



A Centre of Excellence for Innovative Equine Assisted Services

Volunteer Handbook

Windsor - Essex Therapeutic Riding Association

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*“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time;
they just have the heart.”*





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RULES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. Volunteers must be a minimum of 14 years of age and be able to commit to volunteering in the same time slot once a week for 12 weeks.
2. Volunteers must possess a desire to assist riders with disabilities to fulfill their goals and realize their potential.
3. Volunteers must attend an orientation before starting. Commitment to regular attendance for the entire session is especially important in providing continuity for the rider.
4. Volunteers must abide by all rules, policy and procedures set out by the Windsor – Essex Therapeutic Riding Association while volunteering. Safety is our number one priority for our staff, clients, and volunteers. If you are unclear about anything, please speak with a staff member.
5. Volunteers should be comfortable around horses, but it is not necessary to have a high level of horsemanship skills.
6. Volunteers should have a reasonable level of fitness. Able to walk briskly for 45 minutes to an hour and able to jog for short distances (length of the arena) with arm at shoulder height.
7. Volunteers are not permitted to use cell phones while volunteering. Please leave your cell phone in your car or in your pocket (on silent). If you need to make a call, please excuse yourself and do so outside.

8. Volunteers must wear appropriate clothing. **Shoes** should have low heels and **closed toes, be sturdy** so that they protect the feet from horses' hooves and should provide good stability on rough surfaces. A pair of waterproof boots may be required for wet weather. Volunteers should **wear long pants**. Skirts, shorts, and dresses are not suitable. **Short jackets** for cold weather, no long coats; and **gloves**, not mittens. Ripped clothing or clothing with content that could be offensive is prohibited. All zippers/buttons must be done up. Long hair must be tied back.
9. Jewelry, such as earrings and bracelets, can get caught in tack or by a rider and create a dangerous and painful situation. Strong perfume can be very irritating to a horse's sensitive nose. Please remove all jewelry and perfume before volunteering.
10. The use of drugs or alcohol is not permitted on the premises. Smoking is also not allowed in, near or around the barns, outbuildings or arena.
11. Chemicals are to be handled only by people properly instructed in their use and under the direction of a supervisor. Appropriate personal protective equipment is to be worn.
12. All injuries to a person and/or animal must be reported promptly to a staff member and recorded in writing on the appropriate forms. All property/equipment damage is to be reported immediately to a staff member.

BENEFITS OF THERAPEUTIC RIDING

Therapeutic riding is an alternative form of therapy using horses to help persons with various disabilities. Activities involving the horse can be used to assist people with disabilities in achieving physical and mental health, and cognitive, behavioral, social and communication goals. In this context, a team approach involving therapeutic riding Instructors, health professionals and riders who have disabilities, is used in designing and implementing the riding sessions. Riders experience a sense of control they might not otherwise feel in their everyday life.

Some of the benefits include:

- Improvement of balance
- Development of coordination
- Mobilization of trunk and pelvis
- Strengthening of muscles
- Normalization of muscle tone
- Prevention of contractures
- Increased confidence and self-esteem
- Improvement of attention span
- Promotion of independence
- Improvement of social integration
- Access to recreation, sport and/or competition
- Increased concentration, motivation and patience



ROLE OF THE INSTRUCTOR AND SUPPORT TEAM

The team approach is particularly important to the success of our riders. The team creates a support system, which provides a safe ride. Each member of the rider's team is important.

The team will always include an Instructor, a horse, and a rider. A Leader, Side Walker, or Therapy Consultant may be added depending on the needs of the rider.

The Instructor is in charge of the class and does not lead or sidewalk except in an emergency. It is essential to have an experienced and qualified person instructing the riders and directing the volunteers and horses at all times.

The Leader is in charge of controlling the horse at all times in the arena and out on the trail and may help to prepare the horse for the lesson.

The Side Walker is responsible for looking after the rider, providing support (either physically or emotionally) and relaying instructions to the rider from the Instructor. There can be one or two side walkers depending on the needs of the rider.

The Therapy Consultant may be a physiotherapist, occupational therapist, or other health care professional.



VOLUNTEER ROLE IN THE THERAPY SESSION

What takes place during an adaptive riding session?

One, two or three volunteers, an instructor and a therapist can work with a rider in an enclosed ring or stable area for any of several purposes. The client may learn special riding skills, care of the horse, or how to saddle a horse. The rider may play games on horseback, perform gymnastic movements on the back of a horse, or learn equestrian skills. Each rider will have individual goals to work towards.

