

In horses, the brain is situated high in the head. The correct point of entry of the bullet or captive bolt is approximately 2.5cm (1in) above the intersection of two diagonal lines each running from the inside corner of the eye to the base of the opposite ear (see top photo). Ideally, the firearm or captive bolt should be angled so the bullet follows the angle of the neck or the spine.

Proper positioning of the firearm or penetrating captive bolt is essential in order to ensure a quick death. When euthanasia is performed by gunshot, the firearm should be held within 15-30cm (6-12in) of the point of entry. When performed by penetrating captive bolt, the device must be held in contact against the head at the correct anatomical site.

Horses may require restraint in order to facilitate safe and effective euthanasia, particularly if using a penetrating captive bolt (options include a halter and lead rope or bridle).

Refer also to Appendix J-Technical Guidelines for Euthanasia Methods, for other important details.

Image Source: Images developed by the Alberta Equine Welfare Group for the booklet "Humane Handling Guidelines for Horses – Standards for the Care of Unfit Animals" available for download under Resources at www.horsewelfare.ca.