

Sandy Hills Stables Safety Contract

Horses are prey animals and are easily startled into a flight or fight mode. The following guidelines will prevent serious mishaps and make the experience more enjoyable for everyone involved, including the horses.

1. Do not touch or feed horses you have not been introduced to.
2. Except during specific activities, always handle the horse with a halter and lead rope. When leading the horse, never wrap the lead line around your hand. Do not lay the line over your neck or shoulder.
3. Avoid standing directly in front of or directly behind the horse. When walking behind the horse, put your hand on the horse's hindquarters and move around him with your body close to his body. When two people are working with the same horse, they should stand on the same side of the horse.
4. Do not hit the horse. Physical violence only escalates the horse's impulse to run or fight.
5. Stop what you are doing and move away from the horse or return to the neutral leading position when the instructor calls a "Time Out". Wait quietly for further instruction.
6. If a horse begins to panic, give him some space. Do not try to restrain him. If the panic escalates, LET THE HORSE GO! Call "Time Out" or "Loose Horse".
7. As prey animals, horses are very sensitive to the feelings of herd members and human beings. Feelings are a primary source of information to this species. Pay attention to your feelings and how these feelings are changing. If you get frustrated, fearful, or angry, call your own "Time Out" and reassess the situation. Do not hesitate to ask for help.
8. It is not uncommon for human handlers to pick up feelings that actually belong to the horses. If you have distressing feelings that you cannot name or have no logical reason for, call your own "Time Out" and consult an instructor. Many instances of horse panic can be avoided by listening to and analyzing these feelings before they evolve into extreme behaviors.
9. Do not hold your breath. Horses give and receive information through the quality and frequency of their breathing. Holding your breath or producing quick, shallow breaths around the horses can cause them to become stressed or fearful.

I have read the safety guidelines above and will listen to the accompanying demonstration. I agree to follow these rules to the best of my ability and ask for help when I am having trouble with any of the Sandy Hills activities. I agree to be responsible for my own safety and thus contribute to the safety of the group.

Signature

Date