Why does a therapeutic riding program need volunteers?

Most therapeutic riding programs are offered by non-profit organizations that cannot exist without volunteers. An instructor and a team of three volunteers may be needed for the client to ride safely. On top of the lesson expense, the payment of two or three additional people to help one disabled rider to ride would put this sport out of reach for all but a very few. Volunteers are the backbone of our riding program. These dedicated people, from all walks of life team up to give the special needs community an opportunity to experience a sport, which can make a difference in their well-being.

Suggestions to Help You Relate to a Person With a Disability

- Be yourself and relax.
- Explore mutual interests in a friendly way.
- If you don't understand an aspect of someone's disability, just ask!
- Speak directly to the person with the disability and never about them in the third person when they are present.
- Speak at a level which is appropriate to their age. Remember that many non-verbal individuals have normal cognitive function.

What a Volunteer May Want to Know

How is a volunteer trained?

On your first visit, you will be given an orientation, and be able to observe a riding session. This training session will walk you through the average volunteer shift so you know what to expect. Volunteer training sessions are run throughout the year, but hands-on training will be given for new volunteers in between these times. As a new volunteer, it is recommended that you seek assistance from more experienced volunteers and staff until you are comfortable with the facility and your volunteer duties. You may be partnered with a volunteer mentor your first shift so you can shadow the more seasoned volunteer until you are comfortable. We encourage all volunteers regardless of experience to ask questions and communicate with staff about any concerns.

What are the Responsibilities of a Volunteer?

You will be asked to assist in the therapeutic riding sessions as a leader or a side walker. Other responsibilities are aiding in the care and preparation of horses (grooming, saddling the horse, etc.) Please do not talk while the instructor is giving directions, as this can be confusing to the rider. Do not over-help the riders; give them time to process the directions and time to carry through with them. Games are for the benefit of the riders and should not be too competitive.

For volunteers that would rather assist our program in other ways, volunteer opportunities exist in administration, grounds maintenance, barn maintenance, special events and more! Please speak with the Volunteer Coordinator if you would like to learn more about different ways to help our program!

When am I Expected to Attend?

After you attend a volunteer training session you will be set up with a weekly time slot to volunteer. This time slot will work with your schedule but also with our need for volunteers. When you accept a volunteer time slot you are committed to that spot for the whole session (approximately 12 weeks of volunteering). Once a schedule is made, we count on you to attend weekly for the duration of the session. We understand that sometimes there are unavoidable circumstances and ask that if you are unable to attend, please call the office and give as much notice as possible.

The Responsibilities of all Team Members:

- Arrive on time.
- **Call** if you are unable to attend so that a replacement can be found on time for the lesson. This avoids having disappointed riders.
- Be sensitive and understanding to the needs of individual riders.
- Be alert, prepared and responsible at all times.
- Remember to have a good time and to help the riders to enjoy themselves. The task you are doing may not seem significant, but it is very important to the rider and the instructor. Without you, the lesson is not possible

How do Volunteers Help the Program?

- Volunteers are the backbone of the program, helping with the many tasks and goals in the riding session.
- Volunteers do many supportive jobs, which make the non-profit programs work.
- Volunteers bring new ideas for the lessons and the program.
- Volunteers help make the riders happy with their new friendships, they support riders emotionally as well as physically.
- Volunteers bring their knowledge and skills.

PROCEDURES WHEN WORKING AROUND HORSES

1. Appropriate footwear must be worn. Bare feet or sandals are not allowed.
2. A horse should never be approached from behind. Approach from the side' speak to the animal and place a hand on its neck or side. Never walk directly behind a horse.
3. Always speak to the horse so it is aware you are approaching and will not be startled.
4. If a horse pulls away from you, calmly move with him and then move forward with the animal when it is settled.
5. Never lead a horse by its halter. Always use a lead rope.
6. Never wrap a lead rope around your hand, arm, or body. Neatly fold the end back and forth unto itself. Hold the rope with one hand approximately 6 inches from the halter and the other hand on the folded end of the rope.
7. Work with the horse as much as possible from the near (left) side.
8. When leading a horse, position yourself between its head and shoulder.
9. To turn a horse loose in a stall, walk in with the horse and turn the animal around to face the door, so that you are in the opening. Remove the halter and back away from the horse and out the gate or doorway. Always ensure that stall doors are securely closed and latched.

