



# **Volunteer Handbook**

## **Surf and Turf Therapy**

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Updated 6/11/2024

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# Welcome Letter

Welcome Volunteers! We are so happy to have you onboard and look forward to working with you! This manual has a few helpful tips regarding keeping everyone safe and happy while working at Surf and Turf Therapy. Please read through it and ask any questions you might have! Also, don't forget to have fun!



# **Mission & Vision:**

## **MISSION**

*Surf and Turf Therapy is an organization committed to bettering lives through non-traditional therapeutic activities.*

## **VISION**

Surf and Turf Therapy will set the standard for integrated therapy services by providing clinical excellence and personalized care, while making alternative therapies proven and reputable therapeutic forms.

Surf and turf therapy provides therapy services targeting traditional, functional goals using non-traditional approaches, including surfing, horseback riding and community-based activities. These unique approaches offer unparalleled opportunities to address deficits in strength, stability, body awareness, coordination, safety awareness, tone management, flexibility, attention and sensory integration. The focus of treatment is to improve daily life skills, such as walking, postural alignment, talking, and writing, rather than simply teaching individuals how to surf or ride.

Family and friends are invited to join in treatment sessions, with therapy emphasizing functional, fun, and inclusion-based treatment approaches.

# Turf Roles and Responsibilities

- Please arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled hippotherapy lesson at the ranch. This will allow you time to find parking (map is attached), walk up to the barn, and put your personal items away.
- The **speed limit at Rancho Sierra is 5 mph, please drive slowly** to avoid scaring the horses and to ensure the safety of others.
- Please walk at all times, **no running** as it may scare the horses.
- **Please do not enter the barn by yourself.** Staff should be present for you to enter.
- Sign into volunteer log.
- Put your keys, cell phone and other personal items away.
- Check the board to see what role you are assigned to that day (i.e., Leader, Sidewalker, Equine Care).
- Horses need to be ready to go upon the client's arrival. Prior to their arrival volunteers will assist in grooming and tacking the horse.
- The equipment for your session will be listed on the board. Pull all tack prior to grooming the horse. Once you tack the horse alert the staff to check that tack is properly fitted to the horse before client arrives.
- Once the horse is ready, please check the chalk board for daily chores. There is always something to do, so ask a staff member how you can help if you are unsure.
- After the client arrives, the staff leading the session will instruct the leader when to take the horse to the mounting block. The sidewalkers will assist in mounting the client on the horse following staff direction.
- After the treatment session volunteers are expected to help with removing tack, putting the horse away, and barn chores.

# Turf Roles and Responsibilities

## Leader

**Leaders** will be in charge of leading the horse throughout the session. Your main responsibility in this position is the horse. The sidewalkers and staff will be focused on the client. You will guide the horse as directed by the staff, ensure the horse stays away from other horse traffic on the property and provide slow and steady stops (whoas) for the horse as well as slow and steady (walk on) motions forward. Keeping the horse straight, with gentle movements and turns is of utmost importance for the quality of the client's ride. You may occasionally be asked to make the horse/pony trot.

- Most of our Leaders have previous horse experience. However, if you do not, and are interested in becoming a Leader, additional training can be provided.



Don't wrap lead rope around your arm. Don't divert your focus from leading the horse (i.e., on your cell phone).



Do have assertive posture, be aware of your surroundings and lead the horse responsibly.



# Turf Roles and Responsibilities

## Sidewalker

**Sidewalkers** will walk alongside the horse while holding the client's ankle (*ankle hold*) or thigh (*thigh hold*) throughout the duration of the session (45 minutes). The purpose of a sidewalker is to provide safety to the client who may have difficulty staying balanced on the horse. You will also be asked to assist in games played during the ride. It could be as simple as passing a small ball or toy to the client or participating in a fun memory game or song. The main goal is to provide a fun and safe experience for the client.



- Your #1 focus is always the patient – **never** walk away unless directed by the therapist. If a toy is dropped on the ground, never lean down to pick it up without being instructed to do so.
- Emergency Dismount: The staff member will be handling the client in the event there is an emergency (i.e., loose horse). Please stay close to the client and follow the therapist's instructions.



