**Animal Guardians Horse Rescue, Inc.**

**Volunteer Safety Rules & Procedures**

**(Jan. 2020 Edition)**

* Direct Horse Care Volunteers must complete the Volunteer Safety and Procedure Training - Volunteer Purpose Training Module 1, 2, and 3 Video Lessons (“Equine Safety Tips”, “Equine Body Language”, “Knots, Tying, & Tool Handling”) and the Groundwork Purpose Training Module “Catching” before visiting our horses.
* Once completed, Direct Horse Care Volunteers must attend all Volunteer Experiential Learning Trainings assigned, and must attend Volunteer Orientations on a regular basis while working with our horses.
* All Direct Horse Care Volunteers must participate with a minimum of 6 hours per month actively working with the AGHR Training Program with our horses as assigned. All Direct Horse Care Volunteers begin at Level 1 and Move Up Through Levels Evaluations twice a year. Volunteers will participate in regularly scheduled Volunteer Meetings, Play Day / Evaluations, and Trainings / Clinics as assigned. Volunteers Must Participate in Planning and Executing at Least 2 Community Outreach Events per year. All Volunteers Must Join the Organization with a Completed Volunteer Registration Packet, Membership Dues, and Liability Waiver signed and submitted Before visiting Horse Sites.
* Direct Horse Care Volunteers (Level 1, 2, and 3) must check in/out at the Horse Care Sites in the Binder provided at the designated area, as directed by the Lead Volunteer. Data Charts must be completed with each horse at each site, with assigned tasks attempted and completed, and notes documented on the back of the form for each visit.
* No litter/waste on/around foster care site properties or common areas
* No dogs/pets on/around foster care site properties or common areas
* No smoking/alcohol/illegal substances on/around foster care site properties or common areas
* Check & double-check all gates/locks are securely fastened as they were when you arrived. If questions, ask foster caregiver or Board Member for details.
* Check & double-check all electricity/water is securely off & rubbish is properly removed/disposed of as they were when you arrived. If questions, ask foster caregiver or Board Member for details.
* Place all grooming supplies, halters, lead ropes, tack, & equipment back in the designated storage location with our rescue supplies where they were when you arrived. If questions, ask foster caregiver or Board Member for details. All rescue supplies are marked with “AGHR” and some have the horse’s name on them.
* No loud radios, boisterous behavior, or disrupting the foster caregivers in their personal residences.
* Telephone calls or texts/emails to boarding stable or foster care homeowners are preferred if you need to contact them while on site. In case of emergency that cannot wait, you may respectfully knock on the door to report veterinary emergency that needs immediate attention. Otherwise, please refrain from disturbing the residents, while on their properties. Vet emergencies should be reported to the Board of Directors immediately or within 24 hours of the incident. Fosters do not pay for veterinary visits, but are required to hold the horses for us in our absence.
* Only Trained Volunteers whom have attended the Experiential Learning Training are permitted to handle our rescue horses. Trained Direct Horse Care Volunteers are permitted to halter and hand-walk our horses in and around the foster care site properties. They are not permitted to leave the property with the horse without explicit permission by the Board Members. If questions, or you need assistance in moving a rescue horse, ask foster caregiver or Board Member for details. Volunteers are not permitted to move or handle other horses that do not belong to the rescue without explicit instruction by foster caregivers.
* All horses must be hand-walked in a controlled & safe manner using halters & lead ropes in/out of stalls, through gates, through herds, near washing/grooming areas, & in common areas / turn outs. Volunteers must be specifically trained in safe horse handling to do this. Foster caregivers can give you specific tips about safely moving horses about and the role of our rescue horses in the herd hierarchy / behaviors you may experience. Safety is critical for horse & human. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not move the horse alone. You may enter the stall if and when the horse is in a safe state of mind. Do not enter any stall when the horse is upset, frightened, or aggressive, unless you are specifically trained to do so. You will receive ongoing Experiential Learning Trainings to improve your “Approach & Retreat” / “Catching & Leadership” Skills. If you are insecure or unsure of your safety, use common sense and do not approach the horse in the stall. This is for your own safety and well-being.
* No unannounced visitors with the Volunteer. Any/all visitors must be pre-approved and written on the Volunteer’s Liability Waiver in advance. This is a liability issue taken seriously.
* Any Volunteer under the age of 18 MUST have supervision by a Volunteer parent or guardian over the age of 18, MUST be written on parent’s liability waiver, and MUST wear a safety helmet at all times while around our horses (riding helmet preferred, bicycle/motorcycle helmet acceptable). Minor children under the age of 14 MAY NOT handle the horses’ feet at any time.
* No riding the rescue horses without direct Training through the HSUS Forever Foundation Training Program and any specific pro-bono professional Trainers working with our rescue. Any & all riders must complete a riding evaluation prior to riding any rescue horse. Volunteers may NOT ride the foster caregivers’ horses at any time for any reason. This is a liability risk that our rescue is not willing to cover. Volunteering for the purposes of free riding time / riding experience should be done with a different organization, such as a therapeutic riding program or a riding school or academy. Our organization does not provide riding experiences, unless specifically directed to do so for particular rescue horses. However, on the ground, or in the saddle, we highly encourage all Members to wear a safety helmet at all times around the horses. Horses can be unpredictable and should a horse rear over you & come down, it is recommended to keep your head protected at all times.
* No hand-feeding the rescue horses treats. You are welcome & encouraged to bring carrots, apples, or natural (no molasses, no sugar, & no filler junk) treats in small bits to our horses during your visits. However, so as to avoid teaching our horses to become nippy or bitey at human hands, and to avoid liability risk of being bit, we ask that you feed the horses on the ground or in their feeder bowls / buckets / troughs.
