, provision of hardstanding around gates and geotechnical grids/matting etc.



HARDSTANDING NEAR A GATE AND MATTING



GEOTECHNICAL MATTING

Although not recommended, barbed wire fencing is often used to enclose fields. It should, however, only be used as the top wire on correctly erected stock fencing using stock netting. It is less of a hazard to horses and handlers if it is in good condition, however sagging wires and wire detached from posts can be very hazardous. In some cases electric fencing is used, energised by the mains or 12 volt car batteries. Where this is the case there should be warning notices, particularly near public rights of way and gates. Batteries should ideally be covered and kept out of the access of children to reduce the risk of electric shock/battery acid burns. Again the horizontal elements of the fencing should be taut, and the supporting posts firmly in position.

There should be adequate maintenance systems in place to check and repair damaged fencing or gates. There may be implications with regard to the COSHH assessment (see later section) where wood preservatives are used during maintenance.

Gates sometimes become detached from hinges or have awkward fastening mechanisms which can be very difficult to manoeuvre, particularly when staff are also trying to restrain horses (see manual handling section). Hedges, fencing or gates in poor condition can lead to horses becoming trapped and endangering rescuers, or escaping and endangering themselves and traffic users/the general public.

There should also be simple precautions in place including signage and checks to ensure that gates are kept closed and if necessary locked, particularly those less visible from the stable yard or office.

Weather and lightning

During inclement weather e.g. heavy rain or fog or at certain times of the day e.g. dusk or dawn the ability of staff/riders to safely use external riding areas may be compromised. Similarly, many horses will react adversely to thunder or lightning episodes either when ridden indoors or outside. There should be precautions in place to take account of such factors.



PART B – WORK PROCEDURE HAZARDS

Lessons

The main hazards associated with riding horses relate to falls and the consequence of injury. However, injuries may also occur through being kicked, bitten or crushed by other horses or through being crushed against obstacles. As previously stated 'rides' (sometimes referred to as treks or hacks) and lessons may be given to members of the public or provided to employees at licensed riding establishments.

The practice also occurs at some livery yards which unlawfully operate without a licence. The following paragraphs outline some of the main management systems, rules and procedures which may be seen as good practice and form an integral part of the risk assessment.

Pre assessment

Prior to the first ride or lesson, a competent staff member should make an assessment of a client's weight, height, age and riding ability, to help ensure they are provided with a horse that meets their needs. Relevant medical information should also be obtained. Such information is often based on telephone conversations and will need to be substantiated when the client arrives. The strict insurance requirements of many companies now demand that clients complete a written form to this effect.

Some riding schools give their 'rules' to clients in writing on arrival, e.g. procedures to follow and the need to obey instructions.

Riding wear

Prior to the first session, but obviously re-inforced on sight, clients should be given advice about suitable clothing, particularly footwear. Trainers, sandals and even wellington boots with ridged soles are not suitable, as in the event of a fall from a horse they may become wedged in the stirrups. Notwithstanding this general rule organisations such as the ABRS argue that such footwear can be worn where stirrups are fitted with 'toe stops', which prevent the foot sliding through the whole stirrup. Toe stops are commonly used by groups such as Riding for the Disabled but are not otherwise used on a wide scale. Although good establishments often have footwear for hire it is more common place for establishments to rely on the client bringing their own.



THE WELLINGTONS AND BOOTS WITH RIDGED SOLES ARE SUITABLE FOR UNMOUNTED WORK BUT NOT FOR RIDING IN STIRRUPS

In contrast most establishments supply hard hats for clients. The performance standards of hats change in line with the developments of new materials and manufacturing techniques as such the best advice can be found through the governing bodies such as BETA <http://www.beta-uk.org/pages/safety-equipment/hats.php>, the BHS, ABRS, Mark Davies Injured Riders' Fund and the Pony Club. Due to the different disciplines within equestrianism individual organisations may use different standards. Staff fitting hats should be suitably trained to do so.

Organisations generally recommend hats are replaced after a severe impact and in any event in line with the manufacturer's recommendation, which can range from 2 to 3 years. Riding establishments should check that clients' own hats comply with their standards.



Good practice may involve clients being advised not to wear jewellery, in particular rings and earrings, long hair being tied back and the promotion of body protectors, particularly for jumping lessons <http://www.beta-uk.org/pages/safety-equipment/body-protectors.php>. Eating and chewing gum etc should be forbidden.

Suitability of horses

Clients should be matched with horses deemed suitable for their needs. The selection of suitable horses is discussed in more detail later but as a general rule, horses for beginners/novices and particularly children should be of a calm, kind temperament and capable of being lead by someone on the ground.

Riding instructors

One of the key safety controls in the riding establishment environment is the competency of the riding instructor. Depending on the governing body or organisation there are competency standards set down which can lead to professional qualifications. Good practice would include attendance at a safeguarding course (BHS) and a DBS check when working with children <http://www.bhs.org.uk/training-and-qualifications/>

http://www.abrs-info.org/Exam_materials-244.htm. There is currently no requirement for riding establishments to be a member of organisations such as the BHS/ABRS but they do provide valuable links to knowledge and information.

Some very experienced instructors with no qualifications give lessons/conduct rides and could be deemed competent to do so, however this is not always the case. Some proprietors may argue, with validity, that people training towards qualifications should be given the opportunity to teach. They must, however, ensure that such people are adequately supervised. Riding establishment licence guidelines state that a person must be at least 16.

Ultimately it is the responsibility of the person having control of the business to determine who is competent to teach and to what level. Formal qualifications can assist when attempting to substantiate such decisions. Proprietors should ask to see certification or check with the relevant certification body where not available.

GOOD INSTRUCTION IS ESSENTIAL



The lesson itself

On commencement of the lesson clients should be advised of the potential hazards, and basic principles such as how to safely approach horses and advised to follow instructions. Close supervision to enforce this is essential. Beginners and some novices will need assistance to ensure they mount correctly and the girth of the saddle/stirrup leathers are adjusted as required.

As a general rule lessons or rides should have low ratios of pupil to staff. As a guideline one instructor could teach, as a maximum, a group of 8 experienced pupils in a large enough area. With groups of novice riders, children or beginners the ratios should be reduced.

Ideally there should be enough people on foot to help with beginners, perhaps using a lead rein. This is simply a term for a rope attached to the bridle or a head-collar so an assistant can lead the horse with minimal or no reliance on the rider's use of the reins.



ASSISTANCE DURING A LESSON (risk assessment should consider assistants wearing hard hats)

Attention to the dynamics of horses within a lesson is important. Where horses may try to bite or kick one another, to the detriment of a rider in between, the instructor could separate the horses. All riders should be taught to maintain a safe distance from the horse in front as many horses will kick out if they feel threatened from behind. The effective communication of the likelihood of such behaviour from individual horses is therefore fundamental.



As riders' abilities progress, lessons will usually incorporate more work at speed e.g. cantering and jumping. Although there is unlikely to be assistance in the form of helpers as with beginner/novice lessons, other control measures apply. This could include rules such as only one horse jumping at a time and safe use of jump wings/cups including positioning. The use of neck or balance straps may assist novice riders. At all times the instructor has to strike a balance between asking a rider to challenge themselves and yet work within their individual capabilities, as well as those of the horse.



PUPIL BEING GIVEN INSTRUCTION

There should be systems in place for communication where lessons take place at some distance away from the main riding areas, e.g. on cross country courses. This could include radios or mobile phones.

Bareback riding, (without the use of a saddle) and work without a rider's feet in the stirrups can be an important part of learning, as it can help the rider to develop a natural position and balance. However, it should only be introduced when the instructor assesses that riders are ready, on suitable horses and in suitable enclosed areas. Hats should always be worn and insurance cover should be checked as in some instances this may be excluded from the policy.

Hacks/rides/treks Riding assessment

Notwithstanding the previous section, there are other factors to consider when taking clients out for a ride or hack (a ride away from an enclosed area which may or may not include roadwork). Of primary importance is the need for the establishment to assess the rider's capability not only at the initial stage but also as the ride progresses. The initial assessment should where possible take place in an enclosed area. Only if the assessment shows the rider to have basic control e.g. in how to halt and turn the horse, should they be

considered able to participate in a hack. More control and experience would be necessary for faster rides incorporating trot/canter work. The route of the hack will be an important consideration.



RIDERS OUT FOR A HACK

The practice of allowing complete beginners on rides/hacks on the roads and lanes is prevalent in some holiday areas in particular, however should be strongly discouraged. It would be preferable to take such riders around the fields and tracks of the establishment if available, with assistance. Alternatively they should be given a lesson in an enclosed area.

Following the initial assessment, novice and experienced riders should be escorted by competent/qualified staff. The ongoing risk assessment should take into account factors such as the amount and type of traffic they might expect to encounter, the temperament of the horses and capability of riders. Groups should be kept as small as practicable, usually six or less. In many cases it will be necessary to have at least two competent escorts riding, one to ride at the front and one at the rear. Each should wear a high visibility reflective jacket <http://www.bhs.org.uk/safety-and-accidents/common-incidents/riding-on-the-road>. High visibility accessories, such as tail covers, and exercise sheets can also be worn by the horses.



Ideally at least one escort would be a qualified first aider, and a mobile phone or radio should be carried as a means of summoning assistance/an ambulance. They should carry a first aid kit and also a lead rope as a means of leading another horse/rider if necessary. The staff should continually monitor rider ability and how they are coping with a particular horse's behaviour, making any adjustments necessary. This is particularly important if any faster work is being carried out such as cantering.

Riding by employees/unsupervised clients

Many of the factors relating to client lessons and rides will equally apply where riding establishment/livery yard staff ride horses as part of their role or where establishments allow clients to take their horses out unsupervised, e.g. in relation to riding wear, riding on the roads and bareback riding.

Any client or employee allowed to take out a horse without supervision must have an assessment by a suitable person to ensure that they have adequate capability. They must also be advised of any relevant procedural matters and significant hazards. As with clients under supervision it is important that clients and staff are asked to ride horses suited to their size, experience and capability. Any formal qualifications/certificates held by such individuals can help to inform the process. For example, some may hold the British Horse Society Riding and Road Safety Certificate which means that they have obtained a recognised level of road safety/riding ability.

Less experienced staff or clients will need higher levels of supervision than those with more experience and are likely to require instruction to help them improve.

In some instances e.g. when riding young or difficult horses (see section below) clients/employees may need assistance from others or to be accompanied by another horse and rider. Consideration should be given to communication methods, particularly where individuals exercise horses on the roads or on cross country courses on their own.

The rider may need to carry a mobile phone or radio for this purpose. There should be appropriate systems in place to ensure that others are aware of their location/proposed route and raise the alarm if necessary.

Selection of suitable horses for clients and staff to ride

Fundamental to any risk assessment is the process of matching horses with riders/handlers of appropriate age, capability and experience. Although most establishments will routinely do this on a quick, informal basis e.g. when

deciding whether client/staff member X should ride horse A or B, a more formal approach would be to devise a simple list of each horse summarising their various merits/weak points e.g. in relation to ridden work, grooming and being caught from the field. This would be used in conjunction with records or information about client/employee experience and capability.



Such an approach is particularly useful as part of the induction process for new staff and when advising others such as vets. Simple records can be kept which relate to the list, e.g. the name of the horse against each rider's name in the diary of lessons/horses exercised.

