

Advice Notes for the Seller Regarding the Pre-Purchase Examination

Dear Sir / Madam,

We have been instructed to perform a pre-purchase examination on one of your horses. We understand this is often an incredibly stressful situation for many sellers (as well as the purchaser) and so to let you understand the process and prepare you for the pre-purchase examination we have prepared the following advice notes.

For a fuller explanation please see the BEVA/RCVS Guidance Notes on the Examination of a Horse on Behalf of a Prospective Purchaser (amended 2011) at:
http://www.beva.org.uk/_uploads/documents/1ppe-guidance-notes.pdf

We will arrange a time and date that is convenient for all the parties involved.

Pre-Purchase Exam Requirements

For all vettings please ensure

- the horse has been stabled for at least 3 hours before examination.
- the horse has been groomed and hooves picked out and cleaned prior to the vetting.

For all vettings (2 and 5 stage) please ensure you make the following available

- The horse's passport.
- dark box that can be completely blacked out;
- a hard level trot up area;
- areas for lunging on both hard, level (minimum 15m diameter) and soft surfaces.
- lunge line and whip (if applicable)

For a 5 stage vetting please ensure that the following are also available

- tack
- rider
- suitable area for strenuous exercise (including gallop)

The updated vetting certificates (2011) now states whether the horse had flexion tests performed and whether it was lunged on a hard surface. If these are not performed it must be stated why these have not be performed. Therefore where it is deemed safe and appropriate to do so as part of the pre-purchase examination we will ask to perform both flexion tests and lunging on a hard surface. Please ensure you have a suitable area e.g. a hard surface such as concrete/tarmac/hard core that is flat without pot holes and at least 15 meters in diameter and that the horse has been trained to lunge. This also applies to the limited 2 stage pre-purchase examination.

To prevent issues regarding hoof imbalance please ensure the horse has been shod or trimmed recently. The horse will be expected to trot soundly on a hard surface e.g. tarmac/concrete/ hardcore in both a straight line and a circle.

Please respect that we are working on behalf of the purchaser and we may not be able to discuss the findings from the vetting with you. We are tasked by the purchaser to be thorough and while there may be portions of the examination that you disagree with or cannot understand we would ask you to be patient.

Be prepared that the purchaser may ask for a written warranty from the seller covering, for example, matters such as medical or surgical history, height, freedom from vices, temperament, non-administration of drugs prior to the examination and the horse's previous or existing uses and performance levels.

If you have any queries relating to the pre-purchase examination please do not hesitate to contact the veterinary surgeon prior to the visit.

The Examination

The standard examination is conducted in five stages, although the exact sequence of the examination may vary. The stages are:

Stage 1: Preliminary examination

This is a thorough external examination of the animal at rest using visual observation, palpation and manipulation to detect clinically apparent signs of injury, disease or physical abnormality. It includes an examination of the incisor teeth, a thorough examination of the horse's eyes in a darkened area and auscultation of the horse's heart and lungs at rest. Examination of the eyes does not include dilating the pupil but should include examination of internal and external structures.

The examination does not include examination of the inside of the prepuce (sheath), a detailed mouth examination with a speculum, a height measurement or any examination for pregnancy.

Stage 2: Walk and trot, in hand

The animal is walked and then trotted in hand to detect abnormalities of gait and action. Ideally this is carried out on firm, level ground. The horse is turned sharply each way and is backed for a few paces. Flexion tests of all four limbs and trotting in a circle on a firm surface may be carried out if the examining veterinary surgeon considers it safe and appropriate to do so.

Stage 3: Exercise phase

The horse is usually ridden and given sufficient exercise to:

1. Allow assessment of the horse when it has an increased breathing effort and an increased heart rate.
2. Allow assessment of the horse's gait at walk, trot, canter and, if appropriate, gallop.
3. Allow assessment of the horse for the purpose of stage five.

If ridden exercise is not possible for any reason then this stage may be conducted by exercising the horse on a lunge, but this fact should be made clear to the purchaser and on the certificate.

Stage 4: Period of rest and re-examination

The horse is allowed to stand quietly for a period. During this time the respiratory and cardiovascular systems may be monitored as they return to their resting levels.

Stage 5: Second trot up

The animal is trotted in hand again to look for any signs of strains or injuries made evident by the exercise and rest stages.



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Flexion tests and trotting in a circle

Flexion tests and trotting in a circle on a firm surface are not mandatory parts of the standard procedure, but they can sometimes provide useful additional information about a horse. There may be circumstances when the examining veterinary surgeon concludes that it is unsafe or inappropriate to perform such tests.

Blood sample

A blood sample may be taken for storage (usually for 6 months) for possible future analysis to detect substances present in the horse's system at the time of the examination that might have masked any factors affecting the horse's suitability for the purchaser's intended use. If a blood sample is not taken then the reason should be noted on the certificate.

Identification of the horse

The horse should be identified by recording the horse's markings in the form of a diagram and written description as well as searching for a microchip and inspecting any available documentation. The diagram may be omitted if the presence of a microchip can be confirmed by scanner and the diagram of an accompanying passport matches the horse. In this instance, both microchip and passport numbers should be recorded on the certificate.

Variations from the standard examination

Whilst there is a recognised format for the examination, the examining veterinary surgeon may vary it where there are good practical or clinical reasons. In circumstances where it is not possible or appropriate to complete all the stages, or where the standard five-stage examination is limited to stages one and two at the specific request of the purchaser, the variations from the standard procedure should be made clear to the purchaser and on the certificate. The results of any additional procedures (e.g. radiography or endoscopy) carried out at the request of the purchaser should also be reported and recorded on the certificate or in an addendum to it. The original records of these procedures (such as radiographs, ultrasonographs, photographs) should be retained by the examining veterinary surgeon.

Radiographs – should the purchaser require radiographs, please be aware that the shoes will need to be removed to allow diagnostic views of the feet to be taken. The horse may also require sedation to facilitate radiographs to be taken.