

## **Disaster Preparedness for Horses & Livestock**

### **OVERVIEW**

Disaster Preparedness for Horses, Disaster Preparedness for Livestock, and Disaster Preparedness for Animal Facilities, contact the Humane Society of the United States for free brochures to pass out to volunteers in addition to the Evacuation and Disaster Preparedness workbook.

**IT SHOULD BE MANDATORY THAT ALL VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF READ THE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS & EVACUATION WORKBOOK AS WELL AS ATTEND A MONTHLY RANCH MEETING FOR CONTINUAL REVUE**

#### **PLANNING:**

- 1.) Assessing our risks. Our region has unique challenges.
- 2.) Be ready for the events that are most likely in our area.
- 3.) Contact Local emergency services and flood-control agencies to identify resources and help to minimize the risks particular to our property.
- 4.) Clear trees and brush in a 75-foot strip around the perimeter of all corrals and barns
- 5.) Give disaster preparedness & evacuation copies to neighbors, city, sheriff's office , volunteers, all ranch employees and family members.

#### **TWO OPTION PLANNING NEEDED**

#### **EVACUATE OR STAY AT HOME**

- 1.) Evaluate nature of the threat and our individual situation,
- 2.) How much warning time to get safe or out of the way for EACH TYPE OF SITUATION .
- 3.) **In most cases get horses & livestock out of the path of a wildfire EARLY.**

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### **Disaster Plan A: To Stay Put**

Roads may be blocked and power out, but in most cases, our horses & livestock can ride out a storm or the aftermath of an earthquake without evacuation if we are fully prepared.

**Water:** Dehydration is a major cause of death for horses in disasters of all kinds. Storm runoff may contaminate natural water supplies; power failures may knock out your well pump, and even municipal water supplies may be interrupted.

- 12 to 20 gallons needed per horse per day, have **at least a minimum of three-day supply** on hand.
- Store water in clean 55-gallon drums, fill all troughs and other containers on the property. Line garbage cans with plastic trash bags and fill them, too.
- Have chlorine bleach on hand to purify water if necessary. Add two drops of bleach per quart of water and let stand for 30 minutes.

**Feed:** Deliveries may be interrupted. Have enough feed and hay on hand for at least three to seven days, stored in a dry, secure area. Put feed and hay on pallets and cover with water-repellent tarps to reduce the chance of water damage. **Minimum** feed per day per horse is 10 lbs. This is a critical minimum.

**Power:** Have a gasoline-powered generator & full gas can to power critical equipment

**Disaster kit:** Keep these supplies within easy access. Check supplies every 3 months and replace supplies when expired or necessary. **ALWAYS KEEP THE DISASTER KIT UP TO DATE**

- Flashlight and batteries
- Battery-operated radio
- First-aid supplies for both livestock and humans
- Extra halters (leather or breakaway) and lead ropes (with stud chains for extra control)
- 4 knot rope halters (for extra control)
- Clean towels
- Emergency tools: chain saw, hammer and nails, wire cutters, pry bar, duct tape, cutoff grinder, bolt cutter, shovels, rakes, manure rakes, muck buckets,
- Materials for quick temporary fence repairs
- Fire extinguisher
- List of emergency contacts:

### **Horses out of stalls:**

- 1.) horses will be safer in the large open corral rather than in their locked stalls
- 2.) **MAKE SURE ALL FENCES & GATES ARE CHAINED OPEN OR CLOSED SECURE**

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- If there is a danger of flooding, including stalls, get animals to higher ground.
- If you'll be leaving the property for your own safety, make sure the horses have access to clean water and forage. **It may be days before you can get back to them.**

### **HALTERS ON BEFOREHAND**

Keep halters on so that horses & livestock will be easy to catch if they escape during a storm other event, or need to be evacuated. Leather or break away halters only!

- **Use leather or breakaway styles ONLY,**
- all-nylon halters could snag on debris and trap the horses.
- Be sure each horse has some form of ID

**Close up:** Secure pasture gates, **turn off all power**, and get to safety before your own life is in danger.

### **Take Stock of The Situation**

Many times it is not the impact of the event that causes the most damage. It can be the chaos and confusion that occurs during and afterward.

**Practice disaster evacuation drills every 4 months with ALL volunteers and staff.**

### **Trailer Spaces Needed:**

How many trips needed

Confirm Destination and drive distance.

Make prior coordination and have a plan B in case the destination is closed?

Have an alternate destination coordinated and confirmed

Prioritize the value (actual market value or sentimental) of your animals.

Make a list of who to save first. This may sound harsh, but it is practical.

### **REMEMBER TO BE REDUNDANT:**

Which animal(s) give problems trailer loading or seem to colic every time they drink different water?

Do we have enough hay, feed and water to get them to where they are going and be happy for about three days? Do we have a radio and CB with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

(NOAA) radio capability to keep up with the progress of the storm or hazard?

**Document and Delegate the list of tasks specific to our farm that must be done (turn off the power when we leave, unplug all appliances, etc.) Have something to refer to when a crisis occurs. This way nothing important is forgotten.**

### **Prevention, Not Reaction**

Make three disaster plans to be prepared:

**BEFORE DISASTER PLAN:**

**DURING DISASTER PLAN:**

**AFTER DISASTER PLAN:**

Our horses and livestock live in our world, are held captive by and are totally dependent on us to care for them daily, and most assuredly in emergencies.

When humans took horses out of the wild, placing them in confinement for our convenience, we took away their ability to use the six million years of evolutionary skills and instinct that kept them out of danger on the open plains (and out of holes, mud, caves, fires, etc.). We know those instincts are still there right under the surface.

**Many times their urge to flee in panic will take over, making them very dangerous.**

In the wild, they would pick the safest place to get out of the storm, run from wildfire, move to higher ground when flooding or patiently endure a storm. In our world, they do not have the freedom to get out of fences and stalls when the water rises or flames threaten.

### **Consistent Daily Check Ranch for Hazards.**

Make sure human and animal escape routes are not blocked by debris, supplies, farm equipment, etc. Do you have more than one way out by the roads to safety? While assessing our facility, consider what we can do to minimize damage. Make sure to secure all loose items as our ranch is in a high-wind area.

### **Disaster Management Essentials:**

First aid kit (one for animals, one for humans) available at all times, Identification for every horse, preventive vaccinations, de-worming, and proof of Coggins test on a normal schedule recommended by the veterinarian. That way we may take the animals to a local public evacuation shelter such as fairgrounds or another boarding facility or legally cross state lines in a major evacuation.

**Remember:** Disasters are only one of the times that we can lose track of our animals (others include escape and theft), so identification is crucial.

Hold an unannounced drill every six months for an evacuation preparedness. Vary the time of day and the requirements of the drill. Is it necessary to trailer load every horse to haul somewhere? Practice catching all of the horses and livestock and moving them.

**Teach horses & livestock to trailer load-no matter what. At night, alone, when it is raining, windy, dark, and generally miserable.**

**Have an "absolutely no smoking policy within 250 feet of corrals, barns and any animals.**

Locate & contact available sheltering facilities for short term and overnight boarding. Have their contact information saved with all your papers. Expect to pay for the facilities use. About \$20 per day per animal is average

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Prioritize our animals by their worth, both in sentimental and actual value.  
(difficult to do but essential in a life threatening emergency)

Pre-travel all potential exit roads and routes to closest evacuation destinations in our area, keep maps in all vehicles and apps on phones.

**Study our property daily. Make sure no obstructions are blocking paths and escape ways. Look for and eliminate any potential hazards or obstacles which may injure animals.**

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### **RESUMPTION AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING IS CRITICAL**

**Include a plan to get back up and running after the disaster.**

Self-reliance is a crucial part of any pre and post disaster recovery planning. It is our job and our responsibility to have a plan in place to take care of ourselves, our families, and our animals.

Emergency management officials will attempt to provide assistance to people and animals affected by the disaster, but that should be reserved for the private sector and NOT a rescue organization, except for old, infirm and very young animals. We cannot expect anyone else to evacuate and take care of our animals.

**Practice, Practice, Practice**

One plan can be applied to many scenarios, helping to focus and control our reactions to any threat and danger. Being proactive minimizes the amount of time and expense to react and implement the plan.

Make these procedures part of our daily routine to minimize any injuries to people and animals and to be accountable and trustworthy of an official rescue facility.