

Volunteer Orientation



GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Everyone should wear comfortable, **closed toe** walking shoes. It is preferred for horse handlers and groomers to wear boots. Wear comfortable clothing that won't get in your way or restrict your movement (i.e. not too baggy and not too tight).
2. Youth Groomers and Horse Handlers must wear hard hats
3. Turn your cell phones off (or to silent) during classes – your attention needs to be on the rider/student.
4. Do not feed the horses treats by hand unless specifically authorized by an instructor. You can put them in their feed bucket.
5. Be alert.
6. Understand the basics of how to move and react around a horse. Don't assume the horse knows what you are doing or where you are. Make sure they know where you are (through touch and voice) so you don't startle them.
7. Avoid sudden movements.

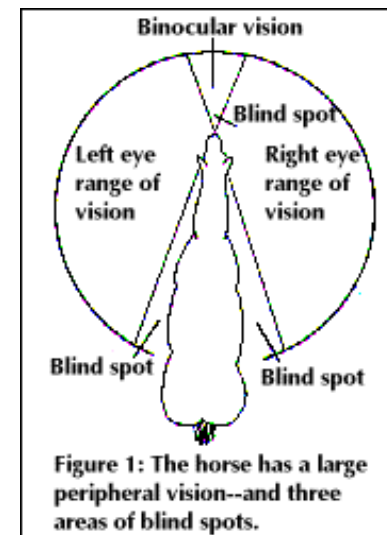


Figure 1: The horse has a large peripheral vision--and three areas of blind spots.



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GROOMERS – (will be accompanied by instructor to help groom and tack horses for class)

1. Wear hard hat
2. Know how to put on halter
 - a. Know how to approach a horse, then put halter on
 - b. Lead from stall to cross tie (or paddock)
 - c. Use safety snaps on cross ties
3. Each horse has their own groom box so check to be sure you have the right one
4. Brush horse from head to tail
 - a. Make sure you brush areas well where tack (saddle and bridle) will touch. Use soft brush or rag on face.
 - b. Brush legs
 - c. Clean out hooves with hoof pick
 - d. Carefully brush out mane and tail.
5. Check Horse assignment list for tack that will be used on each horse that day (it may change from last time so please check).
6. Place correct saddle pad and saddle on. Have it checked by a Horse Handler or Instructor, then put the girth on and tighten it up. Have bridle “ready” for the horse but do not put it on yet (hang it on hook by horses stall).
7. Return Grooming box to that horses “cubby” in tack room.

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Horse Handlers

Requirements for being a horse handler:

- Have the knowledge of grooming and caring for the horses
- Know the interactions of horses in a herd and while working
 - Pecking order
 - Alpha horse
 - Body language (ears, tail, hind end)
 - Etc
- Your responsibility is to handle the lesson horse in a safe and understanding way that enhances the safety and pleasure of the rider. You will follow the directions of the instructor of the class. You should develop a bond with the horse so the team can work as one.
- Check all tack to ensure it is properly adjusted before entering ramp area for the rider to be mounted. Check girth again after the rider is mounted.
- Know the lead positions (with body language) for:
 - “Walk-on”
 - “Whoa”
 - “Back”
 - “Move away” (either via a turn on forehand or haunches)
 - “Trot”
- When in “exercise position” be directly in front of horse (this is the only time you should be in front of horse like this). Keep horse quiet.
- Always keep an eye on the rider and the equipment (is the saddle tipping, is the rider off balance, has the girth loosened as the ride has progressed, etc)



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Horse Handlers (Cont'd)

- Notify instructor immediately if you spot a problem of any kind.
- Each horse handler will be assigned a horse and an additional one as back up
- Each horse handler will pass the leading and handling test for the head instructor
- Each horse handler will need to demonstrate:
 - Ramp loading and mounting
 - Ring work with other horses
 - Safe distance apart
 - Awareness of other horses in arena
 - Line up for exercises
 - Line up for dismounting (stay in line until dismissed by instructor)

- Please remember – the instructor gives the commands and will help you with a basic understanding of each rider and what the goals for that session should be.
 - Only one person should give commands to or talk to the rider at a time. They cannot process multiple commands from various people, so be sure everyone on your team understands that.
 - Some riders may be hypersensitive to touch or sounds so you need to be aware of that also.



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SIDE-WALKERS

1. Brief History of Horses for Handicapped Program

- a. Purpose: Provide recreational therapy to individuals with physical and/or mental disabilities. Our riders are from 4 years old into adulthood
- b. Program was started in approx 1982 by the Seminole Kiwanis Club
- c. The program is sponsored by Kiwanis Clubs of Pinellas County as well as many other private sponsors
- d. The program is supported by Seminole Riders 4-H /Girl Scout club led by Mary (Snakey) Urquhart. These volunteers provide the primary care for the horses and the facilities.
- e. Volunteers like yourselves play a vital role in the program as our source of side-walkers.

2. Description of Saturday Program

- a. The program runs most Saturdays from early September to mid May (in conjunction with the school year). A calendar is published on our website so you can see which days we are not running the program.
- b. Saturday classes start at 9:00 (4 classes @ 45 minutes each: 0900-0945, 0945-1030, break 30 min, 1100-1145, 1145-1230)
- c. Each class has 5 to 7 riders and we need 2 side-walkers per rider.

3. General side-walking information

- a. Wearing closed toe shoes is a requirement. Closed toe *comfortable* walking shoes will make it easier on you.
- b. Horses have been trained for side-walking and are gentle – **BUT** just like people they can be startled by unexpected noises or movements.
- c. **SO...**Cell phones off or on vibrate. No talking on cell phones while in a class. If you must take a call, alert the horse handler and we will try to replace you.
- d. No running or Horseplay as sudden movements can frighten horses
- e. Side-walkers remain outside of riding arena until called to side-walk.
- f. Most riders require 2 side –walkers
- g. Make sure you stay hydrated. Water is available in the shelter area.



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- h. Bathroom is in the barn
- i. Different colored shirts have meanings:
 - i. **Red** - Trained instructor or therapist
 - ii. **Dark Blue** – Board Member
 - iii. **Light Blue** – volunteer
 - iv. **Tan** – Rider

4. Side-Walking Directions (Demonstrate using a horse, mounted rider and side-walkers)

- a. Main purpose – to keep rider from falling off horse and to monitor the rider
- b. We try to match side-walkers to the rider and horse
- c. If you see something wrong, notify the horse handler or an instructor (red shirt)
- d. Rider required Equipment – Shoes, belt, helmet
- e. Types of saddles/equipment
- f. Do not talk to rider unless instructor has requested you to (too many commands will confuse them)
- g. Enter riding arena when called on – do not enter mounting/ramp area
- h. Demonstrate support holds (above knee/ankle stabilization). Instructor will provide directions for each rider individually.
- i. Belt is for emergency purposes only.
- j. Be careful not to put fingers through saddle rings etc.
- k. Understand proper way to change sides (a demonstration will be provided)
- l. Understand what to do during “exercise position”
 - i. Face horse
 - ii. Remove feet out of stirrups
 - iii. Support ankles when rider is doing “touching toes” exercise
 - iv. “Around the world”
- m. Understand what to do/how to assist (if your assistance is required) when rider is dismounting
- n. Know who the instructors are (red shirts). They are the people in charge.