



## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

# Approval of Permanent Privately Owned Horse Quarantine Facilities in the United States

## 1. Purpose and Background

This document provides guidelines for Veterinary Services (VS) to inspect and approve permanent privately owned quarantine facilities in the United States for quarantining imported horses.

This guidance document represents the Agency's position on this topic and is intended solely as guidance. It does not have the force and effect of law, does not create or confer any rights for or on any person, and does not bind the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) or the public. Language suggesting that this guidance is mandatory (e.g., "shall," "must," "required", or "requirement") should not be construed as binding unless the terms quote from a statutory or regulatory requirement. The information this document contains may be made available to the public. While this document provides guidance for users outside VS, VS employees may not deviate from the directions provided herein without appropriate justification and supervisory concurrence.

## 2. Document Status

- A. Review date: 1/31/2024.
- B. This document replaces VS Memorandum 591.72.

## 3. Reason for Reissuance

VS is reissuing this document to reflect VS organizational changes and make policy changes and clarifications.

## 4. Authority and References

- A. **Authorities** (*Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR)):

[7 CFR 371.4](#)

[9 CFR 93.308](#)

[9 CFR 71.10](#)



## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

### B. References

[VS Guidance 13412.2, Entry Procedures for Persons Accessing Permanent Animal Import Quarantine Facilities Overseen by Veterinary Services](#)

VS Guidance 13424.1, Procedures for the Import of Equines into the United States and Approved Quarantine Facilities

### 5. Audience

VS employees, other State and Federal agencies, and members of the public.

### 6. Guidance

#### A. General

[Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations \(9 CFR\) section 93.308\(c\)](#) regulates the approval of permanent privately owned quarantine facilities for imported horses. These quarantine facilities must ensure adequate safeguards are in place to monitor the health status of the horses in quarantine, and to prevent the transmission of animal disease or disease agents into, within, or from the facility. VS must inspect and approve a proposed quarantine facility for imported horses before its initial use to ensure the facility complies with the standards in [9 CFR 93.308\(c\)](#) and this guidance. VS must reinspect an approved facility annually to ensure it is in good repair and continues to meet all relevant standards associated with the compliance agreement required under [9 CFR 308\(c\)\(2\)](#)<sup>1</sup>.

The quarantine facility must provide the necessary level of biosecurity for holding horses in an indoor, vector-proof environment before the animals' entry (release) into the United States. Quarantine services associated with such facilities include testing and observation for regulated diseases, other livestock diseases exotic to the United States, and any other communicable diseases.

Applications for quarantine facilities may not be approved solely to import the facility operators' horses, or to provide services to only one broker or a select few brokers without valid justification confirming that there is no conflict of interest as described in [9 CFR 93.308\(c\)\(1\)\(iv\)\(C\)\(3\)](#). The operator or person responsibly connected with the business of the quarantine facility cannot act as a paid agent (broker) for importing or subsequently selling imported horses. A person is deemed to be responsibly connected with the business if he or she has an ownership, mortgage, or lease interest in the facility's physical plant; is a partner, officer, director, holder, or owner of ten (10)

---

<sup>1</sup> In consistency with current VS nomenclature and practice, the compliance agreement will be referred to as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the remainder of this document.



## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

percent or more of its voting stock; or is an employee in a managerial or executive capacity.

Facility operators must self-certify each year at the renewal of the MOU that they or a person responsibly connected to the business of the quarantine facility are not in conflict with the regulations or terms listed in the MOU which state neither party may act as a paid agent for the importation of or subsequently selling equine animals.

