

Frequently Asked Questions/Answers for Horse Owners Moving Horses into and within Vermont

Effective February 2013

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Why is horse owner compliance with equine importation requirements important?

In recent years, multiple equine disease outbreaks across the country have garnered national and international attention, including contagious equine metritis, equine herpes virus, equine infectious anemia and equine piroplasmiasis. Although these outbreaks have not originated in Vermont, our state's equine industry is not immune to these and other disease issues, such as strangles, West Nile virus and eastern equine encephalomyelitis. Ongoing diligence is necessary to ensure that the movement of competition horses to and from Vermont does not pose increased risk to those horses that move and to those that do not leave Vermont's borders.

What are the State's requirements for importation of horses into Vermont?

In addition to requirements imposed by the individual show or event, all horses *imported* into Vermont (traveling into Vermont from other states), regardless of purpose, must travel with a negative **Coggins test** obtained within 12 months of importation and a **health certificate** dated within 30 days of import. If a horse is traveling to various exhibitions/shows in Vermont between May 1 and October 31, the horse owner may acquire an Exhibition Permit from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture's Animal Health office, which extends the life of the health certificate up to 180 days as long as the horse moves interstate to its first show/exhibition within 30 days of the health certificate examination by the veterinarian. Refer to the document entitled *Exhibition Permit Protocol for Vermont Shows and Fairs* or contact the Vermont Agency of Agriculture's Animal Health Office at (802)828-2421 or agr.animalhealth@vermont.gov for information on how to obtain an Exhibition Permit.

Why are health certificates important for horses imported into Vermont from other states?

Health certificates may be perceived by some as having limited value in *preventing* disease introduction due to the maximum 30-day window between certificate completion and equine travel; however, the health certificate is still extremely important because it provides information about the origin and destination of the horse(s), commonly referred to as traceback information. This traceback information allows state veterinarians to more quickly contain disease outbreaks that do occur, thereby protecting individual horses and lessening the inconvenience and cost to the horse industry.

What happens to the interstate health certificate after the veterinarian fills it out?

Following a physical examination and completion of the interstate health certificate, the issuing veterinarian is required to forward copies of the certificate to the department of agriculture in the horse's state of origin within one week. The animal health officials in that state are then required to forward one copy of the health certificate to the horse's final state of destination within one week. Electronic health certificates are forwarded electronically within the same time frames.

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The forwarding of this traceability information within the required time frames helps animal health officials quickly notify owners of potentially exposed horses during a disease outbreak. This ensures that proper precautions can be taken to prevent disease spread and medical attention may be obtained for sick horses.

What are the benefits of the electronic Certificates of Veterinary Inspection and how do I start using them?

Electronic health certificates are beneficial because they are legible, they can be automatically forwarded to the states of origin and destination within 7 days as required by law, and they are less subject to fraud. If you would like your horse(s) to travel with electronic health certificates, ask your veterinarian to contact the Agency of Agriculture's animal health office at (802) 828-2421 or agr.animalhealth@vermont.gov for a tutorial and to acquire permission to use the electronic certificates.

What happens to my horse if it is imported into Vermont without meeting the State's requirements?

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets' animal health specialists and state veterinarians enforce the State's equine importation requirements. If a horse is found to have been imported into Vermont without meeting the health certificate/exhibition permit and Coggins testing requirements, that horse may be strictly quarantined or be required to leave the show grounds and the State of Vermont. Repeated violations will likely result in the Agency assessing monetary penalties against the owner or handler of the horse and other penalties.

What is the difference between requirements imposed by the individual show/event and those mandated by the State of Vermont?

All horses brought into Vermont, regardless of purpose, must meet the minimum importation requirements established by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, including a negative Coggins test within 12 months of import and a health certificate completed by a veterinarian within 30 days of import into the State. Horses imported into Vermont to attend shows, exhibitions, or competitions are *also* subject to the entry requirements established by the show or event. Horse owners should contact the show or event to determine those event-specific requirements.

Do Vermont-resident horses have to have health certificates to travel to Vermont shows?

The State of Vermont does not require a health certificate for horse movement *within* the state. This means that horses that originate from within Vermont and go to Vermont shows only must meet the requirements that the show has in place for its competing horses. These may include but not be limited to things such as vaccination requirements. Refer to show officials to obtain information on requirements imposed by individual equine events within Vermont.

How do the intrastate livestock movement laws impact me and my horse?

Act 30, effective July 1, 2017, requires that all livestock (including horses) that leave their home property for any reason (except for receiving veterinary care) be officially identified, even if they do not leave the state of Vermont. While the Agency strongly recommends the use of microchips for official identification, a completed Coggins' form that includes a digital photo or accurate drawing of the horse may also be used as official identification. This means that all horses

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traveling on Vermont roads (other than to receive veterinary care) must travel with negative Coggin's forms.

How do I find out the importation requirements for horses traveling to other states?

Importation requirements are determined by the state of destination. Horses exported from Vermont that are traveling to other states must meet the entry requirements of the state(s) to which they are traveling. **All states** (even those within New England) have import requirements, including health certificate requirements. Contact the Department of Agriculture in the state of destination for details on other state requirements or visit www.interstatelivestock.com for information regarding other states' equine import requirements.

Questions pertaining to Vermont's State import requirements for horses should be directed to the Vermont Agency of Agriculture's Animal Health Office at (802)828-2421 or agr.animalhealth@vermont.gov.