

SAFETY PLANNING FOR SHOWS JIM BRANDON EQUESTRIAN CENTER

Safety must be a priority and must be considered in every aspect of show planning. Thorough planning with careful consideration of safety will help minimize the risks of injury to show participants and horses. Show managers are encouraged to consult with safety experts to help ensure adequate safety precautions and medical coverage for the show.

Participants should be aware of risks associated with equine activities. Acknowledgement of Risk forms should be available and completed.

The show committee, steward(s) and ringmaster(s) should be aware of safety procedures prior to the start of the show. Judges should be instructed to keep safety a priority and reminded that the judge may excuse any exhibitor due to concerns for safety of any participant or horse in any class.

The show manager should be sure that a plan to deal with potential emergency situations involving exhibitors, spectators, or horses is in place for the show. Consider potential emergency situations such as extreme weather, fallen rider with injuries, loose horse, etc. Depending on the size of the event, the show manager may designate a safety coordinator to assist with emergency pre-planning and emergency response plan. In some cases, the show manager may also be the safety coordinator. At larger events, this position may be better served by a person with no other responsibilities.

The role of the safety coordinator is to coordinate safety planning before the day of the show and to direct any emergent needs the day of the show. At a minimum, the safety coordinator should post in a designated location the phone numbers for local Emergency Medical Service (EMS), police, fire department and veterinarian, the name and phone number of the nearest hospital with directions to that facility, directions to the location of the show or event for EMS. Each member of the show committee should be aware of the location of emergency personnel on the grounds, emergency phone numbers, and the location of local emergency medical facilities.

If there will be no EMS or medical personnel on the grounds, the safety coordinator should contact local EMS prior to the show and notify them of the upcoming event and review with local EMS directions to the show grounds as well as instructions for accessing central areas. Many EMS personnel may not be aware of factors that may frighten horses and create additional hazards in an emergency. They should be informed of the effects of lights and sirens on horses and resultant problems for horses and humans on a crowded show grounds! Potential medical personnel may be first aid providers with CPR training, First Responders, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT: basic or advanced), paramedic, nurse, physician assistant or physician.

The decision to have EMS or medical personnel, with or without an ambulance, on the show grounds is dependent on multiple factors. The two most important are the total number of individuals on the grounds the day of the event, both participants and spectators, and the proximity of the show grounds to EMS or medical care. As total numbers of individuals on a show grounds increases, so does the probability of illness or injury. It should be noted that this probability is still extremely low and that most medical needs will be minor and non-emergent.

The location of the show grounds in relation to medical care should also factor into safety planning. A show located within close proximity of a hospital and an ambulance service will probably not need on-site EMS for a small event. Once the total number of individuals begins to rise above 500, the safety coordinator should consider having dedicated trained medical personnel on the show grounds, regardless of distance to a hospital. For show grounds in more remote locations, show management should more strongly consider having trained medical personnel on the grounds either with or without dedicated ambulance service.

While an ambulance with EMS personnel on the grounds may be desirable for all events, smaller shows may be adequately staffed with personnel that are familiar with basic first aid and CPR and that can access the 911 system if the event locale is close to EMS/ambulance service. Larger events, including most district and state level events will have participant and spectator numbers great enough to warrant on site EMS or ambulance presence.

At larger events where medical personnel are on the grounds their locations should be clearly marked and they should have the ability to be quickly located on the grounds by radio or phone. The safety coordinator should review the layout of the show grounds with medical personnel as well as access routes to the grounds should an ambulance be needed. The safety coordinator should arrange for communications between show personnel and medical personnel.

Medical personnel should be appropriately dressed and stationed in an obvious location if possible so they can be easily found in the event of an emergency. The location of medical personnel on the grounds should be announced, posted at the show office, included on show maps and published in on-site materials. Protocols for contacting on-site medical personnel should be posted prominently on the show grounds and provided to exhibitors. This is especially critical if the show grounds are large and the medical station is not readily visible.

It is preferable for a veterinarian to be present throughout the show. If this is not practical a veterinarian should be contacted prior to the show and arrangements made for the veterinarian to be "on-call".

A first aid kit and fire extinguisher should be located in the show office or medical stations. They should be checked and re-stocked or serviced as needed.

The safety coordinator should obtain incident reporting forms and be responsible for completing these forms as needed for injuries sustained on the show grounds. Incident report forms must be completed and submitted for all incidents that may result in an insurance claim. If a person refuses medical care when offered, it should be noted on the incident report form.