As discussed, for riding school work there will usually be a range of horses to meet client requirements. The majority of premises will offer lessons to beginners. In these cases the horses/ponies should have a calm temperament and thus be more tolerant of situations such as riders losing balance/ unpredictable movements. They should also be tolerant of being lead by a person at their side. Young and/or inexperienced horses are more likely to be a poor match for inexperienced riders or beginners than older, more experienced horses. These principles of suitability of horse equally apply to any staff member expected to ride as part of their duties or allowed to ride as a reward for assisting.

However, horses suitable for beginners are not necessarily suitable for riders wishing to progress. More advanced lessons will include an element of faster work such as cantering or jumping and a different type of horse may be required.

The perfect all-rounder for all ages and abilities is very difficult if not impossible to find.

For a variety of reasons many horses have 'vices' or bad habits which they may display either when being ridden or at other times. Vices which may affect the safety of riders include; bucking (as seen in rodeo situations where horses round their backs and kick their back legs, often with their heads positioned down); rearing (where they stand on their back legs, raising the front legs); napping (e.g. trying to get back to other horses or the gate); bolting (rushing at speed in a manner not desired). The degree and severity of the particular vice will be very relevant to the assessment of the situation. An occasional excited small buck as a horse prepares to canter is very different to a horse which is intent on displacing a rider and careers around bucking until successfully unseating the rider.

It is often possible to avoid the risks altogether, for example some horses only rear or buck if they are asked to go in the opposite direction to others. Such horses could very usefully be part of a group ride on a daily basis. A horse which rears excessively when asked to jump fences may be completely suitable for work not involving jumping.

Many riding establishments and livery yards will be asked to 'break in' horses (teach them to wear tack and accept a rider) or 'school' (help train and improve) horses on behalf of clients. Similarly, some will make arrangements to use the horse in lessons in lieu of payment (described earlier as a working livery arrangement). Prior to asking a staff member to ride the horse, as much information as possible about its history and the circumstances in which it is likely to exhibit poor behaviour should be obtained, so that adequate control measures can be put into place. The experience and capability of the staff member will be an important consideration.

It would not be appropriate to put a horse new to the environment/establishment into a lesson situation, without experienced staff first undertaking a thorough assessment.

In many circumstances it is acceptable and indeed desirable for staff and riding school clients to ride horses with known vices, so that they can make improvements to the horse and/or their riding ability and skills. Many riders will be very experienced-even international competitors of all riding disciplines have lessons to enhance their skill.

However, in addition to trying to ensure riders and horses are suited, the riders should be advised about the main characteristics of the horse if considered to be a significant risk. Their own views and willingness to ride a particular horse should form part of the assessment.

Suitability for the roads

The suitability of horses to be ridden on the roads, if relevant, is a key factor in any management assessment, both for those to be ridden by livery yard/riding establishment staff and by clients.



HORSES BEING RIDDEN ON THE ROADS, NB THEY WOULD USUALLY RIDE IN SINGLE FILE AND HORSES AND RIDERS COULD WEAR ADDITIONAL HI-VIS EQUIPMENT

Horses are sometimes referred to as ‘bombproof’ with regard to traffic and ideally all horses would be of this nature. However, regrettably, too many have had poor experiences of traffic. Some will be scared of all traffic while others may be complacent about cars but react strongly to lorries, tractors or motorbikes.

The degree of their reaction will be a key component of the assessment. A horse which jogs for a step or two is very different to one which bolts in the opposite direction when it encounters a lorry.

Most horses are more confident and thus better behaved in groups and this may be a relevant factor. However, it would be very difficult within any risk assessment to justify taking clients/staff riding out on the roads on horses which are known to react adversely to traffic without strict control measures.

Assessing the horse using tack as a guide

Some information about the effectiveness of the management system with regard to the suitability of horses can be ascertained from the type of tack worn by particular horses. The part of the bridle known as the bit, which the horse has in its mouth, can give an indication. In lay-person terms, milder bits known as ‘snaffles’ are more likely to be worn by quieter horses, perhaps more suitable for beginners and novices.

Many horses suitable for more experienced riders will also wear snaffle bits.

However, horses which are stronger and perhaps, although not always, less suitable for beginners/novices may wear stronger bits such as ‘pelhams’, ‘gag snaffles’ or kimbewicks’.

Similarly, horses which place their heads high in the air, to avoid the effect of the bit, may wear martingales.



DIFFERENT SEVERITY OF BITS, FAR LEFT A SNAFFLE BIT, MIDDLE A PELHAM BIT (MORE SEVERE THAN SNAFFLE), FAR RIGHT, A CHIFNEY SPECIALIST BIT FOR ANTI REARING

Handling horses

Although the reporting is questionable, the data available and reports in equestrian journals show that many accidents involve un-mounted staff/riding establishment clients. The hazards arise from kicks, bites, being crushed or falling/being knocked to the ground. There is never room for complacency. Particularly in stressful situations, such as when in pain or frightened, even the calmest of horses can display uncharacteristic behaviour. Other horses, either through lack of training or other reasons, may be more prone to bad behaviour.

Sometimes their behaviour is aimed primarily at other horses, but people in the vicinity can get hurt, while others will deliberately try to frighten or hurt people.

Fundamental therefore to any management system is the communication of information about individual horses as discussed with regard to the checklist approach. The nature and frequency the vice is displayed will be a key factor. A horse which occasionally ‘pulls faces’ and pretends to bite when its girth is fastened is very different to a bad tempered horse which always tries to attack anyone entering its stable.

Where horses cannot be trained out of a particular vice, avoidance of the causative situation should be the aim. Where avoidance is not possible careful consideration as part of the risk assessment process should be given to the task, the person required to undertake it, their training and supervision etc. Where it is considered that a particular horse represents a significant danger to staff/clients, which cannot be overcome, consideration should be given to its retirement.

Experience and qualifications in handling and dealing with horses

There are simple rules and procedures which can be applied in riding establishments and livery yards and which should form the basis of staff training. In addition to learning through experience, many staff are likely to have learnt these stable management skills through organisations such as the Pony Club (currently catering for those aged up to 25), local riding clubs or through taking formal qualifications such as those run by the BHS. However, employers should ensure that staff are up to date, and provide adequate supervision for those with less experience. Furthermore staff may take short cuts through complacency, and poor practice should be challenged.



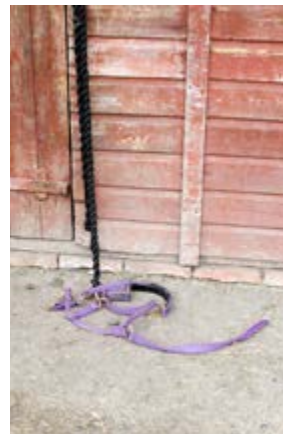
PICKING OUT THE HOOVES, THIS GIRL IS BEING TAUGHT THROUGH THE PONY CLUB

Basic stable management rules include;

- Ensuring horses are not startled, by talking to them on approach, slow controlled movements, reassuring calm behaviour etc
- Minimising the times when necessary to walk or stand behind horses
- Tying horse to suitable places with lead ropes attached to breakable points so that in an emergency the horse can release itself rather than panic
- Ensuring horses are tied up when grooming, tacking up, mucking out stables etc
- Not sitting/lying/kneeling on the ground next to horses to ensure a person can quickly get out of the way if the need arises
- Using headcollars or bridles to lead
- Ensuring handlers do not wrap lead ropes or the reins tightly around their hands, to ensure they can quickly release if necessary and consideration to the use of wearing gloves.

- It is becoming accepted practice for a hard hat to be worn when dealing with horses even when not mounted and the risk assessment should also give consideration to the use of appropriate footwear possibly to include the wearing of boots with metal toe caps.
- Awareness of external factors likely to frighten horses e.g. tractors, bags blowing in the wind and taking appropriate action
- Adequate separation of horses when feeding
- Safely applying tack, leg bandages etc and ensuring there are no trailing stirrups, headcollars, bandages etc in which horses could get caught and then panic
- Not causing pain through inappropriate use of whips or other gadgets
- Ensuring environmental conditions are adequate for the task in hand, eg not grooming in confined spaces, sufficient lighting
- Safe methods of grooming and 'picking out the feet', (cleaning the underneath of the hooves from mud, stones and other dirt)
- Careful use of appliances such as electric clippers, to be used in conjunction with residual current devices (RCD's)

POOR PRACTICE HEADCOLLAR LEFT ON FLOOR'



Certain events can be particularly stressful for horses, e.g. when their feet are being attended to by the farrier or blacksmith, during the administration of treatment to wounds, when clipping to remove hair. In these situations some horses may be more likely to injure those around them than under more mundane routine circumstances. To minimise risk it may be necessary for more experienced staff to be present, or for additional staff to assist. The activity may need to be carried out in a separate enclosed area to the day to day activities. Patience and understanding are often key aspects. Under very difficult situations short term measures such as 'twitches' which restrict the movement of the horse's muzzle may assist. Occasionally horses will require a veterinary sedative to facilitate treatment.

Loading horses into horse boxes or trailers

It is often necessary to transport horses and horse boxes or trailers may be used for the purpose. Some horses dislike travelling or being asked to enter the box or trailer and may resist. Hazards to people in the vicinity include kicking, biting, or injury arising from crushing or being struck as the horse rears in the air. Further hazards arise from the weight of the doors falling onto people including when horses barge their way past. One of the key components to minimise risk is adequate training of both horses and those handling them. Where loading and unloading is incorporated as part of a horse's basic training they are more likely to accept it and be compliant. Where they are less familiar and asked to load or where they have had a bad experience and become frightened or hurt they are more likely to be resistant on future occasions.

This is a situation where bystanders or young people are sometimes asked to help, and they may be inadequately trained for the purpose. Travelling for horses can be stressful; they are in a confined space and asked to balance. If they fall they may find it difficult to stand. Therefore careful driving practices are also important.

Key control measures therefore include;

- Adequate training for horses in loading, unloading and travelling
- Training for staff in loading/unloading to ensure they do not place themselves in a position of danger
- Staff training in driving the vehicles (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-standards-agency>)
- Appropriate maintenance of vehicles to ensure roadworthiness and compliance with the law
- Use of headcollars or bridles to control horses
- Wearing hard hats, gloves and protective toe capped footwear
- Securing partitions or breeching straps behind horses prior to tying them within the compartment. Assistance is usually required for this purpose or there are devices available which enable the person who has lead the horse in to also close a bar behind the horse
- Ensuring people stand to the sides of hinged doors when opening or closing
- Controlled use of aids such as anti rearing bits, lunge lines, whips
- Careful selection of assistants for the tasks required
- Ensuring people travel in proper seats fitted with seatbelts, not in the horse travelling areas

Catching/turning out horses

Most horses are allowed access to field or paddocks either to graze or for exercise. Some horses can become very excitable at the prospect of such 'freedom' and pull free from the person leading them, which can result in injury. Others will display behaviour ranging from a calm walk away to a fast gallop, kicking their rear legs high in the process.



HORSES GRAZING

People can become injured either directly as a result of the horse in question or the effect of their behaviour on others in the field.

Similarly some horses become excitable at the prospect of being caught and taken back to their stable, anticipating feed. Some horses object to being caught and may exhibit aggressive behaviour such as biting or kicking towards the person trying to catch them.

