

MAF Standard for the Export of Horses from New Zealand by Sea

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1 Objective

The objective of this standard is to describe the conditions under which horses are to be prepared and consigned for safe export from New Zealand by sea. A safe export is considered to be one in which the welfare needs of the horses are attended to during transport such that the horses arrive at their destination:

- without having suffered unnecessary or untoward physical or psychological stress; and
- without having developed an aversion to undertaking a similar experience on any future occasion.

2 Introduction

On 21 July 1999 MAF held a workshop to discuss standards for exports of horses from New Zealand by sea, prompted by problems reported during specific export consignments and general concerns regarding a lack of understanding of current standards, consistency in their application and enforcement, and procedures for consignment approval at various ports of export. An audit confirmed and further identified problems with the trade. MAF Biosecurity Authority elected to take a lead role in resolving this situation because these factors could adversely affect animal welfare and market access for New Zealand horses. Following the workshop and draft standard was circulated to all participants providing an opportunity for feedback prior to finalising the standard.

The export of horses by sea has developed, principally in response to market requirements, into a relatively large volume trade involving frequent consignments, a variety of destination countries, and a variety of voyage durations. The move within sea-freight towards standardised shipping containers has driven the industry to adopt these containers, albeit in a variety of converted forms, as the principal means of confining horses for export by sea. This is in contrast to other common livestock

exports by sea, such as cattle or sheep, which are generally conducted in specialised vessels converted for the specific purpose of livestock transport.

Current New Zealand requirements and guidelines for export of horses by sea are provided by:

The Maritime Safety Authority Maritime Rules Part 24C Carriage of Cargoes - Specific Cargoes;
The Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Animals Transported within New Zealand; and
The Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Horses.

MAF Zoosanitary Export Certificates may also provide guidance, in particular in case where the importing country has determined that specific requirements must be satisfied for trade to occur. Both MAF and the exporters agreed that a single document providing the officially recognised standard for exports of horses by sea was required, in order to:

recognise the relatively unique methods industry have adopted to enable exports on container freight ships;
consolidate the requirements of the regulatory agencies involved in determining standards for safety and animal welfare;
determine whether acceptable alternatives exist to those within existing requirements; and
provide objective parameters wherever possible, in order to allow the consistent application of the requirements and recommendations.

MAF envisages this standard will be used as a procedural guideline for preparation and approval of individual consignments, as a baseline standard during audits of compliance, and as an educational tool for new entrants to this industry sector.

3 Definitions

export

In the current context, means consignment from New Zealand under official zoosanitary export certification provided by MAF.

groom

The shipboard personnel allocated responsibility for care of the horses during the export voyage.

horses

In the current context, means any live domesticated animal that is a member of the species *Equus caballus* or *Equus asinus*, or the cross of these two species.

MAF

The New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

Official Veterinarian

A veterinarian employed by MAF to perform official veterinary duties at ports in relation to import and export of animals.

marine surveyor

As defined in Maritime Rules Part 24 C i.e. any suitably qualified person who has been recognised by the Director of Maritime Safety and holds a valid maritime document as a surveyor issued in accordance with section 41 of the Maritime Transport Act 1994.

must

When incorporated into a technical standard, signals a minimum requirement that consignments are to meet in order to comply with the MAF standard.

MSA

The Maritime Safety Authority of New Zealand.

non-slip surfaces

Means a surface that will provide adequate footing for shod and un-shod horses, and includes rubber mats, carpet, slatted wooden floors, and cleated solid wooden floors.

shipper

Means any person who offers goods for carriage by sea, and includes any person who arranges for the carriage of goods by sea on behalf of any other person. In the current context, shipper includes all persons and companies engaged in the business of export of horses by sea.

should

When incorporated into a technical standard, signals a MAF recommendation. Although not considered absolutely necessary in order to comply with the MAF standard, when such a recommendation is not met MAF expects that shippers will be able to demonstrate that the intent has been addressed through some other means to the satisfaction of the MAF Port Veterinarian approving the consignment.

zoosanitary

Pertaining to animal health, particularly in relation to the measures applied during trade in animals and animal products in order to protect animal health and life from risks arising from the entry, establishment or spread of diseases.

4 Technical standards

4.1 Pre-export preparation

4.1.1 Age

Foals less than 4 weeks of age must not be transported.

Unweaned foals over 4 weeks of age must be transported with their dam.

Weanlings should be allowed a period of at least 4 weeks after separation from their dam to allow for feed adjustment and the mental and physical stress of the weaning event to subside.

4.1.2 Pregnancy status

Horses in the last 3 months (90 days) of pregnancy should not be exported. The MAF Port Veterinarian should ascertain the date of last service by due enquiry or by requesting to view a certificate of pregnancy. Taking into account the duration of the voyage, some discretion may be shown if evidence confirms an expected date of parturition and this is less than 3 months from the date of export.

