



# *VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES*



[www.equinedreams.org](http://www.equinedreams.org)

# WELCOME!!

You have chosen to give some of your valuable time to volunteer to help improve the lives of the children and adults with disabilities at Equine Dreams. We hope that in doing so, you will find that your own life has been enhanced as well. All of us at Equine Dreams are proud of the fine work we do, and the extraordinary results that we see. Thank you for being part of this amazing experience.

This manual has been developed to provide you with some guidelines for working with our riders. Please read it carefully. The information it contains is important, and will improve the quality of your work. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

We want you to know that every person you are helping at Equine Dreams is aware and grateful for your help. Without you, this program could not exist. You are valuable to us and we appreciate all you do.

## **Equine Dreams**

*Physical location:* 9775 Fox River Drive  
Newark IL 60541

*Mailing address:* PO Box 372  
Sandwich, IL 60548

# History of Equine History of Equine Dreams

## **Our Mission:**

**Our Faith enables us to nurture abilities in individuals with special needs.**

Started in 1996, Equine Dreams is a not-for-profit organization that provides Therapeutic Equine Assisted Activities to children and adults with special needs at no charge. We are dedicated to improving the quality of life for individuals with special needs.

Equine assisted therapy is a unique tool in that with the assistance of a horse, an individual who is learning to balance can experience the three dimensional movement of ambulation. Through this movement the rider learns the functional tasks for weight shifting, balance, and equilibrium responses which are all necessary components of simple ambulation. For those riders who have cognitive or social disabilities, the benefits include improved concentration, self-confidence, independence, teamwork, listening skills, and an improved self image, among others.

Social isolation and limited access to services remain major problems to individuals with disabilities. Equine Dreams provides services to individuals and neighboring group homes and schools. Equine Dreams operates entirely on funds generated by public donation, fundraising events, foundation grants, and in-kind donations. This assistance allows access to services without placing a financial burden on its participants.

The demand is great and the benefits are remarkable. This drives all of us at Equine Dreams to continually seek new avenues to provide and expand services to the children and adults who need it most. Currently Equine Dreams provides services to over 100 participants every week. Equine Dreams is staffed by a large group of volunteers that includes 11 registered and one advanced PATH Intl. Therapeutic Riding Instructors, with professional degrees in Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Audiology.

## ***INTRODUCTION TO VOLUNTEERING***

Volunteers are the heart & soul of Equine Dreams. We have run this program since 1996 entirely with volunteers. Anyone who wants to have a good time, has a loving heart, and is not afraid of hard work is encouraged to volunteer.

### ***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS***

#### ***Who are the best volunteers?***

Our volunteers come in all shapes, sizes, ages, & genders. They have a variety of previous knowledge, and different backgrounds & expertise. Our instructors will teach you anything you need to know. Once you have completed your volunteer training there will still be much to learn. Please never hesitate to ask questions and to continue your learning. We hope that each and every one of our volunteers learns something new each day of their lives.

#### ***Is there any paperwork to fill out?***

Naturally there is but we do try to keep it to a minimum. We have paperwork that everyone must fill out prior to training and it must be updated annually. Volunteers are required to read, understand and sign our liability and medical releases. We also take lots of pictures so we require a photo release as well. Additionally volunteers must be willing to submit to a criminal history background check. The fee for this is \$20. We regret that this has become a necessity, but we must place the safety of our clients as our top priority.

#### ***When may I volunteer?***

At this time Equine Dreams is open Monday-Saturday (hours vary). We appreciate any time that volunteers can donate. We do ask that you prearrange a set time, as consistency is very important to our clients. As trust and friendships develop between clients and their volunteers they come to rely on that person. Because we depend solely on volunteers to run this program your attendance is critical to the smooth running of those classes.

#### ***What do I do when I arrive?***

The first thing everyone must do is sign in. We have to keep very stringent records of our hours. There is a log-in paper on the wall by the white board. Please please please remember to sign in. Sign in each time you come and enter a total of the number of hours you will be at Equine Dreams.