Basic control measures when catching/turning out horses:

- Leading using headcollars with leadropes attached, or bridles
- Leading a small number of horses at a time, usually one or two
- Ensuring entrance gates are closed and the horse is facing the gate before release
- Controlled use of incentives such as feed to entice horses to be caught when other horses present in a field
- Staff should always wear suitable footwear and gloves/hard hats may be deemed necessary under the risk assessment
- High visibility reflective jackets meeting industry standards should be worn when leading along roads to and from fields
- Ensuring staff/clients/volunteers are adequately trained/experienced/supervised for the task.

LUNGEING

Lungeing is the term used to describe horses exercised by attachment to a long lunge line. The handler stands in the centre and controls the horse circling around them through use of the lunge line, a lungeing whip and voice aids. It is often used to calm excitable horses before allowing a rider on or to give general exercise without a rider. It can also be used to teach a rider, the benefit being that the person can concentrate on their position in the saddle as the instructor controls the horse.



LUNGEING,

The hazard arises from the fact that some horses may buck, rear, work at an uncontrolled speed, come towards the centre and injure the person lungeing as a result. The risk may be increased if the horse and/or person lungeing are not sufficiently experienced or trained, or if the horse becomes frightened.

Lungeing control measures include:

- Adequate experience/training/supervision of the person lungeing
- Selection of suitable horse with regard to rider and/or person lungeing
- Suitable, properly used equipment for lungeing eg bridle, lungeing cavesson, side reins
- Checks to ensure tack secure, e.g. if no rider the stirrup leathers secured to prevent the stirrups banging against the horse's sides
- Lungeing in an enclosed area. Some establishments now use purpose built pens
- Use of suitable footwear, hard hat and gloves by person lungeing.

Tack

The quality and maintenance of the tack (the equipment worn by horses including saddles and bridles) is an important part of the management system.

The traditional material for saddles and bridles is leather, although synthetic alternatives are becoming increasingly more common. The areas prone to break or likely to rub/pinch are of importance, as breakage or discomfort may result in horses panicking and/or riders or handlers having less control/fall off.

Areas of stitching are of concern, particularly where there is likely to be additional stress such as a rider pulling on the reins or bearing down on stirrups, placing pressure on the stirrup leathers. Similarly the straps and girths which hold saddles in place are of importance. Every time tack is put on the horse and straps are secured the person doing so should be making a visual assessment and report any defaults as appropriate. A more thorough check should take place on a weekly basis, often when the tack is cleaned. Cleaning is necessary to remove build ups of mud/hairs/grease which can cause localised pain and chafing to horses. This can result in adverse reactions, which may cause injury to people. The frequency of use of the tack would be a relevant factor within the risk assessment. It is good practice to maintain a simple written tack check list. Checks should also include an assessment of the bit worn in the mouth to ensure that it is not wearing and thus likely to cause pain to the horse.

Tack design

Most saddles are designed so that the stirrups leathers can slide off the stirrup bars which secure them in the event of rider fall. Riders or instructors/assistants should check to ensure the stirrup bars are open where of such design.

The design of the stirrups themselves can be an important factor in reducing the impact of falls from horses. 'Safety stirrups' can be fitted which are designed to facilitate the rider's foot easily coming out in the event of a fall. Although not every rider would require them, they are useful for riding establishments teaching beginners or children in particular where a range of abilities and sizes of rider are catered for. Stirrups fitted with toe stops, discussed in relation to client lessons, may be beneficial in some circumstances.

Stirrups should be suitable for the individual rider as, if too small, a rider's foot is more likely to become wedged, and if too large, more likely to slip through.

Stirrups fitted for a very small child would not generally be suitable for an adult rider.



AN EXAMPLE OF SAFETY STIRRUPS (NB THEY WOULD NEED TREADS WHEN FITTED)

The tack chosen should be suitable for the horse in question and well fitting. This may mean a qualified saddler undertaking

the initial fitting where a saddle is being purchased for the first time. There are relatively simple guidelines for day to day tack fitting, which should be included in staff training. These include the correct placing of the bit, tightness of straps etc. In addition there are tack safety devices such as neck and balance straps which can assist in providing confidence and security to the rider.

Use of work related vehicles

In the UK, being struck by a moving vehicle has been consistently in the top three causes of fatalities. In addition falls from height when loading and unloading, vehicles overturning and objects falling from vehicles have dominated workplace injuries related to transport. A number of employees of riding schools or livery yards will be required to drive vehicles as part of their jobs. The main ones of relevance include:

- Horse Boxes (Sometimes known as lorries), primarily used to transport horses e.g. to shows and competitions.
- Vehicles pulling horse trailers to transport horses
- Tractors to pull trailers for transportation of hay, manure etc or with attachments such as rollers or chain harrows for manege and field maintenance.
- Quad bikes or All terrain vehicles (ATV's). For general transport or to pull attachments as for tractors
- Agricultural Mowers

Any vehicle used on the road must meet the relevant criteria regarding roadworthiness, tax, insurance, MOT tests.



Work vehicles come under the remit of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER)- regulations which specify provision, maintenance, access and safety provisions. The other key elements relating to workplace transport are training of the driver/operator and a safe system for using the vehicle. The following outlines some of the main criteria to be taken into account.

There is an anomaly with regard to horse trailers in that the vehicle pulling the trailer has to meet the tax, MOT and insurance requirements whilst the trailer itself does not.

However, the insurance company of the towing vehicle may have certain requirements with regard to this aspect.

In order to meet health and safety requirements etc. both the trailer pulling vehicle, trailers and horseboxes should be incorporated in regular maintenance programmes to ensure that electrics, brakes, tyres, floors etc. are in good condition.

It is worth noting that the tyres of some trailers may appear to have sufficient tread in them but the side walls in particular are actually cracked and in poor condition. This is because some trailers are not used for prolonged periods of time, and when used are not placed under as much pressure as the towing vehicles themselves.

Pre-use checks should include those outlined in the Highway Code <https://www.gov.uk/highway-code> where relevant including for example electrics such as lights, brake lights and indicators, (in particular where trailers are concerned as the power source for these comes from the towing vehicle). In addition the safety wire which attaches the trailer handbrake to the towing vehicle should be checked. This is designed to pull on the handbrake in the event that the towing vehicle and trailer become separated.



To tow any vehicle on the public highway a full driving licence must be held and to drive certain horse boxes an operators licence will be required <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-standards-agency>

Anyone passing their driving test after 1997 will need to pass a separate test to drive either horse boxes of more than 3.5 tonnes (which most are) or trailers over 750 kg.

Conversely those passing their test before such a date can drive them without passing such a test (unless a HGV licence is required). In either case the skills to drive these forms of transportation can be very different to 'standard' forms of transport. By nature of the horse world staff often find themselves driving down single track lanes, or across fields to access shows, veterinary practices etc.

Employers should therefore satisfy themselves that staff are suitably qualified to drive the vehicles in question. They should then arrange for relevant training where employees have not previously driven the particular vehicles or where it has been some time since training took place. There are commercial companies available which offer such training if in house training is not deemed sufficient.

Safe systems of work should also be employed, particularly where reversing is necessary or visibility is restricted for other reasons. This may include the segregation of vehicles and pedestrians and the assistance of others, permanently positioning mirrors in car parks etc. Once vehicles are moving all passengers should be properly seated with seatbelts in position.

Tractors

Many riding establishments and livery yards will use tractors. Some may use a vehicle known as a compact tractor, which, as the name suggests is a smaller version of a conventional tractor. On average ten people a year die as result of accidents involving tractors and there are many other injuries associated with their use. Many of the incidents relate to drivers being inadequately trained and/or failing to follow basic operating principles. It is therefore imperative that drivers are given appropriate training (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg185.pdf>), <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/farmsdvd.htm> In addition they should be fully trained for the particular tractor they are driving, which includes reading the operator's manual. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is working with a number of partners to campaign for safer use of all vehicles, but in particular farm vehicles such as tractors, as a result of the high number of accidents.

Anyone driving a tractor should ensure they are appropriately dressed-usually this would include safety boots and clothing such as overalls which cannot become caught in moving parts. Jewellery located where it may become snagged should be removed.

Many accidents occur where drivers fail to apply the principles of 'Safe Stop' and are either hit themselves or hit/run over another person. Safe stop is a process which the HSE advocate and should be used whenever the driver needs to leave the seat, when someone approaches, or when someone else is working on the machine.

The driver should ensure the handbrake is fully applied, ensure all controls and equipment are safe, stop the engine and remove the key. Drivers should be especially vigilant where children are in the vicinity. This will often be the case with riding establishments/livery yards. Training also shows drivers that controls internal or external must only be operated from the correct position, and that the engine should only be started when seated.

Particular care has to be taken when driving on slopes or across uneven ground.

There are a number of basic inspection checks which should be carried out on the tractor itself prior to use in addition to more in depth maintenance routines. A useful guidance document, 'Farm Vehicle Health Check Scheme', devised as a cross industry initiative with partners such as the HSE, National Farmers Union and British Agricultural and Garden Machinery Association (BAGMA) is available which includes checklists (<http://www.bagma.com/downloads>). More detailed maintenance programmes will include the braking system, steering mechanism etc.

There is a legal requirement for most vehicles to have a Roll over Protection System (ROPS) e.g. a roll bar or roll cage. In some cases, these will need to be retro fitted. However, operators should also wear a suitable restraint e.g. seat belt. Seat belts are a legal requirement on all tractors where there is a risk of over-turning and where one can reasonably practicably be fitted.

Safe routes should be used for tractors. Many riding establishments will require tractors to be used in small yard areas and through narrow gateways etc. which may render it more difficult for the driver to notice any hazards. Assistance may be required, especially when reversing. The driver should ensure that both themselves and anyone assisting can clearly hear any instructions and should use the horn where

appropriate. Overhead power lines may be a hazard on some premises. A HSE guidance sheet is available which discusses safe working methods near power lines <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais8.htm>. This includes drivers ensuring they are aware of the location and height of power lines, and being aware of the height and reach of the vehicle. The power take off to the tractor must be adequately guarded.



SAFE USE OF TRACTORS AND IN PARTICULAR POWER TAKE OFFS

Training programmes will include how to effectively use the braking system particularly where trailers are attached.

Trailers should not be overloaded e.g. with bales of hay or soiled bedding and the load should be evenly distributed. Trailers should be securely coupled to the tractor with any securing pins in place.

Passengers should only be carried on tractors if a proper passenger seat is fitted. It is in any event illegal to transport children under the age of 13 on tractors. Where staff or the public are transported on a trailer on a regular basis, permanent seating should be provided with protected sides, tailboard and headboard and with maximum permitted number signs clearly visible. Where transported on an occasional basis people should be able to sit down unless the sides are high enough to safely stand. There should be sides, tailboards and headboards to prevent falls and people should not sit on the top of these with their legs dangling over the edges. In all cases the driver should drive sensibly and avoid passengers being thrown around inside the trailer.

All terrain vehicles

All terrain vehicles/ATVs (sometimes known as quad bikes) are sit on vehicles designed for off road use, although some can be made road legal. Their principal purpose has traditionally been to transport people around land and fields but nowadays they are often used with attachments such as mowers, paddock cleaners, levellers, small trailers, harrows. The hazards are similar to those of tractors including overturning, falling from and hitting/running over people on the ground.



