



Manitoba
Horse Council

MHC Covid Update for Equestrian Facility Operators

February 12, 2021

Our email and media posts to facilities and coaches on February 9 mentioned that we would be addressing the questions raised. We hope the following helps you understand how our community could operate in the next three weeks.

It has been confirmed that Sport Manitoba classes equestrian facilities as indoor sporting facilities, which helps in focussing on activities mentioned in Provincial Health Orders (PHOs), press releases, the and Backgrounder.

Throughout this help sheet, “coach” comments also apply to “trainers” who are working with riders.

From February 12, 2021 for three weeks

Indoor sporting facilities such as rinks, gymnastic clubs and martial arts: Reopen at 25 per cent capacity including both staff and patrons for individual, one-on-one instruction only.

History: In the November 2020 PHO, facilities were CLOSED (to the public for lessons, entertainment, recreation etc), except that as per the Schedule of businesses permitted to open (#76), facilities could allow those involved in essential services onto the premises. Per CFIA requirements and in the absence of alternate instructions from the province, boarders were included as providing essential services which included light riding to maintain condition. This did not include lessons or coaching of any kind.

New PHO: In the February 12, 2021 PHO, indoor facilities may REOPEN to the public, ie non-horse-owners are now included (as long as all other Covid restrictions are followed) at 25% capacity for individual one-on-one instruction only. The Schedule of businesses permitted to open still includes stables as #73 so boarders may still provide those essential services including exercise riding.

The proviso is that the facility may only operate within limits of 25% facility capacity including staff. One person may accompany the rider with their coach during the lesson. It would be the facility owners' responsibility to decide their total capacity before making the decision as to what their safe 25% maximum is. Owners may still set their own safe indoor arena limits of horses and riders/coaches which may be less than the 25% capacity number quoted.

Examples:

- a. Non-boarders (the public) may book one-on-one lessons on school horses within the facility's decided capacity number;
- b. Boarders may ride their horses for condition in a non-lesson situation as long as they are included in the capacity number; and
- c. If at any time the facility does not have lesson horse bookings/boarders to fulfil the owner's capacity number, the owner may choose to book non-boarded horses to be hauled in for one-on-one lessons.

- d. Horses cannot be hauled in to a facility be ridden indoors to maintain condition or for recreation.

The above examples are situations which operate within the provincial requirements such as no indoor group lessons even if it is family members (or bubble), 25% capacity of the facility, booking calendar, contact tracing, mask wearing while unmounted, hand and equipment washing and sanitizing, social distancing etc. So if the owner decides the 25% capacity of the facility is 6 people at one time, that could be made up of 1 student with coach and a parent, 1 boarder riding for condition and 1 haul-in with coach, just as an example. For facilities which have regular on-site staff (not including owners), staff numbers should be included in the head count.

The new orders don't give any recommendations for time slots/calendars such as came with the last PHO, but in order to accommodate everyone who wishes to have lessons and condition rides, it's recommended that time slots are still maintained to everyone chance to ride. Good business practice would give the regular boarders and students time slot priority over haul-ins.

Those who operate a facility which does not include boarders may allow haul-ins for indoor coaching but not conditioning., and should follow all the provincial Covid-prevention requirements, as usual.

Moving to Spring weather – Outdoor riding opportunities

As the weather improves facility owners with outside arenas (in addition to, or separate from, an indoor arena) may be able to expand their activities. The Order has provision as follows:

Outdoor sport facilities: May reopen for casual sports as well as organized practices and games, with multi-team tournaments not permitted.

MHC understands "organized practices and games" could mean group lessons. Multi-team tournaments translate to competitions (therefore not permitted yet). Indoor washroom facilities at outdoor sporting or recreational venues can reopen to those participating in the associated activities., however, those using outdoor arenas should not be able to tack up or otherwise use the indoor facilities apart from the washrooms. The sector of "outdoor facilities" does not have a capacity restriction. However, as with indoor activities, the Covid requisites of booking calendar, contact tracing, mask wearing while unmounted, hand and equipment washing and sanitizing, social distancing etc. etc., should be in place.

Moving on

Manitoba Horse Council will continue to work on behalf of its members to provide safe and appropriate recommendations for the equestrian community as the Province moves us towards a more open daily life.

Signage, waivers, contract tracing forms etc continue to be available on Manitoba Horse Council's Competitions web page.

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