**Who do I call if I can't come?**

If you know ahead of time that you can not come, email us at [ride@equinedreams.org](mailto:ride@equinedreams.org)

If you find out you can't come on the day you volunteer, please call the instructor for that day:

Sharon: 815-690-8144	Barb: 630-292-7714	Sarah: 630-567-4006
Windy: 224-305-1117	Rick: 815-690-8143	Aly: 815-508-5486
Katie: 815-520-6877	Kate: 630-414-5550	Mare: 630-417-7282
Susan: 815-409-6006	Nicole: 563-219-1579	Beka: 630-337-0860

**Who do I call if I need more information or if I have questions?**

You can email the program at [ride@equinedreams.org](mailto:ride@equinedreams.org)

**Who do I call to find out if classes are cancelled due to weather or holidays?**

Call the instructor for that day.

**What do I do in an emergency?**

There is more information at the end of this manual, but basically, you need to stay calm and follow the directions of the instructor of the class.

**What will I do as a Volunteer?****Volunteer Job Descriptions**

Equine Dreams volunteers can assist in a variety of ways: cleaning tack, helping with fundraisers, grooming horses, assisting with administrative duties, horse care, bucket cleaning, horse tacking, stall cleaning, side walking, leading horses for lessons, and anything and everything else that needs doing. Below are some of the job descriptions:

**1. BARN ASSISTANTS**

- ❖ **Feeding** – Some of our horses need to be brought in to be fed. There is a feed chart in the feed room. Hay needs to be put out at the end of the lesson day.
- ❖ **Grooming & Tacking** – Horses must be groomed and tacked before or as part of each lesson. The instructor will inform volunteers how to prepare horses for each lesson.
- ❖ **Daily Chores** – grooming equipment must be cleaned, tack must be wiped down or cleaned, buckets and feed tubs need washing, water troughs need regular cleaning, manure picked up, etc. These may not be the most fun jobs but they essential to the well being of our horses and the smooth running of the facilities.
- ❖ **Maintenance** – There is always a list of items to be done. General maintenance, cleaning and grounds keeping, along with fencing checks to name a few.

## **2. SIDEWALKERS**

The sidewalker (either one or two) walks to the side of the rider during a lesson. This person is supervised by the instructor and may physically support the rider or walk along side of the horse as a spotter or to provide verbal reminders. The main duty of this position is the safety of the rider.

## **3. HORSE LEADER**

These volunteers must have extensive equine knowledge. The purpose of the leader is to lead the horse during the session and execute direction given to you by the instructor. This person must focus on controlling the horse while remaining alert to all other activity the arena. It is important to remember that as the horse leader your primary job is to focus on the horse. The horse handler must also encourage quality movement within the horse.

## **4. HORSE EXERCISE RIDER**

If you are a skilled equestrian, you may apply to become one of our exercise riders. Ask a head instructor if you are interested in this position.

## **5. SPECIAL EVENTS/FUNDRAISING HELP/GRANT WRITING**

Volunteers help at all types of special events. Interested individuals are also welcome to join our fundraising committee and help Equine Dreams meet our financial needs. As you know, we run on donations and are all volunteers so this job is crucial to our survival. The fundraising committee plans and executes our annual fundraisers and is always working to think of new ideas for fundraisers and events.

Experienced grant writers or those people interested in learning are needed to help identify foundations or grants with a potential for donating to Equine Dreams, and to write these grants.

## ***VOLUNTEER POLICIES***

Our mission at Equine Dreams is to **enhance abilities rather than focus on disabilities**. Through our therapeutic riding program, we provide supportive rehabilitative services to optimize physical, cognitive, and social abilities. Safety is our first priority at all times for all volunteers, horses, and clients.

**A**ll paperwork must be completed prior to volunteering at Equine Dreams.

**A**ll volunteers must complete an orientation & training before starting work.

**V**olunteers are not permitted to ride horses for recreational purposes.

**V**olunteers should inform the instructors of any times that they will be absent. Please give as much notice as possible.

**V**olunteers should refrain from using perfume or hair products that might attract stinging insects. If you are allergic to insect bites please bring your medication with you and inform your teammates of your allergy and the location of your meds.

**S**moking on Equine Dreams property is **NOT** allowed at any time.

**D**rive **SLOWLY** on the property. Horses can spook at fast cars and there are children and animals around you may not see.

