



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Office of the Commissioner

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### COVID-19 GUIDANCE for EQUESTRIAN COMPETITIONS in PHASE TWO REOPEN PLAN

Updated February 23, 2021

The practices and policies below are for equestrian competitions to implement as necessary in an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. These recommendations are in addition to guidance provided by the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), [USDA](#), [Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development](#), and other federal agencies.

While this document cannot encompass all scenarios, the following information is meant to clarify what will be permissible in phase two of Connecticut's reopening plan on June 17, 2020. In addition to strict adherence to CDC guidelines and business recommendations put forth by the Department of Economic Community Development, the Connecticut Department of Agriculture recommends the following measures regarding equine activities.

Horse shows are considered "lower risk" per the phase two sector rules in that it can be done with social distancing and individually with no sharing of equipment, or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors. Adherence to posted Equine Guidance, per the Connecticut Department of Agriculture remains mandatory and will be updated as necessary.

The Department recognizes that equestrian sports encompass a wide range of disciplines and while this document cannot anticipate every possible scenario, it should serve as a guideline moving forward.

Before a business can reopen in accordance with the sector rules established by the State, they must self-certify that they are following strict safety guidelines to keep their employees or customers safe. Self-certification can be done [here](#). Equine businesses and event managers can register as "outdoor recreation."

**Event Capacity:** Except as otherwise prohibited, outdoor gatherings are permitted provided that any such large outdoor public gatherings shall comply with these rules and all other applicable executive orders governing conduct in public places. The maximum permitted gathering size will be updated by

executive order periodically in response to current public health data. Current capacity limits can be found [here](#), capacity limits can be exceeded **only** to include one parent/guardian per minor participant.

- Whenever possible, events should take place outdoors.
- **Updated 2/23/21:** Indoor gathering sizes should adhere to [DECD Sector Rules](#).
- All event organizers are to maintain a list of participants, staff, volunteers, and guardians who have been on site for possible contact tracing.
- The number of people on horse show grounds or in the ring shall not exceed the number that can safely socially distance at six feet or more away from one another- this may result in a smaller number of competitors than would normally be allowed.
- Day-long/Multiday events may take place but must be separated into distinct “sessions” which allow sufficient time for prior participants to vacate the event space. At no time shall the capacity of the event space exceed event capacity limits.
- Online registration, check-in, and payment shall be used whenever possible.
- Start times shall be posted and distributed online whenever possible, to avoid congregation at posting sites.
- Any staff, volunteer, or participants who have been ill within the past 14 days shall not be permitted on the event grounds.
- All participants and staff on the property will be required to wear face coverings at all times, except when mounted. Exhibitors wishing to wear masks while riding will be permitted to do so.
  - Participants are required to provide their own face masks.
- Social distancing of six feet shall always be enforced, with the exception of mounting/dismounting if assistance is necessary and when necessary for care of the horses.
- Stalls, if used, shall be large enough to permit six (6) feet of social distancing between exhibitors. If not possible, every other stall may be used.
- Horse trailers, if used, shall be spaced a minimum of six (6) apart.
- The use of braiders shall be at the discretion of the show organizer. All social distancing and sanitation measures must be followed.
- All staff, volunteers, and participants shall be required to bring their own water bottles. Water fountain stations, if applicable, shall be restricted to water bottle filling stations only.
- Farms are asked to keep their support staff to a minimum as required for horse care.
- Concession stands are permitted to be full service but must follow the posted [Reopen Rules for Restaurants](#).
- **Updated 2/23/21:** Food may be served via food trucks with an existing food service license per [DECD Sector Rules](#).

For additional information, please see the [equine guidance issued by the Department of Agriculture](#) or visit the Connecticut Department of Agriculture’s page, [Resources for Farmers During COVID-19](#).

Please reach out to [AGR.COVID19@ct.gov](mailto:AGR.COVID19@ct.gov) with any COVID-19 related questions or concerns you may have. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture is actively working to support our industry and will continue to provide the most up to date information as it becomes available.