10. Never leave a lead rope or reins dragging on the ground for the horse to step on.
11. When saddling a horse, fasten the girth smoothly and slowly. Do not tug or tighten the girth. Fasten the girth so it is snug but not tight. The girth should be tight enough that the saddle will not shift while the horse is waiting for the lesson to begin.
12. Learn to clean a horse's hooves from a competent horseperson, to avoid serious injury by using the proper methods.
13. Never squat or kneel when working around horses. Bend from the waist so you can move quickly if necessary.
14. Always keep a minimum of two horse lengths between your horse and the horse in front of you.
15. Minimize extreme or sudden noises or movements around horses.
16. If a horse is frightened by something, let him stop, face it and sniff it. Don't let him run away. Give him time and reassure him.
17. Pat a horse on its shoulder or neck not its head.



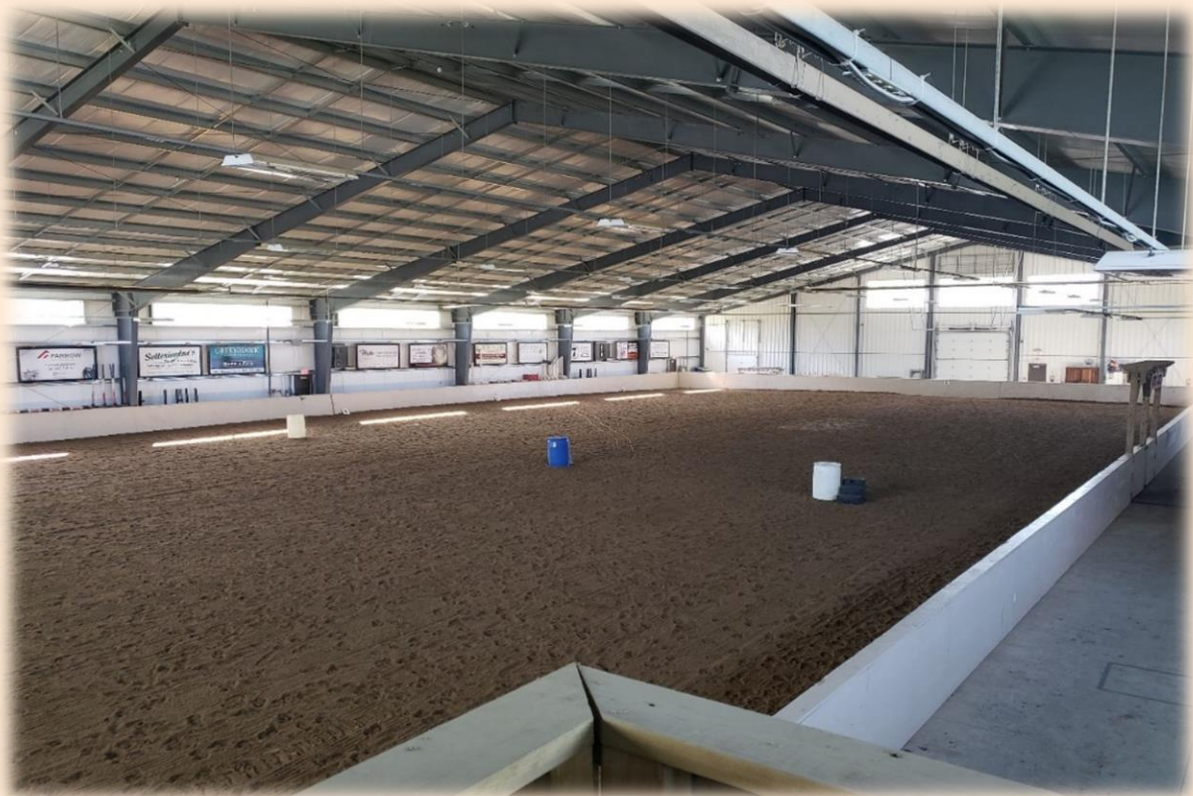
SAFETY IN THE RIDING ARENA

- Before mounting riders, horses line up facing the gate with plenty of space between them.
- All arena gates must be closed and locked anytime a horse and rider are inside.
- Only persons necessary for the therapy session are permitted in the arena during sessions.
- Keep a safe distance between horses during sessions (2 horse lengths).
- If adjustments are needed, bring horse and rider off the track and let the instructor know.
- Pay attention to the directions of the instructor.
- Ask the Instructor for clarification if not certain of procedures with a certain rider.
- All horses should be going the same direction at all times, unless specified by the instructor.
- When trotting, wait for the Instructor's directions, know the correct hold for that rider, make sure the other Side Walker is ready and then give the o.k. to the Leader to "trot." Trot only on the long sides of the arena unless instructed otherwise by the Instructor. Avoid crowding of the horse in front.
- If a rider falls off or if a horse gets loose – **stay calm** and remain with the horse (if you're the leader) or rider (if you're a side walker). Listen carefully to the instructions from the instructor.