Fallen Toy



Don't leave the client unattended to pick up fallen objects.

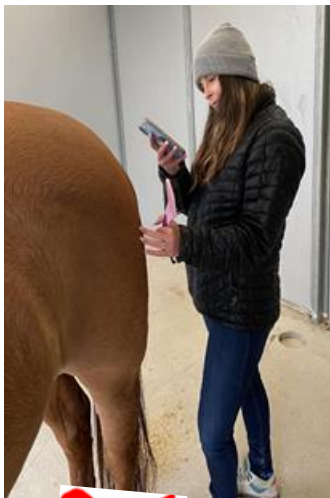


Do stay with the client unless a staff member instructs otherwise while at stop.

# Turf Roles and Responsibilities

## Equine Care

**Equine Care:** Based upon need and experience, volunteers will assist in grooming, bathing, tacking/untacking, turning out and exercising the horses as directed by staff. Grooming supplies are located in the tack room and cross tie area. Hands-on training will be provided as needed. Always ASK if you are unsure about something.



Do not stand directly behind the horse or sneak under their neck.



Do position yourself by the side of the horse.



## Turf Attire

This is a professional environment therefore it is expected that all volunteers wear proper attire. Closed toe shoes are required, boots preferred. Pants are also preferred but shorts are ok as long as they are mid way down the thigh. Hats can be worn to protect from the sun.



# Surf Roles and Responsibilities

- Please arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled surf therapy lesson at the beach. This will allow you time to find, pay for parking, put on your wetsuit, and arrive at the beach. Sunscreen is provided in first aid kit.
- See attached map for location and parking details.
- Sign into volunteer log.
- Check-in with staff member to determine which role you are assigned to for the day. Roles include:
  - Out of Water Volunteers
    - Greeter
    - Help client put on/take off wetsuit/booties/life vest etc.
    - Assist client in walking to the water \*
    - Set up/tear down equipment
  - In Water Volunteers \*
    - Water Safety Catcher \*
    - Line Up Buddy \*
    - Pusher into Waves \*
    - Tandem Surfer \*
    - Body Dragging Surfer \*

**\*For safety reasons, volunteer positions with an \* require staff clearance**

- A typical session includes arriving at the beach, greeting clients/parents, helping client's put-on wetsuit/booties/etc., helping transport equipment to water, assisting in the water\*, helping manage equipment after the session, help with transitions between clients, and helping with tear down equipment.

## Surf Attire:

This is a professional environment therefore it is expected that all volunteers wear proper attire. Booties are required due to the rocky terrain at the surf spot. Full wet-suits and gloves can be worn during colder seasons. Spring suits or shorts with a surf shirt are recommended during warmer seasons. Please ensure attire is conservative as volunteers are directly working with clients and their families (i.e., wear shorts with bombshell wetsuits). Hats can be worn to protect from the sun. Surf and Turf Therapy does not provide wetsuits or boards for volunteers.

# Surf Roles and Responsibilities

## Out of Water Volunteers:

Volunteers assist in set up/tear down for the day. Greeters can help welcome the client and aid in a smooth transition between surfers. If approved by staff, a volunteer can help clients walk to the beach if assistance is needed.

## In Water Volunteers:

Volunteers must be approved by staff for in water positions. General safety awareness in the ocean is required for these positions. It is expected that in water volunteers follow appropriate surf etiquette and adhere to safety guidelines. Volunteers SHOULD NOT be catching waves away from the therapists/patients or “free surfing” during their volunteer session.

- **Water Safety / Catcher:**

Positioned in the inside (close to shore) and help ‘catch’ the surfer after they ride a wave and ensure safety returning to the line up. Should a tandem pair have a wipeout you will also assist in getting the patient back on the board safely.

- **Surf Buddies:**

There will be two positions for surf buddies. One position will be responsible for sitting outside and catching waves so the patients can join for a party wave. The second position will be responsible for shadowing the therapist and catching the wave alongside or behind the therapist (as directed).

- **Pusher:**

This position helps tandem surfers/independent surfers catch waves by pushing the back of their board into a wave at the right timing. DO NOT push a tandem pair without explicit direction. Be aware of leash management when pushing clients into waves.