**D**o not bring any dogs or other pets to the property.

**P**lease dress neatly and wear closed shoes (no sandals) to prevent foot injuries. Hard shoes with heels are preferred. Unless it is extremely hot, please wear long pants. Avoid loose clothing and jewelry, as they can be obstructive and cause injury. Wear sunglasses or a hat to protect your eyes. If you have long hair, please wear it pulled back.

**C**ell phones must be on vibrate at all times. If you are expecting a call or receive a call while you are participating in a lesson, please do not answer the call until the lesson is over. Answering a call takes your attention away from your most important job – the safety of our riders.

**E**ating and drinking are not allowed in the arena. This is both for your safety and the safety of the riders.

**D**on't forget to sign in. If you are getting credit for a course, we need proof that you were here. We also use it to make us eligible for certain kinds of grants.

**W**e depend on you to be here. If you can't come, please let us know ahead of time so we can make arrangements for a substitute. We really appreciate your consideration.

**W**e treat our horses GENTLY. Never kick or hit a horse. If a reprimand is necessary, let the instructor do it.

**W**e treat our riders with RESPECT. Talk to them appropriately for their age and never yell. Use positive rather than negative reinforcement. Be patient. Count to 30 before repeating a request, especially if the student is learning disabled. He or she might need extra time to process what you asked. Be understanding of fear, but if you can't handle a problem with a student, ask the instructor for help.

**K**eep what happens at Equine Dreams confidential. We know you are excited about what you do here and want to share it with others. Please do so in a way that does not identify the riders. They have a right to privacy.

**K**eep busy. If you have a long break, there are plenty of things you can do to help out. Clean up the tack room or office, wash out buckets, clean the toys, pull weeds, groom a horse, muck stalls, or just ask how you can help.

**H**ave fun! Smile, laugh and enjoy yourself. Your enthusiasm is contagious!



## ***SAFETY AROUND HORSES***

- Always speak to the horse as you approach or before touching them. Use a soft voice and a gentle touch.
- Always approach the horse at the shoulder area, never from the rear!
- Let the horse know where you are and what you are going to do.
- Never tie a horse without a safety knot.
- Never leave the reins or the lead hanging on the ground.
- Never wrap the lead rope or the reins around your hand, wrist, or any part of your body.
- Never hold the horse by the halter. Always use a lead rope.
- If a horse becomes frightened, halt and talk to them reassuringly, stroking him on the neck or shoulder.
- Never tease a horse.
- Always stay at least 2 horse lengths away from another horse. Keep an eye on their heads and rear ends. If the ears are flattened, the horse is not happy. Do NOT allow other horses to sniff each other.
- Never kick or hit a horse. If a horse is misbehaving, call the instructor to help.
- If the horse you are working with is nervous or upset, alert the instructor.
- If you aren't comfortable for any reason, tell the instructor immediately.
- Never yell or run around the horses.
- Keep your feet away from the horse's hooves and from beneath the horse.
- Never walk under a horse's neck. Never walk under a horse, you might not be that short, but some children are...so watch them!
- Your riders should ALWAYS have helmets on when tacking or grooming a horse.
- Never stand directly in front of a horse, except to hold that horse for a rider. Never stand behind a horse for any reason.
- Hand feeding is not allowed. A horse can't tell the difference between a carrot and your finger that smells like a carrot. Keep your hands away from the horse's mouth.
- Always use a halter to tie the horse in crossies. Never tie a horse by his bit or reins.

## THE TACK ROOM

The tack room is the room we store saddles, bridles, halters, reins, and other horse related equipment, collectively known as “tack”. A well organized tack room makes the job of the volunteers easier. Knowing your way around the tack room and keeping things in order is vital to the smooth running of Equine Dreams.

Rules for the tack room:

- All saddles should be stored on their racks. Never leave a saddle lying on the ground as it damages the shape of the saddle.
- Each saddle is marked with a name tag, which is assigned to a certain horse.
- Saddle pads must be allowed to dry out before putting them away.
- Girths are stored separately from the saddles. Do NOT leave them attached to the saddle.
- Each horse has its own halter/bridle combination and bit. They are stored on bridle racks on the wall. Each is labeled with the horses’ name. Please remember to wipe the bit clean/dry before you hang it up.
- Each horse has its own grooming tools. They are labeled in individual bins for each horse. Please keep them separate and if they get mixed up, please wash the tools in bleach water thoroughly before putting them away.
- Thank you for helping to keep our tack room organized and clean!

