

Safety

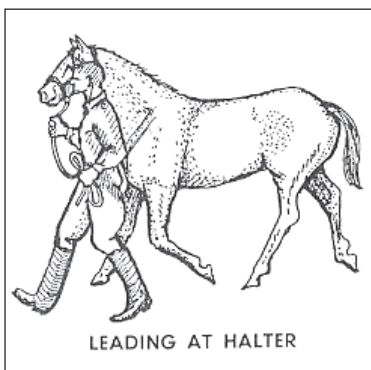
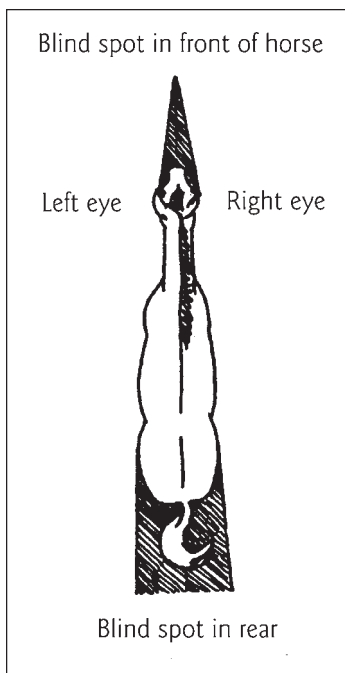
Safety is everyone's responsibility!

Basic Safety Rules

Safety is the most important activity when handling horses.

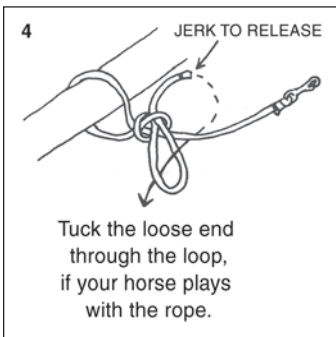
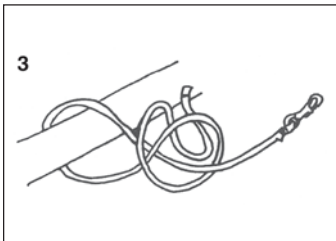
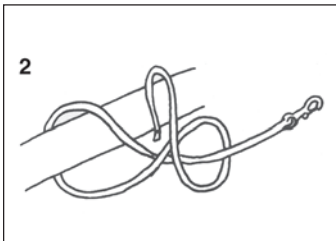
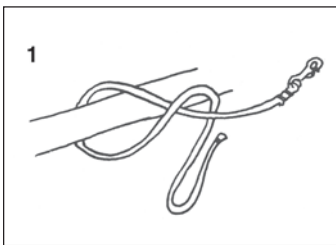
Caution must be taken around even the quietest horse. Accidents can happen when you least expect them.

1. Do not run around horses. If horses see sudden movement without seeing the cause of it, they may kick, strike or bolt, causing injury.
2. When approaching a horse, always walk toward the shoulder; never from behind or ahead. Even in a stall, try to approach towards the shoulder. **Always let a horse know you are approaching by talking to it.**
3. Horses have three blind spots where they can't see you; directly between both eyes extending out approximately 10 inches (25 cm.), directly behind them and under their head. Their hips also block their vision of their rump area. Speaking to your horse lets it know where you are at all times.
4. Lead a horse from the left side, walking between the head and shoulder. This position gives you the best control while maintaining optimum safety. Place your right hand approx. 6 inches (15 cm.) down the shank, carry any excess lead rope in your left hand.
5. Never wrap the reins or lead shank around your hand or any part of your body so that if the horse were to bolt it would not wrap dangerously around you.
6. When leading a horse, turn it to the right (away from you) so it won't step on you. Push its head to the right using the leadshank, held in your right hand, and as you turn stay between its head and shoulder.
7. When the horse is tied do not go under the neck of a horse to get to the other side. If you do, you are passing through a blind spot and may frighten the horse. Go around the hindquarters, talk to your horse and keep hand contact on the horse as you walk around, so that it knows it's you when you pass through its blind spot. The closer you stand to a horse, the less likely you are to be injured if kicked. You may be shoved away, but not badly hurt.