Arena Talk:

Outside Leg / Hand	The leg or hand the is closest to the arena walls
Inside leg / hand	The leg or hand that is closest to the inside of the arena
Offside	The person standing on the steps (offside block) helping to get the rider on the horse
Trot	A faster two beat gait
Un-clip / Un-hook	Un-clipping / Un-hooking the lead rope from the horses' bridle or halter to all the student to ride independently. Continue to walk next to the rider unless instructed otherwise
"Whoa"	A verbal cue to the horse to halt
"Walk On"	A verbal cue to the horse to walk forward

Listen carefully to the instructor for where to go throughout the class. There are letters located through the arena the instructor will use to give directions (eg. Turn left at "E" ... Change direction from "A" to "C" ... Circle at "B")



SAFETY ON THE TRAIL

- Always keep a safe distance between horses (2 horse lengths).
- Keep lead rope short to avoid horses eating grass.
- Watch for and avoid low hanging branches.
- Wear adequate footwear for the weather, and be ready to walk through mud and puddles.
- Follow Instructor's directions.
- Pay attention to the rider at all times.
- Stay alert for:
 - Traffic: cars, pedestrians, bikes, tractors, dogs, wildlife, etc.
 - Things that can spook your horse, such as blowing trash.



SAFETY IN THE BARN

- When in the stable area, every rider must be supervised by an attendant (either a volunteer or a Teacher's assistant).
- Every rider should have a helmet and belt (if needed) when in the stable area.
- Walk quietly and calmly at all times, no running or playing in the stalls or aisles.
- No more than two people in a stall at a time.
- No more than two people grooming/tacking the same horse at a time.
- Open stall doors wide and look both ways before proceeding to lead horse out. Go through the door ahead of the horse.
- Keep all barn aisles free of clutter.
- Ensure reins are secured before leading the horse to the arena (make knot in reins).
- Know the location of the telephones and emergency numbers.



HORSE HANDLING & GROOMING

Handling:

- Horses are never groomed in the stall. Only on cross ties in the barn aisle however, some horses are ground tied.
- On entering the stall approach the horse calmly, making sure he is aware of your presence. If the horse is facing away from you call his/her name to get their attention.
- Put the halter on from the left side.
- When leading the horse in and out of the stall, make sure the stall door is all the way open and the latch pushed back.

Grooming:

A well-groomed and well cared for horse is a positive reflection on the care and attention he receives. Grooming promotes circulation, ensures cleanliness and improves appearance. While grooming, a thorough check of the horse's body will ensure that any cuts, swelling or heat is recognized and attended to early. Horses should always be treated considerately during grooming; be firm, consistent, kind and gentle.

Grooming Tools:

- Hoof Pick: for cleaning hooves
- Rubber Curry: used to remove caked mud from the horse, to stimulate circulation, and to clean the brushes.
- Dandy Brush: stiff bristle brush used to remove dirt & dandruff and to stimulate circulation.
- Body Brush: soft, short bristle brush used to clean off any remaining dirt and spread the natural oil over the whole coat.



Method:

Halter horse securely and cross tie with quick release snaps. Please note, not all horses go in cross ties some are ground tied. Working in sections while grooming is the most efficient way to cover the entire horse, ensuring there are no missed spots! Starting on the near (left) side work from front to back:

1. Pick up each foot in turn beginning at the left front and clean it using the **hoof pick**. Work hoof pick from the heel to the toe making sure there are no rocks in the foot and checking that shoes are not loose. Be sure to take extra care around the frog of the hoof (“V” shaped area in the center). You can potentially harm the horse by picking this area.
2. Working in sections, use the **rubber curry** in a circular motion (against the hair). The object here is to loosen and shift all caked dirt, sweat marks, etc. This brush is not used on legs or the face.
3. Working in sections, use the **dandy brush** (hard bristles) in short flicking motions to drive the bristles deep into the hair to remove dirt and dandruff and to stimulate circulation. Always brush in the direction of hair growth. This brush is not used on legs or the face.

