



Arena Volunteer Manual

Updated January 2010

Volunteer Coordinator:	Carrie Coyne (970) 690-0122 cell
Ranch Telephone:	(970) 663-4200
Fax:	(970) 663-3891
Email:	carrie@heartsandhorses.org
Website:	www.heartsandhorses.org
Physical Address:	163 North County Road 29, Loveland, CO 80537
Mailing Address:	PO Box 2675, Loveland, CO 80539
Office Hours:	9:30 am – 3:30 pm Monday through Friday

General Arena Training Information

Attendance

Volunteers must be willing to commit themselves to a regular day and time for a certain number of weeks so that our students are able to ride. They must also commit to notifying the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible if illness or time conflicts prevent them from performing their assigned duties. This notification is necessary so that a substitute may be found in time. Sometimes, “Murphy’s Law” applies: If one volunteer is unable to come at their appointed time and does not give ample notice or locate a substitute, several more will do the same for that particular lesson and cause a student to not be able to ride.

Do your best to contact someone and not just leave a message on the machine. **DO NOT send an email to cancel unless you are pre-arranging an absence.** In the event we know in advance of a student’s absence, we will attempt to reach you by telephone as best we can, considering the amount of notice we are given. Understand that cancellations cause an enormous ripple effect.

We request that you notify the Volunteer Coordinator *with as much notice as possible*-at least **24 hours-prior** to your scheduled time if you have to cancel.

Contact Information for Carrie Coyne, Volunteer Coordinator:

Hearts & Horses Ranch Telephone: 970-663-4200 extension two for cancellation line

Cell Phone: 970-690-0122

Email: carrie@heartsandhorses.org (use only for pre-arranging an absence)

Arena Information

Emergency During Class

- The word “STAFF!” is called out alerting everyone in the arena to HALT.
- The Instructor proceeds to the emergency situation and assesses the incident. If necessary, the Instructor designates a volunteer to call 911. If injury should involve a horse, the Instructor designates a volunteer to call the Vet.
- If the incident is not serious, the class resumes.
- If the incident is serious, the Instructor designates trained volunteers to dismount the remaining students with the assistance of parents, if needed, and stays at the incident site until Emergency Personnel arrive.
- **REMEMBER:** If an emergency occurs during class, the Horse handler is responsible for the horse and the Sidewalkers are responsible for the student.

Emergency Dismount

If you are side walking next to a horse that becomes involved in an emergency, shout “STAFF!” to alert your Instructor and horse handler of the situation. If an emergency dismount becomes necessary, the side walker the rider is falling away from needs to remove the stirrup and reins from the rider, while the side walker towards whom the rider is falling needs to remove the stirrup then hug the rider around the trunk and under the arms, pulling the rider off and away from the horse. If the sidewalker feels he cannot bear the full weight of the descending rider, a controlled fall can be initiated, taking care to protect the rider and side walker’s heads and roll with the fall as much as possible. It is important that the side walkers break the rider’s fall and does not fall on the rider.

Universal Precautions

Universal precautions are used to minimize contact with blood and body fluids by taking steps that may prevent non-intact skin exposures of individuals to specific organisms such as Hepatitis B and Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus (HIV/AIDS). When you follow universal precautions, you assume that all persons are potentially infected with blood-borne pathogens.

- Wear disposable latex or vinyl gloves when it is likely that hands will be in contact with bodily fluids. Always change gloves between clients.
- Protect clothing with an impervious material when it is likely that clothing will be soiled with bodily fluids.
- Wear masks and/or eye protection when it is likely that eye and/or mucus membranes will be splashed with bodily fluids.
- Wash hands often, before and after client care, paying particular attention to around and under fingernails and between the fingers, even if gloves are worn. If unanticipated contact with these body substances occurs, washing is done as soon as possible.
- Resuscitation masks should be used for CPR.

Nametags

Nametags are required during class time! **Volunteers need to have a nametag on at all times.** Labels and markers are available in the Volunteer room for temporary nametags if you have not received one.

Helmets

A safety riding helmet is the single most important piece of equipment. It is important to understand that posture and balance of a rider will be directly affected by the fit of the helmet. An ill-fitting helmet will make proper balancing more difficult and will fail to protect the head during a fall. Overly large helmets are dangerous and uncomfortable. They may slip, obscure vision or fall off. A properly fitted helmet should be snug.

The well-fitted helmet should stay on the head when harnessed without rocking or moving. A good way to check a helmet's fit is to have the rider bend down at the waist and shake his/her head. With the manufacturer's suggested adjustment, the helmet should feel secure to the rider.