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8. When grooming the underside of a horse or working on the legs or feet, never sit or kneel. **Always keep your feet on the ground and a hand on the horse so you can react quickly if needed.** While handling or grooming do not drop grooming tools or equipment near the horse. Place them away from the horse so you will not trip on them, or they will not be stepped on by the horse.
9. When you are working around horses, wear **protective footwear.** Do not wear runners, thongs or go barefoot. **When riding, always wear footwear with a heel.** **Gloves will help prevent rope burn.** Do not wear anything that dangles when working with horses.
10. Do not mount your horse in a barn or close to the overhanging edge of a roof.



11. Never ride a horse into or out of a barn or stable.
12. **Tying Your Horse:** When you tie your horse, tie it to a secure object (like a fence post secured in the ground) that will not break or move if the horse pulls back. Never tie a horse to the rail of a fence. It may break or the nails may pull out if the horse pulls back. If possible never tie below the level of the horses withers. Tie your horse, using a quick release knot. Tie the shank to the post so that it is short enough that your horse can not get a leg over the rope. **Never tie a horse with reins. Always use a lead shank.**
13. Keep a pocket knife handy where you tie your horse and also one in the horse trailer, so that if you ever need to release your horse from its leadshank and you are unable to untie it, you can cut the leadshank. This may be necessary if a horse is frightened and pulls too hard on the leadshank.
14. When working around your horse (grooming, washing, saddling, and so on) maintain at least 90 degrees of space between your horse and any solid objects (fence or wall). Teach your horse to stand still at a 90 degree angle to where it is tied.
15. Avoid accidents by **practicing safe management procedures.** Keep all equipment in good repair. Maintain clean aisles and well-constructed stalls and fences. Check equipment regularly to ensure a safe experience every time.
16. If releasing your horse into a stall or field turn the horse around to face the door or gate before letting it go. Respect your horse's instincts. Any horse no matter how calm has a first instinct for survival. Try to anticipate situations that may make him nervous, and get him used to them. Get to know your, and your horse's strengths and weaknesses, and get help from a professional when you need it.

Helmets



The Alberta 4-H Horse Program strongly encourages all riders to wear ASTM/SEI approved, protective headgear. The decision to wear helmets is an issue of personal safety. It is the responsibility of the rider and parent/guardian of the rider to ensure the proper use and fit of helmets. Some events or riding establishments have compulsory rules that require riders to wear helmets. 4-H members are allowed to wear helmets at any 4-H event or activity.

You should view videos available that outline the importance of wearing helmets. An excellent video available through the Alberta 4-H Foundation is called “**Every Time, Every Ride**” from the Washington State 4-H Foundation.

Here are some things to consider, when making the decision whether or not to wear a helmet when you ride:

- ⤵ head injury is the leading cause of death from riding accidents;
- ⤵ compared to injuries from other childhood activities, riding injuries are severe;
- ⤵ in the under 18 age group, females (10-14 years) are by far the highest risk group;
- ⤵ helmet use was almost non existent in riders who have died from head injury;
- ⤵ horse behaviour, such as bolting and spooking, that results in a rider falling, leads the injury list;
- ⤵ rural riders (riding around their home) lead the injured list. Most riders are injured while riding for recreation;
- ⤵ **the consistent wearing of an ASTM/SEI approved equestrian helmet, both in competition and recreational riding, will hopefully minimize severe injury.**

Our goal would be that by the year 2010 every 4-H member will be voluntarily wearing a helmet when riding.