## ***EFFECTIVE SIDEWALKING***

Sidewalkers are the ones who normally get 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 distract from the lesson.

In the arena, the sidewalker should help the student focus his/her 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 already have perceptual problems, it can be 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 student seems confused, gently 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 are just not paying attention.

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

There are several ways to hold on to the rider without interfering. The instructor will show you what to do for each individual rider.

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 even pull the rider off balance and make riding more difficult. Encourage your students 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 very careful not to pull down or push up on it. As your arm tires, it’s hard to avoid these movements, 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 for your arm, ask the leader to stop and inform the instructor you need to switch sides.

Avoid unnecessary conversations, as it distracts the rider. Only exception: **INFORM INSTRUCTOR IMMEDIATELY OF ANY UNSAFE CONDITION!**

Pay attention to the instructor throughout the lesson.

Always notify the instructor of any changes in rider’s behavior, drowsiness, seizure activity, irritation, etc. Be discreet whenever you need to discuss a rider in their presence.

**KEEP ALERT!** You are responsible for the safety of your rider as well as others in your class.

Be relaxed, confident, positive and reassuring. Riders will respond accordingly. Expect good and appropriate behavior from your rider. If you have problems, notify the instructor.

Our horses are “teachers”, “therapists” and our riders’ “best friends.” As such, they must be sound, free from illness and injury. Always notify the instructor of any change in the horse’s behavior or movement.

During exercises, pay attention to your student. Sometimes volunteers forget that the riders are to do the 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 want to do it for him in an effort to win. You are there to help challenge the rider to the best of his ability.

In the event of a fall, stay with your rider while the leader moves the horse out of the way. **DO NOT** attempt to help the rider - this is the responsibility of the instructor. Be prepared to go for help at the direction of the instructor. Know where the first aid kit is, where a phone is, and where the emergency numbers are and how to tell the emergency personnel how to get to Equine Dreams.

If there is only one sidewalker and no leader, the sidewalker takes on the responsibility of controlling the horse in the event that the rider has trouble controlling his horse.

Without you, these programs could not exist. We thank you for all you give and challenge you to be the best you can be.

# Horse Leading

As a volunteer, one of the most challenging duties you could be assigned is the position of leader. The responsibility of the horse leader is to control the horse, but you must also be constantly aware of the rider, instructor, and any potential hazards in or around the arena. You must also consider the sidewalkers, making sure there is enough room along the fence and around obstacles for them to pass. For this reason, the horse leader should be someone with some experience in horsemanship.

The rider has a leader because he or she is unable, at this time, to control the horse. The goal is to allow the rider to be as independent as possible. Although the leader is responsible for guiding the horse, stopping and starting, the leader should allow the rider to do as much of this as possible, assisting only when necessary. Be sure to give the rider time to execute an instruction before stepping in and assisting. Avoid the temptation to talk to the rider and/or sidewalkers. A rider may get confused by too much input and not know who's in charge.

## **Leading the horse:**

Walk next to the horse's neck, between the horse's head and shoulder. Do NOT drag the horse or walk ahead of it.

Talk to the horse; most of them know "whoa", "walk on", and "trot", or can learn the words. Watch where you are going and what's around you. Do NOT walk backward to look at the rider. It's dangerous.

Also remember that the horse can pick up on any bad mood or negative feelings you have so try to leave all of those outside the arena and have fun!

The lead rope is held with the right hand, about 6-12 inches from the snap, allowing free motion of the horse's head. This position is more therapeutic to the rider and less irritating to the horse.

The tail end of the lead rope should be looped in a figure eight in the left hand to avoid tripping on it. Never coil the rope around your hand. A sudden pull could crush or amputate your fingers.

The leader usually stands on the left side of the horse, next to the horse's neck (between the head and the shoulder).

When a rider is mounting at the ramp or block, lead the horse to the start of the ramp, and then move to the front of the horse and walk backward into the ramp area, leading the horse as close to the ramp as possible. Be careful not to walk the horse's feet into the ramp or block. Remain standing in front of the horse and keep him as still as possible during mounting.

