



Volunteer Manual
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Thank you for serving as a volunteer, this program would not be possible without your assistance. This information booklet should answer some questions. However, always feel free to ask for clarification.

For some of you this will be your first time around horses. Horse Feathers has established guidelines and standards to provide for the safety and comfort of volunteers and horses. These guidelines and standards will be followed. It has become necessary to provide these guidelines for the volunteers due to increase of those interested in coming here. Please remember that this is private property and that we do have hours set for Volunteering. Off times are for Staff and Property Owners to have down time and to spend with family. We appreciate your understanding. Times outside the “norm” are by invitation. We ask that people just don't show up except for Saturday morning open volunteering unless checking with Staff ahead of time. Volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of the agency or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignment are subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be terminated until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with supervisory staff. Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct or insubordination, theft of property or misuse of agency

materials, abuse or mistreatment of horses, clients, staff or other volunteers, failure to abide by agency policies and procedures, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties. When new here please ask before going anywhere on the property so that Staff may escort you. Do not pet or approach a horse until Staff has told you that it is ok and you have completed a basic orientation.

If you leave the property at any time please notify a Staff member or the facility Facilitator so that they know you are not here any longer or are leaving. This is to be sure that all persons are counted for.

We appreciate your wanting to give something to the horses. If you would like to assist or give something ask a Staff member what is the best idea. i.e.: bring bag of grain that they can eat, etc. We do not hand feed treats. Treats if given are given in their feed buckets.

We have a Volunteer group on Facebook where we post information for those wishing to follow. Please request to join this group to keep up with news.

Note to Parents: While we love having your children here to learn about horses we must ask that you be responsible for their conduct and behavior. We ask that they not scream and run through the barn. We ask that they talk respectfully to others here as well as their parents. This is to show the other children that we have an environment of respect for others as well as animals. Watch your children at all times and be aware of where they are. Children are not to just go places on the property without supervision no matter how long you have been coming here. Please pick up after them whether it's any items they are using or water bottles. Do not let children play on the hay stacks. It is a safety issue as well as they take things up there on their shoes that gets into the hay that the horses eat. Do not let them draw on the dry erase boards or calendars. Do not allow children to get into drawers in feed or tack room. If they need something get it for them. There are items they do not need to touch: medications, salves, etc. We are working to make sure those items are secured.

Do **not** let children hang on, climb, swing or crawl through the gates anywhere on the property. This causes them to bend at the hinges and mis-align, break, and can be dangerous. These gates are costly for us to replace. If your children break a gate you will be responsible for replacing them.

Fundraising/Special Events

Interested individuals are welcome to help think of ideas for fundraising and help the program to meet financial needs. Individuals can help plan and execute events. They also can help by contacting clubs that are interested in offering financial assistance, getting donations, contacting vendors and so on. You can join our Events/Fundraising Committee

and we also have a group on Facebook. This will allow you to learn more about us as well as the projects we are working on, funding needed, and more.

Barn/Facility

Horse Feathers would not look as amazing as it does without the help of our “handy” volunteers to do repairs and upkeep. Occasionally, volunteers will be asked to help feed and clean to ensure that our horses are properly cared for. This includes the Loft Barn where we store supplies. We are always in need of “maintenance” type things which can include lifting of things that some cant, mending fences, doing small handyman type things so if you know of a male who would like to volunteer or a spouse, its a great time to get them involved also.

Volunteering

1. We need plenty of volunteers that are able to help and come to work. If you are unable to come at a time you have scheduled please call or txt to let us know. Some chores or projects may get put on hold until enough people are there to help and if it is pending your being there then we will need to reschedule or find someone to replace you for that time. Please fill out the Volunteer Information forms before starting your volunteering. We have a ZERO tolerance for drugs, alcohol, knives, weapons (unless law enforcement, military or authorized) or any abusive behavior whether of horse, animal or person. You will be removed from the property and appropriate charges filed.
2. Sometimes help is needed in areas other than dealing with the horses (cleaning the barn, fencing, events, unloading supplies, etc) also there may be time variations on when we do the chores or projects. Please understand us having to be flexible.
3. Volunteers are to be aware of the rules and help to enforce them. If you are aware of someone not following the guidelines please notify someone in charge.
4. Volunteers need to be able to stay calm, patient, understanding and tactful as well as upbeat and supportive in the right situations. Appropriate language and respect of others is mandatory. Please remember we have children on the premises and act accordingly. Anyone who is not following the rules will be warned (depending on circumstances) once and will be asked to leave the property if deemed necessary.
5. Volunteers are encouraged to ask questions take initiative and contribute in whatever ways possible. If you have suggestions please feel free to discuss them. Other volunteer opportunities include participation in annual events, fundraising, and yard sales, collecting items for fundraisers, passing out brochures and posting fliers.