The HSE have guidance on use of ATVs (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais33.pdf>). The use of head protection is vital. Different types of helmet may be appropriate depending on the circumstances, e.g. motorcycle helmets, ATV specific helmets or equestrian riding hats, provided each conform to appropriate standards.

Helmets should be capable of being worn with appropriate eye protection against insects, branches etc. In addition, safety boots and clothing which cannot become caught in moving parts should be worn. Many of the training and maintenance issues are similar to those of tractors e.g. around the principles of Safe Stop and effective route planning to avoid steep slopes, ditches and rocks. Passengers should only be carried if the ATV is specifically designed for the purpose. Some have long seats but this is to allow for operator movement not additional passengers. The HSE guidance and checklists referred to with regard to tractors above may be a useful reference.

Safe use of agricultural mowers

Some riding establishments/livery yards will use mowers on their fields or employ sub-contractors to undertake the work. The HSE has provided guidance on this subject due to high incident rates of injuries. The main hazards are listed below and guidance can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais25.pdf>

Main hazards:

- Ejected blades, flails or attachments
- Ejected debris
- Moving blades or flails
- Moving drive mechanisms
- Clearing blockages while the machine is in motion
- Crush and other hazards while moving the mower between the work and transport positions

As with any machine, training and awareness are essential.

The employer should ensure all operators are provided with the instruction manual. They should know about the risks and understand the procedures necessary for safe operation. Especially important is knowledge of the manufacturers' recommendations for safe use and how to clear blockages safely. The principles of Safe Stop are essential.

Employers should make use of relevant training courses (such as those run by Lantra NTO Ltd (<http://www.lantra.co.uk>), agricultural colleges and manufacturers).

Main controls:

- Training and awareness
- Maintenance under PUWER: should identify and rectify faults that are developing and will ensure the correct operation of safety devices (e.g. slip clutches)
- Ensure other parts, such as conditioners are guarded to the same standard as the rest of the mower
- Make sure all guards are in position and correctly fitted before starting work and while work is being carried out
- Make sure that any device to stop projectiles is in place and well maintained
- General tractor controls such as 'Safe Stop'
- Take care when working on steep ground, particularly when turning and especially with mounted mowers
- Ensure that maintenance is only carried out if the machine is supported by a purpose made prop or stand
- Consider the need for protective gloves when changing blades and carrying out similar maintenance

Contractors

Routine visitors to riding establishments and livery yards are likely to include vets, farriers or blacksmiths, horse dentists, and increasingly others such as back specialists. These people will all have direct contact with the horses. It is crucial that they are provided with suitable working areas. Vets for example will often wish to see horses in walk and trot. They will require a relatively level, slip free surface for the purpose.



HORSE WAITING TO BE SEEN BY VET, NB THE HAYNET SHOULD PREFERABLY BE TIED IN A HIGHER POSITION

Most professionals will require adequate natural or artificial lighting for the purpose of inspection/ treatment and suitable hand washing facilities. For example the Worshipful Company of Farriers recommend within their Guide to Professional Conduct published by the Farrier's Registration Council that clients provide the following:

- A flat, hard, non-slip surface; ideally, one that is covered (and lit) in case of bad weather. (Farriers cannot be expected to trim the feet for correct balance if the horse is standing in a field). A safe working environment is essential.
- Public liability insurance (this is automatic for British Horse Society members).
- All horses requiring attention have been brought in from the field and have clean, dry feet.
- There is a secure wall ring (with a twine loop).
- Serviceable head collars/ropes are provided.
- Someone is available to hold the pony/ horse if required.

They also state that the Farrier Training Agency is working hard to reduce accidents through sound working practices for apprentices.

Farrier's expectations (<http://www.wcf.org.uk/lookingafterhorse.php>)

MOBILE FARRIER



Effective communication methods with all contractors regarding individual horses are crucial. Although it is reasonable to assume that vets and other equine professionals have an adequate level of experience and training with regard to horses, they should be advised of any relevant habits or vices which could affect them. Other

visitors will include people making deliveries, e.g. of hay or feed.

Assumptions should not be made about their experience of dealing with horses. Most will not need to come into direct contact with the horses but may need to be alerted if a horse becomes loose etc. Again the areas they have to work in should have suitable surfaces, adequate lighting provision etc.

There will also be contractors who may visit to carry out general management tasks e.g. the application of fertiliser, grass cutting or topping, electrical repairs. A general requirement exists on proprietors to ensure that the proposed working methods of contractors are safe. Those involved with building maintenance must be advised of any Asbestos Containing Materials under the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (see later section) and appropriate steps taken prior to work.

Members of the public/spectators

The issues around members of the public and spectators are covered in a number of sections e.g. relating to protection from falls from height in storage areas, and separation between horses being ridden/handled. The overriding principle is that where possible there should be physical barriers such as fencing and clear signage to prevent access to areas of risk. To support this appropriate supervision is necessary, particularly around vehicles, horses and storage points. The risks may be considerably increased when events are held.

Some adults are unaware of the potential danger they place both themselves and children in, e.g. pushing prams and pushchairs around horses. Systems to enforce horse/pedestrian separation should be in place where possible and effectively enforced.

The public may need to be reminded not to undertake seemingly inoffensive tasks such as shaking out carrier bags or opening umbrellas in the vicinity of horses, each of which can cause panic. Non-smoking rules etc may also need particular enforcement.

Some parents will leave their children on riding school/livery yard premises without clear communication to the proprietor. Arrangements should be made to ensure that supervisory responsibility is clear and that emergency contact details are available.



PART C – RELATED SAFETY PROCESSES

The following part of this chapter deals with hazardous activities that have been identified as important in relation to all workplaces and as such there are legal requirements specifically tailored to address them. Such controls are generally captured under regulations and more specifically Codes of Practice.

The section is however written with reference to the premises in question.

The Management Regulations

The Management Regulations are the regulations which have been discussed in broad terms elsewhere in this guidance as they require the organisations to systematically manage health and safety. They also require employers and the self employed to make suitable and sufficient assessments of risks to their employees and others affected by their work. Where there are five or more employees, including part time workers, the significant findings of the assessment must be recorded. It is still good practice to document the assessment where less than five employees.

The risk assessment required under these regulations is often described as the 'generic risk assessment', i.e. of a general nature. More specific risk assessments may be a legal requirement in relation to other areas as described in the following sections. In some smaller establishments a generic risk assessment may be sufficient. If specific risk assessments have been carried out these do not need to be repeated under the generic assessment. Proprietors should ensure that they take into account shows and events held as part of the general risk assessment process <http://www.hse.gov.uk/event-safety/managing-an-event.htm>.

Under the Management Regulations consideration has to be given to new and expectant mothers and to young persons/children. There is a high probability that such groups will be employed in riding establishments/livery yards and therefore specific risk assessments will be necessary to take into account their needs.

New and expectant mothers

Employers must carry out risk assessments of the specific risks to the health and safety of pregnant women/new mothers and then take steps to avoid those risks. The HSE publish a booklet, *New and Expectant Mothers at Work-A guide for Employers'* (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/mothers/>) which is a useful reference. In relation to riding establishments/livery yards some of the main areas which should be taken into account include manual handling issues, exposure to biological hazards such as the E coli bacterium and exposure to extreme hot or cold conditions.

With regard to riding, the advice of the GP/midwife is important which will take into account the individual circumstances. Many women continue to ride until the late stages of pregnancy through choice. There are, however, sensible precautions which can be taken if this is the case. This would include careful choice of horses, i.e. those of calmer temperament, less likely to result in rider fall, and reduction of exposure to the higher risk elements of riding such as cross country jumping, particularly towards the end of pregnancy. Similar decisions should be made with regard to the horses pregnant women handle when not riding.

Children and young people

Under the Management Regulations employers must make an assessment of the risks to the health and safety of young people, defined as anyone under the age of 18.

Similarly they must assess risks to children, ie those under minimum school leaving age. Such individuals must be protected from any risk as a result of their lack of experience, absence of awareness of existing or potential risks, or lack of maturity. In addition employers should specifically take into account the capability of young people and children when allocating tasks to them.

Clearly however, one young person, e.g. a 17 year old that has always been around horses and perhaps competed to a high level, would need a different level of protection to a 17 year old undertaking a week's work experience that has never around horses before. An additional and important aspect of safety is the protection of children. There are now recognised schemes in place that provide checks and controls. Commonly cited is the use of Disclosure and Barring Service and the Safeguarding system <http://www.bef.co.uk/Detail.aspx?page=BEF-Safeguarding-Safeguarding>. All riding instructors registered with the British Horse Society must have attended a child protection training course and passed a DBS check and this will afford some degree of reassurance. Others should give consideration to the same standards.

Each riding school should have a designated lead staff member for addressing child welfare and safeguarding issues. Equestrian activities are overseen by the BEF safeguarding policies.

Provision and use of work equipment

Under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER), a specific risk assessment is not required but an employer may find it helpful to follow the risk assessment process in order to ensure compliance. Within the Regulations there are a number

of general requirements which equally apply to riding establishments/livery yards. Work equipment must be:

- Suitable for its intended use
- Safe for use, and maintained in a safe condition
- Used only by people who have received adequate instruction, information and training
- Accompanied by suitable safety measures, eg protective devices and warnings
- Examples of work equipment on these premises would include; tractors, ATVs, trailers, horse boxes, horse walkers, ladders, the tack and other equipment used with horses, tools for mucking out stables, ladders

See <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l22.htm>

First aid/incident management

Under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981, employers are required to make adequate provision for first aid in the workplace (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/geis3.pdf>). The riding school or livery yard proprietor should ensure that an appropriate assessment of first aid needs is undertaken and that there are adequate equipment and facilities available for the purpose. As with some other elements of Health and Safety law the assessment does not have to be in writing if there are fewer than five employees but it would be good practice to do so, and would also help the employer to prove the basis on which they have deemed adequate provision to have been made.

The assessment should take into account factors such as;

- the hazards and risks in the workplace
- the size of the organisation
- the history of accidents
- the nature and distribution of the workforce
- the distance from the workplace to emergency medical services
- travelling, distant and lone workers' needs and requirements
- employees working on shared or multi occupied sites
- annual leave and other absences of first aiders and appointed persons

The assessment of hazards and risks falls under the general requirement of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and much will relate to the previous sections. In situations where there is deemed to be a low risk to health and safety

it may be sufficient to have a suitably stocked first aid container and an 'appointed person' to look after the arrangements/take control in emergencies. Where the risks are deemed to be greater the employer may have to consider having suitably trained 'first-aiders', a first aid room, written advice to local emergency services about the relevant aspects of the work activity.

Self-employed people should also ensure adequate provision to enable them to administer first aid to themselves/summons assistance.

The nature of hazards and risk associated with livery yards/riding establishments have been discussed extensively in this guidance. To a large extent the overall assessment with regard to first aid provision will be dependent on the nature of the undertaking and the number of horses in addition to the number of employees. A large riding establishment/livery yard with horses used for most disciplines including cross country and show jumping would have a greater need for first aid provision than a small livery yard where staff had less direct contact with the horses. The assessment should take into account the previous accident history although it should be noted that many accidents, particularly to staff as opposed to the public, may not be recorded.