- **Tandem Surfer:**

This is a specialized volunteer position that requires a screening process with staff and hands-on training.

- **Body Dragging Surfer:**

With some clients, it may be appropriate to maintain grasp on the surfboard at all times at the tail of the board, a technique called “body-dragging.” This position requires hands-on training by staff and fins.

# Surf Roles and Responsibilities

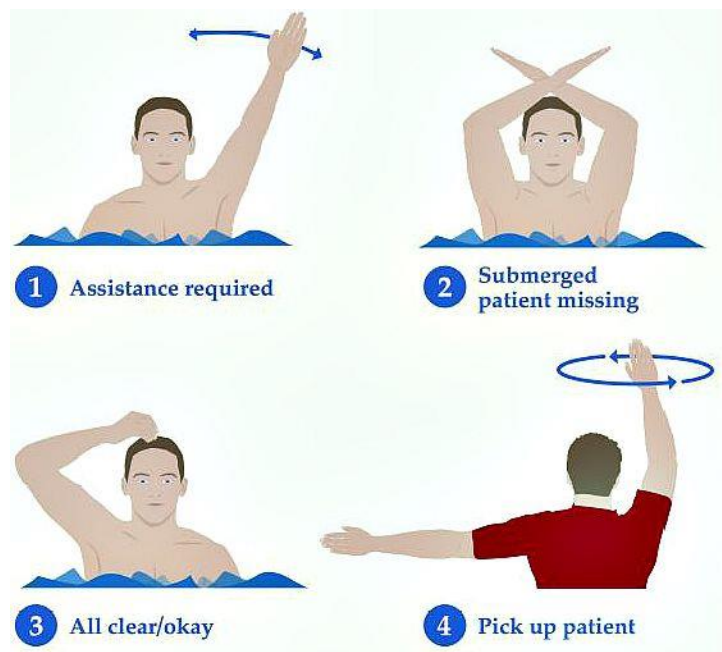
## Key Safety Principles:

- **Safety is the priority.**
- Do not hold onto or touch tandem surfers unless instructed to do so.
- Keep boards perpendicular to oncoming waves.
- Be aware of your surroundings (i.e., other surfers/waves/currents).  
Don't turn you back to oncoming waves.
- Shuffle your feet when walking on the sandbar to deter Stingrays.
- Practice appropriate surfing etiquette (i.e., respect the pecking order).

**Photography:** No photos should be taken of the clients unless assigned a photographer volunteer position. All photos or videos of clients is only for the use of Surf & Turf Therapy.

## Emergency Response:

- In case of an emergency in the water the client is the first priority.
- There is a lifeguard tower on sight.
- First-aid kit and surf kit are always on the beach.
- To the right are commonly used signals while in the water.





## Surf Roles and Responsibilities



Do position yourself to the side of the board to interact with the patient

Do stabilize the board, when asked by the therapist

Do keep your head on a swivel

Do not stand in front of or hold the board unless specifically asked by the therapist

Do not stop paying attention to your surroundings



# Park Roles and Responsibilities

- Please arrive 15 minutes before scheduled park session
- Wear comfortable shoes
- Ensure the safety of patient
- Help with activities such as ball throwing and kicking
- Always follow instructions from therapist



# Volunteer Policies

## How to Become a Volunteer:

1. Complete intake forms online  
(<https://surfanturftherapy.org/volunteer>)
2. Background Check (18+)
3. Training
4. Schedule

**Qualifications:** You do not need specific qualifications to become one of our volunteers. We will train you. Simply bring an open mind and willingness to learn. We love training new faces.

We require that you fill out an Intake form, sign a Liability Waiver and if you are over 18 you will need to complete a Background Check.

**Physicality of Volunteering:** Volunteer positions require varying levels of physical ability.

- Turf: At the ranch expect to be on your feet, walking around the property, helping support clients on the horse, etc..
- Surf: At the beach expect to be on your feet, walking on uneven terrain, carrying surfboards, swimming, etc..

Let us know of any limitations or modifications you may need, and we can be sure to accommodate (i.e., no trotting).

