



GUIDANCE TO YARDS, RACECOURSES AND STUDS DURING COVID-19 “LOCKDOWN”

On Monday 23 March, the UK Government introduced restrictions requiring people to stay at home as far as possible to help reduce the spread of the coronavirus outbreak. These restrictions will be in place initially for the **three weeks following 23 March**.

The official Government guidance can be read [here](#).

Government introduced three **new measures**:

1. Requiring people to **stay at home**, except for very limited purposes
2. Closing **non-essential shops** and community spaces
3. Stopping all gatherings of **more than two people** in public

Can staff working at racing yards or studs still go to work?

The guidance stipulates that people can leave home to travel to and from work **“only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.”**

On this basis, and provided that travel is strictly limited to the express purposes outlined by Government, travel directly to work to care for horses may continue.

Staff who are essential to the care of horses in respect of the above, and who absolutely cannot work from home, should continue to travel to work during the period of these restrictions.

Can groundstaff still go to work?

Our current interpretation of the guidance, informed by conversations with DCMS, is that groundstaff may still travel to work to perform core outdoor duties on racecourses or at other facilities, provided requirements around social distancing and gatherings of no more than two people are followed.

For further advice, please contact the RCA.

Will the new restrictions affect the way I operate my yard or stud?

Horses should of course be cared for at all times – including access to food and water, clean bedding and exercise. Many business will require staff to travel to work to provide this.

Our current understanding is that, in order to adhere to Government guidance, the standard of care should be focused primarily on upholding their welfare, rather than their fitness to race. Any non-essential activity beyond this should be carefully considered and, where possible, avoided.

Staff at yards MUST follow Government advice relating to social distancing when outside – remaining at least two metres apart and avoiding gatherings of more than two people, apart from members of their own household, at any time.



Will my main suppliers (e.g. of feed, bedding, etc.) remain open?

The Government [has advised](#) that pet shops will remain open for access to supplies for animals, and we understand that this will also apply to suppliers of feed, bedding and appropriate veterinary medicines.

Some restrictions or staffing/supply chain issues may apply in relation to individual businesses, so you are advised to check direct with your suppliers.

Any business encountering disruptions in supply should make their membership body (e.g. NTF, TBA) aware as soon as possible. We are - and will remain - in discussions with Defra on this

Will vets still be open for business and able to visit?

The Royal College of Veterinary surgeons has advised its members to reduce face-to-face veterinary consultations to focus on **emergency appointments, fulfilment of urgent prescriptions and maintaining the food supply chain**. Please be mindful of this when contacting or consulting your veterinary surgeon or supplier.

Please be conscious that some veterinary practices may have additional restrictions in place, e.g. caused by staffing shortages if staff are self-isolating.

Are Farriers considered essential and will they be able to visit?

The Farriers Registration Council (FRC)'s interpretation of the Government guidance is that Registered Farriers can continue to provide essential services to equines, and they should continue to attend to equines using their judgement as to matters of priority and/or urgency, with provisos around hygiene and social distancing. This advice is subject to change.

Further updates

This is our current guidance, based on liaison with Defra and DCMS in relation to specific issues impacting on animal welfare, and general advice to businesses. It is possible that Government will further refine or clarify its own guidance over the coming days, which may make it necessary to amend this guidance to the racing industry.

The Government has already outlined support packages for workers who can be furloughed and paid at 80% of their wages in the period. For more information, please speak to your membership organisation.

Further information

If you require any additional guidance on the new measures, please contact your membership organisation:

Owners – <https://www.roa.co.uk/>

Trainers – <https://www.racehorsetrainers.org/homepage/index.asp>

Jockeys, valets, agents – <https://www.thepja.co.uk/>

Stable staff – <https://www.naors.co.uk/>

Racecourses – <https://racecourseassociation.co.uk/>

Breeders – <https://www.thetba.co.uk/>

Transporters – <http://racehorse-transporters.org/index.php>