Although the legislation is designed to protect employees many businesses/activities make first aid provision for members of the public. Given the nature of horse riding it is good practice to make adequate provision for members of the public receiving lessons/going for hacks or rides. Instructors on the BHS Register have to have appropriate first aid qualifications.

The BHS offers its own First Aid courses, written in conjunction with SkillBase First Aid. The content of BHS First Aid courses is tailored to the to the Equine sector. The course certificate is valid for two years when thereafter a one day BHS Refresher course is attended BHS First Aid courses (<http://www.bhs.org.uk/training-and-qualifications/training-courses/find-training-courses/courses/first-aid>) are accepted for BHS Assessors, Moderators, Trainers, Verifiers and for those on the BHS Register of Instructors as are HSE compliant First Aid at Work 3 day initial or 2 day refresher courses. The HSE no longer approve first aid training.

Ratios of first aiders

There is no legislative requirement to provide a certain ratio of first aiders to employees although there is guidance available. Many yards will have small numbers of employees but still deem it necessary to have at least one first aider available at all times.

Provision should be made to cover when first aiders are on leave or absent due to sickness, and so some yards will need at least two qualified first aiders. For establishments covering provision to the public it would be reasonable to expect to have a first aider present at all such times.

Employers should ensure that they have an adequate system to monitor the location of first-aiders as many staff will use numerous areas within an establishment. Systems should be devised to ensure that, if for example a first aider is instructing clients and is required elsewhere, the safety of the clients is not compromised by their departure.

The character and dispersion of the workforce/lone workers

The layout of the establishment can significantly affect the time for a first aider to reach an incident. In some yards staff will be working in fields/schooling areas/on tracks etc considerable distances away from the main office or yard. Staff will often work alone e.g. when catching horses from remote fields. Instructors may be required to teach/lead rides at some distance away.

Employees at potentially higher risk e.g. pregnant women, young people or disabled staff will need special consideration. These factors should be incorporated in the risk assessment and may have an impact of the numbers of first aiders deemed necessary. Of paramount importance is the ability of personnel to summon first aid. Mobile phones can be of obvious assistance, provided they can pick up signals from all areas. Other devices designed to summon assistance in the event of an emergency may also rely on phone signals and these should be checked for reliability. Radio links are another option in some situations.

It may also be necessary to provide lone workers or staff working in remote areas with portable first aid kits.

Distance from the workplace to emergency medical services

Where the premises are at some distance from emergency medical services it may be necessary to make arrangements to transport an injured person. Some field gates may be locked for security reasons and this may hinder the ability to transport an injured person working beyond these areas. It is therefore crucial that the appointed person/proprietor is able to quickly locate keys or open combination padlocks.

Wherever workplaces are remote, the emergency services should be provided with detailed premise layouts/access points in writing. The appointed person should be aware of the postcode/grid reference of the premises in order to assist with the process.

Shared or Multi Occupied Sites

This may well occur on premises such as farms with a livery yard function or riding establishments within a holiday camp etc. There should be an agreement, preferably in writing, between all employers if first aid provision is to be shared. Effective communication e.g. if there are any changes to personnel between the two parties, is an important factor.

Events

Although some events will be managed by governing bodies, if small events are held e.g. dressage or jumping shows the risk assessment may conclude it appropriate to have on site ambulance cover e.g. through the St John's ambulance service or equivalent.



PARAMEDIC EVENT AMBULANCE



HORSE AMBULANCE SERVICE

First aid equipment

The first aid equipment has to be in a suitable container, clearly marked with a white cross on a green background. Depending on the size of the premises and distance between areas it may be necessary to have more than one first aid container. Where possible this should be located adjacent to washing facilities. It may be appropriate for certain staff to be given portable first aid containers e.g. when escorting hacks or working in fields or woods some distance from the main buildings. The assessment determines the equipment e.g. sterile bandages of various sizes, triangular bandages which can be used to provide support to an injured arm or shoulder, sterile eye pads, individually wrapped sterile plasters, individual antiseptic wipes, disposable gloves, a basic first aid leaflet. The portable containers should contain similar items but in smaller numbers.

The appointed person is responsible for regularly checking and replacing the contents of the containers, ensuring all items are within date. The first aiders should notify them if they use or remove any items. Employers are under a duty to notify employees of the first aid arrangements. This is commonly partially achieved through a notice listing first aiders/appointed persons although other methods may be appropriate in smaller premises. All new staff should be made aware of the arrangements. Employers must also ensure that the first-aiders/appointed persons themselves are made aware of the location of any first aid equipment – some employees are more likely to know where the equine ‘veterinary cabinet’ is than the first aid container for people. Staff must be notified of any changes to the arrangements.

First-aiders should be encouraged to keep a record of any treatment administered including the date, venue, person’s name and job, injury, treatment and/or advice, whether the person returned to work/went home/went to hospital etc. It would not usually be necessary to have a specifically designated first aid room in premises of this nature.

Accident reporting and investigation- RIDDOR

Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), certain specified injuries /events have to be reported to the relevant enforcing authority;

- fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes
- amputations
- any injury likely to lead to permanent loss of sight or reduction in sight
- any crush injury to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs

- serious burns (including scalding) which covers more than 10% of the body or causes significant damage to the eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs
- any scalping requiring hospital treatment
- any loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia
- any other injury arising from working in an enclosed space which:
 - leads to hypothermia or heat-induced illness
 - requires resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours

Over-seven-day incapacitation of a worker

Accidents must be reported where they result in an employee or self-employed person being away from work, or unable to perform their normal work duties, for more than seven consecutive days as the result of their injury. This seven day period does not include the day of the accident, but does include weekends and rest days. The report must be made within 15 days of the accident.

Over-three-day incapacitation

Accidents must be recorded, but not reported where they result in a worker being incapacitated for more than three consecutive days. If you are an employer, who must keep an accident book under the Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979, that record will be enough.

Non fatal accidents to non-workers (eg members of the public)

Accidents to members of the public or others who are not at work must be reported if they result in an injury and the person is taken directly from the scene of the accident to hospital for treatment to that injury. Examinations and diagnostic tests do not constitute ‘treatment’ in such circumstances.

If the incident occurred as part of the normal riding activity and there was no failure in the management system, then it would not be RIDDOR reportable. If on the other hand, the accident was caused by a failure in the work of the riding establishment e.g. if faulty equipment/condition of the premises/riding surface, inadequate instruction contributed to an accident, then it would be reportable. A decision about whether a work related accident is reportable requires proprietors to make a reasonable judgement based on the information available to them. Further guidance on when, what and how to report an accident can be found on the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm>.

There is no need to report incidents where people are taken to hospital purely as a precaution when no injury is apparent.

Reporting can be carried out via the HSE website form: <https://extranet.hse.gov.uk/lfservlet/external/F2508IE> or by telephone at the Incident Contact Centre on 0345 300 9923 (opening hours Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 5 pm).

In addition to the requirements above, under the Social Security (Claims and Payment) Regulations 1979 there is an obligation to maintain an accident book where there are more than 10 employees. In practice however many premises will use the accident book as the method of recording both but there are conditions under the Data Protection Act 1998 and 2003.

The enforcing authority have a wide range of powers associated with accident investigation including interviewing witnesses, removing evidence from the scene. The proprietor may be advised to leave the scene intact and should co-operate with any investigation request.

Falls from height

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 were brought into force as a result of the disturbingly high numbers of fatalities arising from falls from height. The actual height of the working environment is not defined although the Regulations include any working environment where, 'if measures required by these regulations were not taken a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury'. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.pdf>

Obvious work environments would include hay and straw storage areas.



The Regulations specify that employers shall ensure work at height is properly planned, appropriately supervised and carried out in a manner which is, so far as reasonably practicable, safe. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg125.pdf>

The risk assessment should determine whether there are alternatives to working from height. If there are not, suitable and sufficient measures must be taken to prevent, so far as reasonably practicable, any person falling a distance liable to cause personal injury. This may include appropriate work equipment or provision to minimise the consequences of a fall. In addition, if there is any risk of a person at work being struck by a falling object liable to cause personal injury, the employer should take reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised entry and indicate the hazardous area.

It is also necessary to ensure others such as visitors and children cannot fall from stores of hay, straw etc. Where feasible access should be restricted through a physical barrier e.g. the door to a barn or gate leading to a storage area. Employers may need to consider enforcement of supervision rules in addition to signs.

Other storage areas may present similar risks and again where possible the work practice should be avoided. Where ladders are necessary safe systems of work, e.g. use of an assistant should be employed depending on the assessed risk. Ladders will need to be incorporated in equipment checklist and maintenance programmes (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.pdf>).

In all cases staff should be given adequate information, instruction and training to ensure that they can undertake the tasks. There may be occasions where it is necessary to employ competent external contractors for work at height, e.g. to repair floodlights to riding areas.



HIGH LEVEL LIGHTING

Personal protective equipment

Under the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 employers must formally assess the personal protective equipment requirements of employees and provide suitable equipment where required. This should be as a 'last resort', i.e. where the work practices and systems are not sufficient to protect employees from the hazards.

Any personal protective equipment provided must be suitable for the purpose it is intended, maintained and replaced as necessary. Employees must be given appropriate information and training in its use and employers must ensure that it is correctly used. Similarly, employees must wear any personal protective equipment provided.

The generic risk assessment under the management regulations and more specific risk assessments under other regulations such as COSHH form an important part of the process in determining which equipment is required and under which circumstances.

Riding hats

Hard hats complying with the current standards should always be required when staff/clients are riding horses. <http://www.beta-uk.org/pages/safety-equipment/hats.php>. It is important that any staff fitting hats for clients have been adequately trained to do so. Hats should be routinely checked and replaced following impact or damage. Clients' own hats should meet the same standards.

There are circumstances other than riding when the risk assessment might require hats to be worn, lungeing and loading being example when it would be good practice. However, the individual circumstances are important factors to take into consideration.



SAFETY HARNESS ON A RIDING HAT

Body protectors

Body protectors, which fit around the upper body and are of semi rigid design to protect against crushing/ impact injuries from falls are currently required for various elements of competition e.g. Pony Club cross country events. The particular event will stipulate the level of protector required but in broad terms the risk assessment should identify the level of protection required based on the individual circumstances. <http://www.beta-uk.org/pages/safety-equipment/body-protectors.php> (see below)



Level 1 (black label) provides the lowest level of protection that is only considered appropriate for licensed jockeys while racing.

Level 2 (brown label) offers a lower than normal level of protection so is considered suitable for low risk situations - not including jumping, riding on the roads, riding young or excitable horses or riding while inexperienced.

Level 3 (purple label) is considered appropriate for general riding, competitions including eventing and working with horses.



As air jackets have become more popular it is important to understand the safety context they should be used in. The BHS states:

'many riders are choosing to wear one over a Level 3 body protector to enhance their protection, as air jackets purport to offer further safety features. However, these jackets – which are generally inflated by a small gas canister, and attach to the saddle with a lanyard – are still relatively new to the market and do not currently meet any recognised safety standard.'