All participants in classes are required to wear a helmet once they enter the mounting/tacking area. Helmets are required for all groundwork for these participants. All volunteers 12 and under are required to wear a helmet when grooming or assisting in the mounting and tacking arena. All personnel and volunteers are required to wear helmets when mounted on Hearts & Horses program horses.

How to Help a Student with His/Her Helmet:

- Place the helmet on the head sliding it front to back. It should sit level on the head at above the eyebrow level. Allow it to rest so there are two fingers between the eyebrows and the edge of the helmet.
- Make sure the helmet is centered correctly and fasten the chin strap. Just be sure it's tight enough so the helmet doesn't slip or fall.
- If there is a laced harness at the back, undo it before fitting the helmet and re-adjust it after the helmet is on. Place the harness below the small bump at the back of the rider's head.
- If the harness is U shaped, adjust the neck or chin strap firmly so the helmet doesn't rotate on the head when pushed up at the front or back edge.
- Practice fitting a helmet on a fellow volunteer first.
- Ask the rider how the helmet feels. For the rider whose head is a difficult size, try placing the foam spacers inside the helmet at the trouble spots.

Manual Contacts used with Riders

To assist a mounted rider, a sidewalker often has to touch the rider. **Always speak to the rider first, asking permission to touch him/her and giving the location you wish to touch.** Most rider assistance can be given from the waist down. The following is a list and discussion of the manual contacts used in therapeutic riding.

Ankle Support: Often riders only need stabilization at their ankles so that they can achieve a balanced riding position. The volunteer grasps **just above** the rider's ankle from behind using the arm closest to the horse, if that arm is not being used for the Thigh hold. When the Ankle hold is being used in conjunction with the Thigh hold, the volunteer can use the hand farthest from the horse to hold the rider's foot by placing her hand over the rider's arch.

Thigh Hold: The volunteer uses her arm nearest to the rider and grips the front edge or flap of the saddle in a spot that allows her forearm to rest midway on the rider's thigh. You may even press down and inward when needing to provide greater security for the rider. Do not lean on the horse or rider.

Sidewalkers

The side walker's responsibility is the rider (not the horse). Be prepared to give the rider your undivided attention. Get to know him/her! If you ever feel your rider is "not himself or herself" or are concerned about him or her, notify the Instructor privately. At every lesson, reinforce what has been learned. Ask the student to share what they remember.

Prior to Class

- Arrive 30 minutes before class so that you can assist the instructor to prepare the arena and activities for the class.
- When the rider arrives, greet your rider, then the parents/guardians. Review your rider's attire, check for appropriate and safe clothing, no dangling jewelry or objects, etc.
- Fit your rider with a properly sized helmet. See Helmet Fitting Guidelines in this manual for more information. When around a horse it is **required that the rider always wear a helmet.**

- Stay behind the chain with your rider until they are called by the instructor.

During Class

- Only the Instructor is allowed to mount the rider. Listen for directions from the Instructor for your rider to mount in the arena or at the mounting block. Generally, the rider does not put his feet in the stirrups until he is fully away from the mounting block.
- **Never leave your rider's side.** If an object falls onto the ground, such as a glove, etc. leave it and tell the Instructor who will then pick it up.
- The side walker's position is always at the rider's knee. If possible, ask your rider what pressure is comfortable.
- If your rider has only one sidewalker, it is best for the sidewalker to be positioned on the rider's weaker side. If both sides are the same, you should walk on the opposite side of the horseleader. Avoid putting a hand on the rider's back (unless told to do so). Encourage the rider to use his trunk muscles.
- Reinforce the Instructor's directions. When two sidewalkers are with one rider, they can share the task of communication with the rider, but be careful not to confuse the rider with too much verbal stimulation. Have the rider carry out tasks, allowing time to react to the instructions. Encourage the rider to do the exercises, games and reinforce the use of new skills.
- The sidewalker should ask the rider and the leader to bring the horse into the center of the arena anytime a stop is needed. Some examples are: the rider is off balance and can not regain balance, the saddle pad has slipped or the girth is loose, the stirrups need readjusting, the rider's helmet needs adjusting, the rider is fatigued, in pain or needs to stop for any other reason (be discreet when discussing a rider in his presence), or if you need to change sides because you are having some difficulty and cannot carry out your job in comfort and safety. **When changing sides, one volunteer changes at a time.** If there is only one sidewalker, ask the Instructor for assistance.
- At the end of class, wait for the Instructor to dismount your rider. Only Instructors can do the dismount.

