



**ELECTRIC FENCES (ELECTRIFIED TAPE)
FOR TEMPORARY ENCLOSURES FOR HORSES ON SHOWGROUNDS**
INFORMATION FOR SHOW SOCIETIES

Issued 1/08/2015.

NOTE: THIS IS A MATTER OF CHOICE FOR SHOW SOCIETIES. IT IS NOT COMPULSORY

INTRODUCTION

With the number of horses which may be on a showground for a show, an event or some other activity at any one time and in many cases staying overnight, it is most unlikely that the showground will have sufficient permanent yards or stables or that the horse exhibitors will have sufficient portable steel yards to accommodate them. The next choice for temporarily enclosing horses would be electric fencing, that is, yards made of electrified tape.

The use of tape fencing, electrified or not, has been strenuously discouraged by the ASC for a number of years. However, after some research and consultation with insurance and horse people, in recognition of the need for temporary enclosures for horses on showgrounds, the ASC has determined to support the use of electrified tape for temporary horse yards on showgrounds under some rigid conditions as follows:

LOCAL RISK ASSESSMENT - (Show Society Responsibility)

Any use on the showground of electric fences must be preceded, as a feature of the event planning, by a local formal Risk Assessment in order to determine where on the showground these temporary yards will be permitted.

Once the event is commencing, a further Risk Assessment is essential in order to identify and deal with hazards that have become apparent as a result of the setting-up process or have emerged during the early progress of the event. Ongoing monitoring will be required and, where necessary, the elimination/mitigation of emerging hazards must occur. NB: Standard Risk Assessment forms will be available on the ASC website.

REQUIREMENTS OF A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE SYSTEM OF ELECTRIC FENCED YARDS

A. Location (Show Society Responsibility)

Given that the safety of the horse exhibitors, their horses and any members of the public who might be in the vicinity is the principal concern, the location(s) of the horse yards should be, if possible, in an area with minimal public traffic and least influenced by other activities on the ground which might startle horses. At this time also attention should be given to avoiding a situation where an escaped horse could go directly out an open showground gate onto a busy public road.

Clearly the location(s) where horses could effectively be yarded on a showground would be chosen to allow reasonable proximity for all exhibitors to their horses enclosed by electric fences because they must exercise some supervision over their yarded animals. Consideration should also be given to the convenient availability of water for horses and, where overnight camping is expected, provision of area lighting and, of course, toilet and shower facilities.

Once the location(s) have been chosen it is then necessary to examine the proximity to internal roadways and pedestrian pathways, so that safe margins can be created and the precise location and sizes of individual yards can be directed to eliminate hazardous situations at the outset.



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B. Construction - (Must be by horse exhibitors)

- In order to minimize the chance of wilful escape, yards must be constructed of two strands of conductive tape set at suitable heights to contain the intended equine occupants.
- The tapes should be attached with insulated fasteners to well-driven steel pickets (star posts) fitted with protective plastic caps or the equivalent pickets in plastic or fibreglass.
- The tapes must be energized by an Australian Standards compliant battery-powered energizer (no mains power connection) of sufficient capacity for the fence it is energizing.
- Each yard should be reasonably square and preferably at least 16 square metres in area.
- The fence must be energized whenever a horse is confined in the yard.
- Each externally facing fence of each yard must exhibit a sign at least 200mm by 100mm carrying indelibly in a contrasting colour on both sides, both the customary symbol and (in letters at least 25mm high) the words "(TAKE CARE) – ELECTRIC FENCE".
- While electrical connection between yards is permissible, interconnection of actual yards should be avoided.
- In the construction of yards, care should be taken to ensure that no situations are created where entrapment of any loose horse or any person could occur where avoidance of electric fence contact is virtually impossible.
- All components of the fence must be in reliable functioning order, including a sufficient supply of batteries, maintenance being the responsibility of the horse exhibitor, and the fence function tested after erection/installation is complete.

C. Communication - (Show Society Responsibility)

- From the very beginning of the organisation of the event where electric fences are planned to be used for containing horses, it is vital that it is widely known that there are some other activities that may be incompatible with the enclosures used in this manner. Depending on their proximity to the horse yards, fireworks, helicopters, water trucks, even whip-cracking can cause serious challenges beyond the power of horse exhibitors to handle without major risk. This conflict needs to be resolved early, and peacefully, but realistically, might involve the horse enclosures not being used or the conflicting activity not taking place.
- At all pedestrian and vehicular points of entry to areas where electric fences are to be, or have been constructed, there must be prominent signs erected saying "(TAKE CARE) – ELECTRIC FENCES IN USE".
- During the event there must be a planned campaign of Public Address warnings advising the public to avoid the horse area plus also P.A. reminders of the dangers associated with disturbing large animals as well as indications that electric fencing is in use in areas where horses are enclosed.

D: Emergency Preparations - (Show Society Responsibility)

Just as normal planning will include preparations for dealing with emergencies such as injuries to horses, riders or handlers during competition, so it is essential, as a feature of good management that arrangements are made for people to be available with equipment, if required for emergencies, such as loose horses, which may arise outside competition times, such as overnight.

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of all of the above is to create a workable framework of strategies for creating safe and effective temporary enclosures on showgrounds for horses while eliminating or minimizing risks to the animals, those responsible for them and others, whether exhibitors or members of the public and in so doing maintaining the benefits of the traditional range of insurance covers. It will require some effort, some co-operation and some vigilance to establish and maintain this framework with the benefits that are dependent upon it.