Footwear

The correct footwear is important. Any rider using the stirrups of the saddle (as opposed to e.g. bareback riding) must have footwear with a smooth sole, and small heel (e.g. long riding boots or jodhpur boots) or a sole otherwise designed to slide out of the stirrups. The purpose of this is to prevent the whole foot from passing through the stirrup when the rider is mounted and becoming caught, again the potential being for the rider to be dragged if a fall occurs. This also relates to the size of stirrup (see section on tack). Consequently footwear such as trainers, ridged wellington boots etc. are unsuitable for riding with most stirrup designs even for short periods of time. As discussed earlier the exception might be stirrups fitted with toe stops.



MOUNTING STOOL, RIDER WEARING UNSUITABLE FOOTWEAR

For un-mounted work with horses the traditional design of riding/jodhpur boots may be more likely to lead to slips and falls, depending on the surface underneath. Concrete yards often become very slippery during icy conditions and therefore footwear with ridged soles is more appropriate.

For staff with limited direct contact with horses, e.g. those employed to muck out, or keep the yards swept, standard ridged sole footwear will be appropriate. For those directly working with horses or heavy objects, where there is an increased risk of crushing injuries, footwear with hard toe caps is recommended.



Gloves

Gloves to protect hands are also important. Good practice under BHS guidance includes the wearing of gloves whenever horses are ridden, being loaded, lunged or lead. This is as a precaution against burn injuries, when ropes are pulled through the hands by strong horses, or to improve grip generally. However, the wearing of gloves is not everyday practice in many establishments, particularly in summer.

Coats and high visibility clothing

Suitable coats are required when working with horses to protect from the general elements of wind and rain etc. Coats which are to be used for riding are often designed accordingly in comparison with coats designed for more general stable work.

High visibility jackets that meet industry standards should be provided for staff expected to ride on the roads or those expected to walk along roads or verges to catch or turn out horses etc, particularly if lighting conditions are poor, e.g. at dusk.

In areas where military helicopters undertake low flying exercises, high visibility clothing worn by both horses and riders has been shown to reduce the incidence of helicopters flying too closely, and thus decrease the risk of accidents (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/301496/low_flying_aircraft_guide_horse_riders.pdf).



Trousers

For general stable work staff are likely to wear a range of different designs of trousers, from jeans to loose fitting track suit bottoms. However, staff required to ride horses for reasonable periods of time will need to wear breeches, jodhpurs or chaps. These are designed to minimise chafing of the skin. Trousers such as jeans are uncomfortable for riding after even short time periods.

Other

Other areas of the risk assessment process could inform the need for other Personal Protective Equipment, e.g. safety helmets for staff employed to ride All Terrain Vehicles, gloves for those dealing with hazardous materials.

General

Although many proprietors and employers will have an awareness of the PPE requirements for staff when riding/handling horses, the prevailing culture is that employees provide these for themselves. An educational role is therefore particularly likely with regard to this aspect.



RIDER WEARING GOOD RANGE OF PPE INCLUDING RIDING HAT, BODY PROTECTOR, GLOVES, APPROPRIATE FOOTWEAR. THE SADDLE HAS SAFETY STIRRUPS AND THE PONY HAS A NECK STRAP FOR ADDITIONAL SECURITY

Manual handling - general

Manual handling is defined as 'any transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or by bodily force'. Loads include any person or any animal. Injuries arising from inappropriate manual handling or poor technique cause a significant number of days to be lost from work. Injuries range from back pain to general joint strain and muscle fatigue. In a similar manner to other work environments, proprietors are required to carry out individual risk assessments under the Manual Handling Regulations 1992 (as amended) where, so far as reasonably practicable, manual handling tasks with a risk of injury cannot be avoided. Where the task cannot be avoided the remaining operations must be assessed, with the risk levels reduced to a reasonable level. Where manual handling is undertaken general indications, and where possible, specific indications, should be given regarding the weight of the load and its weight distribution (eg if one side is heavier than another). Assessments will need to be undertaken of each employee as factors such as their physical capability, knowledge and training etc need to be taken into account.

The HSE produce a Manual Handling Assessment tool (MAC Tool) which assists organisations to conduct initial screening of possible high risk manual handling operations (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg383.pdf>). This may assist with the risk assessment process. They also have an advisory document about suitable manual handling training courses.

The following highlight some of the typical manual handling situations which may be encountered in the riding establishment/livery yard environment:

Manual handling - horses

Horses themselves may come under the definition of loads under manual handling and so safe practices should be considered for leading and in particular dealing with more stressful and thus unpredictable situations such as vet examinations. Without condoning such practice, many experienced riders will have observed or participated in situations where people try to pull horses in a direction they are reluctant to go, e.g. towards ditches or into horse boxes.

Similarly it is not uncommon (albeit poor practice) for people to be asked to push horses from behind to assist in such situations. Bridles give better control than head-collars and good practice arising from risk assessments may include rules about handlers wearing gloves and hard hats even when not mounted.

In general however, practices which involve pulling horses or pushing them should be avoided both from the perspective of other risks of injury e.g. being crushed or kicked, and from the fact that horses are usually much stronger than people.

Sensible alternatives to avoid the manual handling task include, for example, longer term strategies and training to encourage reluctant horses to load into horse boxes.

Manual handling - feed and bedding

Everyday loads, which should be incorporated in the risk assessments as appropriate include bags of feed, hay, straw and other stable bedding. A typical feed sack weighs around 20 kg. Hay is typically either supplied in small rectangular bales, or much larger cylindrical bales. Straw is usually supplied in rectangular bales of similar dimensions to hay bales, and other stable bedding such as bags of wood shavings come in a range of sizes. Most bales and bags do however tend to be rather large and cumbersome to lift.

The design of the storage facilities, stables and proximity of fields can greatly assist in reducing/avoiding handling of such loads. Where possible deliveries should be as near as possible to the relevant storage area, typically barns or feed rooms, to reduce the need to transport significant distances. Feed bags are often opened and placed inside large containers such as metal dustbins and provision should be made to ensure adequate space to facilitate lifting these on an individual basis. Thereafter feeds for individual horses are usually made up into separate containers or buckets, which should not be unduly heavy for staff to take to stables or the relevant feeding areas.



FEED STORAGE

Manual handling - deliveries

Some staff will be expected to help unload and stack deliveries of bales of hay and straw. The tasks should be organised to minimise twisting of the trunk or lifting through restricted areas/above head height and where possible mechanical assistance, perhaps from the delivery vehicle should be used. There should be clear communication about the hazards and safe practice, particularly if less experienced helpers are asked to assist.

The much larger cylindrical bales are only possible to move through mechanical means. Some staff will be required to take whole bales of hay, straw or bags of shavings etc to individual areas of the yard or fields. Where long distances are involved the use of tractors pulling trailers or equivalent should be a consideration.

For shorter distances trollies are a useful aid and their use should be encouraged. In many cases, however, it is likely that wheelbarrows will be used for this purpose. Bales are held together by nylon string often known as 'baler twine' which can be used to assist lifting and staff may find it much easier to grip these when wearing gloves. Clearly the frequency and duration of such tasks will be an important part of the risk assessments. Where staff are not taking whole bales of hay they will often separate the hay into smaller 'wedges' or 'sections' and place into individual hay nets. The assessment should take into account that, where the hay within haynets is dampened, to reduce respiratory problems for the horses, the nets are much heavier than when dry.

Manual handling - tack

Saddles and some rugs can be relatively heavy, and the task of manoeuvre made more difficult by poor layout of tack-rooms. In some cases lightweight synthetic saddles may be an acceptable alternative, but not everyone likes to use these.

There should be sufficient space, adequate lighting etc to allow staff to handle saddles and rugs and where possible racks should not be above head height.

Manual handling - riding and jumps

Some staff will be expected to give clients or colleagues a 'leg up' to assist them to mount the horse. Experienced riders being assisted should know how to minimise the risk through correct use of their own body weight and flexibility but many less experienced riders will rely solely on the force of the assistant.

Lifting a person's weight is a considerable force which can easily cause injury if the person is not strong enough or the 'load' unpredictable. Therefore the task

should be avoided, e.g. through 'mounting blocks', typically concrete or movable steps for the rider to mount from.



EXAMPLE OF A MOUNTING BLOCK

Riders should also be taught how to mount safely without the use of a mounting block.

One load often overlooked is the components of show jumps, including the jump uprights or 'jump wings', which are used to support the poles. Many of these are wooden and are heavy and cumbersome. There are inexpensive plastic jump wing alternatives now available, which could be a more suitable alternative. Again, where the jump wings and poles are to be moved long distances, mechanical assistance should be considered.



LIGHTWEIGHT JUMP CONSTRUCTION

Manual handling - doors and gates

Sometimes the design of doors and partitions to horse boxes and trailers, and doors and gates to barns and fields mean that they are particularly difficult to manoeuvre. It could be possible to replace them with lighter alternatives or to ensure that enough people can assist with them. Effective maintenance e.g. of the hinges will often be an important factor.

Mucking out

Other manual handling tasks relate to 'mucking out', where stables are cleaned and soiled bedding removed.



STABLE WITH SOILED BEDDING

Risk assessments should particularly take account of good practice with suitable tools and techniques involving minimal twisting of the trunk.

The transportation of the dirty bedding should be for as short a distance as possible, with wheelbarrows, trolleys etc. in good repair used on reasonable surfaces. Where staff unload the manure onto 'muck heaps' or trailers, there should be minimal lifting over head height. Any ramp arrangements should be properly secured in place.

Good design can minimise the need to transport buckets of water. Many premises now use automatic refilling systems within individual stables. Water can be piped to individual troughs within fields and either filled on an automatic basis or by manually operating a tap.

Where such facilities do not exist, hosepipes can be used to reach individual areas to minimise the carrying of buckets. Where not feasible or for shorter distances, simple training e.g. ensuring an even distribution of weight through carrying one bucket in each hand, can be adequate.

More specific individual manual handling assessments

Given the fact that there may be a number of young people or pregnant women working for the premises in question the issues around individual assessments and capacity will be particularly pertinent to the area of manual handling.

Asbestos in riding establishments/livery yards

Some of the buildings such as barns and stables associated with the premises may contain asbestos. The most common types of asbestos are crocidolite, chrysotile and amosite (known as blue, white and brown asbestos respectively). Materials which may contain asbestos are known as 'ACMs'. When large numbers of asbestos fibres are inhaled in the lungs, usually over prolonged periods of time, damage to

the lung alveoli or tiny air sacs may occur, decreasing lung capacity and ease of breathing. This is known as asbestosis and may be fatal.

Asbestos is also associated with mesothelioma, cancer of the outer lung surface and with lung cancer. The risks associated with exposure to asbestos fibres in isolated incidents are much smaller although not necessarily insignificant.

There are a number of regulations, codes of practice and guidance notes associated with asbestos but those of most relevance are the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2012, (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/regulations.htm>) primarily designed to protect workers employed to maintain and refurbish buildings. These place a duty on employers to protect employees and anyone affected by the work activity.

A suitable and sufficient risk assessment has to be undertaken to ascertain whether asbestos is present or likely to be present. Factors which should be taken into account include the nature of construction, age of buildings etc. The assessment should be documented and maintained in a readily accessible form for anyone that might need it. Its purpose is to advise and inform decision making about work practices of those that may be affected e.g. maintenance workers. If ACMs are present or likely to be present, an up-to-date record must be maintained (sometimes known as the asbestos register). This will include the form in which it is present, locations, condition of the material. It may be necessary to commission a laboratory sample based test to ascertain the type of asbestos.