4.1.3 Feed adjustment

Every horse loaded for export must be adjusted to the on-board feed rations. What is necessary to achieve this will depend upon the experience of the horse during the period prior to export.

When the expected duration of the voyage is less than 7 days, the shipper must advise the persons responsible for the horses during the 48 hours prior to export to adjust feed during this period to match on-board rations.

When the expected duration of the voyage exceeds 7 days, the horses must be given a minimum 48 hour period of pre-conditioning involving assembly at a central depot, stabling with travel mates, and adjustment to on-board feed rations.

4.1.4 Shoes

The shipper may decide whether to transport horses with shoes on or off, and this will depend on the history of the horse, the duration of the voyage and the expectations of the consignee.

However, in recognition of the potential for self-injury if shoes spread or are inadvertently removed and for injury to other horses to occur if a shod horse goes down in a stall, horses with shoes on must:

- be provided with non-slip surfaces in all stalls, ramps and exercise areas;
- be provided stalls and containers of sufficient strength to withstand kicking over prolonged periods, in particular kickboards at the rear of the horse;
- be provided stalls and containers which are free from edges (in particular wire mesh flooring) upon which shoes are likely to catch and be inadvertently removed or loosened; and
- be accompanied by grooms with farrier skills and equipment which would allow the removal of shoes, if this is indicated, during the voyage.

If during pre-export inspection the MAF Port Veterinarian determines that insufficient provision has been made to ensure the safety of shod horses and stable-mates during the voyage, the shipper must remove shoes prior to loading.

4.1.5 Final health check

(N.B. The preparation of all horses for export in accordance with official zoosanitary conditions of trade negotiated between MAF and the importing country must occur under the supervision of a veterinarian accredited by MAF, such that all horses arriving at the port for final health checks prior to export are accompanied by the appropriate zoosanitary documentation. If this does not occur, MAF Port Veterinarians may refuse to certify horses for export.)

All horses must be examined by the MAF Port Veterinarian, or another veterinarian accredited by MAF, during the 48 hours prior to loading and found to be free from clinical signs of contagious and infectious diseases and in a fit condition to travel.

Shippers must ensure that an appropriate arrangement has been made to allow the MAF Port Veterinarian to examine the horses prior to loading into containers, and to inspect the horses once loaded into containers. Examination of the horses prior to loading will require an enclosed area with adequate lighting.

4.2 Container requirements

4.2.1 Construction

Each modified shipping container used for exports of horses must be certified by an agent approved by the MSA in accordance with International Convention requirements on construction of shipping containers. The certification takes the form of the CSC Plate attached to the outside of the container.

Every horse must be able to be removed from the front of the container (head-end of the horse) without undue disruption to other horses, such as would occur if removal of one horse required the removal of any others.

Internally, the construction of the floors, walls and internal divisions must provide appropriate strength and safety for the purpose of confining horses for long periods. Materials should be able to withstand the weight of the standing horse, in the case of floors, or repeated kicking, in the case of walls, kickboards and internal divisions. Flooring must provide a non-slip surface constructed to allow drainage and cleaning, but reinforced steel meshes are considered inappropriate. Internal stall divisions may be solid or rails, whichever shippers consider appropriate in order to balance conflicting requirements of providing adequate ventilation, allowing horses to spread the stance to improve balance, and to prevent kicking of other horses. The lower margin of the internal stall divisions should be sufficiently close to the floor to avoid entrapment of the hoof or fetlock, or be clear of the floor to the height of a horse's hock.

Signage should be provided on the outside of the container indicating that it contains live cargo, and should be visible to lift operators (e.g. in large lettering on the roof of the container).

4.2.2 Stall dimensions

Appendix 1 provides the minimum stall dimensions for horses recommended by the *MAF/AWAC Code of Welfare*. However, those recommendations and the

recommendations within Appendix 2 of the Maritime Rules Part 24C do not account for the current practice of converting standard ISO-dimension shipping containers to carry live horses. Under these circumstances, the dimensions of the standard shipping containers will determine the length and height of the stalls when these are aligned across the width of the container (the external width of a standard shipping container is 2438 mm, and the external height is 2591 mm). The width of individual stalls will be the only variable able to be controlled through use of internal divisions along the length of the container (the external length of a standard shipping container may be 2991 mm, 6058 mm, 9125 mm or 12192 mm; most containers converted for the purposes of horse exports are the 6058 mm dimension).

Each horse must be able to stand comfortably within its stall (i.e. during normal stance no part of the head or body is touching the sides or ceiling of the stall), and the required stall dimensions will be dictated by the size of the horse.