After Class

- Accompany your rider to the parents/guardians. You must stay with them at all times until they are returned to their parents/guardians.
- Wipe out or spray the helmet and return it helmet to the rack in its numeric order, facing the correct direction.

Horse Handlers

The horse handler's responsibility is **the horse** (not the rider). All handling of the horses *outside of the therapeutic riding classes* must be cleared through the Equine Manager

Prior to Class

- Arrive one hour earlier than class time to locate your horse, groom, lunge (if necessary) and tack him for class
- Familiarize yourself with the horse's binder, located in the helmet room
- Read the "Horse Information" board for any information you need to know prior to working with him.
- All horses *must be haltered* when being led into and out of pastures, paddocks or stalls
- All horses are to be tied using a quick release knot to the baling twine available.

- Use grooming tools only for the horse intended – no sharing please
- Tacking – Check class chart to see what tack is to be used for the class. Check the saddle fit chart for any notes about the tack to be used (lollipop pad or riser with certain saddles on certain horses). Place the saddle on the horse behind the shoulders. The seat of the saddle needs to be level. Always pull the saddle pad up into the gullet of the saddle.
- Put all Velcro and keepers on saddle pads through the billets and girths (when possible)
- If girth has one elastic side, it goes on the horse's left side
- Girth should be a couple of hole higher on the right side
- Girth should be only as tight as needed to keep the saddle from sliding. Girth will be tightened by INSTRUCTOR (for class) prior to rider mounting
- INSTRUCTORS (only) are allowed to put on bridles. Once the bridle or reins are on: *DO NOT LEAVE THE HORSE UNATTENDED*
- At least 15 minutes prior to class and until the class begins, warm up the horse by allowing the horse to investigate some of the toys and props, practice leading the horse while maintaining your own space and that of the horse, stopping, backing, turning to the left and right and trotting. Horses should not be tied up at the rail prior to class.
- When leading a horse:
 - Hold the lead rope about 6-8 inches from the snap with your right hand
 - Fold the excess rope in a butterfly loop with your left hand. Never wrap the rope around your hands. Be sure the lead rope dangles between the reins
 - *Maintain your own space*
 - Look up to where you're going, *do not look at the horse*
 - Keep the horse at your side with their eye about even with your shoulder
 - Do not allow the horse to get *ahead of you*
 - Do not allow the horse to fall *too far behind you*
 - Do not allow the horse to *walk right behind you*

During Class

- **The Instructor always mounts and dismounts the rider.** Pay attention to the Instructor. The Instructor will address the rider, but as the handler you need to know what the instructions are as well.
- Whenever your horse is stopped, stand at an angle in front of the horse's shoulder. Your body language will tell the horse to stay put. This is during mounting, dismounting, emergencies and or anytime the horse is stopped for extended periods.
- Maintain a steady, even pace. Avoid sharp turns or abrupt changes of gait. Follow the rail unless directed otherwise. Maintain two horse lengths between horses.
- **Allow the horse's head freedom of movement!** As they walk, all horses bob their heads up and down. This rhythmical movement starts at the head and moves all the way down the horse's spine. **This movement is what makes horseback riding therapeutic.**
- Reinforce the rider's attempts to control the horse. Keep an eye and ear on your rider's commands. Don't give a free ride!

- Don't drag the horse along. Encourage the horse to move out with the energy in your upper and lower body.
- Remember: with sidewalkers your horse is much wider. Be sure to leave enough room around barrels etc. for the sidewalker to pass without running into items in the arena.
- When the rider is controlling the horse, you may allow a little slack in the lead, do not influence the horse. (The horse may get confused if he feels tugs on both the reins and the lead). This may, at times be difficult if the horse tends to follow you. Allow the horse's head to point forward, not pulled towards you. Especially important at the trot.
- Allow the rider time to process the information given by the Instructor and to make an effort to comply—be patient and listen to the instructor's directions as to what to do when.
- Be aware of the rider's uncontrollable body movements, vocalizations, and behaviors.
- Manage the horse to avoid problems. NEVER discipline a horse with a rider mounted.
- Bring the horse to the center of the arena anytime the rider or sidewalkers need to make any adjustments. Avoid stopping on the rail.
- At the end of class, wait for the Instructor to dismount the rider. After all of the students have left the arena, lead the horse to the tacking area.
- If an emergency occurs with your rider or horse, such as: the rider having a seizure, the rider is falling off, the horse is frightened, or any other emergency requiring an emergency dismount: Stop your horse (turn him towards the wall, if necessary, as an aid for a quick stop) and stand at an angle in front of the horse to keep him stopped, then soothe him while the sidewalkers assist the rider. **Do not leave the horse or let go of the lead rope for any reason.** When the rider is off of the horse, pull the horse's head towards the student, which will cause the horse's hindquarters to move away from the student. When the horse is away from the rider, halt the horse and wait for instructions.