Wherever ACMs are present a documented plan to manage the health risks should be produced. For day to day purposes this may be as simple as labelling their location provided they are not in a condition likely to be a significant health risk, with provision for routine and emergency maintenance works. However, if any works are to be undertaken which may involve disturbance e.g. laying new cables, further steps will need to be introduced. Depending on the type of ACM this may necessitate the employment of licensed asbestos contractors to remove the materials. The materials should not be disturbed without effective control measures in place. Before anyone is engaged to work on the buildings they must check whether there is a possibility that ACMs will be affected or disturbed, usually by checking the register. They must be trained as to relevant safe working practices.

The asbestos register records should be kept up to date, which will mean incorporating visual and other checks of the ACMs as part of maintenance checklists.

Electrical systems

Electrical shocks occur as a result of electric currents flowing around the body. Incidents have the potential to cause major and minor injuries such as burns, affect the body's organs such as the heart or cause fatalities.

As with all workplaces, riding establishments and livery yards are covered by general health and safety requirements and the specific criteria included in the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.

There is a general requirement under the regulations that the main electrical installation and any associated equipment is constructed and maintained so as to prevent danger (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsr25.htm>). The installation does not legally have to comply with the current Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) Regulations (IEE institute of electrical engineers) regulations 17th edition bs7671), but it would obviously be advantageous if this were the case.

In any event it may be necessary to prove the safety of the installation through the provision of a current test certificate. There is no legal requirement as to the frequency or need for any such inspections, but many employers would find it hard to demonstrate the safety of their system without one. A recommendation of 5 yearly testing is usually given.

In some premises the general lighting and power circuits may have been extended to other areas such as additional stabling, and test certificates for the element in question are advisable. Only qualified personnel, usually contractors, should be allowed to work on the installation.

In any event, as part of the overall management system, there should be regular visual checks of the visible components of the electrical system e.g. light fittings, switches and sockets. Any defects should be reported and acted on.

All switches should be mounted in areas protected from the weather or enclosed in suitable materials if not possible. Switches should not be located within reach of horses. Cables between areas should be wall or ceiling mounted or laid underground, suitably sheathed to protect from damage.

Portable electrical equipment such as kettles and horse clippers (to remove horse hair in a similar manner to shaving) should be included in regular Portable Equipment (PAT) testing programmes by qualified personnel. Clippers are often used outside and should always be used in conjunction with a residual current device (RCD) as should equipment such as electrical

grooming appliances. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg236.pdf> <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg107.pdf>

Horse walkers to which horses are placed and then walked in a circular movement by a machine will be found in some of the larger premises. In addition to compliance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER), these will need to be fitted with a separate isolator switch for use in an emergency to comply with electrical safety requirements.

Some yards will have solarium lamps and areas to warm the muscles of the horses. These should be installed by a competent person. Any replacement bulbs should be of the correct wattage and they should be included in visual maintenance checklist programmes. A separate isolator will also be required for these.

Many premises use electric fencing to section off certain areas, usually within fields which should be signed appropriately. These are designed to prevent horses from straying, through intentionally giving a small shock.

The effect is the same when touched by people. Although unpleasant, injury should not result. They are not always mains powered, but can be powered by batteries, typically car batteries. These should be covered and kept out of everyday reach.



ELECTRIC FENCE POWER UNIT (NB BATTERY NOT CONNECTED)

Substances harmful to health

In the UK exposure to hazardous substances, such as bleach, is regulated via controls on those who manufacture and distribute such chemicals and those who use such chemicals. In the riding context many of the chemicals will not be harmful in normal concentrations but will still be subject to regulation under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, as amended in 2002 (The COSHH Regulations) (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/basics.htm>).

These Regulations include provision to assess the risks to health from hazardous substances, and this includes micro-organisms such as viruses, bacteria, mould. The duty relates to risks both to employees, the self employed, and, so far as reasonably practicable, to anyone else who may be affected by the work carried on including for example contractors and members of the public. There are some basic principles that must be applied in using hazardous substances, these are:

- a. Design and operate processes and activities to minimise emission, release and spread of substances hazardous to health.
- b. Take into account all relevant routes of exposure- inhalation, skin absorption and ingestion- when developing control measures.
- c. Control exposure by measures that are proportionate to the health risk
- d. Choose the most effective and reliable control options which minimise the escape and spread of substances hazardous to health.
- e. Where adequate control of exposure cannot be achieved by other means, provide, in combination with other control measures, suitable personal protective equipment.
- f. Check and review regularly all elements of control measures for their continuing effectiveness.
- g. Inform and train all employees on the hazards and risks from the substances with which they work and the use of control measures developed to minimise the risks.
- h. Ensure that the introduction of control measures does not increase the overall risk to health and safety.

In determining whether any hazardous substances are used in the riding environment the person undertaking the risk assessment should systematically consider all of the substances used. Substances to consider include veterinary medicines (which may include hydrogen peroxide), cleaning materials, battery acid, horse treatments such as hoof oil, fly repellent, pest control chemicals.



EQUINE MEDICINES AND INSECTICIDES

The hazard data sheets should be obtained from the supplier and then relevant control measures implemented as listed above. In many cases this will mean ensuring the substances are kept in secure locked containers with access only by competent personnel trained in their use, provided with appropriate personal protective equipment.

Where the data sheets suggest immediate washing if the substance comes into contact with a person, it is sensible to ensure the substances are used near to washing facilities. Gloves and other personal protective equipment should be kept in the area the substance is used.

In relation to riding establishments and livery yards the main zoonoses or diseases which may be transmitted as a result of contact with micro-organisms are:

- Leptospirosis
- Ringworm
- Esherichia coli (E.coli)
- Salmonella
- Tetanus

In addition, some people will be susceptible to illnesses caused by dusts present on feedstuffs, hay and straw. This is sometimes known as Farmers Lung.

Leptospirosis

The form of leptospirosis which most commonly affects those involved with horses is Weils disease. This is caused by the bacterium *Leptospira icterohaemorrhagiae*, carried by rats. Although it can be fatal, the usual symptoms include one or more of fever, headache, vomiting and muscle pain. It can lead to jaundice, meningitis and kidney failure. Infection usually occurs through cuts and grazes when in contact with the urine or water contaminated with the urine. Employers can assume that rats will be attracted to the premises of riding establishments and livery yards given the type of environment i.e. fields, ditches, bedding materials, feed stuffs. They should therefore take steps to prevent or reduce the likelihood of contamination, at least around the principal building areas.



COSHH RODENTICIDES

Good housekeeping practice is an important element, including for example storing horse feeds in enclosures with tightly fitting lids and ensuring spillages are cleared. It may be necessary to instigate a rat treatment programme and a separate risk assessment will be necessary regarding the deployment of any poison (see above).

Employees and others can follow basic principles to control the risk of exposure, e.g. ensuring cuts and grazes are thoroughly washed and then covered. When necessary to walk through ditches, streams, etc everyone should wear appropriate footwear and clothing, and should avoid being splashed in the face. Hands should always be washed prior to smoking, drinking or eating. Again the HSE provide information about this area

(<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/healthrisks/hazardous-substances/harmful-micro-organisms/leptospirosis-weils-disease.htm>)

Ringworm

Ringworm is a fungal disease of the skin which can be transmitted between horse and humans or vice versa. It is very contagious and will also spread through indirect contact e.g. through grooming, on fences, rugs and saddles. It is recognised by raised areas on the skin or circular scabs.

Good practice would include ensuring that if any horse becomes infected it is kept away from others and receives appropriate veterinary treatment. Ideally infected horses should be dealt with last, after those that are not affected, to minimise spread. Its rugs, saddle and bridle etc should also be kept separately and should be kept scrupulously clean. Anyone dealing with the horse or its equipment should wear gloves, thoroughly wash after contact and disinfect their boots etc. Even where horses do not have ringworm it is good practice to minimise cross contamination through the use of separate grooming kits, rugs and tack.

E.coli/Salmonella

The E.coli O157 bacterium lives in the guts of many animals including farm animals, horses and birds and is transmitted to humans through ingestion following contact with the dung. It can cause very severe illness including diarrhoea and may be fatal in some cases: (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/campaigns/farmsafe/ecoli.htm>)

The salmonella bacterium is carried by most types of farm animal and birds and, as with E coli, can be transmitted through contact with the dung. It can cause diarrhoea, fever, abdominal pains. In some riding establishments/livery yards staff pick out individual droppings from stables (known as skipping out). They should always wear gloves to do this. Usually those dealing with the droppings in other ways e.g. mucking out stables, 'poo picking' from fields or tidying muck heaps, will use tools such as farm forks and shovels. In these cases the risk assessment should consider the need to wear gloves etc. All employees should, however, routinely wash their hands and arms with antibacterial soap and warm water after contact with horses/droppings, particularly prior to eating, drinking or smoking. Visitors and others should be encouraged to do the same.



POO PICKING' EQUIPMENT

Tetanus

The tetanus bacterium is found in soil or manure and is transmitted to both horses and people through cuts and grazes. Transmission through accidental puncture wounds e.g. from standing on nails or stable forks has occurred, as it has through injury on barbed wire fencing. The disease is very serious and can be fatal.

Most children are routinely immunised against tetanus. Historically in the UK people received booster vaccinations every five or ten years. However, current Department of Health guidance suggests that if anyone has had 5 tetanus vaccinations in the course of their lifetime there is little justification for further preventative boosters. Employers should ask staff to ensure their vaccination programme is up-to-date.

In the event of a cut or graze being sustained it should be thoroughly washed and covered.

Where any doubt exists medical advice should be sought: (<http://www.nhs.uk/chq/pages/1316.aspx>)

Dust irritation/farmer's lung

Some people are particularly susceptible to irritation from the dusts and mould spores present in hay, straw and some horse feeds. Symptoms include redness of the eyes, sneezing and coughing.

Farmer's lung is the name for the illness that may be caused when the smaller mould spores enter the lungs. In the short term it can cause irritation as with dusts but it can also cause fever, headache, chest tightness, breathlessness, asthma symptoms including wheezing. Longer term effects can include chronic asthma, persistent chest tightness and wheezing, chronic bronchitis with phlegm and shortness of breath or even heart damage.

Employers/proprietors of riding establishments and livery yards can help prevent or minimise exposure to the dusts through buying good quality hay and straw. Problems of mould spores are more likely if the bales have been harvested in damp conditions. Where possible staff should handle the products in the open or in areas with good ventilation.

Many working practices can be designed to reduce the amount of dust generated, e.g. through hosing yards before sweeping. Staff should ensure their work clothes are regularly laundered and left at work to change into where possible.

Where employees are regularly exposed to dust and may be particularly susceptible or have any symptoms of respiratory illness, employers should change work methods/routines or otherwise improve control measures. There are alternatives to the traditional

products available e.g. 'haylage' which is stored in plastic sacks and should not emit dust when opened, although it can be more expensive than hay. Many yards soak their hay before feeding, which reduces the dust in circulation. Dust free alternatives to straw for bedding include rubber matting and shredded newspaper.

When all other reasonably practicable means of controlling exposure to dust have proved inadequate, respiratory protective equipment (RPE) might be appropriate.

