



Hillside HOPE Thru Hooves
Equine Assisted Mentoring Services

Horse Related Activities Safety & Warning

Section A: Protective Attire

- I am hereby advised to always wear hard-soled, fully enclosed shoes or boots and socks to protect feet and long pants to protect legs while working around or interacting with horses.

Section B: The Nature and Physical Character of the Horse

Domesticated, well-trained horses are usually obedient, docile and affectionate. However, it is important to understand that their survival instincts are what have allowed the horse to survive.

I am therefore advised:

- that horses are unpredictable by nature, with minds of their own, as are all animals both domestic and wild. The horse is often somewhat high strung or nervous by nature. Horses are extremely strong and physically powerful. Horses are extremely heavy weighing from 600-1300 pounds on the average. These characteristics deserve a human being's utmost respect.
- when a horse is frightened, angry, under stress or feels threatened, it is the horse's instinct to jump forward or sideways, to run away from danger at a trot or gallop of speeds up to 35 miles per hour.
- that if a horse is frightened or feels threatened from behind, the horse may kick straight back, sideways in either direction or even forward with either or both hind legs with tremendous force.
- that if a horse is frightened or feels threatened from the front, the natural reaction may be to rear up with both front legs, strike with one or both front legs, bite with teeth throw the head up or from side to side, or run directly over whatever he/she fears in front of him/her.
- that a human must always approach a horse calmly and quietly with caution, preferably to the horse's shoulder or lower neck, talking soothingly to the horse.
- that loud and/or sudden unexpected movements, dropping of objects near a horse, approaching vehicles or animals or

people, ill-fitting equipment or physical pain can provoke a domesticated horse to react according to natural, protective instincts.

- that the first signs of anger or fear in a horse are the sudden tensing of the muscles of the body, possibly laying the ears flat back against the head, or quickly tossing or raising the head, or sudden snorting through the nostrils accompanying at least one other warning sign.
- that a horse can see independently with each eye, actually looking in one direction with one eye and another direction with the other eye. The horse can also focus both eyes on one object somewhere in front of him/her. Typically the direction the ear is pointing will tell an observer where the eye is looking on the same side.
- that a horse has two blind areas around which he/she cannot see. Those areas are directly behind the horse and directly in front. When a horse has his/her head lowered to the ground, the spot directly at the end of the nostrils is the blind area. This is the reason it is best to approach a horse close to the shoulder, and never to surprise a horse from the rear, or to reach first for the horse's mouth.
- that while a horse is very sure-footed by nature, horses may accidentally step on an object such as a human's foot when the horse is balancing or turning around. When a horse is worked on unstable ground or slippery grass or footing, the horse could fall down injuring the horse or handler.

I have read and do understand the above warnings concerning protective attire and the nature and physical character of the horse.

Participant or Parent/Guardian Date

Witness Date

Witness Date