Pay attention to the instructor at all times. It is important that you not engage in conversation when leading, as this will interfere with your knowing what is going on. The instructor tells the riders what to do. The leader needs to hear these commands so as not to interfere with the rider's efforts, and to supplement them if needed.

Be aware of other horses in the arena, and do not let the horse you are leading approach another horse too closely. There should always be a 2 horse distance between riders at all times.

When passing another horse, always pass on the inside.

All horses should be going in the same direction. If doing a circle to reverse direction, always turn in toward the center of the arena. Do not circle a horse near another horse.

Use short tugs rather than a steady pull to keep a lazy horse moving. The horse can set himself against a steady pull, but tugs keep him awake. Move out, about 1000 steps per 15 minutes to provide the most therapeutic benefit.

When you halt for more than a few seconds, stand in front of the horse. 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 forward. Don't put your thumbs through the bit or halter; they could be broken with a toss of the horse's head.

If the worst happens and there is an accident, stay with the horse. There are other people to care for the 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 the instructor. You will provide real therapeutic input to your rider, as well as make it safe for them to have fun riding.

## **UNDERSTANDING HORSE BEHAVIOR**

### **EQUINE SENSES**

When developing relationships and working with horses, communication is key. It is critical to provide a safe environment in a therapeutic riding setting. Beginning a process of understanding the horse senses, instincts and implications is a step in predicting behaviors, managing risks and increasing positive relationships.

#### **SMELL:**

The horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute and it allows him to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to evaluate situations.

#### **Implications:**

- Allow horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling.
- It is recommended that treats are not carried in your pocket since horses may desire to go after them.
- Volunteers should be discouraged from eating or having food in the arena.

#### **HEARING:**

The horse's sense of hearing is also thought to be very acute. The horse may also combine their sense of hearing and sight to become more familiar with a new or alerting sound. "Hearing and not seeing" is often the cause of the fright/flight response. Note the position of the horse's ears (pictures below). Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest. Ears that are laid back often communicates that they are upset and/or showing aggression toward another horse or person.

#### **Implications:**

- Horses are wary when they hear something but do not see it. If your horse is acting nervous, talk to him in a quiet and calm voice for reassurance.
- Avoid shouting or using a loud voice. This can be frightening to a horse.
- Watch your horse's ears for increased communication. Stiffly pricked ears indicate interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, inattentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion or illness. Flattened ears indicate anger, threat or fear. Ears flicking back and forth indicate interest or attentiveness.

#### **SIGHT:**

The horse's eyes are set on either side of the head; there is good peripheral (lateral) vision, but poor frontal vision. A horse focuses on objects by raising and lowering its head. The horse's

visual memory is very accurate. Horses are thought to see quite well in the dark, due to the large size of their eyes. There is still controversy as to whether or not horses see in color.

### **Implications:**

- The horse may notice if something in the arena or out on the trail is different. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects. Introduce new props that the horse may be unfamiliar with.
- The horse has better peripheral vision; consider a slightly looser rein, enabling him to move his head when taking a look at objects.
- Although the horse has good peripheral vision, consider 2 blind spots; directly in front and directly behind. The best way to approach a horse is to his shoulder. It may startle him if you approach from behind or directly in front. The horse may be unable to see you around the mouth area, which is a safety concern when hand feeding.

### **TOUCH:**

Touch is used as a communication between horses and between horses and people. Horses are sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs.

### **Implications:**

- Handlers should treat horses gently but firm.
- Each horse has sensitive areas, and it is important to be familiar with them (i.e. flank and belly areas).
- Watch rider leg position. Riders may need appropriate assistance to reduce a "clothes pin" effect with their legs. Ask the instructor or therapist what is the best handling technique.
- Horses will often touch or paw at unfamiliar objects. For example, a horse may paw at a bridge or ground pole before crossing it.

### **TASTE:**

Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects.

### **Implications:**

- Taste is closely linked with smell and touch; therefore, a horse may lick or nibble while becoming unfamiliar with objects or people. Be careful, as this could lead to possible biting.