After Class

- Untack and groom horse; placing everything back in its proper location
- If the horse came to class with a fly mask or blanket, please make sure they go back home dressed with these items
- Bridles and saddles should be cleaned (not taken apart) after class/ride
- After grooming is complete, please return grooming kit to tackroom
- Complete a "Horse Use and Behavior Log regarding the performance of your horse in class. This is also the place to note routine horse concerns. Leave the completed form in the designated section of the Master Horse Binder. Blank logs are located in the Master Horse Binder.
- For urgent horse concerns contact the instructor immediately

Suggestions on How to Relate to Individuals with Disabilities

A person with a disability is an individual first and is entitled to the same dignity, respect and considerations expected by anyone.

A disability need not be ignored or denied between friends. But, until your relationship is that, show a friendly interest in him/her as a person.

Be yourself when you meet him/her.

Talk about the same things as you would with anyone.

Help him/her only when he/she requests it. If a disabled person falls down, he/she may wish to get up on their own.

Be patient. Let the disabled person set their own pace in walking or talking.

Don't be afraid to laugh with him/her.

Don't stop and stare when you see a disabled person you do not know. He/she deserves the same courtesy any person should receive.

Don't be over-protective, over-solicitous and don't shower the disabled person with kindness.

Don't ask embarrassing questions. If the disabled person wants to tell you about his/her disability, he/she will bring up the subject themselves.

Don't offer pity or charity. People with disabilities want to be treated as an equal. He/she wants the chance to prove him/herself.

Don't separate the disabled person from his/her wheelchair, walker, crutches, etc. unless asked. They may want them within reach.

Don't make up your mind ahead of time about a disabled person. You may be surprised at how wrong you are in judging his/her interests and abilities.

Enjoy your friendship with the disabled person. His/her philosophy and good humor will give you an inspiration.

When speaking to someone in a wheelchair, remember to get down to their eye level.

Inappropriate behavior is the same for persons with or without a disability.

Therapeutic Riding Benefits for Various Disabilities

At Hearts & Horses we focus on ability not disability. This section has been included to assist volunteers with a basic knowledge of common disabilities, the challenges they pose for students, and what benefits therapeutic riding can provide. The list is not all-inclusive but is intended to aid the volunteers in providing the best experience they can for our clients. Student's needs vary greatly. Remember that each client is a unique individual and that we need to focus on meeting those individual needs.

<u>Disability</u>	<u>Challenges to Student</u>	<u>Benefits of Therapeutic Riding</u>
Autism	Inattentive, limited eye contact, delayed language, unusual fears	Postural and verbal stimulation
Cerebral Palsy	Impaired balance, fatigue, uncoordinated movement	Promotes symmetry, balance, posture, increases muscle strength
Down Syndrome	Characteristics vary but may include mild to severe learning disability, poor muscle tone	Improvement of expressive and receptive gross and fine motor skills, balance, posture, muscle tone and coordination
Emotional	Trouble coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relationships, short attention span	Increases self-confidence and self-Disabilities awareness and provides appropriate social outlet
Hearing Impairment	Challenged communication, may have attention deficits	Promotes self-confidence, attentiveness, balance, posture and coordination
Learning Disabilities	Problems sequencing and problem solving	Stimulates attention span, cooperation, language skills, posture and coordination
Mental Retardation	Developmentally delayed in all areas, short attention span	Stimulates group activity skills, balance, posture, coordination, eye-hand coordination
Muscular Dystrophy	Muscular weakness, fatigues easily	Stimulates postural and trunk alignment, may slow progressive loss of strength
Multiple Sclerosis	Fatigue, weakness, visual impairment, loss of coordination	Promotes balance, symmetry, strengthens muscles, socialization
Spinal Cord Injury	Trauma to spinal cord resulting in a loss of neurological function	Stimulates posture and balance, strengthens trunk muscles, is an option for recreation
Tramautic Brain	Impaired balance, motor skills, speech, paralysis, weakness	Stimulates balance, posture, gross and Injury fine motor skills, speech and perceptual Skills
Visual Impairment	Insecure posture, lack of visual, memory, fearfulness	Stimulates spatial awareness, posture, and coordination, provides structured risk taking and freedom of movement