6. All volunteers when starting will not be allowed to interact with the horses such as leading, tacking, lunging, until approved by Staff. During this time we will evaluate your abilities to work around the horses. Please do not be offended. You will be allowed to groom, feed and clean areas where the horses are.
7. Smoking: There are appropriate areas where smokers can go. NO smoking in the barn, around hay bales or in the main house. Please remember to NOT smoke around children or others who do not. Do **NOT** throw your cigarette butts on the ground. Please dispose of them in the smoking cans/ashtrays or after extinguishing put it in the trash can.
8. Community Service: For school we have forms here that we can fill out to track your hours. Court ordered, you are responsible for bringing your forms to be filled in and signed. You are responsible for tracking your hours not us. We will give you a form with hours once completed. Any inappropriate conduct will be reported to your Probation/ Parole Officer. Court Ordered Community Service Juveniles may not have their cell phones on while volunteering.

Note to NON-Community Service— We will not allow those offenses that are violent or of a sexual nature to do service here. We screen anyone wanting to do service and those are scheduled on days when most volunteers are not here except when at Staff discretion.

9. PLEASE do not be on your cell phones when working around or with horses. If it is an emergency then please leave the barn area to talk on the phone. Ringers on phones should be muted when around the horses. It creates issues when a horse spooks while being held and a phone goes off if they are not used to it.

Parking

The parking area is either along the road outside of the fence on east side of the dumpster or inside the gate near the driveway. Please **do not** park anywhere in front of the gate OR the dumpster. Do **NOT** block the mailbox. They will not remove our trash or leave our mail if it is blocked on so please be considerate. If you need assistance getting through the gates please let us know. Please put the chain on the gate securely.

Facilities

There is a restroom in the barn for your use and a wash sink. Please make sure to clean up after yourself. Toilet paper and soap are always in the cabinet if there is none on the shelf/roll. Horse Feathers has a refrigerator that we stock with water so please remember to hydrate while working. The water is there for the volunteers. Please be considerate and do not leave half empty bottles lying around. We welcome donations of cases to replace the water if you feel so inclined when coming back.

DRESS CODE

Footwear- you will want to wear footwear that is comfortable. Closed toed shoes such as tennis shoes, hiking boots, cowboy boots or riding boots. No open toed shoes, sandals, flip flops or shoes with heels. Steel toe boots are up to you, we don't recommend them, but they sometimes can cause more damage than protection if a horse steps on your toe pushing the toe downward.

Gloves- it is always good to have a pair of gloves on you, for protection or cold weather. Leather or synthetic gloves are the best, but any kind will be fine. We have some on hand if you need to borrow a pair but please return them before leaving. Cotton with liners are better in cold weather, leather gets very cold and stiff.

Clothes- Wear something comfortable you can move around in and remember to dress for the weather. No revealing clothes (low cut, cleavage hanging out), bare midriffs, see through tops or inappropriate holes. Ladies, please remember to wear jeans or shorts that will not expose your undergarments when bending over. (No thongs hanging out the back) Shorts should be at least mid-thigh and down. (No daisy dukes ladies). Jeans, t- shirt work the best (unless hot summer months). Long sleeve shirts when necessary. No "gang" clothing, insignias, "colors" or anything with drug paraphernalia or alcohol on it. Its a great chance to buy your Volunteer shirt to wear and show how proud you are! We have regular shirts and tank tops!

Accessory Wear

Belts- No need for the big shiny belt buckles. They can get hooked on something and we give no awards here.

