



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

SPECIAL EQUESTRIANS, INC.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Thank you for your interest in Special Equestrians	3
Volunteer Guidelines	4
Leader's Duties	5
Sidewalker's Duties	5
Mounting Procedure	6
Effective Sidewalking	7
Follow the Leader	8
Safety Rules and Regulations	9
Glossary of Terms	10
Disability Information	11
Grooming the Horse	13
Parts of the Horse, Parts of the Hoof	14
Saddle and Bridle Parts	15
Mounted Emergency Plan	16
Emergency Procedures	17
Map of SE with Evacuation Routes	Back Cover

This Volunteer Handbook is being lent to you to give you a clear understanding of the volunteer experience at Special Equestrians. After you have read this handbook, please return it to our office and **sign the checklist** to let us know that you have read the Volunteer Handbook.

Reading this handbook is **required** of all volunteers. If you would like to have your own copy to keep, you may download and print the Volunteer Handbook from our website,

www.specialequestrians.net.

Thank you for your interest in Special Equestrians!

We are a therapeutic riding program providing services to mentally and physically challenged persons in Lee, Charlotte, Hendry, and Glades Counties in Southwest Florida since 1987. An all volunteer self-administrative organization, the program is affiliated with the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship. The association's therapeutic teaching techniques and safety standards are adhered to in every aspect of the program.

What Does Horseback Riding Accomplish?

Doctors, therapists, instructors, and the disabled have become aware of the positive physical and mental benefits of horseback riding. The horse's movement provides the sensory input of a precise, repetitive pattern of movement very similar to the movement of a person's pelvis during normal human gait. The horse's center of gravity shifts forward, backward, up and down and side to side just as the human does. Riders have the four legs of the horse that they can direct as they wish, which conveys a sense of mobility and power not otherwise available to the physically and mentally challenged.

Additionally, muscle tone is improved through movements transmitted by the horse; and the body warmth of the horse aids muscle relaxation. Head and trunk postural control is encouraged and body symmetry (balance) is enhanced. The riding participants receive benefits relating to body awareness, spatial orientation, and endurance. Interestingly, there is also been found a beneficial effect on digestion. Contact with the horse demands constantly changing, adaptive responses and automatic self-correction by the rider resulting in increased responsiveness and adaptability.

The horse is a social creature that will readily bond with people. If you are kind to him, he will be kind to you. He will respond to you without caring if you can walk or talk; he does not care if your body works. He will love you because you are kind. That's all he needs. A rider's bonding with the horse can provide the motivation to do dramatic things. A ten year old autistic boy who had never spoken joined a riding program. After several months of riding, he was waiting in line for his turn and someone cut in front of him. In a very strong voice he said, "It's my turn." This wonderful moment was the beginning of his entry into the speaking world.

The lessons that we provide will help the students to gain self-confidence and self esteem. The horse will motivate the riders to strive for higher goals. The motivation that the riders achieve through their lessons frequently will carry over into their everyday lives and make their world a happier place.

How Can You Help?

Special Equestrians cannot exist without volunteers. Our fund-raising efforts and nominal charge to riding participants does not cover the costs of maintaining our horses. We are grateful for our volunteers and we depend on them to run our program.

If you are comfortable around horses, we have many ways for you to contribute. You can groom and tack up the horses, lead the horses, be a sidewalker, or help maintain the stable area. We also have office work, fund-raising, and special events for those volunteers who do not want to work directly with the horses. Whatever direction you choose will be unique and rewarding. Join our team and share the joy!

Volunteer Guidelines

Volunteers are the backbone of our program. Without you and the hours you put into Special Equestrians, we would not be able to provide these special opportunities to our participants. Thank you.

PATH, Intl. (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship) provides us with national accreditation and guidelines of operations to encourage safety for you and our participants. Always be alert and think safety. Please don't be offended if the instructor offers comments or suggestions. The safety of our riding participants is paramount to the success of our program.

Please remember that although our horses are very trustworthy, strange situations can cause panic. Cameras with flashes, shrill voices and sudden moves by people or other horses can cause problems. Always approach the horse from the side rather than directly from the rear. This enables the horse to anticipate your arrival. Talk calmly to the animal as you approach. If you walk behind a horse, be well away and talk as you walk. There should not be groups standing and chatting around the horses.

Only one parent/guardian is allowed with the rider when they go on the mounting ramp. Siblings, friends, and visitors must stay in the viewing area. Volunteers should remain in the viewing area, except when performing a specific duty.

1. You must be at least 14 years old, with horse experience or the willingness to learn.
2. You should be physically fit and able to trot along with a student in a lesson. If you cannot, trot, please let the instructor or the volunteer coordinator.
3. It is wise to keep your tetanus shots up to date.
4. Please wear closed shoes and neat comfortable clothes. Do not wear dangling jewelry as it is unsafe to wear with some participants. Do not wear heavy perfume since it may attract bees or other biting insects.
5. You will receive orientation and training to explain the safety and procedural rules of the program.
6. You will need to fill out an application form and the emergency medical treatment form before you begin your work.
7. Volunteers should be able to do the following:
 - Work cooperatively with all of our personnel.
 - Arrive on time and give advance notice by calling our office (226-1221), if you are unable to make your scheduled time.
 - Accept full responsibility for any task you undertake and follow it through to its conclusion.
 - Grow and learn and HAVE FUN.
8. We would like our volunteers to look at their involvement with Special Equestrians as a professional responsibility. We are interested in your opinions, comments, and input. We want this to be a collaborative effort, as you are a very important part of Special Equestrians.
9. We expect you to be very careful about the confidential nature of many things in our program. Never discuss our students' disabilities with outsiders. Be honest about your feelings and sensitive to others' feelings. Above all, be yourself.

Leaders Duties:

The leader's responsibility is the horse. He must be in control of the horse at all times. If there is an emergency, it is the leader's job to stay with the horse, and not rush to help a fallen rider since a loose horse in the arena may create a dangerous situation. Lead the horse from horse's left side, walking alongside his head. Do not try to drag the horse; he obviously weighs more than you. If he is slow, cluck and encourage him. Trotting the horse should only be done on the direction of the instructor.

Hold the lead rope 12-18 inches from the horse's head, keeping the slack folded up your left hand. Do not trail the leftover lead line along the ground. Do not wrap it around your hand or arm. If the horse should panic and pull away from you, let go of the lead with hand closest to his head, and talk calmly to him, maintaining the lead line in your left hand. Sometimes just taking the tension away from their head will help calm a horse.

When stopped, turn and face the horse, standing directly in front of but not touching the horse's face. This discourages the horse from taking a step or two when the rider and sidewalkers are not prepared. When leading, always look where you are going, not back at the rider. If you trip or fall, no one is left in control of the horse. Always keeps a good distance from other horses in the arena to avoid collision or possibly someone being kicked. Try to let riders do most the steering, if they are able. If they can steer and halt the horse on their own, it gives them pride and a feeling of achievement.

When going through gates, near fences or around cones or barrels, remember your sidewalkers. Don't squash them and don't force them out of their assigned positions.

One last thing to remember is that the leader does not give instructions to the rider. This is done by the instructor and the sidewalkers. The leader is aware of what is happening with the rider in case of emergencies, but the leader is there to handle the horse.

Sidewalkers Duties:

Sidewalkers are responsible for the rider. Handholds for the sidewalkers will be demonstrated. Some riders need more support than others, and in fact some can ride without the assistance of sidewalkers. Do not have a general conversation with the leader or the other sidewalker. The rider is your prime concern. Extraneous conversation will leave the rider feeling left out and unimportant. Please include the rider in any conversations you have.

If you are in a class group, make sure the rider is paying attention to the riding instructor. If the rider drops the reins or lets them go too long, help or encourage them to gather the reins properly. When the rider gets ready to trot, the sidewalker may have to remind the rider to take hold of the special strap that is attached to the front of the saddle. Make sure that the rider's feet are in the stirrups before you begin the trot, unless the rider has been told by the instructor to ride without stirrups.

Mounting Procedure:

Special Equestrians is very fortunate to have a regulation mounting ramp and second barrier for mounting our riders. The rider is brought up the ramp by a parent or a caretaker to the instructor or trained personnel.

When instructed by the trained personnel on the ramp, the leader begins leading the horse into the mounting area between the mounting ramp and the second barrier. The leader must lead the horse straight into the mounting area, so that the horse is close to the mounting side (left side) of the ramp.

Do not hold the horse by the bridle. If the horse throws its head up, allow some slack in the lead line and do not tug or pull until the horse is calm. The horses have been to the ramp many times, but it is strange for them to see humans at or above their eye level, therefore care should be exercised during the mounting process.

The leader should stand in front of the horse, to discourage its moving forward during the mount, talking to the horse to encourage cooperation. The person (loader) on the ramp is there to assist the rider in mounting. After the rider is mounted, at the command of the person assisting the rider to mount, move the horse forward slowly and stay next to the ramp. This allows the loader to step down to ground level as the horse moves forward and turn responsibility over to the sidewalker on the left side of the horse. Final adjustment of the stirrups can then be in the arena before the ride begins. Do not attempt to adjust the stirrups while horse is next to the ramp or mounting block.

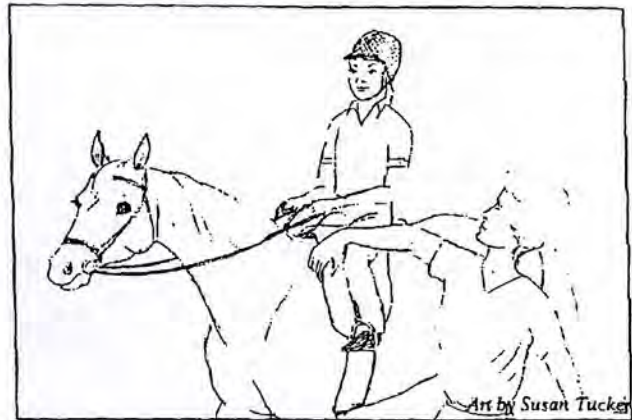
Only trained volunteers and the instructor are permitted to mount riders. Some small children may be lifted onto the horse by the trained personnel. Other riders will mount from the ramp level with the help of the trained personnel. On rainy days, a smaller mounting block may be placed inside the arena during the mounting of the riders.

Effective Sidewalking

By Susan Tucker and Molly Lingua, R.P.T.

Sidewalkers are the ones who normally do the most hands-on duties in therapeutic riding. They are directly responsible for the rider. As such, they have the capability to either enhance or detract from the lesson.

In the arena, the sidewalker should help the student focus his attention on the instructor. Try to avoid unnecessary talking with either the rider or other volunteers. Too much input from too many directions is very confusing to anyone, and to riders who have perceptual problems, it can be very overwhelming. If two sidewalkers are working with one student, one should be the designated talker to avoid this situation.



When the instructor gives a direction, allow your student plenty of time to process it. If the instructor says "Turn to the right toward me," and the rider seems confused tap the right hand and say "right" to reinforce the command. You will get to know the riders and learn when they need help and when they're not paying attention.

It's important to maintain a position by the rider's knee. Being too far forward or back will make it difficult to assist with instructions or provide security if the horse should trip or shy.

There are two ways to hold onto the rider without interfering. The most common used is the "arm-over-thigh" hold. The sidewalker grips the front of the saddle with hand closet to the rider. Then the fleshy part of the forearm rests gently on the rider's thigh. Be careful that the elbow doesn't accidentally dig into the rider's leg.

Sometimes pressure on the leg can increase muscle spastically, especially with the cerebral palsy population. In this case, the "therapeutic hold" may be used. Here, the leg is held at the joints, usually the knee or ankle. Check with the instructor for the best way to assist. In the event of an emergency the arm-over-thigh hold is the most secure.

Avoid wrapping an arm around the rider's waist. It is tempting, especially when walking beside a pony with a young or small rider, but it can offer too much and uneven support. At times, it can pull the rider off balance and make riding more difficult. Encourage your student to use their own trunk muscles to the best of their abilities.

If the instructor chooses to use a safety belt on your rider, be careful not to pull down or push up on it. As your arm tires it's hard to avoid this, so rather than gripping the handle firmly, just touch your thumb and finger together around it. This way you are in position to assist the rider if needed, but you will neither give unneeded support nor pull him off balance. When you are ready for relief of your arm, ask the leader to stop and trade sides, one at a time, with the other sidewalker.

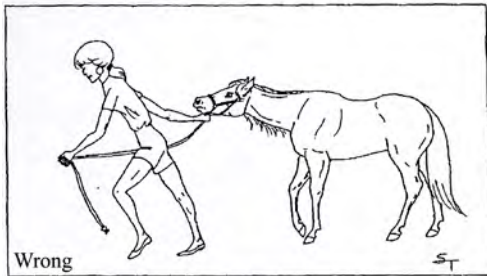
During exercises, pay attention to your student. Sometimes volunteers forget that the riders are to do exercises and the sidewalkers are to reinforce and assist. The same applies to games. Don't get so competitive that your rider doesn't get to use his skills because you do it for him in an all out effort to win. The ultimate goal for therapeutic riding is to encourage the rider to stretch and grow to be as normal as he can possibly be. You are right at his side, so help the instructor to challenge him to the best of his ability.

Follow the Leader -By Susan F. Tucker, PATH, Intl. Accreditation Committee

As a volunteer, one of the most challenging duties you could be assigned is the position of leader. A leader's first responsibility is the horse but must also constantly be aware of the rider, instructor, and any potential hazards in or around the arena. In addition, you must also consider the sidewalkers, making sure there is enough room along the fence and around obstacles for them to pass.

An effective leader pays close attention to the rider's needs as well as to where the horse is going. This reinforces the rider's attempts to control the horse. However, you should not execute an instruction for the rider before he has enough time to process the information and make an effort to comply. Sometimes it may be appropriate to walk into the corner and stand until the student figures out what to do.

Avoid the temptation to talk to the rider or sidewalkers. A rider may become confused by too much input and not know who's in charge. (Instructors often make terrible leaders because they can't keep their mouths shut.)

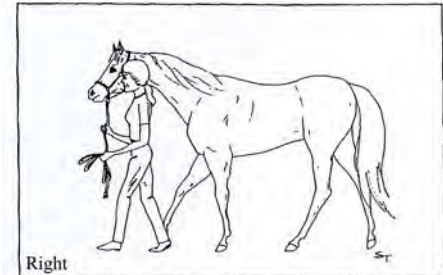


The first picture depicts a few faults common among leaders. Here is a leader grimly marching along -head down, one hand on the lead snap, the other inside the coiled end of the rope-dragging a strung out horse. In a battle with a horse, you lose. You must get the horse to cooperate. Walk alongside the horse, about even with his eye. This helps keep him in a proper frame, which is more beneficial for everyone.

Talk to the horse; most of them know the words "whoa," "walk," and "trot," or can learn the words. Watch where you're going and what's happening around you. Do not walk backward to look at the rider. It's dangerous for everyone and the horse isn't eager to follow someone who can't see where he is going.

The next picture shows the correct position for leaders. The lead rope is held with the right hand 12-18 inches from the snap, allowing free motion of the horse's head. This is more therapeutic to the rider and less irritating to the horse.

The tail end of the lead should be looped in a figure eight in the left hand to avoid tripping on it. Never coil the rope around your hand. That could end a close relationship with your fingers!



Try not to pull on the horse to keep him moving. If you have to use a tug, use a short tug rather than a steady pull. The horse can set himself against a steady pull.

When you halt for more than a few seconds, stand in front of the horse with your hands on/ or near the halter's cheek pieces (if the horse permits) or loosely hold the lead or reins. Standing in front is a psychological barrier to the horse and he will stand more quietly than if he has an easy chance to move out. If you like your thumbs, don't put them through the snaffle or halter rings. (This is considered the "HALT" position. You can see the entire environment around the horse and rider, and can easily see if any situation needs to be corrected. If something needs to be corrected please mention to the instructor and have the instructor change the situation.)

If the worst happens and there is an accident, stay with the horse. There are other people to care for a fallen rider. The situation could easily become more dangerous if there are loose horses running around the arena. Move your horse as far from the fallen student as possible and keep calm. Listen for the instructor's directions.

These suggestions can help you control your horse, be a good aide to a rider and be a valuable assistant to an instructor. You will provide real therapeutic input to your rider, as well as make it safe for them to have fun riding. In short, if you lead, we'll be happy to follow.

Safety Rules and Regulations

In order for Special Equestrians to protect its participants and visitors, as well as for insurance purposes, we request that you follow this set of rules. These rules are designed to ensure the safety of our participants, parents, visitors, volunteers and staff. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. The instructor requires your complete attention at all times. In case of emergency, everyone will follow the directions given by the Instructor.
2. Please drive **very slowly** as you drive down the road into Special Equestrians. There are humans and horses walking on and beside the road.
3. DO NOT WALK BEHIND THE HORSES.
4. Only the Instructors and trained Staff will handle the mounting and dismounting of riders.
5. Only the Instructors and trained Staff will bridle and unbridle the horses.
6. Riders and parents may not enter the stable area unless they are accompanied by a volunteer or staff member.
7. Riders must wear safety helmets, long pants and closed-toe hard-soled shoes or boots. Helmets must be worn when riding and around the horses.
8. Do not feed the horses grass, carrots, apples, etc. unless you have permission from the instructor.
9. Children are not allowed to play on the mounting ramp, mounting blocks, gates, fences, or in the ditches.
10. No running, shouting and/or horseplay allowed.
11. No chewing of gum when riding horses.
12. Parents, Caregivers and Guests must stay in the viewing area, unless they are going to the bathroom, or accompanied by a volunteer or staff member.
13. Riders will stay in the viewing area until it is their time to ride. They will be taken up the ramp for mounting by the Instructor or trained Staff.
14. All riders are to be supervised by their caregivers or parents until handed over to the Staff.
15. No pets are allowed on the property.
16. The swimming pool area is off limits.
17. **Smoking is permitted only in the privacy of your car. Please do not drop butts on the ground.**
18. **Please obey all signs. They are there for your safety.**

Glossary of Terms:

ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT: Riding equipment which has been developed or changed to allow a physically disabled person to ride.

BACKRIDING: When two people ride a horse together. Sometimes an instructor will ride with a student who feels insecure.

BENDING POLES: Poles which stand upright and are used for reining and other exercises.

DISABILITY: Any failure of function or skill.

GROUND POLES: Heavy poles placed on the ground for students to ride over.

HIPPOTHERAPY: Treatment on horse back done by a physical therapist trained in the theory of hippotherapy. "Hippo" means horse in Greek.

IMPAIRMENT: Loss of psychological, physical, or anatomical structure or function.

LEADER: A person who has training in horsemanship skills and knows the psychological and physical needs of the horse. This person leads the horse in the lesson.

LONGE: The horse is attached to a long line and made to go in a circle around a person standing in the middle of the arena. This is used in riding and vaulting. The person longeing the horse controls him so that the person riding can concentrate exclusively on his/her riding skills.

PATH, INTL. (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship): A national organization which accredits and oversees riding programs.

PARALYSIS: Temporary or permanent loss of function.

SIDEWALKER: A person who has been trained to help the rider. This person walks next to the horse at the rider's side and may assist the rider with balance and provide necessary security. There may be one or two sidewalkers.

SPOTTER: Person who stands at the opposite side of the horse during mounting and dismounting. Spotters may also be spaced around the arena to help with any problems that may arise.

SURCINGLE: A belt or girth of leather that goes around the horse behind the withers. There are two handles on the surcingle to provide stability for the rider.

TACK: Equipment worn by the horse.

VAULTING: Gymnastics done on horseback.

Disability Information:

APHASIA: A difficulty in speaking often found in stroke victims. This is a language disorder in which the processing of words is interrupted, sometimes resulting in confusion and misunderstanding.

AUTISM: A neurological disorder which produces the following characteristics:

- Preoccupation with self; may not relate to people.
- Avoids eye contact, has delayed or no social smile.
- Communication dysfunction; lack of speech or unusual speech patterns.
- Normal physical development.
- Perseveration: tends to get "stuck" in an action, becomes obsessed with something such as a possession, rocking, spinning an object, etc.
- Echolalia: repeating words or phrases which have just been heard.
- Can be very adept at specific skills.
- Function can vary from hour to hour.
- Can exist in conjunction with other problems created by organic brain disorders.

BLIND OR PARTIALLY SIGHTED: Blindness may be the result of birth defects, disease, or injury. The blind have extra strong senses of hearing, smell, touch, and taste.

CEREBRAL PALSY: A non-aggressive disorder of movement or posture beginning in childhood. The cause of this malfunction or damage to the brain usually results from problems occurring during pregnancy or at the time of birth. Every effort should be made to improve muscle movement, as this helps to prevent the wasting away of muscle tissue. There are several types of cerebral palsy:

- Spastic: Limb muscles are tight, making smooth movements difficult. The rider cannot regulate the amount of movement or tension the arm or leg produces.
- Rigid: There is extreme stiffness. The rider displays excessive muscle tightness with little ability to move or bend.
- Ataxia: There is a lack of balance, a lack of position sense in space, and uncoordinated movement.
- Tremor: Shakiness or limb involved.

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING: Deafness may be the result of birth defects, disease, or injury. Communication with deaf students occurs through signing or lip reading.

DOWN SYNDROME: A birth defect which can manifest in soft and floppy muscles; loose joints; unusually formed hips, small hand and fingers; poor balance; and below normal intelligence.

EPILEPSY: A brain disorder which causes seizures. Generally seizures can be controlled with medication. The two most common forms are:

- Grand mal. The student may exhibit rapid and repeated motor activity or jerking. The jerking can involve the whole body or just one limb. These can be with or without losing consciousness. Incontinence is also possible.
- Petit mal. These attacks usually only last several seconds and can frequently be overlooked initially as if the student is daydreaming. The eyes may stare and a slight twitching of the face may occur.

LEARNING DISABILITY: Dysfunction of the brain caused by interference with the normal process of storing, processing, and producing information. Students with learning disabilities may have short attention spans and become easily frustrated.

MENTAL RETARDATION: A disorder due to brain damage or genetic disorders. Difficulties that result can be seen in mobility, vision, hearing, speech, understanding, judgment, and behavior.

MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY: A genetic disease marked by progressive weakening of the muscles. Intelligence is in the normal range.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS: A progressive disease of the nervous system. There are lesions in the myelin shafts of the nerves in the brain and spinal cord. This can cause unsteadiness, dizziness, spasticity of the arms and legs. Speech can become slurred and vision impaired.

STROKE (CVA): A cerebrovascular accident is caused by an interruption of the brain blood supply, generally effecting one side of the brain, which causes impairment to the opposite side of the body.

These are very brief descriptions of some of the conditions you may observe in our students. If you have questions or want more information about a specific condition please ask the instructor.

Grooming the Horse

TOOLS:

Rubber Curry: Usually shaped like an oval or circle, has soft rubber "teeth".

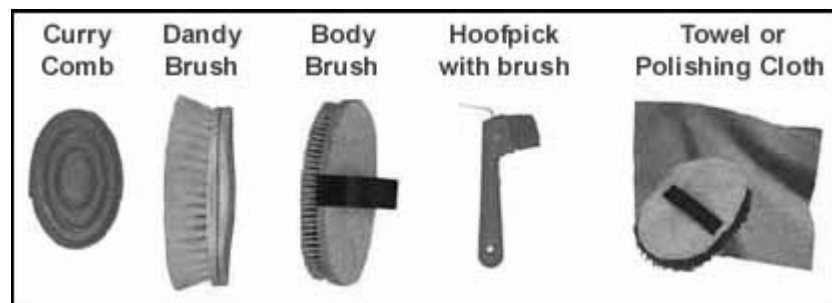
Dandy Brush: Stiff bristled brush.

Body Brush: Soft bristled brush usually made of horse hair.

Hoof Pick/Brush: The hoof pick/brush combo can be found at most tack stores.

Mane Comb: Plastic is used, as it is less likely to break the hairs.

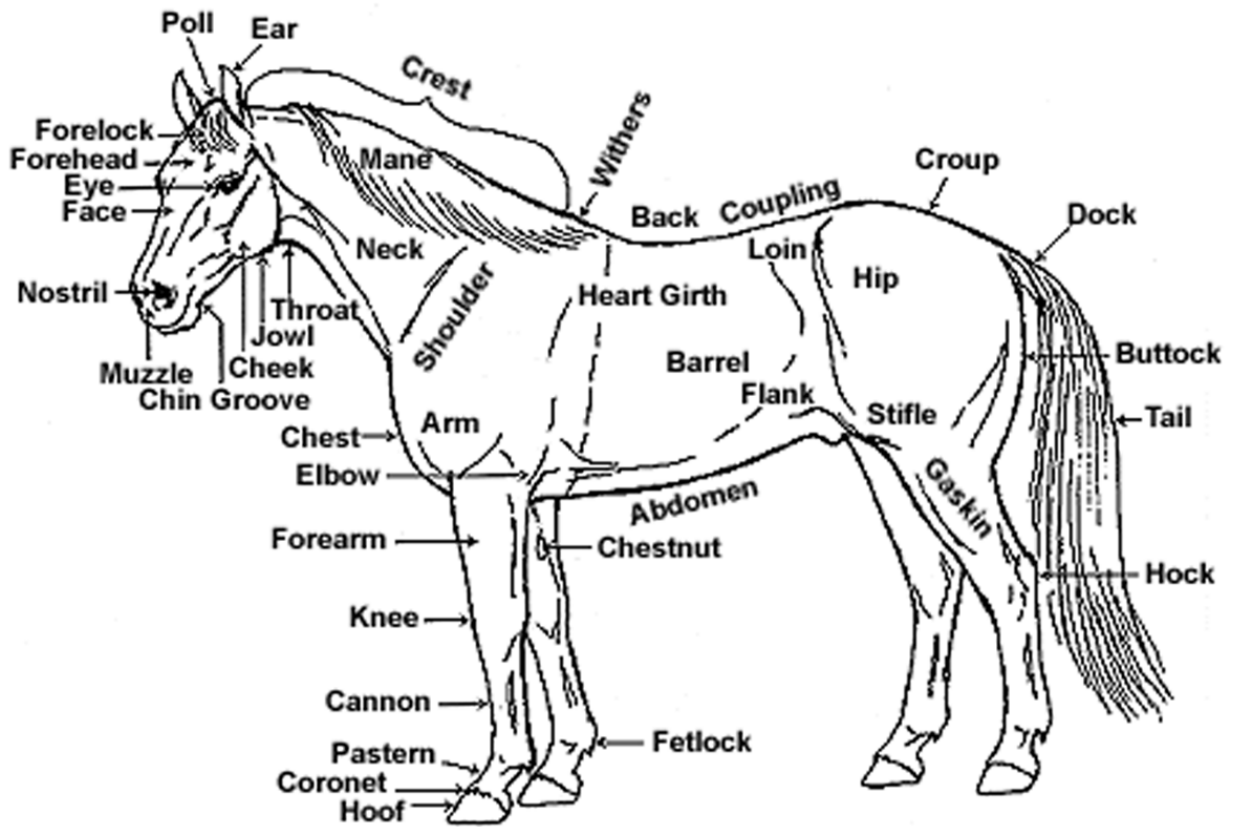
Towel: Polishing towel/rag helps remove sweat marks and gives the coat a nice shine after brushing.



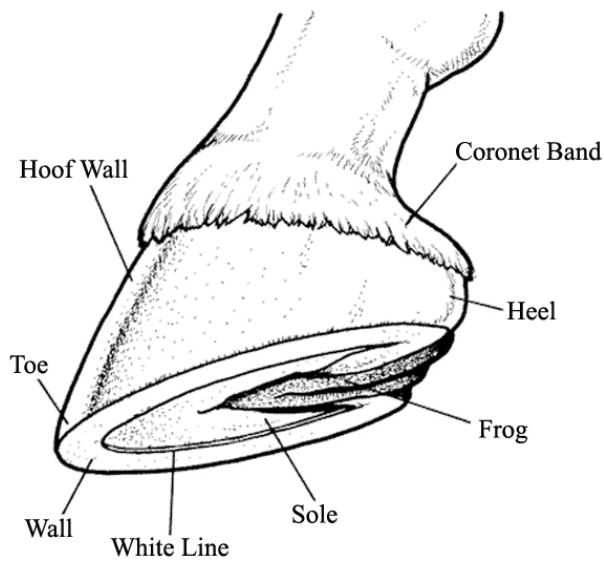
Grooming:

When grooming a horse, start at the top of his neck and work your way to his rear, then switch sides and repeat.

1. Start with the Rubber Curry. The rubber curry should be used in a circular motion to loosen dirt that has settled under the horse's hair. NOTE: be very careful and gentle around bony areas of your horse's body (such as his back or shoulders). Don't use a Rubber Curry on your horse's legs unless you can be extremely gentle with it. Never use a Curry or any stiff brush on your horse's face. It's too easy for your horse to injure his eye on the rubber curry or stiff bristled brush.
2. Next, use the Dandy Brush. The motion for this brush is like the same motion you would use when sweeping a floor. You 'flick' the brush away and up from the coat so that the dirt comes off of his coat.
3. Then, you use the Body Brush. The body brush is meant to smooth down the hair and to get rid of any traces of left-over dirt after you have thoroughly used the Dandy Brush. With the Body Brush, you do not use a 'flicking' motion; instead, you smooth it flat over the horse's coat to flatten the hair.
4. Next, use the Mane Comb (or Brush) to gently comb the horse's mane. Use the Dandy Brush to brush the horse's tail. Many people use the comb to brush their horse's tails, but we don't use a comb since it breaks the hairs more easily. If you want the horse to grow a long, flowing tail, you can use the Dandy brush or the Mane Comb.
5. You should first have an experienced volunteer show you how to pick up a horse's feet. Usually, this can be done by running your hand down your horse's leg, then gently squeezing his fetlock (ankle). When you use the hoof pick, always scrape away from you, just as you would if you were using a carrot peeler. You don't want to accidentally injure yourself or your horse if he suddenly moves or pulls his foot away. It is important to thoroughly clean out the hollow areas on both sides of the frog, and around the sole of the foot.