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When buying a helmet, here are some tips: Black is the preferred colour, although brown or navy are often accepted. Green or maroon are not generally allowed, if you plan to wear your helmet for English show classes. Be sure that any helmet is well fitted. It is very important that helmets meet or exceed the American Society of Testing Materials (ASTM) standard 1163 and the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) guidelines. There must be a label bearing the “ASTM/SEI 1163” mark and manufacturer’s lot number permanently affixed to the inside of the helmet to indicate an approved equestrian protective device. Canada recognizes the standards set by ASTM as the highest. The market is flooded with helmets which do not meet the ASTM standard. Get safety value for your dollar – look for the ASTM sticker. Most helmets have a life span of five years, so beware of damaged, outdated, leftover helmets or second-hand purchases.

The Riding Arena

An arena is a fenced or covered rectangular area set aside for training and riding horses. When it is outdoors it may be called a riding ring.

The “**track or rail**” is the part of the arena where the horses normally work. The outside track follows the walls or fence and the inside track is about 3 metres inside of the outside track.

When you are riding on the track with your right side towards the centre of the arena, you are on the **right rein**. When you are riding with your left side towards the centre of the arena, you are on the **left rein**.

Rules of the Riding Arena

When riding in an arena with other riders it can become like a busy highway. It is important that you follow some basic rules to help keep the traffic flowing and to prevent accidents.

1. Riders must close gates behind them when they enter or exit the arena. Keeping the gates closed at all times ensures that horses will not bolt out of the arena. It is a good idea for riders to dismount and lead their horses through the gate.
2. Be aware of others around you. Be careful not to cut anyone off.
3. Keep at least six feet of space all around when possible (or one horse length between riders). The rider following another should be able to see the heels of the horse in front of him. Keep out of bunches.
4. Horses moving slower are given priority for using the outside track. Riders working faster must move to the inside track.