### **SIXTH SENSE:**



Horses have a “sixth sense” when evaluating the disposition of those around him. Horses can be hypersensitive in detecting the moods of their handlers and riders. A good therapy horse is often chosen for their sensitive response to the rider. At times there may exist a personality conflict between handlers and horses. It is important to the instructor to know if you are having a difficult time relating or getting along with a particular horse.

### **FLIGHT AS A NATURAL INSTINCT:**

Horses would rather turn and run away from danger than fight it.

#### **Implications:**

- At a sudden movement or noise, the horse might try to flee. Speak to the horse calmly.
- A frightened horse that is tied up or being tied might try to escape by pulling back. Relax your hold or untie him quickly and usually he will relax. Be sure not to stand directly behind the horse.
- If flight is not possible, the horse could either turn to kick out or face the problem and rear, especially in a tight area like a stall. A halter with a lead rope may assist with maintaining control while working with a horse in a stall.
- If a horse appears to be frightened or fearful (not the position of the horses’ ears), it may be helpful to allow a more experienced person to lead.
- Most horses are chosen to work in a therapeutic setting have less of an instinct to flee. The horse may look for you for reassurance. It is helpful if the volunteer remains calm and talks to the horse in a soothing voice.

### **HERD ANIMAL:**

Horses like to stay together in a herd or group with one or two dominant horses, with a pecking order amongst the rest.

#### **Implications:**

- Be aware that a horse may not like being alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving the arena or being left in a stall.
- Be aware that if the horse in front of a line is trotting or cantering, the horse that is following may also attempt to do the same.
- If one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected.
- For safety, it is recommended to keep at least one to two horse lengths between horses when riding in a group to respect the horse’s space and pecking order.

**\*\*Knowing how to read your horse can prevent an accident and increase the quality of your relationship.**

## **MOUNTED ACTIVITY EMERGENCY PLAN**

### **If there is an emergency while a lesson is in session:**

1. All horses will be halted.
2. All leaders will position themselves in front of the horse. The leaders are responsible **ONLY** for the horse, not the riders.
3. All sidewalkers will stabilize their riders (arm over leg support). If there are 2 riders on the same horse, the sidewalker on the left supports the rider in front and the sidewalker on the right supports the rider in the back. The sidewalkers are responsible for **ONLY** the rider, not the horse.
4. The instructor will supervise the dismounting, either verbally or personally. If there are 2 riders on the same horse, the sidewalker on the left is responsible for dismounting the rider in front and the sidewalker on the right is responsible for dismounting the rider in back.
5. In the event that a rider must be removed from the horse quickly, as in the event of a seizure or a spooked horse, the sidewalker on the left is responsible for dismounting the rider.
6. If circumstances call for the arena to be evacuated, the riders will be escorted out first by their volunteers (if used) and the horses will be removed by their leaders to an appropriate place, after the riders are out of danger.
7. The instructor will determine if medical personnel are required and will request assistance in contacting specific personnel.

# **EMERGENCY PLANS**

## **A. THUNDERSTORMS**

1. AT THE FIRST SIGN OF LIGHTNING AND/OR THUNDER, ALL RIDERS WILL BE DISMOUNTED AND CLASS WILL BE CANCELED.

## **B. TORNADO WARNING**

1. IN THE CASE OF A TORNADO WARNING, LEADERS WILL BRING HORSES TO THE FRONT OF THE ARENA WHERE RIDERS WILL BE DISMOUNTED.
2. ALL RIDERS, PARENTS, AND VISITORS WILL BE TAKEN INTO THE TRAILER FOR SAFETY. SIT ALONG THE INTERIOR WALL WITH NO WINDOWS.
3. LEADERS WILL UNTACK THEIR HORSES AND THE HORSE LEADER WILL TURN THEM OUT TO THEIR PASTURES.
4. ALL VOLUNTEERS AND INSTRUCTORS WILL ALSO GO TO THE TRAILER.
5. RIDERS SHOULD KEEP THEIR HELMETS ON AND ANYONE WANTING A HELMET WILL BE PROVIDED ONE.
6. INSTRUCTOR WILL CLOSE BLINDS.
7. EVERYONE WILL REMAIN INSIDE UNTIL WARNING IS OVER.