There must be an arrangement to provide extra space for any individual horse that requires it during the voyage, such as for horses that adversely react to confinement or to provide a work area to manage colic or perform farriery. The provision of extra space may be accommodated by extra allocation of space to every stall; by adjustable partitioning allowing any particular stall to be expanded (without compromising the space requirements of other horses); by removable partitioning and the provision of a spare/empty stall such that two stalls can be joined; or through provision of an exercise area outside the container. The groom must be able to demonstrate how the extra space would be provided.

4.3 On-board conditions

4.3.1 Arrangement in stalls

The groom must have safe access to each individual horse. Horses should be exported in individual stalls, however horses of similar size, weight and age may be penned together in the same stall. Mares with foals at foot and foals under 9 months must be penned separately.

Each horse must be fitted with a halter made of leather or other suitable material and, in each stall, two cross ties and suitable fastenings must be provided to enable a horse to be restrained from biting, rearing or attempting to jump from the stall. The groom must be able to demonstrate an emergency procedure for removing fastenings, such as if a horse goes down in the stall. This would require provision of bolt cutters if chains were used as fastenings.

4.3.2 Lighting, ventilation, drainage and fire safety

Sufficient fixed or portable lighting must be provided so that the horses can be inspected in their containers at any hour of the day and night. (Note: Maritime Safety Authority Maritime Rules Part 24C Carriage of Cargoes - Specific Cargoes, Appendix 3, notes that 110 lux is considered sufficient lighting to inspect animals.)

Openings on at least two sides of the container must be provided to allow through-ventilation. For voyages in which tropical conditions (warm and humid) will be

experienced, the openings should be on opposing sides of the container to provide cross-ventilation, and be of sufficient size and number to prevent over-heating within the container. Painting external roof surfaces white is suggested as a means of reducing heating inside the container.

The groom must be able to demonstrate adequate and effective drainage arrangements for removing fluids and semi-solid matter from the horse container.

Fire safety arrangements must comply with the Maritime Rules Part 24C, such that fire hydrants, fire hoses and fire extinguishers are readily accessible.

4.3.3 Exercise facilities

An exercise facility must be provided if the standard scheduled duration of the voyage exceeds 7 days, such as voyages to Asia, the Americas, or Europe. The exercise facility should be fenced or enclosed and comprise a minimum area of two void container spaces with a non-slip surface as flooring, for every two containers of horses within the consignment. Horses should be allowed daily access to the exercise area.

For voyages of 4-7 days standard scheduled duration, such as from New Zealand to Western Australia or the islands of the South Pacific, an exercise facility comprising at least one void container space (enclosed and with non-slip surface as flooring) must be able to be created, for every two containers of horses within the consignment. Depending on the condition of the horses and the expected actual duration of the voyage, grooms should consider allowing horses access to the exercise area during the latter part of the voyage.

For voyages where the standard scheduled duration is 4 days or less, such as voyages to the eastern ports of Australia, it is not necessary to provide an exercise facility (notwithstanding the requirements at 4.2.2 above whereby extra space either within or external to the container must be available to create a work area or if considered necessary for individual horses).

4.3.4 Feed and water provisions

Fresh, clean water must be available to all horses at all times. Water troughs and containers should be cleaned regularly to prevent algae build up. The basic water requirements of horses for maintenance is 52 ml/kg bodyweight/day (roughly 10 litres for 200 kg horse; 15 l for a 300 kg horse; 25 l for a 450 kg horse; and 30 l for a 500 kg horse).

The quantity and frequency of feeding will depend on the age and size of the horse. On-board rations should consist of a combination of hay and hard feed (oats, bran or lucerne chaff). The groom must be able to demonstrate that adequate feed is being carried to provide for the expected maximum duration of the voyage, including accounting for delays during loading and unloading, when fed according to a regime based on the individual requirements of each horse. (As a guide, the following suggestions have been made: either, 2% of bodyweight in dry matter daily; or a third of a 40 kg bag of hard feed and a sixth of a bale of hay daily for each adult horse.)

4.4 Grooms

4.4.1 General competence

A groom must accompany every export consignment. The ratio of grooms to horses should be not less than 1:6 for voyages requiring the provision of daily exercise, and not less than 1:12 in other situations.

All grooms must be certified under the New Zealand Veterinary Association Code of Practice – *Use of Prescription Animal remedies by Grooms traveling with horses by air or sea*. This will enable them to use prescription animal remedies in compliance with the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act 1997. See section 4.4.2 for further information.

Grooms must be competent horse handlers and able to undertake a daily routine of feeding, watering, exercise (if appropriate) and mucking out stables.

Grooms must be able to demonstrate that effective channels of communication with the Master of the vessel and/or appropriate senior crew have been established, such that assistance by the crew could be rendered in situations when it is required.