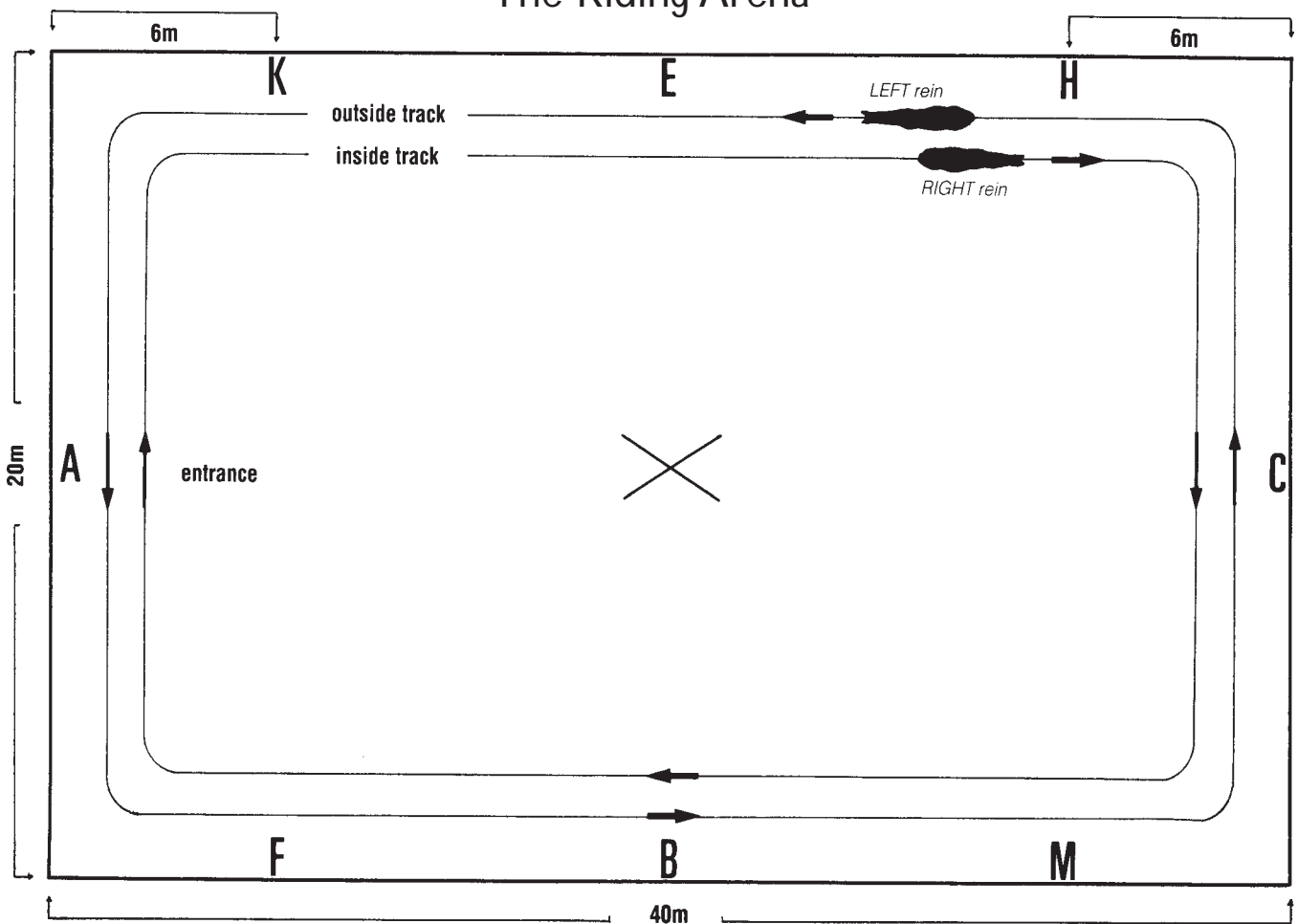


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5. When riders are working in different directions, those riding on the left rein are given priority for using the outside track. Those working on the right rein would move to the inside track. This rule means riders know they will pass oncoming riders, left shoulder to left shoulder.
6. When working at the walk, a rider should use the outside track to keep out of the way of faster horses, unless all of the horses are traveling at a walk.
7. If you have to stop for any reason, you must move off the track to the centre of the arena. e.g. to adjust tack.
8. If you must stop on the rail or slow your horse down, make sure there is space behind you for riders to respond to your transition.
9. When exiting the arena, do not rush. Leave the arena at a walk, in single file.



The Riding Arena



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Trailer Horses

Trailer Horses should be done with two people if at all possible. Seek advice of people experienced in transporting horses before trailering for the first time.

Horses May be Trucked or Trailered

Check Trailer

The trailer should be serviced and checked regularly for the following:

1. Rotting or weakened floor boards.
2. Open, rusted or weakened door hinges and latches.
3. Proper and safe operation of hitch, lights and braking system.
4. Wheel bearings, tire wear and proper inflation.
5. Sharp projections inside or outside the trailer.

Be sure the trailer is properly constructed and that it meets provincial requirements for brakes and lights. The trailer should be of sufficient height to give the horse ample neck and head room, and be free from sharp or protruding objects.

Before Loading or Unloading

Before loading or unloading, be sure the ground area behind and around the trailer affords safe footing. Be sure the trailer is level and steady and cannot move as the horse enters. If necessary, place chocks (blocks) behind the wheels to keep the trailer steady.

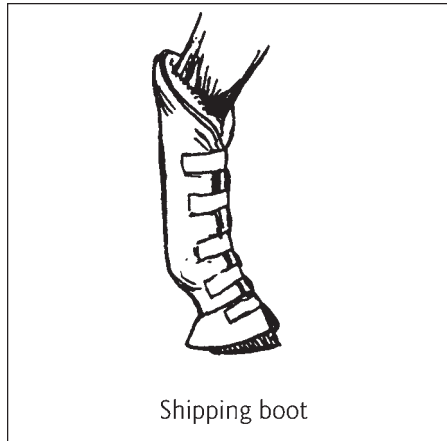
Unless you and your horse are experienced, remove the bridle, saddle and other equipment before loading. Use a properly fitted halter and a good sturdy lead shank (wearing gloves reduces the risk to you). Avoid the use of nylon lead shanks because of potential rope burns. Always pack a spare halter and lead rope.