4. Following the same order, take the **body brush** (soft bristles) and use long, smooth strokes in the direction of hair growth to clean off any remaining dirt and to spread the natural oil over the whole coat. The **body brush** can now be used on the legs. Run your hand firmly down each leg before brushing it, feeling for any heat, swelling or tenderness. Brush firmly in a downward direction.

TACKING AND UNTACKING

It is important for the safety of horse, rider and handlers that the horse is properly saddled. Have all of the equipment ready before you start. The saddle pad is protection for the horses back; a gel pad or cashel can be used in addition to the saddle pad. There are different types of saddles used for therapeutic riding and each will have slightly different straps and buckles to secure. Types of saddles are the English, Australian, Western, Easy Ride, and various pads and surcingles.

The method for tacking up with an English saddle:

- Place the pad high on the withers so it can be slid back into position and smooth the hair in the right direction. Stop when the front of the pad is in line with centre of the horse's front leg.
- Center the pad on the horse's back. Lift the saddle high above the horses back and gently lower the saddle down while spreading the flaps apart.
- Attach to the pad the saddle using billet strap keepers.
- Lift the front of the pad to eliminate pressure from the withers and to allow air to circulate.
- Attach the girth on the right side first, making sure the elastic on girth buckles is on the left. Make sure that the girth is through the keeper straps on the saddle pad.

- Tighten girth to a comfortable level. The girth will be tightened again before rider mounts. Fasten the girth smoothly and slowly. Do not tug or tighten the girth. The girth should be snug but not tight. The girth should be tight enough that the saddle will not shift while the horse is waiting for the lesson to begin.

To Unsaddle a Horse:

- Undo the girth (or cinch) on the left side first.
- Undo right side and lay the girth over the saddle.
- Undo the keepers on the front of the saddle pad
- Lift the saddle and pad high off horses back. Be sure to pull the saddle back from the horse's withers before removing it.
- Return the saddle to the tack room. Do not lay a saddle on the floor.

To Bridle a Horse:

- With the horse safely cross tied to the wall, attach the reins to the horse's bit with the clasp pointing outward. Hold the bridle in the left hand in the reins in the right and inspect the bridle to ensure everything is lying flat and isn't tangled. Ensure that the noseband is underneath the cheek pieces.
- Standing on the horse's left side with the bridle & reins on your left forearm unbuckle the left cross ties. Put the reins over the horse's head then unbuckle the right cross tie.
- With the bridle still on your left forearm, unbuckle the horse's halter. Slide the horse's halter off his head and onto your right shoulder – this will leave both hands free to bridle!

- Position your right shoulder next to the horse's left cheek. Gather both sides of the bridle in your right hand holding under the brow band. Let the bit lie flat across the fingers and thumb of your left hand. Direct the bit towards the horse's mouth and gently pull up with your right hand when he opens his mouth. If he does not open his mouth readily, you can stick your finger into the corner of his mouth where there are no teeth.
- Bring the crown piece (top of bridle) over the horse's right ear holding the ear forward, then over the left ear holding the ear forward as well. Pull the horse's forelock over the brow band.
- Fasten the throat latch, leaving a space of a fist underneath the horse's lower jaw. Ensure the noseband is underneath the cheek pieces and fasten the noseband, leaving a space of two fingers underneath the chin. All strap ends must be put in keepers.
- Fasten your lead rope to the metal ring under the horse's noseband and tie both reins in a knot.

To Unbridle a Horse:

- Undo the throatlatch and noseband.
- Slip the crownpiece forward over the ears, holding onto the bit so it doesn't drop out of the horse's mouth and hit its teeth.
- Rinse off the bit under a tap before returning the bridle to the tack room.

THE HORSE HANDLER (Leader)

The Leader leads the horse and must keep him under control at all times. The degree of assistance will depend on the rider and on the horse. We encourage the rider to be in control to the best of their ability and the Leader assists when required. As the rider progresses the assistance of the Leader will decrease.