Parts of the Horse

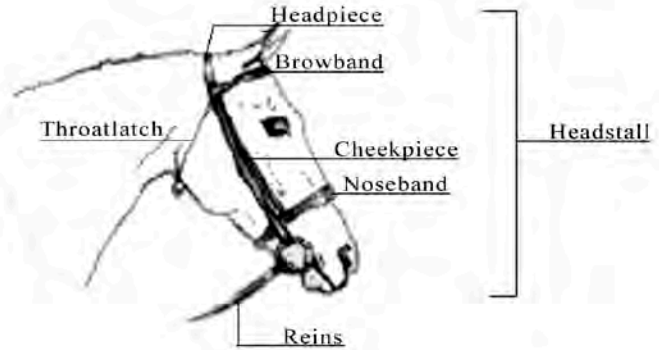


Parts of the Hoof

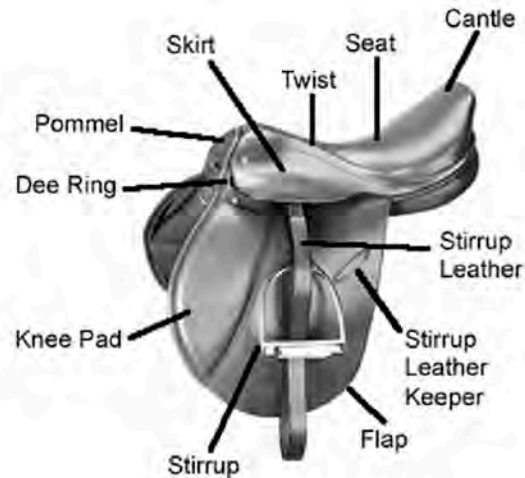
Saddle and Bridle Parts

Special Equestrians uses different kinds of tack (equipment for saddling and bridling a horse), depending on needs of the horse and rider. Here are three of the most common types of tack used at our center.

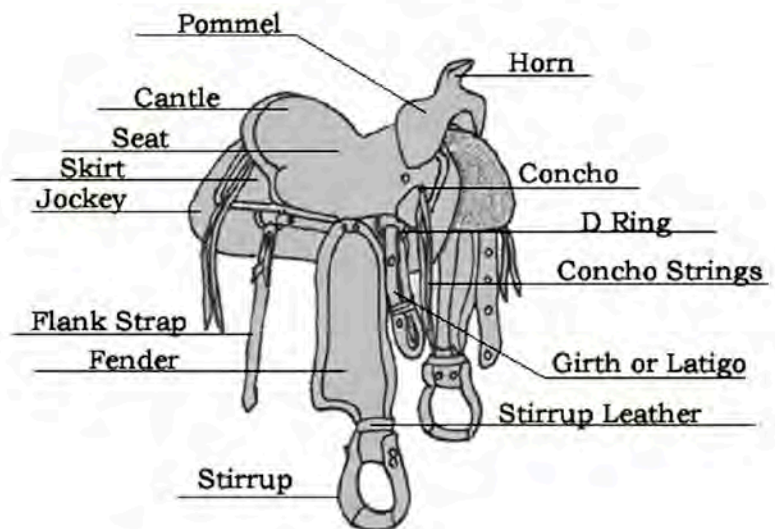
Bridle



English Saddle



Western Saddle



MOUNTED ACTIVITY EMERGENCY PLAN

The instructor will call “HEADS UP.”

1. All Horses will be halted.
2. All Leaders will position themselves in front of the horses.
3. All Sidewalkers will stabilize their riders.
4. The Instructor will supervise dismounting procedures verbally or personally.
5. If circumstances call for the arena to be evacuated, the riders will be escorted out first by their volunteers and the horses will be removed by their leaders to an appropriate place, after the riders are out of danger.
6. The Instructor will determine if medical personnel are required and will request assistance in contacting specific personnel.

Emergency Procedures for Health and Safety Concerns

I. Natural Hazards Specific to our Site

A. Animal Bites

Policy:

Domestic pets cause most animal bites, with dogs more likely to bite than cats. Cat bites, however, are more likely to cause infection. Bites from non-immunized domestic animals and wild animals carry the risk of rabies. Rabies is common in raccoons, skunks, bats and foxes; rabbits and squirrels rarely harbor rabies.

Procedure:

1. If the bite barely breaks the skin, treat it as a minor wound.
2. Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water.
3. Cover it with a clean bandage.
4. Call 911 if the wound is deep or bleeding heavily.
5. If the bite creates a deep puncture of the skin or the skin is badly torn and bleeding, cover the wound with clean gauze and a roller bandage, apply pressure to stop the bleeding and elevate if it is an arm or a leg.
6. If you suspect the bite was caused by an animal from a wild or domestic animal of unknown immunization status, call 911 immediately.

B. Snake Bite

Policy:

Most snakes in are not poisonous. A few exceptions include the rattlesnake, coral snake, water moccasin and copperhead. Most poisonous snakes have slit like eyes. Their heads are triangular, with a depression or pit midway between the eyes and nostrils on both sides of the head. Some nonpoisonous snakes, however, also have slit like eyes. A snake identification booklet is kept in the Special Equestrians office.

Procedure:

1. Check the scene, see if the snake is able to be identified, but do not capture it.
2. Call 911.
3. Wash the wound, immobilize the injured area, and keep it lower than the heart.
4. Don't cut the wound or attempt to remove the venom.

C. Stinging Insect Bites

Policy:

Stinging insects can include fire ants, wasps, yellow jackets, and bees. A normal response to an insect sting results in swelling, pain, and redness around the site of the sting or bite. When a person is allergic to an insect sting, he or she is susceptible to the effects of anaphylaxis, which can include:

- Itching and hives over much of the body
- Swelling in the throat or tongue
- Difficulty breathing or swallowing
- Dizziness, severe headache
- Stomach cramps, nausea, or diarrhea
- Rapid fall in blood pressure
- Shock and loss of consciousness

Procedure:

1. If the bite reaction seems normal, apply baking soda paste or calamine lotion to the bite.
2. If the bite response results in symptoms described above for anaphylaxis, call 911 immediately.

D. Spider Bites/Scorpion Stings

Policy:

There are only two spiders in the United States whose bite can make you seriously sick or can be fatal-the black widow and the brown recluse. Both of these spiders are found in our area. Only a few species of scorpions have a sting that can cause death.

Procedure:

1. Wash the wound
2. Apply an ice pack.
3. Get medical help immediately.

E. Slippery Ground/Rain Puddles

Policy:

Special Equestrians is constantly improving its property to avoid low areas and to keep its walkways safe and navigable. Personnel, Participants, and Staff need to help protect themselves against possible falls by wearing sturdy shoes or boots with non-slip bottoms, and trying to avoid new puddles from recent or sudden storms.

Procedure:

1. If a person falls, and they feel that they cannot get up, 911 will be called.
2. Basic first aid procedures will be followed until 911 arrives.

F. HEAT RELATED EMERGENCIES

Policy:

In Florida, heat related emergencies are a common problem which can occur during much of the year. If a participant becomes overheated, they will be dismounted and taken out of the arena safely. Water is available during the program days and participants are encouraged to drink water on hot days. It's also very important to drink water before you come to avoid dehydration and other heat related emergencies.

Procedure:

Heat Cramp

- Painful muscle spasms, usually in the legs and abdomen.

