



Horse Behavior and Horse Handling in an Emergency

When a horse feels threatened, its natural response is typically one of the following:

1. Flight
2. Fight
3. Freeze

A horse is a “conditioned response” animal so the more time spent in preparing your horse to deal with its emotions during a stressful situation, the better able it will be to successfully survive an emergency situation. This is provided to help you be better prepared to handle your horse under stress.

1. Your horse will react to your emotions so stay calm.
2. Train your horse to behave well before an emergency situation arises.
3. Sedating your horse in an emergency is not always a good idea. Your horse may lose its natural instinct for self-preservation and may also lose balance and stability.
4. Not all emergencies occur in the daytime. Take your horse out at night. Horses see better at night than we do, but you will need to use a flashlight around your horse so that he can become familiar with them. Practice putting on halters and lead ropes in the dark.
5. If you have friends/neighbors who can evacuate your animals in your absence and if you padlock your corrals, make sure they know the combination or have a key.
6. Day sheets, blankets, fly masks and leg wraps may easily catch fire and should be removed from horses if fire is a threat nearby.
7. Trying to load a panicked horse into a trailer can be risky and dangerous to you or others. Practice loading your horse both during the day as well as at night, using only the truck/trailer lights. Do this as many times as needed until you and your horse feel comfortable with the process. Repeat this periodically to make sure this still works well.

Please see separate document (Evacuation Preparedness for Animals) for information on preparing a Go Box for your horse on the LASER website at www.laser-shelter.org