* Once properly Trained to do so, you may lunge & play specific ground games with our horses. You will be trained to do the Parelli 7 Games (that horses naturally play with each other in the wild herd), as well as other fun games on the ground to encourage horses to be desensitized to spooky things, to use their right / left brains, and to develop stronger respect for & partnership with, humans. Your responsibility as a human is to play the games CORRECTLY and with respect for the horses as well. If you are unsure or insecure about playing the games, ask the Board of Directors or the Trainer that is working with that specific horse, how to improve your skills. If something is not “working”, then don’t try to force the horse to do it. You probably are not communicating the task clearly and we don’t want to confuse our horses or get them in bad habits by disrespecting people. Remember, the most important thing is SAFETY. So don’t get into a power struggle with a horse to get the horse to step over something. You will not win. Come to our Trainings, ask on the Board of Directors, or the Trainer, and step back 1 notch to something that is fun, easy, and successful for you and the horse. Your role, as a Voluntary EA is not to “train” our horses. It is to PLAY with our horses & enjoy their company, help them learn to interact with you in a positive and willing manner. Remember, most of our horses have been abused & neglected, so they will not “take to you” right away, or maybe at all. That’s ok. It takes time, patience, & understanding to really LISTEN to the horse & discover what he/she needs.
* Visits to the foster care sites should be between the hours of 9am and 6pm. If you need to arrive before sun up, or leave after dark, for some reason, please notify the foster caregiver & Board of Directors in advance. Our foster care sites do not have lights, and this will put you at a higher liability risk.
* There is no restroom at our foster care sites. Please take care of your personal business before or after your visits. Again, these are private residences, and we are graciously renting stalls on their facilities. Thank you for your cooperation.
* No feeding our horses, or any of the stabled horses, at the foster care sites at any time. This is the responsibility of the foster caregivers and stable managers at the sites. If we ever need your assistance in doing this, we will give you explicit instructions to do so. (i.e. food treats for particular training tasks, etc.). Our horses are on a specific diet for health & rehabilitation, as directed by our equine veterinarians. Please leave the feeding to us. Thanks.
* While grooming / bathing the rescue horses, do not spray them in the faces with water, grooming supplies, or fly spray. Instead, wipe their faces with a wet washcloth, soft brush, or your hand. This prevents them from throwing their faces up in the air and becoming headshy.
* All tack & training equipment is to be used under specific direction by the foster caregivers & trainers working with the horses. Volunteers are not permitted to saddle, bridle, spur, hobble, or use a crop on any horse for any reason. Training equipment is specifically selected for each horse based on individual needs. During our Monthly Trainings, we will demonstrate the proper use and care of specific equipment for certain games with certain horses. Please properly clean off and stow equipment where you found it before you leave the foster care sites – Please notify us if we are running low on grooming supplies, or if something is lost/broken and needs to be replaced. Please be courteous of others and put things back where they belong to assist our rescue collaboratively. Thank you.
* All Volunteers & visitors must dress in proper equestrian attire: long pants (jeans or breeches preferred), work or riding boots, well fitted shirts - no loose or dangling jewelry, and all women/girls should have hair pulled back away from their faces so as not to become caught in any tack / equipment.
* Please turn off, or switch, your cell phone to vibrate, so as not to spook or scare the horses when you are visiting them. It is a good idea to keep cell phones charged before your visit, and do not visit the horses alone without a cell phone in case you need to call 9-11 or call the foster caregiver or Board of Directors for an emergency. Again, safety first.
* All participants must be properly Trained at the Monthly Training, and must have all Membership Packet paperwork filed with the rescue prior to beginning the scheduled visits with the horses. This includes:
1. Fill out, sign, & return your Membership Dues Application with Your Tax-Deductible Dues Donation by mail or in person
2. Fill out, sign, & return your Volunteer Application by mail or in person
3. Fill out, sign, & return you Equine Liability Waiver & Hold Harmless Agreement by mail or in person
4. Fill out, sign, & return your Confidentiality Affidavit form by mail or in person
5. Notify the Lead Volunteer & Site Property Owner of your Quarterly Visit Scheduling by the 1st day of that Quarter.
* All Volunteers must commit to attending all scheduled Volunteer Trainings, Clinics, Play Day / Levels Evaluations, and Meetings monthly on a Saturday, from 10am to 1pm, in order to work directly with our horses. In addition, please plan to commit at least 6 or more hours per month service time, in order to keep your active Member status in good standing. This does not include trainings and special events.
* All Volunteers must participate in, and assist with, the planning & execution of at least 2 major fundraiser events per year; this is critical for our financial support, and your help is invaluable and appreciated. By maintaining a cooperative, collaborative, confidential, & reliable rapport with our Rescue family, we all join our hearts & hands to hooves, and make such a tremendous difference in the lives of homeless horses in need.
* In case of inclement weather or natural disaster, follow the Safety Rules and Procedures posted in the Binders at each site. Dial 9-11 and notify the Property Site Owner and Lead Volunteer and Rescue Directors immediately in the need for site evacuations or emergency first responders.
* Violence, slander, libel, discrimination, negative judgment, unprofessionalism, or inhumane treatment towards horse or human will not be tolerated in our Rescue Family. Please be kind, mature, responsible, and safe.
* Have fun! Enjoy your time with our horses and our good friends & family. You will learn so much, and gain so much, by spending time with our organization.
* Kahne Krause, Lead Volunteer – **klklichtman@earthlink.net**

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