

# Commonly Asked Horse Insurance Questions

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In talking to prospective clients every day, a lot of the same questions come up and I thought I would share some of the more common in this blog.

## **1. 1. I just bought a horse that is already insured, does his policy just automatically transfer to me?**

**OR**

## **I just sold my horse and he's insured. Will his policy just automatically transfer to his new owner?**

No. Your insurance policy on a horse you own is only in effect while you have an insurable interest in the horse. Just like if you sold your car, the insurance on the car would not transfer to the new owner, the same is true of a horse. So if you're in the process of purchasing a new horse and want to make sure there is no lapse in coverage between the current owner's policy and you, it's a good idea to get all the paperwork for your new policy in order prior to the purchase so you can make coverage effective the day of the sale.

## **2. 2. My horse isn't registered – can I still insure him? What type of identification can I use?**

If your horse isn't registered, you can use a microchip number if one is available. If not, then photos can be used as identification. Typically a front and side view is all that's necessary, and if you need a few days to get those to us, that's fine, we can still see about getting coverage started pending receipt of the photos.

## **3. 3. Do you need a copy of the Bill of Sale to get coverage started on my new horse?**

No. We do not need a copy of the bill of sale for our records, but you definitely want to keep that document on file, because in the event of a Mortality claim, the claims adjuster will ask you for proof of the sale. They may also ask for proof of the purchase, such as a cancelled check, or wire transfer.

## **4. 4. Can I just call and insure my horse over the phone?**

This depends on the agency and/or insurance company. At Broadstone, we do require an application to be completed by the horse owner (or lessee if the horse is being leased). The application asks for very important information with regard to the horse and the coverages that you want, and we feel it is best that we have that information in writing from you so there are no misunderstandings.

That said, we make the paperwork as easy as possible. The application can be completed and signed as a fillable PDF and then emailed to us. Or completed by hand and scanned/emailed, faxed, or even sent as a picture from your smart phone – as long as we can read the application (and all the questions are answered) and it is signed/dated by you, we should be able to work with

it.

In some instances (though not many) we may also need a current vet certificate or copy of the pre-purchase exam. See the next question for details.

**5. 5. Do I have to pay a vet to examine the horse before I can get him insured?**

In most cases, no. You will definitely need a current vet certificate (or copy of the pre-purchase exam on a recent purchase) for horses to be insured for over \$100,000; or age 16 or 17 (depending on the company). Something from the vet may also be necessary if the horse has had a recent injury or illness that the underwriter would like addressed. In addition, with one company that Broadstone works with, if you have not known the horse for at least 30 days, a vet certificate will also be required.

**6. 6. If I have a claim, my horse won't be insurable any more, right?**

In the majority of cases, a claim doesn't make a horse uninsurable. Typically when the policy is due to renew, the underwriter will review the details of the claim and determine if they will offer renewal (which they usually will), and if so, if any exclusions will apply at renewal. Horse insurance policies are 12-month term policies, and are underwritten every year. So issues that occur during the policy period can be considered pre-existing, and therefore excluded, on the next year's policy. This can be confusing, as it is unlike human health insurance policies.

**7. 7. OK, then if my horse has a minor leg injury, the whole leg is going to be excluded forever, right?**

In most cases, this would not be the case. Providing the injury has been diagnosed and the underwriters have information to work with, they will typically exclude for the injury that has occurred, such as deep digital flexor tendon right front, not the whole right front leg. Exclusions vary depending on the situation, but the underwriters do try to be as specific as is reasonably possible.

**8. 8. I had a friend who walked into her barn one morning, and found her horse lying dead in the pasture. She said that the insurance company required a necropsy. Is a necropsy always required? If so, do I have to pay for it?**

If you are unfortunate enough to be in a situation, you first want to give the insurance company's claims office a call. They can then advise you on how to follow the provisions of the policy to ensure the best result. If the horse was previously healthy and the death is unexpected, then I would expect a necropsy will be required, and those costs are not covered by your policy, so you would pay out of pocket. If the horse had been ill/injured and under a vet's care, there is the possibility that a necropsy may not be necessary, if the cause of death is definitive, but that will be determined by the insurance company depending on the specifics of the case.

