

Westwind 4-H Safety and Emergency Procedures

Please follow these guidelines to help ensure the safety of our volunteers and riders.

1. Move quietly, but purposefully around horses. Avoid running, shouting, jumping, or otherwise unruly behavior. Although our horses are calm and patient, even the best-behaved horse can get startled, which could put a rider in danger of falling off or someone on the ground may get stepped on.
2. Always approach a horse from the side, never from behind. Horses can't see directly in front or behind them. Walk around a horse to get to the other side; do not duck under the horse's head.
3. Never tie a horse with the reigns. Always use the lead rope.
4. Be observant and take action if you see any dangerous situations, such as children standing too close behind a horse.
5. In the unlikely event that your horse spooks, the horse leader is responsible for the horse and sidewalkers stay with the rider. For more information, see Emergency Procedures.

Emergency Procedures

Safety is our first priority. It is important that all volunteers are familiar with emergency procedures. Westwind 4-H holds an annual safety training class for all volunteers that includes emergency procedures. This class is required for horse leaders.

Emergency preparedness

1. Report any unsafe conditions to the instructor or your horse leader.
2. Know the location of the landline phone (office), fire extinguishers, and human and equine first aid kits.
3. Be familiar with the emergency procedures in this handbook.

Emergency dismount procedures

The instructor will advise when an emergency dismount is deemed necessary. In the event of an emergency dismount, please follow these steps:

1. Horse leader: Immediately halt horse and stay close to the horse's head to calm the horse.
2. Sidewalkers: Immediately free the rider's feet.
3. Left sidewalker: Remove the reins from the rider's grasp, and place them on the horse's neck.
4. Right sidewalker: Ask the rider to look at you.
5. Instructor (or lead sidewalker): Ask the rider to lean forward toward the horse's neck.

6. Right sidewalker: Assist with helping move the rider's right leg over the horse's croup.
7. Instructor (or lead sidewalker): Slowly lower the rider down to a standing or seated position, as appropriate for the rider.
8. Horse leader: Turn the horse's head toward the rider, pushing the hind end away from the rider, and lead the horse to a neutral location away from other horses and riders.
9. Sidewalkers: Stay with the rider until you receive further instructions from the instructor.

Loose horse with a rider

1. Stop all riding activity and halt all horses.
2. All participants stay silent as the instructor gives directions to the mounted rider.
3. All other sidewalker teams assume a thigh hold until the instructor provides further directions.
4. The horse leader and sidewalkers wait for further instruction before approaching the horse.

Loose horse without a rider

1. Stop all riding activity and halt all horses.
2. All participants stay silent as the instructor gives directions.
3. All other sidewalker teams assume a thigh hold until the instructor provides further directions.
4. The horse leader and instructor will work together to catch the horse.

Rider falls

1. Horse leader: Turn the horse's head towards the rider, pushing the hind end away from the rider, and lead the horse away.
2. Horse leader: Move the horse to a neutral location away from other riders and horses.
3. Sidewalkers: Stay with the rider until the instructor gives further direction.
4. Instructor: Provides assessment of rider's well-being and instructs sidewalkers what steps are needed (e.g., first aid, call 911 to report accident).
5. Severely injured riders must remain lying down and will not be moved until emergency help arrives.
6. The instructor may instruct other horse leaders to return to the mounting ramp for dismounting if there is another volunteer available to assist with dismounting procedures.

Rider becomes ill

1. Stop all riding activity and halt all horses.
2. All participants stay silent as the instructor gives directions.
3. All other sidewalker teams assume a thigh hold until the instructor provides further directions.

4. If the rider becomes ill in the arena, the instructor will dismount the rider.
5. If the rider becomes ill on the trail, the instructor will decide whether to immediately dismount the rider or return to the mounting ramp at Westwind Community Barn.

Fire, earthquake, or other emergency that requires evacuation

To prepare for responding to a fire, all horse leaders and volunteers are trained in emergency dismount procedures and emergency evacuation procedures. All volunteers should know the location of the fire extinguishers at Westwind Community Barn.

1. Evacuate the riders and staff members calmly and quickly from the barn and associated areas to the designated emergency safe zone.
2. Count all participants and volunteers to ensure everyone is accounted for.
3. The instructor will call 911 or ask another volunteer to do so. When reporting a fire or other emergency, provide your name and the location:
Westwind Community Barn, 27210 Altamont Rd, Los Altos Hills
Stay on the line with the 911 operator if instructed to do so.
4. With the instructor's permission, evacuate the horses if possible, and move to a more distant location.
5. Use the fire extinguishers located in the barn only if your safety or the safety of others will not be compromised.

Volunteer Acknowledgment

I have read the Westwind 4-H Safety and Emergency Procedures handout.

Volunteer's Signature and Date Signed

Volunteer's Name (printed)

Please bring the signed form to the volunteer training class.