

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



Department of Agricultural Resources

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2025 MDAR Documentation Rules for Horses at Massachusetts Racetracks

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The Requirements for the importation and movement of horses within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are found in three separate documents including the 330 Code of Massachusetts Regulations 16:00 (330 CMR 16:00), the 2025 Fairs Animal Health Rules, and the rules for the importation of horses (available at <http://www.mass.gov>).

Horses moving interstate are required by both state and federal regulations to be accompanied by an Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (OCVI), also called a health certificate, indicating that the animal has been examined by an accredited veterinarian and found to be free from evidence of infectious and contagious disease and exposure thereto. The destination state sets the requirements for animals entering their jurisdiction. Massachusetts (and many other states) requires that the veterinary examination occur and OCVI be written no more than 30 days prior to importation. Individual states may be more restrictive than the federal requirements and the event organizers may choose to be stricter than the state requirements, but they may not be more lenient.

Horses that move both within and into the commonwealth to attend events where horses will be commingled such as fairs, shows, and races are required to be accompanied by a negative test for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA), often called a Coggins test, conducted within the previous twelve months. The test may be either an Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) or Agar Gel Immuno-Diffusion (AGID) test conducted at a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved laboratory. The sample must be taken, and appropriate identifying documentation filled out by a USDA accredited veterinarian for submission to an approved lab. The test is a negative test when the results are reported as such by the lab. Pending tests do not provide any assurance that the animal is negative and therefore are unacceptable.

For several years, the New England states have agreed to allow certain healthy animals (usually those attending shows and fairs) that are moving temporarily between states to move with OCVIs that are older than thirty days. These agreements were made in effort to improve compliance and not be cost prohibitive. It is thus reasonable to extend that allowance to healthy racehorses that enter the Commonwealth for the sole purpose of racing and then return to the state of origin.

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) rules require that all horses whether originating in Massachusetts or moving interstate be accompanied by a negative EIA test conducted within the previous twelve months and an OCVI issued within the prior thirty days the first time they enter the grounds.

Plainridge Park will also require a 2025 EHV-1 vaccination for all horses entering the grounds. This includes horses arriving at the facility for any purpose such as participating in the racing meet, stabling on the grounds, or shipping into the facility for training purposes. Veterinary documentation of the vaccination will be required.

The Department of Agricultural Resources strongly recommends that all horses also receive vaccinations for protection against Rabies, Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), and West Nile Virus (WNV). EEE and WNV vaccination should be timed so protection lasts through peak mosquito season which extends from late July through the first heavy frost.

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) will provide MA OCVI forms to MA accredited veterinarians to be used for Massachusetts animals being shipped to the racetrack. Electronic CVIs that are available through Global Vet Link, Vet Sentry, eCVI, VSPS, and similar sources may also be used. A hard copy of the OCVI must be available. DAR and MGC will work cooperatively with Plainridge racing officials, the Harness Horsemen's

Association of New England (HHANE), and accredited veterinarians to ensure that MA origin horses comply with the OCVI requirement. To expedite the process, it is recommended that the animals be examined and listed on the certificate by trainer (acting as agent for the owner) with an attached list of owner contact information.

Horses being imported into MA from other states must arrive with OCVIs from their state of origin. Notification should be made to the horsemen that this requirement will be enforced throughout the 2025 race meet. Each horse is to be examined by and the OCVI is to be written by a licensed accredited veterinarian in the horse's state of origin.

To support the effort to allow horses training and racing at the track and returning to the state of origin ("race and go") to move interstate with OCVIs older than thirty days the following conditions must be met for all horses entering the Plainridge Park premises:

1. All horses entering the grounds or traveling with horses entering the grounds must be accompanied by a negative test for EIA conducted within the previous twelve months. A copy of the negative EIA test chart may be kept on file in the racing office and a hard copy of the negative EIA test chart should always accompany the animal during movement. Horses with pending tests must not be shipped and will be denied entry to the grounds. Any horse housed on the grounds must have a negative EIA test that will remain valid for the duration of the race meet. Plainridge Park requires that 2025 entries have a negative EIA test performed within 2025.
2. All horses arriving at the track must be free of evidence of infectious or contagious disease at the time of arrival or they are to be denied entry. Trainers should take the temperatures of their horses first thing in the morning on the day of shipment and on race day. Animals with elevated temperatures (102.0 F or higher) should not be shipped or raced. Note: horses on NSAIDs may be febrile at lower temperatures due to the medication. Any horse being imported into Massachusetts (destined to stay in MA) must meet the standard import requirements. The horse must be healthy and the OCVI may be no more than thirty days old.
3. The EHV-1 vaccination required must be given in calendar year 2025. To afford the best protection, it is recommended that the vaccine be given at least 10-14 days prior to shipment. Horsemen should consult with their veterinarian regarding the specific vaccine and booster recommendations for their horses and situation. Veterinary documentation of the vaccine may be included on the OCVI.
4. Any horse that arrives in MA as a "race and go" with an OCVI older than 30 days that subsequently remains in MA must also meet the import requirements. The animal must be examined by a licensed accredited veterinarian and issued a current OCVI.
5. HHANE should work with the horsemen to ensure that they have thermometers and the necessary skills to use them. Trainers are to keep a barn log recording each horse's temperature on days that they will be on the racetrack premises. A normal temperature recording is one of the most valuable tools horsemen possess to assess their animal's health status. The biothermal microchips now required by USDA for identification can be read with a scanner and provide easy access to the horse's temperature.
6. Disease traceability information is recorded on race day at the stable gate where security officials record the horses entering the grounds, the shipper, and the location of origin of the horses on the trailers. This information should be kept on file for a minimum of two years.
7. HHANE and Plainridge agree to require a sign in sheet for all horses using the Plainridge track and/ or paddock on non-race days where the name of the horse(s), the shipper of the horse(s), trainer contact information, and location where the horse(s) is housed will be recorded and kept on file. Horsemen must have OCVIs, proof of 2025 EHV-1 vaccination, and negative EIA test records in their possession for the horses shipped in for training.
8. "Race and go" horses that are scratched "sick" must be examined by an accredited veterinarian and issued a new OCVI once healthy and prior to admittance to the grounds. Alternatively, the animal may be examined by an accredited veterinarian at the place of origin and issued a certificate on the veterinarian's letterhead stating the following:
I have examined the animal "Name of Racehorse" at "Stable Location" on this date and found it to be free of infectious contagious disease or exposure thereto. (Veterinarian signature and accreditation number)