

Code of conduct for MFA NSW members

Your clients are entitled to expect that you will:

- Make horse welfare your first consideration in seeking to provide the most appropriate attention for horses committed to your care including due regard to a safe working environment
- Ensure that all horses under your care are treated humanely and with respect
- Maintain and continue to develop your professional knowledge and skills
- Uphold the good reputation of the farriery profession
- Recognise the limits of your professional competence
- Be honest and trustworthy
- Foster and maintain a good relationship with your clients, earning their trust, respecting their views and protecting client confidentiality
- Foster and endeavour to maintain good relationships with your professional colleagues
- Respond promptly, fully and courteously to complaints and criticism

Your Responsibilities to Horses

Horse, in this context and throughout the Guide, includes pony, mule, donkey or other equine animal.

Farriers must:

- Treat all horses humanely, with respect, and with welfare as the primary consideration
- Make proper arrangements for the provision of relief (for example holiday leave or extended periods of absence) and emergency cover
- Maintain proper standards in all equipment, including mobile forges and business premises

Farriers must not cause any horse to suffer by:

- carrying out any unnecessary action
- employing excessive restraint or discipline
- failing to advise the need to contact a veterinary surgeon when appropriate
- His or her neglect

Farriers are advised not to commence working with an animal if it is felt that the conditions (i.e. present temperament of the horse or present condition the horse is kept in) are unfavourable to a successful outcome or such that they may compromise their own, or others, health and safety.

Your Responsibilities to Your Clients

A client is defined as a person whose horse has been shod or trimmed by the farrier within the last ten weeks and is not known to have become the client of another farrier.

The provision of farriery services creates a legal relationship with the client under which farriers should:

- ensure that clear information is provided about practice details, contact arrangements, terms and conditions, services, prices, insurance cover and complaints procedures
- respond to clients' enquiries as quickly as possible. A time scale is not set but factors to consider include:

- The means and ease by which the client can be contacted
- The urgency, nature and complexity of the enquiry
- The availability of either party
- Whether information is needed from a third party
- take all reasonable care in using their professional skills
- keep their skills and knowledge up to date by undertaking regular
- Continued Professional Development (CPD)
- not attend (shoe or trim) any animal in the absence of the client, or a person who takes responsibility for the horse in the client's absence, without prior arrangement keep within their own areas of competence save for the requirement to provide emergency first aid
- advise clients when a second opinion or further professional advice is required work in conjunction with a veterinary surgeon's advice where appropriate ensure that all their staff are properly trained and supervised where appropriate
- recognise that the client has freedom of choice7" Understand and comply with your legal obligations
- The farrier/client relationship is one of mutual trust and respect, under which a farrier must maintain client confidentiality providing it does not conflict with the horse's welfare
- treat the client with respect, and observe professional business courtesies, for example strive to arrive for appointments at the agreed time and keep clients informed of any delays that may occur
- give due consideration to the client's concerns and wishes where these do not conflict with the horse's, or your own, welfare or health and safety
- provide fully itemised invoices and bills if requested
- provide an adequate period of notice if he/she does not wish to continue to work for a client for whatever reason
- Owners often ask the farrier to catch, tie up and release the horse before or after trimming and shoeing. Farriers are not required to do so, but if they choose to accept these additional risks, they must perform them with all due skill and care.
- Farriers are advised to check with their insurers as to whether they are covered to work on horses unattended by their owner

A Client's Responsibilities to the Farrier

Make sure that your clients are aware of their responsibilities

It is the client's responsibility to provide:

- a clean, dry standing with good light and a non-slip surface
- a secure, safe ring to which the horse can be tied protection from rain, wind and bad weather
- a properly fitted, sound head collar/halter with a good rope of adequate length competent assistance available should the farrier require it

The client should:

- ensure that the shoeing area is safe for horse and farrier
- ensure that the horse is used to being handled and, if appropriate, has a companion animal close by. In the event of a horse being unruly the client or their agent, should agree with the farrier, on the management of the horse
- understand that certain methods of control may be required to preserve life, health and safety and that a farrier has the right to decline to shoe a horse, or to discontinue shoeing, if it is felt that to proceed would compromise his or her own health and safety, that of others, or that of the horse

Your Responsibilities to the General Public

The farrier has a vital part to play in terms of education and protection in matters of animal welfare

Farriers must:

- co-operate with colleagues and other professionals when appropriate promote responsible horse management
- use their professional status to provide only factual information to the general public Farriers may accept or refuse any person as a client, bearing in mind
- their obligation to the welfare of the horse in an emergency.
- Any public demonstrations of shoemaking or shoeing must be carried out to high standards and must not bring the profession into disrepute

Your Responsibilities in Relation to your Professional Colleagues

It should be borne in mind that a good relationship between farriers and veterinary surgeons enhances the reputation of both professions and is in the best interests of animal welfare.

Farriers must:

- provide all relevant information promptly to colleagues taking over responsibility for a horse
- refer cases responsibly
- if advertising, do so in a professional manner and only in accordance with the relevant legislation
- observe professional standards in the conduct of their business

Farriers must not:

- speak or write disparagingly about professional colleagues or their standard of work discourage a client from seeking a second opinion

Apprentices

Throughout their training, except when at college, apprentices work on behalf of their Approved Training Farrier (ATF) who is responsible for the quality of their work and their professional behaviour.

ATFs are expected to use proper judgement in deciding on the level of supervision appropriate. This may be:

- Direct Supervision. The ATF is standing over the apprentice or atleast in the same room, forge or stable and observing the apprentice
- General Supervision. The ATF is nearby, in the same premises and can be located quickly and easily
- Under Direction. The ATF has discussed the shoeing plan prior to work being undertaken but is not present; the apprentice is working alone using his/her own initiative

Employees

Employees, including apprentices, should be treated in a fair and reasonable manner, without discrimination, and in accordance with their contracts of employment.

Your Responsibilities if Things Go Wrong

Initially, Farriers are advised to:

- encourage clients to discuss any farriery related problems they may have use a sympathetic approach in response to a complaint rather than immediate denial and defensiveness. This does not in itself amount to an admission of liability
- communicate constructively with their clients, as many complaints arise from misunderstandings

Subsequently Farriers must:

- respond promptly and constructively to any request from the MFANSW for comments in relation to any allegation or complaint made against them.
- be prepared to explain and justify any action or decision taken in the course of their professional activities
- discuss cases personally with veterinary surgeons.

Your responsibilities when taking on new clients

- Establish who the previous farrier was that serviced the client
- Why does the previous farrier no longer service the client?
- Is there an outstanding debt to the previous farrier and if so why has this debt not been cleared?
- Make firm payment arrangements before providing a service to the client

Outstanding debts

If any member has an outstanding debt that can not be recovered from a client in the normal course of business the member may contact the MFA NSW and the following action may be taken:

- The association may contact the defaulting client to discuss the debt
- The association may advise the defaulting client that members of the association will be discouraged from providing a service until the debt is cleared
- Should the debt involve a registered RNSW trainer the debt may be referred to RNSW stewards and may be informed that horses trained by the defaulting client will not be serviced by members on course on race days
- The association may request any member who is currently servicing the defaulting client to withdraw service from the client until such times payment has been made or a suitable arrangement is made to clear the debt.