Leg injuries may be minimized or prevented by putting on shipping boots. Give your horse a chance to get used to the feel of the protective boots before you load him. Always include a well-stocked first-aid and tool kit when trailering.

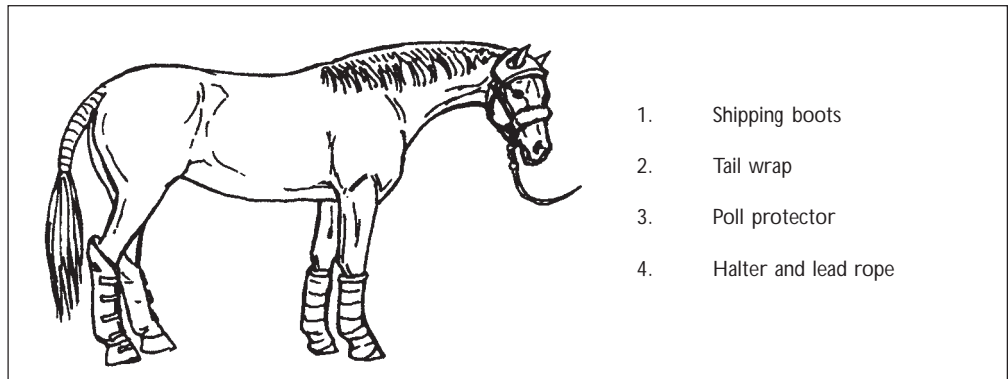


Leg Wraps

Protective boots for shipping



Horse prepared for shipping



Allow Time

It is natural for horses not to want to go into a small space like your trailer. Teach your horse to load days, weeks or months before you have to haul him. Don't wait until it's time to go. Always allow sufficient time for loading the horse, and remain calm but firm with the horse at all times! One of the most common mistakes when teaching horses to load in a trailer is not allowing sufficient time to properly accustom the horse to the process. A horse that has a positive experience will become easier to load with each lesson.

Loading Safely into Trailer!

The loading procedure should be done with at least two people whenever possible. If you have trouble loading or unloading, get experienced help!

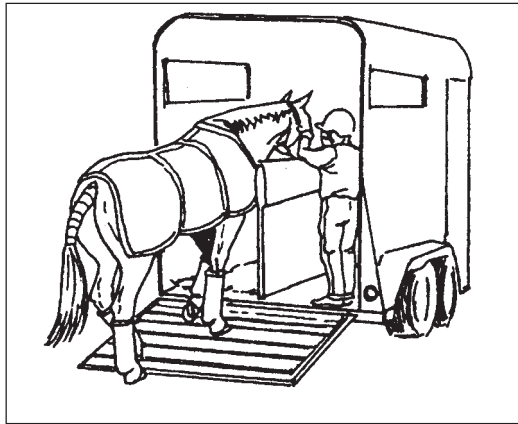
When attempting to load, position the horse so that it is straight with the trailer entrance. Be sure that the safety-escape door is unlatched so you are not trapped if the horse begins to panic. Secure the butt-bar (if the trailer has one) immediately after the horse is loaded and before the horse is tied. Opinions vary on hauling a horse tied or loose. If you tie, allow sufficient length of rope so the horse can move its head for balance and comfort, but tight enough so the horse cannot turn around or bother the horse next to him. Always tie with a quick release knot or use panic snaps on the trailer ties.

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Trailer Horses

(continued)

Loading safely into a trailer



Hauling When hauling only one horse in a two-horse trailer, it should be hauled on the left side. If two horses are being hauled, the heaviest animal should be hauled on the left. Due to the crowning structure of most roads, this assures a smoother tow and an easier ride for the horse. When hauling, all normal driving laws should be observed. Drive defensively, avoid sudden stops or turns, and allow additional distance for braking. Remember that the weight and movement of horses and the trailer will often push the towing vehicle.