### B. Specific Instructions

- 1) An applicant (the owner or operator) seeking approval of a quarantine facility must submit a written application to VS Field Operations, Port Services (PS) via mail at 4700 River Road, Unit 39, Riverdale, MD 20737-1231, or via email to the port office nearest to the facility (see section 7.B). Applicants should submit requests for approval to PS at least one hundred and twenty (120) calendar days before applying for local building permits.
- 2) The application must include:
  - a. The applicant's full name and mailing address.
  - b. The facility's location and street address.
  - c. Blueprints or other technical drawings for the facility. Blueprints must include dimensions of every stall.
  - d. A description of the financial resources available for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the facility.
  - e. The average and maximum number of horses to be quarantined.
  - f. Expected frequency of shipments to the quarantine facility.
  - g. A contingency plan for the possible necropsy and disposal of horses held in the facility that die or must be euthanized.
- 3) Additional Documentation Required - New Ports of Entry for Quarantine Use

Ports designated to inspect and quarantine horses are listed in [9 CFR 93.303](#). Applicants requesting use of ports not listed in [9 CFR 93.303](#) must submit the additional documentation for review and approval set forth below:

  - a. Letter from the airport port authority requesting recognition as an APHIS-approved port for horse imports. The airport of choice must not exceed two (2) hours' driving time under routine circumstances from the proposed import quarantine facility.



## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

- b. Confirmation in writing from an active airline company or companies indicating their commitment to routinely transport imported horses to the airport associated with the proposed import quarantine.

### 4) Procedure for VS Approval of Facilities

- a. The Veterinarian in Charge (VIC) of the VS Port Office assigned to oversee the quarantine request reviews the initial application and the accompanying documentation. If the application is complete, the VIC consults with the VS Port Services Director and VS Strategy and Policy Live Animal Imports (LAI) Director on the feasibility of the request. The VIC may notify the facility's State Animal Health Official.
- b. The VIC must determine if sufficient VS personnel would be available to oversee the proposed facility.
- c. If PS and LAI determine that an application merits further consideration, the applicant must enter into a service agreement with PS to cover costs associated with further evaluation of the application and facility. User fees for these services are listed in [9 CFR 130.30](#). A new USDA cooperative service agreement must be established using a cashier's or a personal check.
- d. PS informs the applicant in writing of the application review results.
- e. PS or a VS designee must inspect the facility to determine compliance with [9 CFR 93.308](#), this document's criteria, and the attached checklist (Appendix 1).
  - 1. The facility must meet any additional requirements imposed by the APHIS Administrator to ensure that the quarantine of horses is adequate to determine the horses' health status and prevent the transmission of livestock diseases into, within, and from the facility.
  - 2. The VIC forwards the inspection report to the VS Port Services Director and LAI Director for concurrence, then notifies the operator in writing of the approval, with a copy to LAI.
- f. After VS has approved the facility, the applicant and VS must enter into a MOU (Appendix 2) before horses can enter the facility. The facility operator and the VS Port Services Director must sign the MOU.



## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

### C. Physical Plant Requirements

#### 1) Location

- a. The facility must be located at a site approved by PS. PS must approve in advance the specific routes for moving horses to the facility from the port of arrival in the United States. These routes must not pose a risk of disease exposure to the domestic animal population.
- b. The facility must be located within a reasonable proximity to a port of entry approved by VS for importing horses. A reasonable proximity should not exceed two (2) hours of driving time under routine circumstances.

#### 2) Construction

The facility must be constructed as described below and maintained in good repair. It must be designed to prevent quarantined animals from escaping and animals outside the facility from entering.

- a. A security fence that can be locked must surround the facility. The fence must be a minimum of eight (8) feet high to prevent unauthorized people or animals from entering and quarantined horses from escaping. Fencing should also prevent small animals from entering by crawling underneath.
- b. The quarantine area must be located inside a secure, self-contained building that can be locked. Holding areas (such as stalls and pens) must be sealable when animals are present and tamperproof from within the building.
- c. Loading docks used to receive horses must be constructed for the safe offloading of horses.
- d. The facility may have either:
  1. Separate loading docks for receiving horses and general use; or
  2. A multiuse dock that may be used for both receiving and general use, but which must be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with [9 CFR 93.308](#) after each shipment.
    - ii. The operator must maintain a disinfectant log for each multiuse dock.
    - iii. The disinfectant log must be readily available for review upon request by VS personnel.



## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

- e. Each lot of horses (i.e., animals arriving in a single shipment) must be held separately. Physical barriers that prevent contact with other lots of horses and their discharges must be used to keep lots separate.
  - 1. If separate housing is used, then measures must be taken to prevent separate lots of horses from approaching within thirty (30) feet of each other.
  - 2. If non-quarantine horses are kept on the same premises as the quarantined horses, measures must also be taken to prevent non-quarantined horses from approaching within thirty (30) feet of the quarantined horses. This includes separation of all discharge.
- f. The facility must have isolation stalls available for horses exhibiting signs of illness.
  - 1. Individual stalls must house horses exhibiting signs of illness separately from horses not exhibiting signs of illness.
- g. The facility must provide VS with:
  - 1. Lockable office space for VS personnel.
  - 2. Examination space, including stocks, to safely restrain horses and equipment to collect and process test samples.
  - 3. A refrigerator and freezer to store test samples.
- h. The facility must have storage for supplies and equipment needed for the quarantine.
  - 1. Feed and bedding must be stored in a separate area to prevent contamination.
  - 2. There must be secure separate storage for pesticides.
  - 3. Medical or other biological supplies must only be used by an accredited veterinarian. Controlled substances may not be kept at the facility.
  - 4. Each lot holding area should have its own separate storage space.
- i. The facility should contain designated work areas for repairing equipment and cleaning and disinfecting equipment in accordance with [9 CFR 93.308](#).
- j. The facility must maintain enough feed and watering equipment for all animals.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Marketing and Regulatory Programs  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Veterinary Services

## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

- k. Windows or other openings must be double screened with a mesh size sufficient to prevent insects and other vectors of livestock diseases from entering or leaving the facility. The interior and exterior screens must be separated by a width of at least three (3) inches.
- l. The facility's flooring must be skid-resistant and provide adequate drainage. All floors and walls that have contact with horses and their excrement or discharges must be impervious to moisture and able to withstand repeated cleaning and disinfecting without deteriorating. Floor and wall surfaces must be free of sharp edges that could injure horses.
- m. Horse stalls must allow each animal to make normal postural adjustments and provide adequate freedom of movement. Varying breeds and heights of horses must be taken into consideration.
- n. Aisles for moving horses must be wide enough to prevent horses in facing stalls from physically contacting horses in access aisles and allow safe movement, including space for horses to turn around.
- o. Indoor heating and ventilation systems should control the ambient temperature, humidity, and odors to prevent discomfort of the animals at all times.
  - 1. Air supplied to the quarantine area must not be recirculated or reused for other ventilation needs.
  - 2. Air handling systems for lot holding areas must be separate from air handling systems for other areas of the facility.
  - 3. If the facility includes more than one (1) horse holding area, the air handling system(s) must ensure no cross-contamination of air between separate lots.
- p. Lighting must be sufficient throughout the facility to visually inspect the horses.
- q. A fire alarm and voice communication system should be in both quarantine and non-quarantine areas such as break rooms and offices.
  - 1. Voice communication systems may include a land phone line or other systems that allow communication in both quarantine and non-quarantine areas.
  - 2. Emergency plans should be established in the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak, or other emergency necessitating closure of the quarantine. Emergency plans must be accessible to all personnel in both



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Marketing and Regulatory Programs  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Veterinary Services

## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

the quarantine and non-quarantine areas. All plans must be submitted to VS for review at the initial inspection and when any updates are made.