## **C. FIRE**

1. IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE, ALL RIDERS WILL BE DISMOUNTED AND ESCORTED AWAY FROM THE SOURCE OF THE FIRE. SIDE-WALKERS WILL STAY WITH THEIR RIDERS.
2. LEADERS WILL UNTACK AND TAKE THEIR HORSES TO THE FURTHEST TURNOUT AREA.
3. THE INSTRUCTOR OR THEIR DESIGNEE WILL IMMEDIATELY CALL **911**.
4. THE STAFF PERSON CLOSEST TO THE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS AND/OR WATERHOSE WILL ATTEMPT TO PUT OUT FIRE.
5. THE INSTRUCTOR WILL MAKE SURE EVERYONE IS ACCOUNTED FOR.

## **D. ACCIDENTAL INJURY**

1. WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL IS INJURED IN ANY SITUATION AT THE FACILITY, THE INSTRUCTOR WILL DESIGNATE TRAINED PERSONNEL TO ADMINISTER FIRST AID.
2. IF RIDERS ARE MOUNTED, THE INSTRUCTOR WILL DECIDE IF THE RIDERS ARE TO BE DISMOUNTED OR IF THE CLASS SHOULD CONTINUE.
3. ALL VOLUNTEERS WILL STAY WITH THEIR ASSIGNED HORSE AND RIDER UNTIL THE INSTRUCTOR DISMOUNTS THE RIDERS AND DISMISSES CLASS.

4. SIDE-WALKERS SHOULD REMAIN WITH THEIR STUDENTS. TALK TO YOUR RIDER, REASSURE THEM AND KEEP THEM QUIETLY OCCUPIED.
5. LEADERS STAY WITH YOUR HORSES. KEEP THEM CALM IN THE CENTER OF THE ARENA UNTIL YOU ARE DISMISSED TO THE PADDOCK AREA.
6. IF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE IS NECESSARY FOR THE INJURED PERSON, THE INSTRUCTOR OR DESIGNEE SHALL CALL **911**. THE INSTRUCTOR OR DESIGNATED FIRST AID PERSONNEL WILL REMAIN WITH THE INJURED PERSON UNTIL EMERGENCY PERSONNEL ARRIVE AND TAKE OVER.

E. **LOOSE HORSE**

1. IN THE EVENT OF A HORSE GETTING LOOSE IN THE ARENA DURING CLASS, ALL LEADERS WILL HALT THEIR HORSES AND SIDE-WALKERS WILL REMAIN BESIDE THEIR RIDERS IN FULL SUPPORT POSITION.
2. THE INSTRUCTOR WILL DIRECT LEADERS WHERE TO STAND WITH THEIR HORSES IF IT IS NECESSARY TO MOVE THEIR POSITIONS.
3. THE INSTRUCTOR WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CATCHING THE LOOSE HORSE.
4. IF A HORSE GETS LOOSE OUTSIDE, A STAFF MEMBER WILL GET A LEAD AND SOME GRAIN AND QUIETLY WALK UP TO THE HORSE AND CATCH IT.
5. IF THE HORSE CANNOT BE CAUGHT, **DO NOT CHASE**. SPEAK CALMLY AND QUIETLY TO THE HORSE, SHOW IT THE GRAIN AND GUIDE IT AWAY FROM THE ROAD TOWARD THE CLOSEST PASTURE AREA.
6. KEEP EVERYONE NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH THE CAPTURE AWAY FROM THE SITUATION. A LOOSE HORSE MAY DECIDE TO RUN FOR HOME AND THE SAFETY OF THEIR TURN OUT.

*Please sign and date this page and return to the Instructor.  
Thank you.*

**Volunteer Agreement**

I have read and understand the volunteer manual. I agree to the terms set before me. I understand that failure to follow these rules and terms may result in loss of volunteer privileges.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Instructor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

EQUINE DREAMS RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE THE SERVICES OF, OR DISMISS ANY VOLUNTEER IF IT IS DETERMINED TO BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE ORGANIZATION.

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**DISCRIMINATION DISCLOSURE**

It is the policy of Equine Dreams Therapeutic Riding Center to provide equal opportunity for all persons and to prohibit unlawful discrimination because of age, disability, creed, religion, gender, national origin, or veteran status. This policy applies to all participants, potential participants, volunteers and employees.