Ventilation Be sure that proper ventilation is provided in the trailer at all times, but especially during the summer months e.g. roof vents, screened windows etc. Often horses that are “poor haulers” have had bad experiences such as being blanketed and getting too hot on the trip due to poor ventilation. Never allow anyone to throw cigarettes or matches out of the moving vehicle. The air currents can pull these items into the trailer and cause a fire.

Footing Use rubber mats with sufficient bedding for secure footing. Shavings or sand are commonly used to provide adequate footing and to keep the horse comfortable during hauling. For example, a horse on a long haul may not urinate without bedding to absorb the sound and splash. However, for a short haul if you are using a trailer which is not completely enclosed, the bedding may blow around and irritate the horse’s eyes and respiratory system. In this instance, you might choose to eliminate the bedding.

Consideration should be given to the size of trailer and weight to be towed when selecting a towing vehicle. The size of the vehicle should be sufficient to stop the load as well as to pull it.

The Department of Transportation has specific regulations regarding trailers, for example, recommended weights, brakes etc. Contact them for the most current regulations.

When trailering always:

1. Have your towing vehicle serviced if necessary.
2. Double check all connections (lights, brakes, hitch and safety chains).
3. Be sure all doors and latches are secured.
4. Drive carefully. Turns should be made slowly. Start and stop slowly and steadily.
5. Look far ahead to avoid emergencies.
6. Drive defensively!
7. Allow extra time for slower driving and unexpected delays.

Always speak to a horse that is in a trailer before attempting to handle it. When traveling, check the horse, hay net or bag, trailer tires, lights and hitch at every stop before continuing. Adjust the feeding schedule to avoid traveling immediately after feeding grain. Feed smaller amounts more often if necessary, and provide hay when trailering. Cubes are preferred over hay as they don't blow around. This will help prevent digestive upsets due to hauling. Water the horse as frequently as possible, especially in hot weather. When hauling a horse in the winter, the horse must be protected against windchill (by closing off openings, hooding, blanketing, etc. to match the severity of the conditions).

Unloading

When unloading, use caution when dropping the tailgate or opening the rear door. The horse may try to back out as soon as the tailgate is opened. Having the butt-bar secure will prevent the horse from flying back, breaking the tie or halter, and falling over backwards. Always untie the horse first before opening the rear door. Back the horse out slowly and straight or slightly to the center. After a long haul, walk the horse to restore circulation and ease stiff muscles before the horse is put into a stall.

While learning, have a person experienced in hauling horses ride along on some practice runs with you. Practice first with an empty trailer. Recognize that hauling a large animal requires more caution and experience than towing a boat or cargo trailer.

When the trailer is disconnected and parked, be sure to place chocks (blocks) to secure the wheels. Never load or unload a horse into or out of an unhitched trailer. Never tie a horse to a disconnected trailer.

If you require further information on hauling horses check out the resource "**Recommended Code of Practice for the Handling of Farm Animals**". This is available through Alberta agriculture offices or at <http://www.carc-crac.ca>



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Trailer Horses

(continued)

Transportation Regulations

In Alberta you are required to fill out a "Livestock Manifest" to ensure proper identification and type of animals being hauled. You can obtain manifests from the Livestock Identification Service Office, or the Local Auction Market. You can also get a yearly permit from a Brand Inspector.