Leader's Duties

- Wear closed-toe shoes or boots when working around horses.
- Keep both hands on the lead rope. Place your right hand on the lead approximately 6-12" from the halter. The remaining portion of the lead is held folded in a figure of 8, neatly and safely in the left hand.
- Ensure reins do not dangle.
- Lead at an even pace. Avoid sharp turns that could unbalance the rider.
- Never put your fingers through any rings on the halter or bridle- if the horse throws its head you could break a finger.
- Do not wrap or drape the lead around any part of your body.
- To move a horse forward, give the verbal command using the horse's name (e.g. "walk on Nutmeg"). Give the horse a moment to make the first step, and then walk forward yourself. Do not look at the horse, look up and where you are going.
- No rider will mount until the Instructor is present and requests him or her to mount.
- While the rider is mounting, the horse must be kept as still as possible. The Leader should stand in front of the mount, slightly to one side and gently contain it. If held too tightly the horse will toss its head and move around.
- When a command is given, give the rider time to process the information and give aid if needed.

- Use short tugs rather than a steady pull to keep a lazy horse moving.
- Be sure to keep at least two-horse lengths distance between your horse and the one in front. Handlers should keep the horse from being too close if the rider cannot. A simple command that the rider halt, cross the ring to an empty spot or do a circle can prevent an accident.
- Once the lesson has started it is important that the handler **be alert and pay close attention.** The Instructor will address the rider by name rather than the name of the horse or volunteer.
- Avoid talking to the Side Walkers and rider except as it relates to the lesson.
- It is necessary to keep the lead rope between the reins otherwise it will interfere with the “aids” given by the rider and could confuse the horse and cause him to resist. Please ensure that the reins do not hang down to one side. Horses can step through reins that are dangling down and an accident could result.
- At the halt, stand facing the horse’s shoulder so you can see the rider, the horse and the other volunteers.
- Always leave enough room for the Side Walkers along the fences and around obstacles.
- Trot the horse only when requested to do so by the Instructor. Check to see that the rider and side walkers are prepared for the trot! When trotting, keep the horse in a straight line and at an even pace. Stay level with the horse’s head so the Side Walker behind has room to run beside rider.
- No matter how careful we are, occasionally falls do happen. If a rider should fall, the handler must take care of the horse. A horse left unattended is an added danger.
- At the end of the ride ensure that the stirrups are run up and the reins are secured out of the way. If the rider is leading the horse back to his stall, stand on the opposite side ready to assist should the need arise.

Proper Leading Position:



Note that the leader is looking ahead to where she is going and not looking at the horse.

THE SIDE WALKER

A Side Walker's primary responsibility is to ensure the safety of the rider. The degree of assistance from the side walker will depend on the balance and the ability of the rider. Side Walkers can also help the Instructor in many other ways; i.e. keeping the rider's attention on the lesson, assisting in left/right directionality, spatial orientation, helping the rider understand the Instructor's directions and helping to keep the horse walking on.

Side Walker's Duties

- Assist the rider to mount or dismount if asked by the Instructor.
- Stay with the rider while mounted or in the barn area at all times.
- The Instructor will tell you what hold is appropriate for each student. Maintain that hold throughout the lesson.
- Walk beside the rider level with the rider's knee. Keep hands free, not in your pockets.
- If the rider starts to lose his/her balance, gently push him/her back into position. Give just enough support to help him/her regain the proper position in the saddle.
- Do not lean on the horses or hang on to the saddle or saddle pad.
- Keep conversation to a minimum during the lesson.
- Side Walkers who accompany poorly balanced riders need to change sides occasionally to relieve the stress on their arms. To change sides, ask the Leader to go off the track and halt. Once stopped, switch sides (one at a time) if two Side Walkers are present, and always going in front of the horse and the handler.
- Remind the rider to maintain correct posture (i.e. straight line between shoulder, hip and ankle and a straight line from elbow to hand, rein & bit) where possible.
- Help the rider to carry out instructions, giving the rider time to process the information. To give assistance, use hand over hand, but warn them that you are about to help and touch them.
- During the exercises, pay attention to your rider and assist only if necessary.
- In an emergency, follow Instructor's directions.
- At the end of the lesson stay with the rider and help him/her exit the ring and remove helmets and belts before returning to the supervision of their caregiver/parent.

Right Side Walker (Off side assist)

- When the rider is mounting, hold onto the stirrup leather and provide enough weight so that the saddle stays straight on the horse (counter weight!).
- Stay level with the rider on the off (right) side of the horse.
- Assist with exercises and movements involving the right side.
- Ensure that the rider's right foot is out of the stirrup before he/she dismounts.
- Be sure that you do not get too far behind the rider
- Sidewalkers are no longer helpful when they are not in the correct position relative to the rider
- Do not pet or concern yourself with the horse while you are side walking. It is the Leader's job to control the horse.
- Pay attention. Your responsibility is the rider.