First Aid:

1. Have the victim move to a cool place.
2. Give cool water to drink
3. Have the victim lightly stretch the muscle and gently massage the area.

Heat Exhaustion

- Cool, moist, pale, flushed, or ashen skin
- Headache, nausea, dizziness
- Weakness, exhaustion

First Aid:

1. Move the victim to a cooler environment
2. Loosen or remove clothing.
3. Fan the victim.
4. Get the victim into circulating air while applying water with a cloth or sponge.
5. If the victim is conscious, give small amounts of cool water to drink.
6. If the victim's condition does not improve or if you suspect heat stroke, call 911.

Heat Stroke

- A change in the level of consciousness
- High body temperature
- Red, hot skin that can be either dry or moist
- Rapid or weak pulse
- Rapid or shallow breathing

First Aid:

Call 911.

Give care until help arrives by following the care steps above for heat exhaustion.

II. Man-Made Hazards Specific to the Site

A. Construction Activities

Policy:

During program days, construction activities may be going on, as we continue to improve our facility and our property. Volunteers, personnel, and participants need to stay clear of any construction activities at the facility. Signs are posted as a reminder for volunteers, personnel, and participants.

Procedure:

If an injury is sustained by anyone involving any construction activity, the following first aid procedure will be followed.

1. Stay calm.
2. Instructor will secure area and attend to victim.
3. After assessment is made, instructor will instruct staff to call 911 if necessary.
4. Basic First Aid/CPR procedures will be followed.

B. Facility Machinery and Equipment

Policy:

There is a presence of machinery and grounds maintenance equipment at the facility. The tractor, the lawnmower, the golf cart, the utility vehicle and all grounds maintenance equipment are used by Special Equestrians personnel to for facility maintenance and program activities. The maintenance equipment is off limits to participants and unauthorized personnel. Participants are not allowed near the golf cart, unless they are being driven by authorized personnel, and have permission to get in the golf cart. Only authorized personnel are allowed to operate tractor, the lawn mower, the golf cart and utility cart.

Procedure:

If an injury is sustained by anyone involving any of the above mentioned machinery, the following first aid procedure will be followed.

1. Stay calm.
2. Instructor will secure area and attend to victim.
3. After assessment is made, instructor will instruct staff to call 911 if necessary.
4. Basic First Aid/CPR procedures will be followed.

C. Drainage Ditches

Policy:

Drainage ditches run the length of the property to allow the property to drain during rainy season. Volunteers and participants are instructed to stay away from, and out of, drainage ditches.

Signs are posted warning people to stay away from the drainage ditches.

Procedure:

If an injury is sustained by person falling into or near a drainage ditch, the following first aid procedure will be followed.

1. Stay calm.
2. Instructor will secure area and attend to victim.
3. After assessment is made, instructor will instruct staff to call 911 if necessary.
4. Basic First Aid/CPR procedures will be followed.

D. Electric Tape Fencing

Policy:

Electric fencing is used on the property to keep the horses secure in their pastures. This fencing has signs on the electric tape fencing, warning people not to touch it.

Procedure:

If an injury is sustained by anyone who touches the electric tape fencing, the following first aid procedure will be followed.

1. Stay calm.
2. Instructor will secure area and attend to victim.
3. After assessment is made, instructor will instruct staff to call 911 if necessary.
4. Basic First Aid/CPR procedures will be followed.

E. Road Through Center of Property

Policy:

A paved road runs lengthwise through the center of the property. It is the entrance and exit road for all persons who come to Special Equestrians. There is a 5 mile per hour speed limit on this road. Signs are posted. Children are not allowed to play on this road. Parents and caregivers are instructed to keep children and participants off this road unless they are crossing the road with a parent or caregiver. Signs are posted.

Procedure:

If an individual is struck by a car entering or leaving the property, the following first aid procedure will be followed:

1. Stay calm.
2. Instructor, or designated person trained in First Aid, will secure area & attend to victim.
3. After assessment is made, 911 will be called, if necessary.
4. Basic First Aid/CPR procedures will be followed.

F. Swimming Pool

Policy:

There is a swimming pool located behind the caretaker/office house on the SE property. This swimming pool is off-limits to participants, volunteers, and their families. There are designated volunteers who maintain the pool and have access to the pool for the purpose of pool maintenance. Off-limits signs are posted.

Procedure:

If an injury is sustained by anyone who is injured in or around the swimming pool, the following first aid procedure will be followed.

1. Stay calm.
2. Instructor, or designated person trained in First Aid, will secure area and attend to victim.
3. After assessment is made, instructor will instruct staff to call 911 if necessary. Basic First Aid/CPR procedures will be followed

III. Operations of Facilities and/or Equipment

A. Loss of Power

Policy:

If a power failure occurs, Special Equestrians will contact Florida Power and Light. The phone number is below.

Procedure:

1. Notify the stable committee or an instructor of the problem.
2. If there is a true power outage and FPL needs to be called by our staff, they will need the address of the farm as given below.

FPL phone number for emergencies: 800-468-8243

Address of the facility: 5121 Staley Road, Fort Myers, Florida 33905

B. Loss of Water

Policy:

Special Equestrians will take certain steps if loss of water occurs, as water is necessary for the health of our horses.

Procedure:

1. If loss of water occurs, notify the stable committee. It is possible that the water has been temporarily turned off due to construction activities. If there is a true water outage, the stable committee will take care of the problem.
2. If the water will not be turned on for an extended period of time, water will be transported from the water troughs or other outside sources to the horses buckets. Alternately, the horses can be turned out in their turnout areas to have access to the water troughs.

C. Electrocutation

Policy:

Electrocutation is a serious and potentially life-threatening situation and will be handled in a calm and expeditious manner.

Procedure:

1. Stay calm. Area should be immediately secured and checked for safety. If the circuit breaker box can be safely reached, all circuit breakers should be switched to the off position.
2. Staff will quietly and quickly direct removal of all people and horses from the area.
3. Staff will call or direct someone to call 911 immediately.
4. Instructor, or one of the personnel who is certified in First Aid and CPR, will attend to the victim until EMT arrives. Basic First Aid/CPR procedures will be followed.

IV. Disasters such as Hurricane, Tornado, Thunderstorm, Fire, Flood

A. Hurricane and Tornado

Policy:

The hurricane plan for our stable is dictated by Special Equestrians. Identification straps will be attached around each horse's neck or the horses' name and our phone number will be written on the horse with a livestock marker. Breakaway halters will be put on the horses.

Procedure:

Horses

1. Store at least one week supply of food in an airtight water-proof container.
2. Fill all water troughs and any large vessels with water, enough for one week.
3. Include extra buckets and halters w/leads in disaster supplies.
4. Have at least 2 week's supply of any medications regularly used.
5. Check Horse First Aid Kit to make sure it is adequately supplied.
6. Keep copies of Coggins certificates, photos of horses, and proof of ownership with the disaster supplies. Zip lock bags make good waterproof storage for these items.

Facility

1. Secure and/or remove all loose objects outdoors (e.g. buckets, bulletin boards, trunks, halters, leads, cross ties, bags of shavings, hay, etc.).
2. Secure all paddock and arena gates.
3. Review location of Human First Aid Kit and Fire Extinguishers.
4. Shut off main electrical breakers and water valves. Unplug all appliances, and office equipment.
5. Secure all windows/doors.

Participants

1. The decision to cancel class upon inclement weather will be made by the Program Director/Instructors. All participants and staff are notified prior to scheduled class time.
2. If sudden inclement weather occurs during class activities, the Instructor has ultimate responsibility for participants, personnel and horses.
3. All staff will support evacuation and safety relocation.