LIVESTOCK IDENTIFICATION SERVICES LTD. OFFICIAL ALBERTA MANIFEST AC						
Pen Number			Date Month/Day/Year			
Pay to Owner John Doe		Phone Number Press hard! (403) 123-4567		Owner's Address RR1 Rural Town, Alberta		
On Account of (Consignor)			Postal Code T6Z 7L8			
Consignor's Address						
Destination Address Local Riding Arena						
Destination Address			City or Town Anywhere Rural Town			
<small>Fed and Veterinary Drug Declaration: I declare that these animals, while under my ownership or control, have not been fed any materials prohibited under the Health of Animals Act (Canada) and that, in the case of animals intended for slaughter, appropriate withdrawal times for veterinary drugs and biologics have been observed.</small>						
Finance Declaration (Optional) Name of lender having lien or security interest in the livestock: N/A						
Description of Livestock: Show the correct brand information.						
Number	Colour	Kind of Livestock	Brand/EID	Brand Location	Other Brands	Brand Location
1	Black	Geld.	KC	RS		
2	Sorrel	Mares	NVB	---	-----	-----
1	Roan	Stud	↑	LT		
Total 4 I certify that the information given above is true. X Jane Doe signature (or authorized shipper)						
Brand Inspector			Vehicle's License Number 7IN- 909			
Transporter's Name			Driver's Signature Jane Doe			
Transporter's Address			Trucking Charges			
Received and Counted By:						
Date			Time			
US0426 REV. 05/2002						
Calgary Office Copy			Manifest # AC343405			

First Aid

Having some knowledge of first aid is important. It is a good idea for 4-H members to take a certified first aid course. At riding clinics and club activities identify a parent or leader as the designated first aider before the event starts.

Information about first aid for horses can be found in the chapter on “Health”.

Here’s one important tip for foot injuries for people who work with animals:

-  If you ever receive a foot injury when working with your horse (stepped on, kicked in the ankle, and so on) **leave your work or riding boot on** as this will help to prevent swelling. Once you find medical assistance, the boot may need to be removed by cutting the seams. Don’t worry, they can be re-sewn.

Safety on the Trail/ Road

Riding with a group of people on a trail can be a lot of fun. There are some basic rules to follow for the safety of people and their horses. Don’t show off. This is not the time or place.

1. Always allow one horse length or more between yourself and the next rider.
2. Have a designated, experienced lead rider (trail boss) and someone experienced to bring up the rear. This will keep your group as a tight unit. Keep a calm horse at the front and rear of the group.
3. If someone needs to stop, to adjust equipment, etc., have everyone stop. This will prevent runaways as horses left behind may try to catch up to horses that have continued on ahead. If there is a runaway horse all riders should stop. A horse is a herd animal and will likely return to the group.
4. When crossing roads, have everyone line up along the road and cross over together at the same time when traffic is clear. This gets the group across safely and quickly and prevents a long string of horses crossing the road. Reassemble in a line on the other side.
5. When crossing streams or rivers, be careful to cross where it is shallow and safe. Have someone experienced remain behind to help any horses through that may not want to go. Undo standing martingales and tiedowns before crossing in case your horse hits a deep spot. Your horse needs the full use of its head and neck to swim.

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Safety on the Trail/ Road (continued)

6. If you are riding and get caught in a thunderstorm, avoid riding under trees, on hills or along stream beds. Try to obtain shelter under a lean-to shed or a properly grounded barn. Horses can be a high risk in electrical storms especially if they are wearing metal shoes. Try to stay in a low, heavily forested area.
7. Suggested equipment to take on a ride:
 - protective clothing or carry rain gear,
 - sun screen and hat,
 - carry small first aid kit, phone, hoof pick, pocket knife, water/sponge, wire cutters and rope.
8. Avoid trail riding alone; but if you do ride alone tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.
9. Avoid riding at night on roads or highways. Wear light colored clothing and put reflective tape on rider or tack if you choose to ride at night.
10. A red ribbon tied into the horse's tail indicates a kicker, so stay away!!!
11. A blue ribbon tied in the horse's tail indicates a stallion, so use caution.
12. Be patient with less experienced riders.

Knowledge of proper horsemanship with regular use and review of safety guidelines will make horse experiences safer and more enjoyable. Recognize that there are no short cuts to becoming a knowledgeable horseman or woman. Be prepared to spend considerable time developing safe horse handling and riding skills.

Keep an open mind, continue to seek more information, and be receptive to ideas of reputable, experienced people. If you have a problem with your horse, or are unsure how to safely handle a situation, do not hesitate to seek professional advice. Remember, safety is everyone's responsibility!