Please note in water surf volunteers require clearance by staff. In water volunteers must have a good understanding of ocean safety, be comfortable in the water, and have the physical ability to navigate safely.

**Conduct:** We expect all of our volunteers to come with kindness and respect for our staff, our horses and of course our clients. Do not physically handle patients without direct instructions from therapists. Always explain to the patient before physically assisting, again if instructed by staff. Should there be any issues of poor conduct you will first be given a warning. Should there be any further incidents, you will be asked to leave our program.

Reasons for Volunteer dismissal would be excessive tardiness, issues with safety, cell phone use and criminal background check. Failure to drive slowly on the ranch can lead to volunteer dismissal or requirement to park off premise.

# Volunteer Policies

## Conduct:

Cell phones are not allowed in use during any lesson. No photos should be taken of our horses or clients. We would ask that you either leave your cell phone in your car or place it in one of our cubbies in the tack room.

## Scheduling:

**Shift Cancellation:** If you are sick and unable to make it to your shift please call in as SOON as you can.

- Please **CALL (949) 312-7227 ext 1 for all same day cancellations. Please leave a voicemail to cancel, texts do not get forwarded to staff and will be missed.**
- If you are cancelling a shift in advance (>24 hours) please email [volunteer@surfandturftherapy.org](mailto:volunteer@surfandturftherapy.org).

**Shift Changes:** If you need to permanently change your shift, (i.e., a Monday afternoon to a Wednesday) afternoon, please do so by emailing [volunteer@surfandturftherapy.org](mailto:volunteer@surfandturftherapy.org)

**Injury:** Should a volunteer, client, or horse be injured there is a First Aid kit readily available at both the ranch and beach. At the barn the First Aid Kit is located in the Tack room for both people and horses, at the beach it is in a backpack near the chairs. Lead staff will advise how to respond in each situation.



# Volunteer Agreement

By signing below, I certify that I understand and agree to the volunteer policies and have received the volunteer handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Volunteer Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Volunteer Printed Name**

Please return completed form to [volunteer@surfandturfttherapy.org](mailto:volunteer@surfandturfttherapy.org)

## Availability:

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Friday:

Sunday:

# Ranch Rules

**1**

**Speed limit is 5 MPH**  
**\*\* Safety risk**



**2**

**Horses and Pedestrians**  
**have right of way**



**3**

**No running, roughhousing,**  
**playing on mounting ramp,**  
**screaming or shouting**  
**\*\*Safety risk**



**4**

**No walking on race track**  
**\*\*Safety risk**



**5**

**No dogs allowed without**  
**prior approval**  
**\*\*Safety Risk**



**Failure to comply with rules**

**May result in ban from ranch and program dismissal**

# Barn Directions:



## Rancho Sierra Vista Equestrian Center

31441 Avenida De La Vista  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

### Do not arrive at:



- Blue ridge farms
- Sycamore Trials
- Shea Center

We're so excited to have you join us for your Surf and Turf Sessions. Listed below is a step by step guide how to get to the barn and beach!

**Contact our staff for mobility or behavioral concerns for accessible parking**



# From I-5 North



- Follow I-5 N to Junipero Serra Rd in San Juan Capistrano. Take exit 83 from I-5 N
- Turn left onto Junipero Serra Rd
- Turn left onto Camino Capistrano

# From I-5 South



- Follow I-5 N to Junipero Serra Rd in San Juan Capistrano. Take exit 83 toward Junipero Serra Rd
- Turn right onto Junipero Serra Rd
- Turn left onto Camino Capistrano

# Barn Directions



- There are 2 gates for this property, and some direction apps will take you to the locked gate.
- We recommend using Devil Mountain Nursery

- **31461 Avenida De La Vista,  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675**

- Follow street Camino Capistrano until La Zanja
- Turn **RIGHT** on La Zanja



- Follow street La Zanja until Avenida de la Vista
- Turn **LEFT** on Avenida de la Vista