If you find yourself in this situation—do not dispose of the horse's body without contacting the insurance company and determining if a necropsy is required, otherwise you will void coverage under your policy. Claims adjusters are available around the clock, including weekends, and will do their best to help you through a heartbreaking situation.

**9. 9. My horse was a little girthy and grumpy. The vet thought it might be gastric ulcers, so we just gave him a course of medication without actually doing any diagnostics. Would that be covered under my Major Medical/Surgical coverage?**

Most likely, this would not be covered. It is very likely that the insurance company will require a definitive diagnosis by an endoscopic exam before they cover the costs of the medication to treat

the ulcers and that there will be a dollar limit for coverage, if it is available. If your vet suspects that your horse has ulcers and wants to treat without an endoscopic exam, before starting treatment you should contact your insurance company and consult with an adjuster to determine what the company will require in order for coverage to apply.

**10. 10. I don't know what limit of Major Medical/Surgical coverage I should get. Any advice?**

This question comes up quite often, and the answer varies based on what limits are even available (some companies will not offer a Major Medical/Surgical limit higher than the horse's insured value on the Mortality policy), your budget, your comfort level, and past history. Some people want the peace of mind to know that a worst case scenario will be covered as much as possible, and therefore will purchase the highest limit of coverage possible. Other people would rather save some money and purchase a lower limit, hedging their bets that hopefully they won't need the coverage, or if they do, it won't be for a catastrophic scenario. And that even if that worst case scenario happens, they feel comfortable that they have the funds (or credit card balance) to handle the difference. And for those horseowners who have experienced an unfortunate run of luck with a previous horse, their past history will inform their decisions and they often want a high limit. In my experience, the \$7,500 and \$10,000 limits are most popular, but those may not be suitable for you, especially if you're concerned about a worst case scenario.

**11. 11. I just bought my horse, but I think I may want to save some money on the premium and insure him for less than the purchase price. What do most people do in that situation?**

Generally most people insure a new horse for its purchase price, but certainly not always. Just keep in mind that the process of introducing a horse to a new location, new feed, new barn mates, etc., can be a little tricky. Most likely no damage will be done in those first days and weeks, but change can be difficult for some horses. Like with Major Medical/Surgical limits, how much you insure your horse for is a very personal decision, and will be based on your budget, your comfort level, and past history. Also, take into consideration that if heaven forbid your horse dies, and you have insured for considerably less than his value, are you able to afford to "replace" him with a horse of similar age, talent, training? Some people choose to insure their horse for considerably less than his actual value because their plan would be to purchase a younger, less experienced (and therefore less expensive) prospect.

**12. 12. I've had a bad experience in the past with a horse that had colic surgery. There were serious complications and he died. I would not put another horse through that. So if I insure my horse and he colics, and I choose to put him down instead of surgery (or because I don't allow surgery he dies as a result), would my Mortality policy still cover.**

Probably not. When you purchase an insurance policy, you have made an agreement with an insurance company, and one of your responsibilities is to provide the horse with the care necessary to save its life. If the veterinarians recommend surgery (or other treatments) in order to save the horse, and you choose not to pursue those treatments, most likely the policy will not respond. Now, if your vet recommends euthanasia, this would be a different set of circumstances, as the policy does cover for humane destruction, providing it meets the requirements. If you find yourself in this situation, make sure to contact the insurance company's claims office and work with an adjuster to determine how the policy will respond.

To get more information on insuring your horse, go to the Broadstone [FAQs](#) and [Protect Your Horse](#) pages. To see about getting a free quote, go to the Broadstone [Quote](#) page.

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