Correct Sidewalker Position:



SUPPORTING THE RIDER

It is important that the Side Walkers apply support as directed by the Instructor. Different levels of support may be required depending on the activity or ability of the rider. The instructor will always tell you what type of support a rider needs!

Note that the Side Walker's hand is tucked under the saddle(Knee Support) with the thumb in line with the fingers. This will prevent the thumb from getting jammed, should the horse suddenly turn or stop.



Ankle Support



Knee Support



Thigh Support



Toe Support



Thigh and Ankle Support



Thigh and Toe Support

MOUNTING AND DISMOUNTING

The mounting and dismounting procedures can be as varied as the number of riders in a lesson. Wait for instructions. The Instructor must supervise all mounting and dismounting.

- Know the procedure used for each rider in mounting & dismounting.
- Only those people required to mount a rider should be on the block or ramp.

Various mounting techniques are:

- **Croup Mount**

The rider will mount, from the left side by putting their left foot in the left stirrup and swinging their right leg over the croup (hindquarters) of the horse. The Side Walker on the off side will hold and put weight on the stirrup leather to ensure that the saddle stays straight on the horse's back. The Side Walker will also assist the rider to lift his leg over the horse's back so he does not touch the horse with his leg.

- **Crest Mount**

The rider will be lifted onto the saddle sitting sideways facing the Instructor and Side Walker/caregiver. The Side Walker on the off side will support the rider during the mount and, with the assistance of the other Side Walker, support the rider's back while the Instructor brings one leg over the neck (crest) of the horse. This mount is useful for riders with tight adductors or poor balance who would have trouble mounting the conventional way.

- **Dismounting**

Before dismounting, ensure the rider's feet are out of both stirrups and the reins are secured on the horse's neck. Be ready to assist the rider to swing their leg clear of the horse's back.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The Instructor is responsible for riders and horses in the arena and on the trail. Volunteers and caregivers must answer to the Instructor. Please follow all directions and instructions as quickly and safely as possible, especially in an emergency situation.

IF A RIDER FALLS:

- The Leader will move the horse away from the rider to the centre of the arena unless instructed to do otherwise. The Side Walkers stay with the rider.
- All other riders will halt their horses and remain stationary until further instruction. Volunteers will remain with their assigned riders / horses and wait.
- DO NOT attempt to move the rider without direction from the Instructor in charge
- If the rider is unconscious or if back and neck injuries are suspected, the rider IS NOT TO BE MOVED (an ambulance must be called)
- If a rider is suspected of hitting their head, do not remove their helmet.
- The Instructor will ask the rest of the group to circle away from the incident.
- If the fall is not serious, the Instructor may decide to mount the rider again or may wait until a later date.
- In all cases the Instructor concerned must complete an INCIDENT REPORT.
- All incidents must be reported to the Health & Safety Officer and Executive Director as soon as possible. The input from the volunteers is important.

Infectious Disease and/or Outbreaks

Preventive Measures:

1. Protective Equipment:

- We are committed to providing a safe working environment. Employees are encouraged to use personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, goggles, face shields, masks, and hand sanitizers.
- WETRA will supply and maintain the necessary PPE to ensure its effectiveness in preventing the transmission of infectious diseases.

2. Hygiene Practices:

- All employees are expected to maintain high standards of personal hygiene. This includes regular handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or the use of hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- Proper respiratory etiquette, including covering the mouth and nose with a tissue or elbow when coughing or sneezing, is mandatory.

3. Social Distancing:

- Employees/Volunteers are encouraged to practice social distancing by maintaining a distance of at least six feet from others whenever possible when there are infectious disease guidelines set out by the health unit.
- Meetings and gatherings should be conducted virtually whenever feasible during infectious disease outbreak.

4. Sick Leave Policy:

- Employees who are feeling unwell or exhibiting symptoms of infectious diseases are required to stay home to prevent the potential spread of illness.
- To support this, WETRA will provide flexible sick leave policies to ensure that employees can take the time they need to recover without the fear of negative repercussions.

5. Cancellation of Work-related Activities:

- Employees and Volunteers are responsible for assessing their health before coming to the workplace or engaging in work-related activities.
- If an employee is feeling unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease, they are obligated to inform their supervisor immediately.
- If a volunteer is feeling unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease, they are obligated to inform the volunteer coordinator or, a staff member onsite by calling the main office.
- In the event of illness, employees and volunteers are encouraged to cancel or reschedule work-related activities, meetings, or events to prevent the potential spread of infection.