4.4.2 Animal health responsibilities

Grooms may have to manage horses that become sick, injured or excited and at risk of injuring themselves, other horses or people. Responsible management of such events requires grooms to have access to drugs to deal with situations that could commonly arise.

Such drugs fall into the category of Prescription Animal Remedies (PARs), which by law are able to be administered, dispensed or prescribed by veterinarians for animals under their immediate care.

The use of PARs is controlled by the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act, 1997. Three classes of PARs are described:

PAR Class I: to be administered only by a veterinarian, or under and in accordance with the authority and prescription of a veterinarian;

PAR Class II: to be administered only by a veterinarian, or in the presence and under the direct control of a veterinarian;

PAR Class III: to be administered only by a veterinarian.

The Act does allow for the use of PARs by non-veterinarians under a code of practice. The code of practice, the *Use of Prescription Animal Remedies by Grooms Travelling with Horses by Air or Sea* is administered by National Quality Veterinary Services, on behalf of the New Zealand Equine Veterinary Association and the New Zealand Veterinary Association. This code allows for the training and certification of professional grooms to ensure the safe use of

certain PARs. Professional grooms wishing to become certified should speak to a veterinarian or the New Zealand Veterinary Association.

In some cases it may be necessary to euthanase a horse. This is more likely on board ships, rather than in the air, where an aircraft maybe able to divert to an alternative port where veterinary attention may be sought. Grooms must be able to demonstrate to the official veterinarian that they are competent to euthanase a horse according to the planned method.

As well as the specified PARs a certified groom shall carry a basic veterinary kit comprising of:

**a thermometer, and a range of swabs, bandages and disinfectant solutions;
surgical instruments (scissors, needles, needle-holders, forceps), suture materials and
a humane killer or captive bolt.**

4.5 Approval process for consignments

Approval of individual consignments requires effective communication between the marine surveyor, the Master of the vessel, the shipper and the official; Veterinarian.

The owner and the master of a ship must give 48 hours notice to the surveyor of the intention to load livestock, and ensure that arrangements for carriage of livestock are in accordance with the Maritime Rules Part 24C. The marine surveyor must be satisfied that the ship and its intended load conditions are substantially in compliance prior to loading any livestock.

The shipper must provide a minimum 72 hours notice to the MAF Port Veterinarian regarding the impending export, providing appropriate details including:

the number of horses and their destination;
the MAF accredited veterinarian who has supervised pre-export zoosanitary preparations;
the name of the ship, the port of export, and the date and time of sailing;
the expected time of loading;
arrangements (location and time) for examination of the horses within 48 hours of export;
and
the marine surveyor responsible for ensuring the ship and its intended load conditions satisfies the Maritime Rules Part 24C, and a contact phone number for that person.

The MAF Port Veterinarian should contact the marine surveyor to check that the ship and its intended load conditions satisfy the Maritime Rules Part 24C.

Prior to export, the MAF Port Veterinarian must:

examine all horses outside their shipping containers in order to ensure they are free from clinical signs of infectious and contagious disease and fit to travel, and complete the zoosanitary documentary requirements;

inspect shipping containers for compliance with the requirements of this standard;

view horses once loaded into shipping containers to ensure that space requirements are in accordance with this standard, including the ability to provide extra space if a work area is required;

be satisfied that grooms are competent to perform the expected tasks and manage emergency situations; and

be satisfied that on-board conditions are in compliance with the requirements of this standard, either by witnessing loading and positioning of the horse containers or through due enquiry of the shippers, grooms, marine surveyor and/or the Master or crew.

In the event of non-compliance, the MAF Port Veterinarian must decide whether the welfare of the horses may be compromised during the voyage. The MAF Port Veterinarian should refuse to certify the required zoosanitary export documentation if he/she believes that any non-compliance creates a situation whereby the welfare of the horses during the voyage would not be adequately provided for.

All instances of non-compliance, whether they result in refusal to certify for export or not, should be reported in writing by the MAF Port Veterinarian to the MAF Biosecurity Authority.

Appendix 1. Minimum stall dimensions for transport of horses recommended in the MAF / AWAC

Code of Recommendations and Minimum Standards for the Welfare of Animals Transported within New Zealand

	Stall dimensions (m)	
Minimum length	2.5 *	
Minimum width	Across ¹	0.7
	Fore and aft ²	0.9
Minimum height	Horses < 14 hands	2.19
	Horses > 14 hands	2.4

* The length can be reduced to 2.3 metres for donkeys and ponies.

1 Where the stall is constructed so that the horse faces the side of the vehicle.

2 Where the stall is constructed so that the horse faces the front or rear of the vehicle.