Fact Sheet

Bringing Your Horse to Canada – What to do at the Border

Temporary Importation

If you are bringing a horse to Canada on a temporary basis, (e.g. for competition, breeding, training or pasturage) special rules will apply at the border. Horses or other equines may be imported temporarily into Canada from the United States free of taxes as long as there is reasonable cause to believe the horse will not remain in Canada. You should be prepared to provide documentation to show that the animal will only be in Canada for a short period of time. Information such as breeding contracts, training contracts or show catalogues may be useful to prove the animal will not remain in Canada. If you are unable to show that the animal is only being imported temporarily, a security deposit may be required.

Horses for Sale

If you are bringing a horse into Canada for sale, you will have to pay PST and GST on the value of the horse when you get to the border. Valuation provisions of the Customs Act will be used to arrive at a value for any horses which are being sold. If you are unable to sell your horse in Canada, and are returning with it to the United States, you may be eligible for a refund of the GST. Be sure to obtain confirmation that you have exported the animal from the Customs office as you leave Canada.

Horses Sold and being delivered to Canada

If you have sold your horse to someone who lives in Canada and you are on your way to deliver it to a Canadian address, you will be required to pay PST and GST when you get to the border. Ensure you obtain a receipt for the taxes paid as the Canadian purchaser may require this for their records.

All Horses

In all cases you must have a current international health certificate (valid for 30 days) and a current Equine Infectious Anemia (Coggins) test (valid for six months) for each horse entering Canada.

For further information on the importation of horses, call the toll free enquiry line at 1-800-461-9999 or check our website at www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca
Crossing the Canada / US Border

Both Canada and the US have regulations governing the movement of horses across the shared border. These regulations can change at any time and without notice due to disease outbreaks or international events. Upon speaking the CFIA in Abbotsford, they stressed the fact that every time we cross the border we are in fact leaving one country and entering another — each with its own set of rules and regulations.

Be Prepared

Crossing the borders with horses should not be taken lightly. Plan well in advance of your trip allowing time for all necessary tests and paperwork to be completed. If registration papers do not match the horse exactly, the breed registry should correct them before crossing the border.

What documents do you need for permanent and temporary importation?

All horses require a negative EIA (Equine Infectious Anemia) test within 180 days of entry. This document must be completed and signed by your veterinarian and endorsed by a Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) or USDA veterinarian.

Foals less than 6 months and at the foot of the mare that was EIA tested prior to foaling do not need to be tested, as long as the mare’s test has not expired.

Should the foal be at the foot of a mare when she is tested, the foal must be tested for EIA regardless of age.

The mare’s health certificate must indicate if the EIA test was performed prior to the birth of the foal. Any foal at the side of a mare is required to have their own health certificate that identifies the foal as belonging to the mare.

All horses require a Veterinary Health Certificate stating that the horse has been examined within 30 days of entering the country and are free of contagious diseases. The document must be completed and signed by your veterinarian and the CFIA or USDA veterinarian.

Canadian Health Certificate form HA1964 is used for individual horses permanently or temporarily entering the US and form HA 1963 is used for multiple horses in a consignment for permanent entry to the US. US Health Certificates are VS17 – 145 for individual horses and VS17 – 140 for multiple horses whether a permanent or temporary entry is being made into Canada.

All horse leaving the province of Alberta MUST have a brand inspection and be accompanied by a Horse Permit or an A Form. Contact Livestock ID Services at (403) 509 2088 or 1 866 509 2088
Moving Horses for 30 Days or Less

No veterinary inspection is required at the border for horses entering Canada or the US provided the horse returns within 30 days of the date of entry into either the US or Canada on a temporary basis.

Proper brand inspection documents (Alberta) are not a livestock manifest.

A current Health Certificate and a current EIA test must accompany all horses.

Horses may enter/re-enter at any port of entry. A duty or sales tax will not be assessed if horse is entering Canada or the US temporarily.

Moving Horses Permanently

Horses may only enter the US or Canada permanently at a port of entry that offers animal inspections – see list below.

Contact the port of entry for business hours and when a veterinarian will be on duty to perform the required inspection. After hours inspections are subject to additional service charges. When nearing the port of entry, contact the federal veterinarian and give an estimated time of arrival, especially if you are arriving after hours.

Stop at the US and Canadian customs office on entering or leaving Canada to complete the required papers. Please note that any paperwork i.e. Canadian GST declaration forms that you receive when leaving / entering may be necessary for future re-entry, in some cases.

It is recommended that you keep the original laboratory results from the EIA Test with you. Customs have been requested not to collect Veterinary Health Certificates, but they take copies.

If a Canadian horse was in the US for 60 days or more, the horse is then considered an American horse. A private American veterinarian and USDA veterinarian must then issue an American Health Certificate to the horse. Please note these health papers will be easier to obtain if the horse’s EIA test is still valid, and you have proof of the EIA test laboratory results. If the EIA test has expired, then another blood sample must be obtained from the horse for a new test.

If a Canadian horse is transported to the US for a sale and is then purchased by a Canadian and will be returning to Canada, the original Canadian Health Certificate is no longer valid. Once a sale transaction occurs in the US, the horse is considered an American Horse, and an American Health Certificate must be issued before the horse can re-enter Canada. If a horse is purchased and imported to Canada, Canada customs will assess GST on the value of the horse in Canadian dollars. Assessment of GST is based on the bill of sale.
Exceptional circumstances requiring veterinary inspection into Canada.

Certain circumstances require that the horse receive veterinary inspection before entering Canada:

- Horses originating from another country other than Canada or the US and horses in transit to other countries other than Canada (i.e. the horse will be spending less than 60 days in Canada)
- Horses that have been exposed to or traveling through/from an area with a federally reportable disease (e.g. Vesticular Stomatitis) Notice of federally reported diseases can occur and change at any time. In some cases, horses may have to be quarantined
- Horse destined for a slaughter facility operating in Canada

US Transpiration Regulations

Some US states have permit regulation. Check with state agricultural authorities to obtain a permit before entering the state. This permit can be obtained by telephone in many cases.

In the US, Interstate trucking laws require that all drivers of units over 25,000GVW or 6 horse trailers etc. must have a commercial driver’s license. For guidance and information contact the US Department of Transport at 7034 276 6876. Contact state brand inspections before leaving to ensure that you have all the required documentation – requirements vary from state to state and are subject to change.

More Tips

Only certain border crossings have veterinarians on duty on a regular basis. When a federal veterinarian (CFIA or USDA) is needed to process the health paperwork or to inspect horses at the point of entry, individuals crossing the border after hours are required to make arrangements with the veterinarian in advance. There will be an extra charge, and the veterinarian is not obligated to serve you outside normal working hours.

The current Canadian charge for this service is a minimum rate of $120.00 or $47.00 per hour, whichever is greater.

Ports of Entry

Veterinarians are available at 8 border crossings in Western Canada and the US. Be sure to call ahead to confirm when the veterinarians are on duty when inspection is required. Some ports maybe available by appointment only and hours vary.