- r. There must be a dedicated necropsy area (either onsite or offsite) with an autoclave, freezer, hot and cold running water, drainage, and adequate storage for equipment.
  - s. Showers must be located at the entrance of each quarantine area and necropsy area providing necessary privacy and adequate space.
    - 1. The shower must separate the non-quarantine area from the quarantine area.
    - 2. There must be clothing storage and changing areas in the quarantine and non-quarantine areas.
    - 3. The quarantine area must include a receptacle to collect clothing worn in quarantine.
  - t. Both the non-quarantine and quarantine areas must have permanent restrooms.
  - u. The quarantine facility must have a laundry.
- 3) Any structural or architectural changes after initial approval must be submitted to VS for prior review and final inspection. User fees for inspection services are listed in [9 CFR 130.11](#).
- 4) Sanitation
- a. There must be readily available equipment and supplies to maintain the facility in a clean and sanitary condition and to control pests.
  - b. There must be a stock of disinfectant authorized in [9 CFR 71.10](#) (or otherwise authorized by VS) sufficient to disinfect the entire facility and remove equine infectious and contagious disease pathogens.
  - c. Each lot must have separate supplies and equipment for sanitation and pest control.
  - d. The facility must have an adequate supply of potable water for all watering and cleaning needs and must maintain an emergency supply of water.
  - e. The facility must be able to dispose of waste (including manure, urine, and bedding) by incineration or public sewer, if permitted. Waste must be handled as regulated garbage while horses are in quarantine.





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Marketing and Regulatory Programs  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Veterinary Services

## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

1. The facility must handle waste materials adequately to minimize spoilage and attracting pests.
2. If the facility includes an incinerator, the incinerator must be located in a separate building. The operator must readily disclose the location of the incinerator facility, and contact information, to VS personnel.
3. The facility operator may coordinate local, offsite incineration, using the nearest available facility. VS personnel must have direct oversight of any incineration at local sites away from the facility.
4. All waste (including waste generated during transport) must be disposed of as regulated garbage. Alternatively, waste may be held onsite until all horses in the same shipment have completed quarantine, then disposed of as domestic waste.

Waste from horses refused entry due to non-negative test results for EIA, equine piroplasmiasis, dourine, or glanders must also be disposed of as regulated waste.

- f. PS must approve the facility's plan to dispose of any carcasses of animals that die during quarantine to prevent disease spread.
  - g. The facility must be able to control surface drainage and effluent into, within, and from the facility to prevent the spread of disease. If more than one lot is present in the quarantine facility, each holding area must have a separate drainage system to prevent cross-contamination of lots.
  - h. After each use of the facility, VS personnel must reinspect the facility to verify the operator has cleaned and disinfected it adequately to ensure compliance with quarantine guidelines. Direct VS supervision of each cleaning and disinfection is not required once the operator has demonstrated how the procedures will be carried out and VS has established a record of compliance verifying strict adherence to the procedures.
- 5) Security
- a. The facility and security fence are kept locked and secure.
  - b. The facility displays easily visible signs at all entrances designating it as a quarantine area that prohibits entry of visitors or other unauthorized personnel.



## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

- c. The operator provides a telephone number that VS can use for contact at any time.
- d. In the event of any security or biosecurity breaches VS becomes aware of, VS is authorized to place seals on entrances or exits to ensure security. If anyone other than VS personnel breaks the seals, the facility operator must notify VS immediately. VS personnel must then immediately account for all horses in the facility.
- e. If a communicable disease is diagnosed in the quarantined horses, the VIC and LAI Director may require that a bonded security company provide coverage to ensure the security of the facility.
- f. The facility must always either be guarded by a bonded security company or have an Underwriters Laboratory-approved silent electronic security system that contacts a remote monitoring site staffed by local police or bonded security monitoring personnel.
  1. If an electronic security system is used, the operator must provide written instructions to the bonded monitoring agency stating that local police and VS personnel must both be immediately notified if the alarm is triggered.
  2. The operator must immediately report any breaks or suspected breaks in security to the VIC.

### D. Operating Procedures

VS personnel must be physically present to monitor all import quarantine operations. This includes, but is not limited to, inspecting arriving horses, identifying each horse and its accompanying import certification, obtaining required serological testing, examining horses for external parasites and screwworms, and monitoring routine diagnostic tests and treatments. VS personnel may also perform the services required by the MOU. VS personnel do not need to be physically present during routine facility operations.