Reporting and Communication:

1. Immediate Reporting:

- Any employee or volunteer who tests positive for an infectious disease and has been at work should immediately inform their supervisor.

2. Confidentiality:

- All health-related information will be treated confidentially. However, employees are encouraged to share information relevant to safeguarding the health and safety of their colleagues.

Compliance:

- All employees and volunteers are expected to comply with this infectious disease policy.

Continuous Improvement:

- This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated in line with the latest guidelines from health authorities to ensure its continued effectiveness in preventing the spread of infectious diseases within our workplace.

By adhering to these guidelines, we aim to create a healthy and safe work environment for everyone associated with our organization. Your cooperation and commitment to these measures are crucial in maintaining the well-being of our community.

FIRE DRILL PROCEDURES

- 1.** On discovery of fire or smoke, immediately notify staff and/or others in the area making sure to advise of the location. Move quickly to a safe location and call for help. Follow the “In Case of Emergency” procedure listed by all phones.
- 2.** If classes are in progress, all riders will be dismounted following the Emergency Dismount Procedure and students will be evacuated to the shed by the driveway unless otherwise directed. This will be the responsibility of the side walkers. Horses being utilized at this time will be evacuated to the sand ring. This will be the responsibility of the leaders.
- 3.** If instructed to move horses, close all stall doors behind you as horses will attempt to escape back into their familiar stall even if it is in the fire. If you are unable to evacuate horses, open as many stall doors as possible in order to give them a opportunity to leave. This is only to be done if instructed to do so by staff.
- 4.** WETRA staff will communicate with emergency services to provide the number of individuals on site and who is accounted for.
- 5.** All personnel are responsible for knowing the fire procedures thoroughly.
- 6.** Fire drills will be carried out at least twice a year. Regular fire hazard inspections will be carried out on a routine basis. Any and all noted hazards are to be reported immediately.

7. Fire Extinguishers can be found on maps throughout the facility, be sure to familiarize yourself with all extinguisher locations. All exit doors are equipped with fire extinguishers.
8. Familiarize yourself with all exits, safety equipment and the locations of telephones.



POINTS TO REMEMBER...

- A relaxed and confident volunteer encourages the rider to be relaxed and confident too.
- Always pay attention. Inattention causes accidents.
- Progress is measured in months and years. Encourage and praise *effort*, just as much as the *action*.
- Relaxation and enjoyment go hand in hand with learning. Fatigue produces negative results. A change of activity is often helpful. Be flexible and note signs of change or discomfort.
- Treat each rider, regardless of disability, in a friendly respectful manner and expect appropriate behavior in return. Address questions and conversation to the riders. First give riders the opportunity to speak and make decisions for themselves. Caregivers/parents will fill in the blanks if required.
- Please report to staff any incidents of concern with horse behaviour.
- Read and understand the emergency procedures. Ask questions if there is any aspect of the program you do not understand. No question is foolish or insignificant.
- If you are cancelling, please remember to call our main office.
- If you are not happy with your volunteer assignment, please tell us. We would like you to derive satisfaction from your work. We value your time, dedication and enthusiasm and want you to enjoy your volunteer time as much as we enjoy having you here!



RIGHTS OF A VOLUNTEER

- The right to orientation and regular training sessions.
- The right to supervision.
- The right to be involved in planning some aspects of the program and evaluating the program.
- The right to be involved in evaluating their own performance.
- The right to be regarded as a person and accepted as an individual.
- The right to have a written job description.
- The right to be provided with the opportunity for varied experiences.
- The right to recognition.



NOTES:

HORSE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

A therapeutic horse must be kind, gentle and patient. They are the heart and soul of our program and take on the role of friend, teacher, confidante, and therapist. Maintaining their health and condition is important to the success of our program.

wetra
SPONSOR A HORSE

SPONSOR FOR A FULL YEAR OR HALF YEAR

- Recognition on the WETRA website and Facebook page
- A placard on the horse's stall door with your name or company name
- A photograph of your horse to display in your home or office
- An official receipt for tax purposes where donation qualifies
- A semi-annual update about the impactful work we are doing because of support from people like YOU!

FOR DETAILS, PLEASE CALL 519-726-7682 www.wetra.ca

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THERAPEUTIC RIDING

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