Returning to the Farm after the Hurricane

1. Wear rubber boots and rubber gloves.
2. Enter with extreme caution: check structural integrity of buildings and check for downed electrical wires.
3. If there has been flooding or rain damage, have an electrician inspect the premises before turning on the breakers.
4. Remember that water can become contaminated creating a health hazard for horses.

B. Thunderstorms and Lightning

Policy:

Thunderstorms and lightning are frequent during the summer months. During heavy rains and severe thunderstorms, the horses are kept in their stalls. There are run-in sheds in some of the turn out paddocks for the horses, if they are out during inclement weather.

Procedure:

If a storm comes up quickly during a class:

1. All horses will halt.
2. Mounted Activity Emergency Plan will be followed.
3. The instructor will direct volunteers to dismount the riders. Volunteers and riders should follow the directions of the instructor.

C. Facility Fire

Policy:

All personnel, participants, and guests must be prepared to follow the fire drill procedures in the event of a facility fire.

Procedure:

1. If a class is in session the Instructor will give directions and will take responsibility of evacuating participants.
 - All horses will halt
 - Mounted Emergency Plan will be followed.
 - Instructor will direct volunteers to escort riders to a designated area (outside front gate, arena, or individual's transportation)
 - Once all riders have been evacuated to a safe area, horse handlers will walk horses to a safe area away from the fire (See map).
2. Staff will check area and determine if 911 should be called. Fire extinguishers may be used (see map for locations). Emergency numbers and directions to the farm are posted by the telephone.
3. Ensure that all participants have been evacuated. Staff then evacuates remaining horses from stall area.
 - Survey scene to make sure it is safe to enter.
 - If fire is in stall area, evacuate horses closest to the fire first.
 - If at all possible, horses should be led to a safe area (see map).
 - Frightened horses may not want to leave their stalls, talk to them in a reassuring tone of voice. It may be necessary to cover their eyes with a towel or t-shirt.
 - If a horse is unmanageable or refuses to leave stall, leave door open and move to the next horse.

- Once outside a horse may try to run back into his stall. Be aware of that possibility.
NEVER endanger a human life..., for any reason.

D. Wildfires

Policy:

Wildfires in Florida are not uncommon and can come up fast and move fast. Normally, large open grassy areas would be a safe place to move to. Because of the many fenced-in areas of the stable, evacuation would be the safest procedure if a wildfire threatens.

Procedure:

1. Evacuation of all participants will be the primary responsibility of the Instructor, as above.
Refer to the map for all routes out of the area.
2. Evacuation orders must be followed by participants, volunteers, and staff.
3. Staff will designate someone to call 911.
4. If evacuation is necessary, a staff member will lead a car caravan to the fastest and safest evacuation route (see map)
5. Horses will be evacuated to safest designated area following above procedure.
NEVER endanger a human life for any reason.

V. Hazards Specific to the Use of Equines

A. Sudden Illness of Rider

Policy:

If a rider should experience seizure activity or otherwise become ill while mounted, the instructor will call for a HEADS UP or an EMERGENCY STOP. The rider will be dismounted under the direction of the instructor.

Procedure:

1. Leaders and sidewalkers will be instructed to do an EMERGENCY STOP for all horses.
2. There will be an emergency dismount of the ill rider.
3. 911 will be called, if indicated.
4. The rider will be accompanied out of the arena.

B. Riders Falling from Horses

Policy:

If a rider falls off his horse during the program, the Mounted Activity Emergency Plan goes into effect. All horses will be halted and leaders will go to their assigned horse and attach lead rope.

Procedure:

1. STAY CALM.
2. Mounted Activity Emergency Plan goes into effect
3. Loose horse will be caught (see Loose Horse: In the Arena)
4. Instructor will attend to victim.
5. Instructor will instruct staff to call 911.

6. Basic First Aid/CPR procedures will be followed.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE INSTRUCTOR REMAINS IN CHARGE AND THAT ALL PARTICIPANTS QUIETLY WAIT FOR INSTRUCTIONS!

C. Loose Horses

Policy: If a horse becomes loose in any area of the property, specific procedures must be followed for the safety of the participants, personnel, and the horse itself.

Procedure:

Retrieving the loose horse:

1. Carry a halter with lead rope over your shoulder.
2. A small amount of grain in a bucket may encourage the horse to come to you.
3. Do not chase the horse.
4. Approach horse from the side, walk slowly and talk in a low soothing voice.
5. Put lead rope over horse's neck; then put the halter on with lead rope attached.

Loose Horse in the Arena

1. Have riders halt on the rail
2. Leaders should go to their horse or stand in front of their horse, if attached.
3. Sidewalkers remain with assigned rider and prepare to assist with dismount upon request.
4. If necessary, leaders will be asked to lead horses out of the arena.
5. Sidewalker or designated volunteer will exit with the riders to the guest area.

Loose Horse in the barn/tack area

1. If participants are in the area, a staff member or designated volunteer should lead them to a safe place.
2. Horse handlers should unsnap any horses on cross ties, attach lead ropes and return horses to their stalls.
3. Remain calm until loose horse is caught.

D. Horses Spooking

Policy:

When a horse spooks, it can be a dangerous situation. Leaders and sidewalkers must be ready to take the right steps to avoid injury to riders and volunteers.

Procedure:

For the Horse spooking and his Rider

1. The leader shall stop the horse and the sidewalkers will extend an arm across the rider's thigh and grip the front of the saddle.
2. If indicated, the instructor or charge person may instruct the near sidewalker to perform an emergency dismount.
3. The leader shall move the horse to a safe place, away from riders. The horse shall be held by the leader.

For the Other Horses and Riders in the class

1. All horses will be halted.
2. All leaders will position themselves in front of the horses.

3. All sidewalkers will stabilize their riders, unless back riding, in which case sidewalkers will stabilize the back rider who will stabilize the rider. Make sure rider holds the strap.

E. Horses Kicking and Biting Personnel, Participants, Guests

Policy:

Horses are large, powerful animals and their size and strength should always be respected. We choose our horses for their calm, quiet personalities, but any horse has the ability to change if frightened, surprised or alarmed.

Procedure:

1. **STAY CALM.** Mounted Activity Emergency Plan goes into effect if during a lesson. All horses will be halted and leaders will go to their assigned horse and attach lead rope, if the rider is independent. If incident occurs before or after mounting, victim will be removed quickly from area of injury and area will be secured with participants being led to a safe area and volunteers going to assigned horses and attaching a lead rope. Loose horses will be caught.
2. Instructor will attend to victim.
3. Instructor will instruct staff to call 911.
4. Basic First Aid/CPR procedures will be followed.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE INSTRUCTOR REMAINS IN CHARGE AND THAT ALL PARTICIPANTS QUIETLY WAIT FOR INSTRUCTIONS! STAY CALM.

F. Horse Health Emergencies

Policy:

Our horses are checked before being tacked up, but it is possible that a horse could become ill or injured during the program day. All efforts will be made to provide care for a sick or injured horse while insuring the safety of the riders and volunteers, as well.

Procedure:

1. **STAY CALM.** Staff will quietly direct removal of all people and other horses from the area.
2. Instructor, or member of the Stable Committee, will secure area and attend to sick or injured horse. Horse will be kept as calm as possible and moved to a safe area where it is unlikely to be injured should it go down.
3. After assessment is made, Instructor will instruct staff if assistance is needed or to call Veterinarian. If Veterinarian is called, a detailed description of illness or injury should be given to the vet clinic including:
 - Symptoms of illness or injury & cause, if known
 - Vital signs (heart rate, respiration rate, temperature, gum color & capillary refill time)
 - Length of time and amount of blood loss (if any)
 - Length of time of illness
 - Any medications administered
4. Basic First Aid procedures will be followed.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE INSTRUCTOR REMAINS IN CHARGE AND THAT ALL PARTICIPANTS QUIETLY WAIT FOR INSTRUCTIONS!

