



Horse Welfare Alliance *Canada*

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Industry practices and laws in place to humanely transport horses

The commercial transport of all livestock must be done by skilled drivers following strict federal regulations. “We strongly advise all livestock owners and buyers to use a transportation company with drivers that are knowledgeable about industry animal care expectations and provide for the safety and comfort of the animals during transport,” says Bill desBarres, chair of the Horse Welfare Alliance of Canada (www.horsewelfare.ca). “We do not condone any transportation by unscrupulous haulers who may compromise the welfare and/or safety of horses and public.”

The livestock industry in Canada offers training for livestock haulers. The Certified Livestock Transport (CLT) program (www.livestocktransport.ca) is a comprehensive training course and support service for livestock truckers, shippers and receivers. It focuses on the humane and safe relocation of livestock and the regulatory requirements for Canada and the US. Since its launch in May 2007, some Canadian meat plants, feedlots and branded meat protocols demand mandatory CLT training for drivers delivering their livestock. Several horse haulers are CLT trained.

Part of CLT training includes how to respond in emergency situations like roll-overs. The content is taken from the comprehensive Livestock Emergency Response Course www.afac.ab.ca/courses/lerc.htm. This program provides truckers, emergency response personnel, fire fighters, RCMP and other peace officers with knowledge on how to handle livestock in emergency distress situations.

“Unfortunately incidents do happen. We are prepared and have skilled livestock handlers to respond to livestock related incidents. The quick response to a recent trailer roll-over involving horses in Calgary is testament to this. Well trained individuals were on site and resulted in improved animal well being and enhanced the safety of those involved,” reports desBarres.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) reminds horse owners and those who transport horses of the federal regulations that govern the humane transportation of animals in Canada. Anyone transporting horses for business or personal use must first ensure that the animals are healthy enough to handle the stress of transportation. When in doubt before loading animals, seek the advice of a veterinarian, contact the CFIA or review the *Humane Handling Guidelines For Horse* booklet, available for download at www.horsewelfare.ca.

To help protect horses during travel, transporters must:

- ✓ Provide feed, water and rest at required intervals. Horses must not be transported without feed and water for longer than 36 hours, after which they must have a rest period of at least five hours before resuming their journey. •
- ✓ Provide immediate attention to animals that become unfit for transport, including veterinary treatment or euthanasia at the scene if necessary.
- ✓ Use suitable vehicles that provide adequate ventilation, non-slip footing surfaces, appropriate bedding and protection from the weather. Vehicles must also provide adequate space and headroom to allow the horses to stand in a natural position.
- ✓ The use of double-deck trailers is not recommended when transporting horses. Because of their size, horses over fourteen hands can suffer head or back injuries in these vehicles.

Everyone responsible for transporting horses must follow Canada’s animal transport requirements. The CFIA recognizes that the majority of transporters treat animals with care. The few who do not may face fines or prosecution.

For more information, contact: Bill desBarres at 403 526-1070 www.horsewelfare.ca

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