Jewelry- please be conservative when working around horses. Large earrings, hoop earrings in ears, lips, or eyebrows can get caught on things. Please only wear studs. Necklaces should be tucked in or thin enough to break if there was an accident. Rings should not be too large. They can get caught on tack, etc hurting yourself or cut horses.

Hair- Long hair should be worn so that it is not interfering with your vision when working around the horses and so that it will not get caught on objects. Please put it in a pony tail or up with a clip.

Appropriate clothing additions: hats, sunglasses, sunscreen, and sweatshirts.

Chore Instructions

You will be taken through this process with someone on Staff so don't panic! We don't expect anyone to get it all their first day or to know exactly what needs done. It is a learning process.

Stalls

Rinse water bucket if needed, only fill if horse is staying in 1/2 to 2/3 full

Check mats for damage, edges up, parts missing

Check for critters in stall before entering or putting a horse in (snakes, dead animals)

Check and clean corner feeder every 3 days—wash out with rag and disinfectant
Check walls for damage, loose boards, nails sticking out, anything that might injure a horse

Do not put shavings in stalls unless a horse is staying in— check with Staff
Check salt block holders, replace as needed

Water Tanks

Check waterers daily to see where water level is, this lets us know that they are re-filling. Clean waterers when green, lots of debris or look dirty.
Check chlorine tabs when filling, replace as needed.

If using hoses: When connected to hydrant make sure there is slack in the hose—do NOT let it pull on the hydrant as you will crack it below ground or damage hose.

Curl hoses up correctly close to the water source, try to avoid kinking the hose.

Drain the hoses. It makes them lighter to carry and in winter it keeps it from freezing. We cant get water through it if its frozen and it takes a long time to thaw in the house.

Feed Buckets

Clean feed buckets every other day with soap and disinfectant. Please use a small amount of bleach **not** the chlorhexidine.

Turn upside down on the table to dry.

Stack the next feed times buckets up and sit by feed cans

Please be sure to not mix up the am and pm feed buckets.

If a bucket is split or broken please advise staff so it can be replaced.

Evening Feed

After completion of chores and feed please make sure that all gates are closed, doors are shut to the feed room from outside, tack room. (make sure no cats inside tack room)

Turn all fans off unless in extreme heat the center isle fan can be on IF there are horses in the barn. If there is a horse in a stall you can leave on until night barn check. If you have any questions please ask Staff. Check to make sure that horses in the barn have hay in feeders

Check water buckets if horses are in stalls. If winter time please see if their water bucket heater is plugged in. If you are not sure to plug in ask Staff. We will let you know if it needs done. Check for any loose or frayed wires.

Check to make sure that lids are on feed cans

Check to make sure that the refrigerator door is closed. It will not cool and it wastes electricity if not shut. It also allows animals to get in there.

Bathroom

Clean bathroom weekly—scrub toilet, inside and out—bottom base also. Clean sinks with Soft Scrub

Sweep floor, shake out or wash off the black mat if needed.

Refill toilet paper and paper towels—if low please inform us so we can purchase
Wipe down door handles with bleach water
Sweep cobwebs out of corners of walls and check the light cover weekly for build up of bugs. They eliminate light and also create fire hazard.

Basic Horse Safety Rules

You will be assisted in learning some rules by Staff on how to handle and work with horses. Please read some of the information below. We will determine when you are able and which horses you are able to handle. Horses are categorized by a Stop Light System. Red being those only experienced handlers can do and the Green being those that anyone can handle. Even if a horse is Green if you are uncomfortable with that horse please let Staff know so we can find one you are more comfortable working with. Do not feel as though you must continue with that horse.

Please be sure you are taught properly how to halter and lead horses before taking on this task. We work diligently to make the horses as ground safe and well mannered as possible. We want them to work in the same manner consistently. Do not pull down on the lead while walking as this can cause pressure on the horses poll/head and nose.