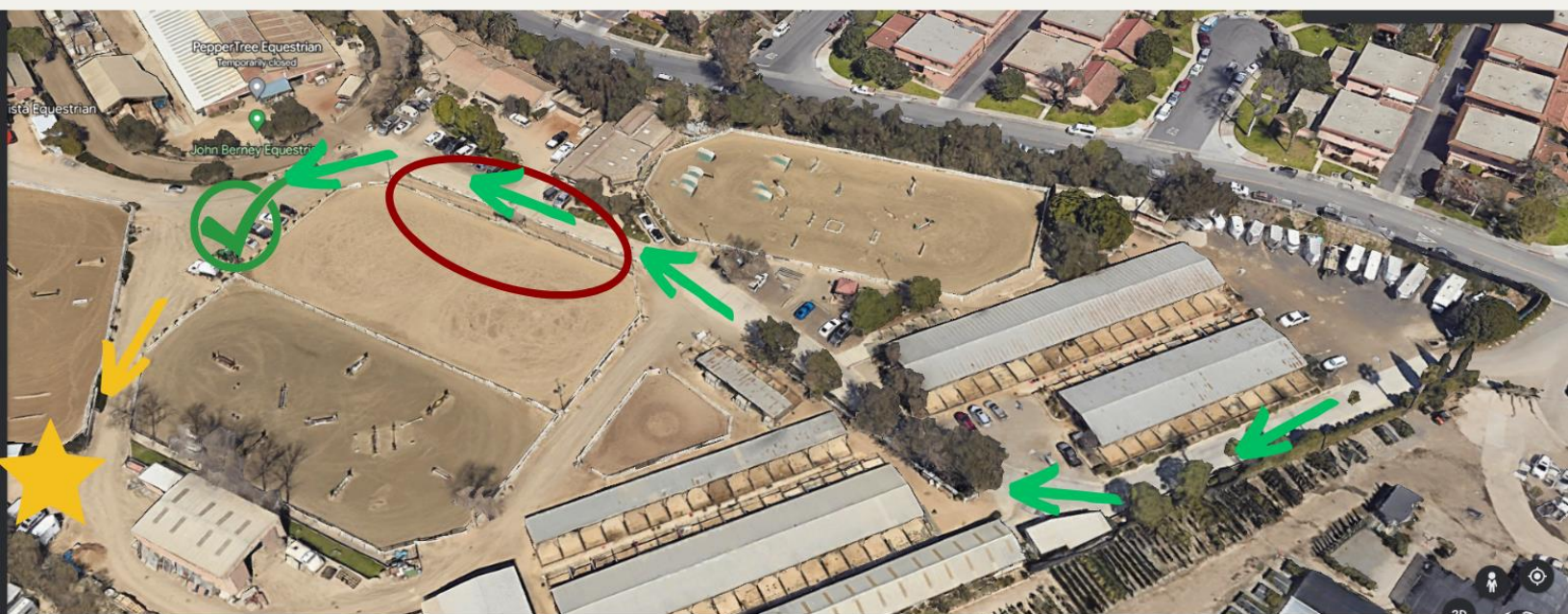


- Follow street Avenida de la Vista
- Turn **RIGHT** into the shared entrance of Devil Mountain Nursery and Rancho Sierra Vista, **STAY TO THE RIGHT**

# Barn Directions



- Stay to the **RIGHT** and enter the ranch
- Follow the road through



- Keep following the road through
- Go **PAST** the American Flags on your left hand side (Circled in red)
- Park in the green check mark area
- Walk up the hill to the small barn on your right (Starred)

# Surf Directions

## Doheny



- Beach location: **Doheny Boneyards**
  - Park Lantern, Dana Point, CA 92629, **NOT** Doheny State Beach parking
- Drive down Dana Point Harbor Drive, toward the harbor
- Do NOT enter Doheny State Beach, continue straight
- Turn **LEFT** on Puerto Place



- Drive down Puerto Place
- Turn **LEFT** into parking lot (\$1/hr pay or free with disabled parking)
- We will meet you on the grass (Starred)

## Getting to Us

### Park Map

#### Getting to the park:

Creekside Park is located adjacent to San Juan Creek, at 25753 Stonehill Dr. Dana Point, CA 92629. This park is a small park. You will be able to easily spot your assigned therapist in or near the parking lot.