The facility must always follow the procedures listed below. In addition to direct observation and spot-checking procedures to verify compliance, VS may ask to review logbooks and standard operating procedures.

#### 1) Personnel

- a. The operator must provide trained personnel to maintain the facility and provide for proper care and feeding of the horses.



## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

- b. The operator must provide enough authorized personnel, as determined by the VIC, to effectively restrain and handle horses during VS inspections.
  - c. The operator must readily provide VS with an updated list of names and current contact information of all personnel with access to the facility. Personnel may not enter the quarantine facility before receiving VS approval.
  - d. All personnel with access must sign an agreement stipulating they will follow the terms of the MOU and any related instructions from VS personnel pertaining to quarantine operations.
- 2) Authorized Access
- a. The facility owner or operator must grant access to the facility to VS personnel assigned to the quarantine and others specifically authorized to work in the facility.
  - b. The operator, and all authorized personnel except veterinary practitioners providing emergency care, must sign an affidavit before entering the quarantine area stating they will not have contact with any horses outside the quarantine facility during the quarantine period until the horses under quarantine are released for entry into the United States. All personnel must sign a new affidavit annually, and all affidavits must be readily available for review upon VS request.
  - c. When VS personnel provide the facility owner or operator prompt verbal or written non-compliance notification, the owner or operator must immediately take corrective actions.
- 3) Sanitary Practices
- a. All equipment must be dedicated to the quarantine facility or to a specific area within the facility.
  - b. All equipment in the facility or its specific areas must be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with [9 CFR 93.308](#) before use. A log of cleaning and disinfection activities must be maintained and be readily available for review upon VS request.
  - c. Vehicles must be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with [9 CFR 93.308](#) before entering or leaving the area within the security fence or any quarantine area.



## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

- d. The facility loading docks must be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with [9 CFR 93.308](#) before and after each use. The disinfectant log must be readily available for review upon VS request.
  - e. Any area that has held quarantined horses must be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with [9 CFR 93.308](#) after each use and before a new lot may enter the area.
  - f. The operators must provide clean protective clothing and footwear for anyone granted access to the facility, and those protective items must be available to personnel before they enter the quarantine area.
  - g. The operator is responsible for the proper cleaning and disposal of soiled and contaminated clothing used in the facility.
  - h. Anyone granted access to the quarantine area must:
    1. Adhere to all procedures outlined in this section of this guidance for visitors entering quarantine facilities.
    2. Shower before entering and leaving a quarantine area and when leaving the necropsy area in accordance with [VS Guidance 13412.2, Entry Procedures for Persons Accessing Permanent Animal Import Quarantine Facilities Overseen by Veterinary Services](#)
    3. Wear clean protective work clothing and footwear provided.
    4. Wear disposable gloves when handling sick animals.
    5. Change protective clothing, footwear, and gloves when they are soiled or contaminated.
    6. Limit contact to only one (1) lot of animals.
- 4) Handling of horses in quarantine
- a. Each lot of imported horses must be placed in the facility on an “all in, all out” basis. No horse may be taken out of the lot while it is in quarantine, except as authorized by VS personnel for medical or emergency purposes, and no horse may be added to the lot while the lot is in quarantine.
  - b. The facility must provide sufficient feed and bedding for the horses.
    1. Feed and bedding must be vermin free, fresh, and unspoiled.



## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

2. Feed and bedding must not originate from a region stipulated in [9 CFR part 72](#) as affected with fever ticks.
  3. Feed used in quarantine is received in sealed, original, and untampered packaging. The facility operator or authorized personnel should inspect all hay used prior to use to ensure freedom from pests. Purchase records must be available upon request.
  4. Adhere to all feed handling procedures outlined in this guidance (see section D.4)b).
  - c. During quarantine, breeding horses, which includes collecting semen, is prohibited.
  - d. Vaccinating horses prior to quarantine completion is prohibited.
  - e. VS subjects quarantined horses to any additional tests and procedures it deems necessary to ensure they are free of foreign and communicable livestock diseases. The importer of record must pay for such testing.
  - f. The operator must report to VS immediately any suspected illness or death of quarantined horses and should notify VS as soon as possible regarding any emergency.
  - g. Quarantined horses requiring specialized medical attention or necropsy may be moved to another quarantine site when VS so authorizes. VS must approve in advance any supervised movement of quarantined horses.
- 5) Recordkeeping
- a. The operator must record in a daily log all personnel moving to and from the facility.
  - b. Signed affidavits stating approved personnel will not have contact with any horses outside the quarantine facility during the quarantine period until the horses under quarantine are released for entry into the United States must be retained at the facility for VS' review.
  - c. The operator must keep all records related to the quarantine for at least two (2) years after the release of the animals.
  - d. The operator must make those records promptly available to VS on request.



## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

### E. Noncompliance with Regulations

If VS determines at any point that the facility does not comply with [9 CFR 93.308](#) or the provisions of this guidance, VS may deny, suspend, or revoke approval until the facility applies appropriate remedial measures. VS personnel overseeing a facility should consult with the VIC for noncompliance issues. The VIC and LAI Director determine whether denial, suspension, or revocation of approval is appropriate. The VIC issues denial of approval letters. Revocation or suspension of approval for existing facilities must be coordinated through the VS Executive Team.

### F. Variance to Requirements

Quarantine operators wishing to request any variance to these requirements must make that request in writing to VS through the VIC at least thirty (30) days before horses arrive at the facility.

## 7. Inquiries

- A. Please contact VS Strategy and Policy, Live Animal Imports at (301) 851-3300, option #2 or send an email to VS. Live [Animal.Import.Export@usda.gov](mailto:Animal.Import.Export@usda.gov) for any questions related to this document
- B. Contact the office for the relative port of entry:

Port of Entry	Email Address
New York Port Office Federal Quarantine JFK	<a href="mailto:vspsnic@usda.gov">vspsnic@usda.gov</a> <a href="mailto:vspsjfk@usda.gov">vspsjfk@usda.gov</a>
Miami Port Office	<a href="mailto:notifymaic@usda.gov">notifymaic@usda.gov</a>
Los Angeles Port Office	<a href="mailto:vspslax@usda.gov">vspslax@usda.gov</a>
Chicago Port Office	<a href="mailto:vsdesplaines@usda.gov">vsdesplaines@usda.gov</a>
Southern Border Port	<a href="mailto:vs.santa.teresa.poe@usda.gov">vs.santa.teresa.poe@usda.gov</a> , <a href="mailto:vs.presidio.poe@usda.gov">vs.presidio.poe@usda.gov</a> , <a href="mailto:vs.columbus.poe@usda.gov">vs.columbus.poe@usda.gov</a> , <a href="mailto:vs.laredo.poe@usda.gov">vs.laredo.poe@usda.gov</a> , <a href="mailto:vs.pharr.poe@usda.gov">vs.pharr.poe@usda.gov</a> , <a href="mailto:vs.douglas.poe@usda.gov">vs.douglas.poe@usda.gov</a> , <a href="mailto:vs.nogales.poe@usda.gov">vs.nogales.poe@usda.gov</a> , <a href="mailto:vs.eagle.pass.poe@usda.gov">vs.eagle.pass.poe@usda.gov</a> , <a href="mailto:vs.del.rio.poe@usda.gov">vs.del.rio.poe@usda.gov</a>
Northern Border Port	<a href="mailto:vs.nbp@usda.gov">vs.nbp@usda.gov</a>
All other ports	<a href="mailto:Collateral.port.offices@usda.gov">Collateral.port.offices@usda.gov</a>



## VS Guidance 13402.1

---

Appendix 1: Checklist for U.S. Privately Owned Equine Quarantine Facilities

Appendix 2: Memorandum of Understanding