

Counseling & Psychotherapy
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Section A. *Protective Attire*

1. I am hereby advised to always wear hard-soled, fully enclosed shoes or boots and socks to protect feet and long pants to protect legs while working around or interacting with horses.

Section B. *The Nature and Physical Character of the Horse*

Domesticated, well-trained horses are usually obedient, docile and affectionate. However, it is important to understand that their survival instincts are what have allowed the horse to survive from prehistoric times to the present day.

1. I am advised that horses are unpredictable by nature, with minds of their own, as are all animals both domestic and wild. The horse is often somewhat high strung or nervous by nature. Horses are extremely strong and physically powerful. Horses are extremely heavy weighing from 600 to 1300 pounds on the average. These characteristics deserve a human being's utmost respect.
2. I am advised that when a horse is frightened, angry, under stress or feels threatened, it is the horse's instinct to jump forward or sideways, to run away from danger at a trot or gallop of speeds up to 35 miles per hour.
3. I am advised that if a horse is frightened or feels threatened from behind, the horse may kick straight back, sideways in either direction or even forward with either or both hind legs with tremendous force.
4. I am advised that if a horse is frightened or feels threatened from above or from his/her back, he/she may hunch the back and buck in a way that could throw a rider to the ground with tremendous force. A fall from a horse will usually be from a height of 3 to 6 feet.
5. I am advised that if a horse is frightened or feels threatened from the front, the natural reaction may be to rear up with both front legs, strike with one or both front legs, bite with teeth, throw the head up or from side to side, or run directly over whatever he/she fears in front of him/her.
6. I am advised that a human must always approach a horse calmly and quietly with caution, preferably to the horse's shoulder or lower neck, talking soothingly to the horse.
7. I am advised that loud and/or sudden unexpected movements, dropping of objects near a horse, approaching vehicles or animals or people, ill-fitting equipment or physical pain can provoke a domesticated horse to react according to natural, protective instincts.
8. I am advised that the first signs of anger or fear in a horse are the sudden tensing of the muscles of the body, possibly laying the ears flat back against the head, or quickly tossing or raising the head, or sudden snorting through the nostrils accompanying at least one other warning sign.

9. I am advised that a horse can see independently with each eye, actually looking in one direction with one eye and another direction with the other eye. The horse can also focus both eyes on one object somewhere in front of him/her. Typically the direction the ear is pointing will tell an observer where the eye is looking on the same side.
10. I am advised that a horse has two blind areas around which he/she cannot see. Those areas are directly behind the horse and directly in front. When a horse has his/her head lowered to the ground, the spot directly at the end of the nostrils is a blind area. This is the reason it is best to approach a horse close to the shoulder, and never to surprise a horse from the rear, or to reach first for the horse's mouth.
11. I am advised that while a horse is very sure-footed by nature, horses may accidentally step on an object such as a human's foot when the horse is balancing or turning around. When a horse is worked on unstable ground or slippery grass or footing, the horse could fall down injuring the horse, rider and /or handler.

I have read and do understand the above warnings concerning protective attire and the nature and physical character of the horse.

Participant or Parent/Guardian:

Date:

Witness:

Date:
