

# *Basic Horse Safety Rules*



- Never approach a horse directly from the rear. Even in a stall, the horse should turn to face you.
- Approach the horse at his shoulder, talking to him in a calm voice.
- REMEMBER: Horses are creatures of REACTION (fight or flight); so always let the horse know where you are so you do not startle them.
- Horses may kick, bite, strike and/or bolt if startled.
- REMEMBER horses cannot see your hand when you pat their noses and foreheads so this may cause them to jerk their heads up. Always keep your head in a protected position when handling a horse.
- Use a safe lead rope and both hands when leading. The excess lead should be folded (NEVER WRAPPED OR LOOPED), and held in the hand farthest from the horse.
- Do not allow the lead or reins to drag on or near the ground.
- If the horse rears, release the hand closest to the horse's head so that you will not be jerked off the ground.
- Always lead the horse between the throat latch and shoulder – at about his jaw line.
- Do not pull down on the lead as this causes pressure on the horses' head and can make him irritable.
- You weigh a lot less than any horse; you cannot “out pull” him.
- If a horse pulls back, step with him rather than pull against him.
- If the horse will not move, try turning his head away from you.
- ALWAYS walk AROUND your horse, preferably in front UNLESS your horse is tied to the rail.
- NEVER duck under or step over the lead.
- ALWAYS tie your horse with a lead (NEVER the reins) at wither height.
- If walking behind your horse, either walk BODY TO BODY with your hand on the horses rump, or at least 15 feet away.
- When releasing a horse, always turn him to face you, stand at his side and pat him quietly before removing the halter.
- Never yell and try to make the horse run from you. In turning, he may kick out or knock you down. Make sure that you have room to move away quickly if necessary.
- Make sure that all gates and doors are always closed and secured. If it is open, close it.
- Keep tack and equipment off the ground and in proper places. If you use something, put it back where you found it. Do not leave things where people or horses could damage or be hurt by them.
- When grooming and tacking up a horse, do it from the side with your back toward the horses' head.
- NEVER squat, sit, or kneel near a horse.
- THINK SAFETY!