1. Never approach a horse from the rear. Even in the stall, they should turn to face you.
2. Approach a horse at their shoulder, talking to them in a calm voice. REMEMBER: horses are creatures of reaction (fight or flight); so always let the horse know where you're at.
3. Remember horses cannot see your hand if you pat them on the nose, this can make them jerk their head upwards. So make sure you always keep your head in a protected position.
4. We spend a lot of time working on Ground Manners with our horses but in rare circumstances—new intakes, young horses, they may kick, bite, or bolt if startled. Please no running through the barn or screaming. Parents/Adults please keep children under your supervision at all times. Be aware of where you are when horses are around.
5. Use a safe lead rope. Check the rope for broken clips, fraying, anything that renders it useless and give to Staff. The excess rope should be folded (NEVER WRAPPED OR LOOPED) when leading. The same goes for cross ties—check for damage before clasping a horse in cross ties. Notify Staff if needed.
6. Do not allow the lead to drag on the ground. This causes tripping of horse and human and ruins the rope. The same goes for reins on bridle—do not loop or drag when walking a horse. This will cause tripping issues as well as pulling on the bit if one is in their mouth and injure the horse.

7. You weigh a lot less than any horse, you cannot “out pull” them. Battling will not teach the horse appropriate manners. Please ask for assistance if a horse is not behaving.
8. Make sure that all gates and doors are always closed and secured. If it is open, close it. If unsure double-check or ask Staff.
9. Keep tack and equipment off the ground and in its proper place. Do not leave things where people or horses could damage or be hurt by them. Hang forks, shovels, etc back on the wall. Keep the aisle clear so that it is not a safety hazard.
10. ALWAYS put things back from where you got it, if unsure ask someone. Many times we need something even in a rush and if we can't find it that hinders us getting done what needs done. Don't give treats to the horses unless you have permission. Some horses have health conditions that prohibit them having sugar or other foods. Many come in and are on restricted diets to help them rehabilitate.

Positions around the horse

Where you stand next to the horse determines what the horse is physically capable of doing to you. As previously stated we work very hard to make the horses ground safe here. Some horses that are new have not yet been evaluated, worked with consistently or are in need of manners. Please be aware of the following for those who have not been around horses before:

Front (directly in front of the horse): If you're working in front of a horse, the horse could run you over, strike you with their front feet, rear up and hit you in the head, bite you or hit you with their head. This position is not a good place to be.

Shoulder Area: The horse can still reach you in this position, but it cannot do as much damage and you are able to usually see if a problem is coming. The only thing a horse can really do to you in this position is step on your feet (which they are very good at if not well mannered yet).

Side of Rear: This area goes from the rear of the horse's shoulder to their hind leg. If you're standing here the horse can shove you up against a wall, kick you with their hind foot—cow kick, or whip you in the face with the tail.

Rear (directly behind the horse): When you stand in this position the horse can kick you with a lot of power. A horse can do major damage to you when standing behind them. If you have to pass behind a horse either walk where they can't reach you or walk body to

body while letting them know your back there.

Horse Vision

Horses have a large peripheral vision and three blind spots to be aware of. They are on the forehead, directly below the nose and directly behind them. It is important to be aware of the blind spots because it may startle a horse if you approach it from one of those areas.

Grooming

Other than helping to keep the horses clean, grooming gives volunteers the chance to look over their body for any cuts/swelling/etc. If there are cuts/swelling inform someone.. This is also a great time to get to know the horse and its personality.

1. Bring out a grooming box, the box should contain: a hoof pick, curry comb, hard body brush, soft face brush, and a comb for mane/tails.
2. When using the curry comb you want to go in a circular motion beginning from behind the horses ear and working towards the tail. Curry combs are only for the body, not for legs or face.
3. Next would be the hard body brush. You always want to brush in the direction of the horse's hair. You start being there ears and work towards there tail.
4. Soft face brush is used on the horses face.
5. Then comb out main and tail. We have some things to use if they have a lot of knots. There are detanglers we keep on hand. **DO NOT** cut horses manes or tails if you can not get knots out. Please go to Staff and allow them to determine the best way to get something out.
6. Please ask to be shown how to clean the hooves. Those who are new may want to spend time getting to know the horses before attempting this.

Purpose of Volunteer Policies

These policies are written to provide overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer involvement and management efforts. These policies do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. Horse Feathers Equine Center reserves the exclusive right to change any of these policies at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy. Changes to or exceptions from these policies may only be granted by the Volunteer Program Manager or the Director, and must be obtained in advance and in writing. Areas not specifically covered by these policies shall be determined by the Volunteer Program Manager or Director.

