

Five Horses, LLC

SAFETY RULES FOR HANDLING HORSES (For Visitor/Volunteer/Participant to Keep)

- ◆ Sturdy boots with a heel are required to be worn when riding horses. No tennis shoes, sandals or loafers are allowed.
- ◆ Properly fitted ASTM/SEI certified helmet is required to be worn when mounted on a horse at all times.
- ◆ No one is permitted to go into the pasture or stall with the horses unless specifically instructed to by a Trainer.
- ◆ No one is permitted to take a horse out of a stall or pasture, unless specifically instructed to by a Trainer.
- ◆ Do not feed horses anything without specific permission from a Trainer.

General Information About Horse Behavior:

Horses survive in the wild because of their instinct to flee from danger. This is called the "flight instinct." Horses may react to unfamiliar objects and circumstances by spooking, or fleeing, from the object of fear. Horses detect danger through their vision, sense of smell, and keen sense of hearing. Horses also see differently than humans do, and they can be easily spooked if surprised. They have wide- angle vision, but they also have blind spots directly behind and in front of themselves. The horse has to position its head to focus its vision. When it focuses on one area, it cannot see other areas clearly. When a horse lifts its head and pricks its ears, it is focusing on something far away. A horse lowers its head when focusing on low, close objects. Keep these blind spots in mind and pay attention to where your horse's attention is focused. Your horse's ears will give you clues, too. They will point in the direction in which its attention is focused. Ears that are laid back, or flattened backward, warn you that the horse is disturbed and may be getting ready to kick or bite. Know the difference between ears that are laid back and ears that simply indicate a resting or listening horse.

Approaching a Horse:

1. Before you approach a horse, speak so that the horse knows you are there. Watch the horse for an indication that the horse has acknowledged your presence.
2. Approach from the side of the horse. Stand at the horse's shoulder.
3. Never stand directly in front or directly behind the horse. A horse cannot see you well if you stand directly in front of it. When the horse can't see you, he may become startled.
4. Horses have powerful hind legs to defend themselves, so it is only normal for them to kick when surprised. When walking around a horse stay out of kicking range. Walk 12-15 feet from the horse and pay close attention to the horse's reaction.
5. Remember to walk and speak normally around a horse. Don't make loud noises or sudden movements.
6. Speak to your horse and keep your hands on it when moving closely around it. Even when a horse is aware of your presence, quick movements can startle it.
7. Never feed a group of loose horses treats including grains & carrots in the pasture. They become jealous over food and could start kicking and biting.
8. Only feed horses grain and treats from a bucket that you hold in your hand, not directly from your hand. The horse will be less likely to nibble your fingers while looking for treats. Also, when feeding a horse grain and treats it must take place in a separate, designated area, and be approved by a trainer.
9. Do not use food to catch the horses. Other horses may crowd you and you could get stepped on.
10. The key to true horsemanship is to respect your horse and to be patient.