(<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg53.htm>)

The equipment must properly fit the person and they must be given adequate instruction, information and training in its use. It should be stored away from dust sources, fully inspected on a regular basis with checks recorded and examined for defects prior to each use.

Exposure to hot or cold conditions

Given the nature of the equine working or leisure environment, which is predominantly outdoors, consideration should be given to changes in climatic conditions. This particularly relates to both staff and clients who should be made aware of both extremes in temperature. In the summer the aim is to prevent hyperthermia and/or sunburn/skin cancer and in the winter for the prevention of hypothermia. The HSE recommends:

Cold environments

- ensure the personal protective equipment issued is appropriate
- provide mobile facilities for warming up, and encourage the drinking of warm fluids such as soup or hot drinks
- introduce more frequent rest breaks
- consider delaying the work – can it be undertaken at warmer times of the year without compromising on safety?
- educate workers about recognising the early symptoms of cold stress

Hot environments

- reschedule work to cooler times of the day
- provide more frequent rest breaks and introduce shading to rest areas
- provide free access to cool drinking water
- introduce shading in areas where individuals are working

- encourage the removal of personal protective equipment when resting to help encourage heat loss
- educate workers about recognising the early symptoms of heat stress

Working in the sun

- Keep a top on.
- Wear a hat with a brim or a flap that covers the ears and the back of the neck.
- Stay in the shade whenever possible, during breaks and especially at lunch time.
- Use a high factor sunscreen of at least SPF15 on any exposed skin.
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
- Check skin regularly for any unusual moles or spots. See a doctor promptly if anything is found that is changing in shape, size or colour, itching or bleeding.

Display screen assessments

Riding establishments/livery yards more commonly use computers than previously.

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 were brought into force to try and reduce the risk of associated hazards such as muscle fatigue, upper limb pains, eyesight effects, general fatigue.

Suitable and sufficient risk assessments are required in relation to 'users' or 'operators'. These assessments would not therefore be necessary in premises where computers are used so infrequently or for such short periods of time that the person using is not defined as a user/operator.

The assessments take into account factors such as the height of the workstation and ability of the operator to adjust the chair/angle and height of screen. Time spent at the workstation is an important consideration. Where proprietors deem it necessary to undertake an assessment under the Regulations HSE guidance and sample checklists are available (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.pdf>)

Fire safety

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which came into effect in 2006, applies to England and Wales and there is equivalent legislation covering the remainder of the United Kingdom. The occupiers of all equestrian establishments, regardless of whether they require a licence to operate, must ensure a competent person undertakes a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment. Again, where there are five or more employees the findings of the risk assessment must be recorded and acted upon.

Lightning strikes and arson set fires contribute to several thousand fires per year to the UK's equestrian and agricultural premises. The people at risk again include staff, visitors and contractors, and people not authorised to be on the premises.

Specific hazards will usually include potential ignition sources such as; hot shoeing by farriers, electrical and mains gas installations and appliances, smoking, heating and lighting sources, cooking, live flames, vehicles and their exhausts, LPG gas in cylinders, some veterinary supplies, firearms and ammunition. Combustible hazardous materials include; quantities of fodder and bedding (e.g. hay and straw), storage of LPG cylinders and other gases, chemicals, vehicle fuel oils and petrol, vehicles parked against buildings, flammable decorating materials.

The risk to life from fire is an important element of the fire risk assessment and will include day time occupancy fire risks to staff and visitors, residential accommodation for visitors and customers, night time accommodation, seating accommodation within riding schools, restaurants, special arrangements for Riding for the Disabled groups etc. Fire safety standards for residential accommodation would normally mirror those of a hotel.

The risk assessment must also take into account other usage such as indoor car boot sales and events such as shows, where additional catering arrangements and equipment may be utilised. <https://www.britishhorse.com/products/bhs-fire-safety-book-paperback.html>

Competency and training

As discussed in other sections of this guidance, the BHS have a universally recognised examination system for those dealing with horses and involved in providing instruction. The ABRS also offer an examination structure for these aspects. Many people will have qualifications relating to riding and handling horses obtained through the Pony Club. In addition the RDA have requirements relating to training of those working with the disabled.



<http://www.rda.org.uk/assets/Health-and-Safety-Guidelines-0913.pdf>

Evidence of any of these qualifications should be required. Many staff will have gained their qualifications years previously and proprietors should be asked what they do to ensure staff are up to date with current methods and practices. Instructors on the British Horse Society register must hold appropriate qualifications along with up to date first aid training, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training, an up to date DBS check and attendance on Child Safeguarding training. However the CPD requirements will need to be supplemented with relevant on the job training. The BHS Register of Instructors CPD (<http://www.bhs.org.uk/training-and-qualifications/exams-and-qualifications>) training days offer learning and development opportunities by:

- Broadening individual knowledge base and acquiring new skills for safe and effective practice
- Supporting renewal registration with the Register of Instructors
- Encouraging reflective practice

Others will not be on this register. The Pony Club now have similar requirements with regards to CPD of their instructors, and these often also work for riding establishments. Many instructors however are not on the register and do not teach on behalf of the Pony Club. See previous section on competency.

In addition to ensuring that staff are up to date with appropriate riding/teaching/'stable management' techniques, proprietors must ensure that they advise staff of the main findings of their risk assessments and relevant areas of the safety management system e.g. control measures. Appropriate training should be undertaken. This might range from training to drive a vehicle and trailer (assuming an appropriate licence is held), to using electric clippers with residual current devices (RCD), to correct techniques under manual handling. Ongoing training both on a practical and theoretical basis is important.

Many staff will not wish to study for formal qualifications but others should be supported, within overall budgetary constraints, if they wish to do so.

Appropriate induction training is essential. An example would be to discuss the horse checklist referred to earlier and to explain any safety procedures and systems e.g. arising from risk assessments as discussed above. Ideally these would be available in documented form. Significantly the 'volunteer' group, which often includes children, will require induction training. Their needs are of particular relevance within risk assessment and training programmes. The tasks they participate in should be taken into account –typically including catching/turning out horses/grooming/mucking out, tacking up, assisting with lessons. With regard to all staff, certain activities e.g. loading horses, lungeing, may require higher levels of supervision than eg sweeping yards. Tasks should be allocated according to individual experience and ability. All staff should be given appropriate training in emergency procedures.

Communication

One of the key issues with regard to the effective implementation of health and safety controls is that of communication. Systems should be used which are appropriate to the size and nature of the establishment and degree of assessed risk. (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg232.pdf>)

In a small livery yard with one employee it is likely that verbal communication is used and this may well suffice. However, the more complex the individual work patterns, and the greater the number of employees, the less reliable such a system might be. Some establishments may employ staff to work at different times to one another which renders communication more difficult, but given the introduction of smart-phones and social media, communication is much easier nowadays. Alternatives might include employees checking a 'work book' or a 'black/white' board on a daily basis, to determine whether there are any relevant matters of health and safety concern e.g. relating to a particular horse or cross country jump. The work book method would be preferable as records would be maintained and staff could be asked to sign and acknowledge reading. The precursor is that there must be an effective system for staff to report issues of concern and for these to be actioned and recorded in an appropriate manner. In larger premises it will be necessary for certain individuals to take responsibility for certain areas. Some of these will have been specified in the general arrangements for meeting the health and safety policy commitments. It may be possible to hold regular staff meetings where information can be passed on, with significant points recorded, but in many small yards this will neither be the cultural norm or practically feasible. However key staff members could hold smaller meetings and then have responsibility for cascading information to other staff.

Once all the significant hazards are understood and the controls have been implemented it is essential to make sure that they remain in place and appropriate for the given hazards. In any establishment changes occur and there will be staff and client turnover so it is important to keep those controls under review. In this management model this is referred to as 'Checking' and 'Acting'

PART D – MANAGEMENT RELATED SAFETY PROCESSES

Check

Many of the assessments will have identified the need for regular maintenance checks, e.g. of the structural components of the premises or of the work equipment. These checks do not have to be onerous and in many cases can be carried out by generalist employees. Proprietors may find it useful to draw up checklists relating to their premises and to ensure that these are completed at intervals suggested by the risk assessments and other processes. Written checklists are preferable. At various stages of the guidance checklists have been referred to, e.g. the farm vehicle checklists devised by the British Agricultural and Garden Machinery Association (BAGMA), with suggested intervals between checks.

Some checks might be required on an annual basis or even less frequently, e.g. those relating to the electrical installation. For many aspects of monitoring, monthly checks might suffice, e.g. in relation to fencing, RCDs, gates, condition of car parking areas and stabling, cross country jumps. Weekly checklists may be appropriate in certain circumstances, e.g. the condition of the tack and hats provided for clients.

It is also important to investigate properly accidents and 'near miss incidents'. This is where an incident could have caused injury but did not. By monitoring these types of incident they help to better understand the things that can go wrong and thus preventative action can be taken.

None of these checks negate however the need for ongoing visual checks by all staff and appropriate methods for reporting. A staff member observing a significant area of stitching undone on a stirrup leather or a show jump in dangerous condition should take action e.g. take it for repair/cone off to prevent use/report the same day. Similarly the employer should ensure that significant issues of concern are dealt with and that there are mechanisms to prioritise repair needs.

There should also be effective checking systems in place to ensure that policies and procedures are adhered to. There may be comprehensive rules about how to safely ride/deal with horses but these must be enforced. An employee 'turning a blind eye' to a staff member riding a horse with no hat or bareback on the roads renders the organisation, and potentially themselves as an individual, liable to serious criticism and potential litigation, particularly if an accident arises. It is always useful to maintain records of staff qualifications/copies of certificates and records of training.

Act

It is also important to learn from the accidents and therefore it is important to review the findings regularly to determine whether the processes and procedures in place are actually doing what they should do. For example a person injured as a result of placing themselves between two horses kicking one another in a field may have ignored procedures and rules but alternately could be deemed to require additional training/supervision. It could be possible to separate the two horses or to otherwise change practices. Many riding establishment/livery yard proprietors will automatically undertake such reviews as an intrinsic part of running the business but others may not.

Following significant changes to work practices/systems e.g. the introduction of a new piece of work equipment such as a horse walker or a hazardous substance it is a legal obligation to revise the risk assessment. In addition the organisation may wish to review the existing management arrangements to determine if they remain suitable and sufficient. Similarly, the establishment must consult employees about any changes in safety procedures, equipment etc.

In larger and more complex establishments it is good practice to hold an annual review where the proprietor/managers etc. plan for the following year. During this meeting they can collate all relevant information about the past year, e.g. accident data and compare it with previous years to determine improvements or risks reduced. The organisation should analyse whether the existing controls have been as effective as they thought and whether new controls should be introduced. This may then have an impact on the budget, staffing resources etc. for the next year.

The review may highlight the need to change certain practices even where accidents have not occurred. Legislative changes, insurance company requirements or good practice highlighted by equine associations may be of relevance. There may be a need to alter responsibilities for various aspects in light of staff changes/attendance on training programmes. The views of staff and, if applicable, clients should be taken into account during the review. Again it is important not only to review the system but to ensure that any changes are effectively implemented. Suitable and sufficient training and communication will usually be important elements.

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Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
Chadwick Court, 15 Hatfields, London SE1 8DJ

Telephone 020 7928 6006

Email info@cieh.org **Web** www.cieh.org

Registered charity no. 290350