



Veterinarians have developed a general routine of examination which has been found to be satisfactory as a means of detecting signs of disease and injury. This examination is conducted in five stages and all the stages should be completed. If this has not been possible it should be made clear on the certificate in what way the examination has been varied and that any opinions are based on this restricted examination.

The full 5 stage examination consists of:

*Stage 1 – Preliminary examination*

This is a methodical examination of the animal's body to assess general appearance and condition. It includes examination of the teeth, the resting heart, the eyes by ophthalmoscope, the skin, the limbs and feet, and flexion of the limb joints to reveal pain or limitation of movement.

*Stage 2 – Trotting up*

The animal is walked and trotted on hard, level ground in order to detect gross abnormalities of gait and action.

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*Stage 3 – Strenuous exercise*

The animal is given sufficient strenuous exercise (1) to make it breathe deeply and rapidly so that any unusual breathing sounds may be heard; (2) to increase the action of the heart so that abnormalities may be more easily detected; and (3) to tire the animal so that strains or injuries may be revealed by stiffness or lameness after a period of rest.

*Stage 4 – A period of rest*

The horse is allowed to stand quietly for a period. During this time the breathing and heart are checked as they return to their resting levels.

*Stage 5 – The second trot and foot examination*

The horse is walked and trotted again, turned sharply and backed, in order to reveal abnormalities exacerbated by the strenuous exercise stage.

The letter above instructs the examining veterinary surgeon to omit stages 3, 4 and 5 of the full examination.