

## **Rules**

### **Horse licences**

In order to obtain a horse licence, you must be 16 years of age or older. You will need a separate licence for each horse you own. Each licence costs 31.74 euro. Anyone who deliberately gives false or misleading information on an application for a horse licence is guilty of an offence. After you have applied for your licence, an inspector from your local authority will visit the premises at which your horse is to be kept. The inspector must be satisfied that proper accommodation, food and water (and if necessary, veterinary attention) will be provided for your horse. The inspector must also be sure that your horse will not be treated cruelly. Following the inspection, you will be informed whether or not you have been granted a licence.

If you have been refused a licence, your local authority will inform you in writing, outlining the reasons why they have refused your application. If you wish to appeal against the decision, you must do so in writing within 14 days. If the local authority still refuses to grant you a licence, you will be again notified in writing. You can then appeal the decision to the District Court within 14 days. The decision to refuse or grant your licence will be suspended until the District Court hears your appeal or you withdraw your application. If you do not appeal your case to the District Court, your application is refused and you will not be granted a horse licence.

### **Exemptions from licences**

If you are bringing a horse into a local authority Control Area for an equine event (i.e., a gymkana, a sale or a showing of horses) and you have received written permission from the local authority, you are exempt from holding a licence by that authority. The exemption will last from 12.00 am on the day before the event, until 12.00 am on the day following the event. Adequate facilities must be provided for the event and you are advised to check with the local authority in advance of the event. Horses kept within Dublin Zoological Gardens at the Phoenix Park (Dublin city) are also exempt.

### **Horse identification**

If your local authority decides to grant you a horse licence, you must arrange to have your horse implanted with a microelectronic identification device by a vet before your licence is issued. The number of the identification device will then be included on your licence. Identification of horses in this way allows the local authority to match owners with horses if your animal strays or roams. Failure to have proper identification on your horse can result in an on-the-spot fine.

It is an offence to forge, alter or interfere with any device or identification mark on a horse. It is also an offence to bring a horse into a Control Area that cannot be identified and does not have an identification device.

### **Controlling your horse**

Your horse must be accompanied and be under your effective control or the control of another responsible person if it is outside your home or premises or the home or premises of the person in charge of it. A person authorised by the local authority or a member of the Gardai may request that you produce evidence of a horse licence. Failure to produce evidence of a licence can result in an on-the-spot fine. Failure to pay your on-the-spot-fine can result in prosecution by your local authority.

If your horse has been found wandering three times within a 12 month period, it can be seized and you will not get your animal back.

Anyone permitted to have a horse in a public place must ensure that the horse is wearing a bridle and is under adequate control. Every year, countless injuries and damage to property are caused

by horses that are not adequately controlled. It is important to remember that it is illegal to allow a horse to graze, feed, stray or remain in a public place without the consent of the local authority.

If you wish to ride your horse on a public road, you may do so provided that the horse has a licence, is fitted with a bridle and is under the control of someone over 16 years of age.

### **Markets and fairs**

A horse owner or keeper bringing a horse to a market or fair is responsible for ensuring that:

- Adequate food and drinking water is available to the horse at all times
- All equipment and tackle used in connection with the horse is suitable for the purpose
- Every reasonable precaution has been taken to prevent and control the spread among horses of infectious and contagious diseases
- Sufficient care (including veterinary care) has been taken of the horse
- Adequate precautions have been taken of the horse in the event of fire.

No injury or unnecessary suffering must be inflicted on the horse through the use of spurs, goads or sticks or through improper tethering.

### **Seizure and detention of horses**

Members of the Gardai and authorised persons from your local authority have the right to seize and detain your horse if they suspect that your horse is:

- a stray
- causing a nuisance
- being mistreated
- not under adequate control
- posing a threat to other people or property
- posing a threat to the health and welfare of other people and animals
- not identifiable or capable of being identified
- in need of veterinary attention and is unlikely to receive this care
- in an area/kept in an area/being ridden/driven in an area where it is not allowed by your local authority
- kept in a local authority Control Area without a licence.

Horses seized are taken to a horse pound. Local authorities and Gardai are required to keep a register of horses seized by them (and horses detained by other people that have been notified to them). You can inspect this register at the offices of your local authority. If your horse has not been claimed after 14 days from the date of seizure, the local authority may dispose of your horse in accordance with their bye-laws.

If you wish to reclaim your seized horse, your local authority must be satisfied that you have a horse licence, the horse is identifiable as yours and that adequate food, accommodation, water

and, if necessary, veterinary attention will be provided for your horse. It must also be satisfied that your horse will not be mistreated at any time or be out of control.

If your horse has been detained on two or more occasions within the previous 12 months, your local authority may decide to dispose of your horse. In addition, if your horse has been or is being mistreated, your local authority has the power to seize your horse. You may be liable for prosecution if you claim the horse and identify yourself as the owner. Your local authority or Gardai may need to detain your horse for a period of time if it is required as evidence in criminal proceedings.

When you reclaim your seized horse, you will have to pay any costs incurred as a result of having been impounded. Each authority has its own fees, but a general guide is provided below.

### **Disqualification from keeping horses**

You may be disqualified from keeping, dealing in or having charge or control of a horse for a limited period (or for life) if you have been convicted of an offence relating to:

- your horse being a nuisance
- your horse posing a danger to people or property
- unsatisfactory conditions in which the horse is being kept
- your horse being ridden/driven in an area where the local authority deems it a danger or nuisance

If you have been disqualified for a period of more than 6 months, you may after 3 months apply to the court for the removal of the disqualification. If the court agrees, it may remove the disqualification not earlier than 6 months after the date of disqualification. If the court refuses, you will have to wait 6 months from the date of refusal before you can apply again.

### **Rates**

Horse licence	31.74 euro per horse	Valid for 1 year from date issued
Seizure of horse	190.46 euro per horse	-
Horse impounded	19.05 euro per horse	Charge per night in pound
No identification	12.05 euro per horse	On-the-spot fine
Mistreatment of horse	1,904.61 (maximum) or 6 months in prison	Summary conviction in court
Mistreatment of horse	12,697.38 (maximum) or 2 years in prison	Conviction on indictment