NORMAL RANGES IN VITAL SIGNS FOR AN ADULT HORSE:

- **Pulse rate: 30-42 beats per minute**
- **Respiratory rate: 10-20 breaths per minute**
- **Temperature: 99-101.5 F**

If temperature exceeds 102.5 F, call vet immediately.

- **Temperatures over 103 F indicate serious disorder.**
- **Capillary refill time: 1-2 seconds**
- **Gum color pink to bubble gum pink**

VETERINARIAN: Van Roekel and Associates – 239-694-7177

VI. Conduct of Personnel, Participants, and Guests

A. Allegations of Inappropriate/Abusive Behavior toward Others.

Policy:

Special Equestrians has zero-tolerance for abuse of any nature and therefore will address any and all situations without delay.

Procedure:

Executive Director or Program Director proceeds as follows:

1. Meets with complainant to discern specifics of allegations.
2. Requests that the staff/volunteers/others who are accused of inappropriate behavior immediately remove themselves from the program until the investigative process has been completed.
3. Contacts appropriate regulatory authorities and facilitates resolution of the matter.

In all circumstances the following actions will be required:

1. Occurrence Report completed
2. Matter is reported to the Board

3. Procedures are reviewed to ascertain whether additional training or education of staff/volunteers could have prevented the abusive behavior and to assure that there is no occurrence of a similar nature in the future.

B. Allegations of Inappropriate/Abusive Behavior toward Horses

Policy:

Special Equestrians has zero-tolerance for abuse of any nature and therefore will address any and all situations without delay.

Procedure:

Executive Director or Program Director proceeds as follows:

1. Requests that the staff/volunteers/others who are accused of inappropriate behavior immediately remove themselves from the program until the investigative process has been completed.
2. Contacts appropriate regulatory authorities and facilitates resolution of the matter.

In all circumstances the following actions will be required:

1. Occurrence Report completed
2. Matter is reported to the Board
3. Procedures are reviewed to ascertain whether additional training or education of staff/volunteers could have prevented the abusive behavior and to assure that there is no occurrence of a similar nature in the future.

C. Incidents Due to the Use of Alcohol or Drugs

Policy:

Special Equestrians has zero-tolerance for alcohol or drug use of any nature and therefore will address any and all situations without delay.

Procedure:

Upon being informed that alcohol or drugs have been used on the premises, the Executive Director or Program Director meets with the individual and informs them that Special Equestrians has a zero-tolerance for the use of drugs and alcohol on the premises.

1. Requests that the individual who used alcohol immediately leave the premises.
2. Requests that the individual who used drugs immediately leave the premises, and contacts the appropriate regulatory authority.

In all circumstances the following actions will be required:

1. Occurrence Report completed
2. Matter is reported to the Board

D. Failure to Follow Established Safety Procedures

Policy:

Special Equestrians does not tolerate failure to follow safety procedures and therefore will address any and all situations without delay.

Procedure:

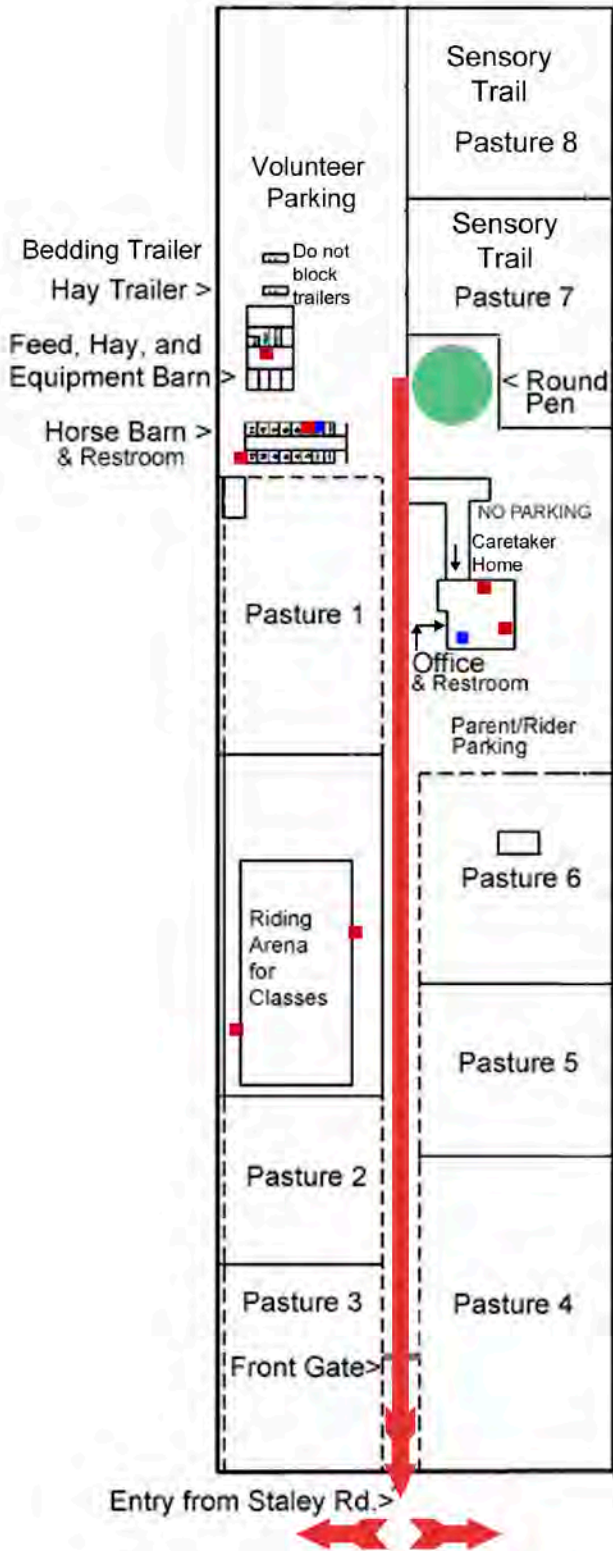
When it is observed that anyone has failed to follow established safety procedures, an Instructor, the Executive Director or the Program Director is to be informed immediately. Thereafter, the Instructor and/or Program Director:

1. Meets with the individual to remind them of the procedures established by the facility
2. Require that the individual attend an additional training session.
3. Upon repeated failure to follow safety procedures, individual is asked to leave the facility permanently.

In all circumstances the following actions will be required:

1. Occurrence Report completed
2. Matter is reported to the Board
3. Training Program and Procedures are reviewed to ascertain whether additional training or education of staff/volunteers could have prevented the situation.

Special Equestrians Map and Fire Escape Route



Please drive in very slowly as you enter the property.

Volunteers park in the open area behind the equipment barn. Do not block the large trailers as we sell hay and bedding from these trailers.

If you have walking difficulties, you may park close to the barn or the house, but don't block anyone in.

Our office is in the side of the house next the parent and rider parking. Please enter our office from the front of the house. Our Farm Caretaker lives in the other side of the house on the property. The garage is for our Caretaker's entry.


Special Equestrians sells Guardian Swift Pick horse Bedding all year long, during program times, or by appointment - 239-226-1221.

The fire escape route is down the paved road and out to the front of the property.

Fire Extinguishers are located in 7 places on SE property. They are marked on this map.

 Fire Extinguisher Symbol

 Fire Escape Route Symbol

 Restroom Symbol