

FACILITY SAFETY HOMEWORK

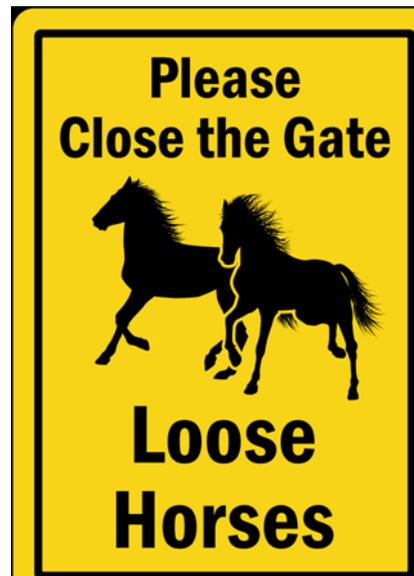
WHAT hides in PLAIN SIGHT at many facilities? Dangerous things that other people don't realize is dangerous. Be a hero to your horses by eliminating these common problems in your barn facilities – keeping your horses, staff and volunteers safe!

Do you have a NUMERICAL REFLECTIVE SIGN at the road that can be seen day or night, in the rain, in the snow? So that emergency responders can find your location even if they have never driven down your road? So many responses take much longer because the fire truck or EMS personnel cannot find your location easily. Having a pretty sign and fancy bushes at the entrance may look nice in daytime but the emergency responders are looking for a NUMERICAL ADDRESS. The easier you make it for anyone to find the location, prevents lost time under duress (in the dark, rain, snow, etc).



Do you have SECONDARY FENCING on your property? Loose horses in the road is a very preventable problem with a secondary fence and a closed gate at the road – consider a code to open the gate automatically or a gate opener installation (and coordinate with 911 so that responders can get in, too). Loose horses can get **people** in vehicles injured or killed. Estray horses get injured and killed, trapped, and cause general problems for everyone. Owner is financially responsible... it is a best practice to prevent tragedies. Use signage "SHUT THE GATES" everywhere there is a possibility for escape.

Do you have STALL and GATE LATCHES that are easy to open for the humans, and obvious how they work? Is it possible that a horse can be injured walking out of the stall if they aren't all the way closed? Is it possible that horses will learn how to open them and accidentally get loose? Do the latches and gates need maintenance (so that humans don't take shortcuts messing with them.) Do latches have reflective on them so that a firefighter can find them under duress?



DO you avoid the use of SQUARE fence corners? If necessary – do you block the 90 degree off to a 45 degree so that horses can't get trapped in the corner and then panic when chased by a more dominant horse? Do you locate the gates into the middle of the line of fence instead of at the corners, since horses tend to learn the location of gates and hang out there –

potentially causing conflicts? Rounded corners are more difficult to build and maintain but are proven to keep horses out of fights.

Are your fences easy for horses to see so they don't run into it, and do they discourage horses from interacting with them? A board at the top (minimum) makes it easier to see, and an electric fencing strand discourages horses from bumping, scratching, or otherwise messing with a fence – or playing over the fence with other horses.

Do you have a “horse escape / loose horse” capture plan that has been coordinated and practiced with your staff and volunteers? Who calls 911? Who gets a leadrope and bucket with grain or treats? Who mans the gate to ensure no more horses escape? Who controls the road traffic to get drivers to slow down in the area with a reflective safety vest on themselves?

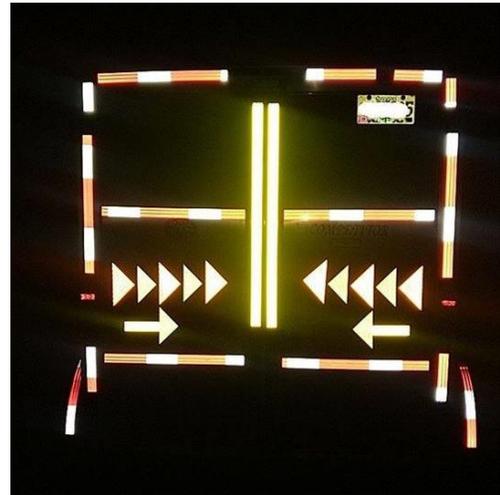
Have you eliminated ALL Bungee Type Ties for horses (crossties, tie ups and trailer ties)? If a horse panics, these will stretch and trap a leg or neck, or can break, then they snap back to hit a person or horse usually in the face with tremendous force (up to 6000 lbs!). PERSONS and HORSES have LOST EYES or gotten HORRIFIC LACERATIONS from these awful tie methods.

Have you initiated the use of a weak link in your tie systems around the barn and in all horse trailers? Did you know that normal nylon Halters and Trailer Tie Webbing have a working load of about 4000 lbs – which is sufficient to allow a horse to hang itself, or break its neck fighting to get loose. Instead, a loop of Sisal twine breaks at about 150 lbs, or polypropylene hay twine about 400 lbs. Put a small loop of twine or string at the top of where you are tying the horse (barn or trailer). This is simply the best prevention for when a horse panics.



Can a fire truck fit down the driveway of the facility (At least 12 feet wide and 14 feet tall)? Can several fire trucks drive close to the barn and expect to be able to turn around? The average fire apparatus weighs at least 15,000 pounds WITHOUT water in it. They can weigh up to 60,000 pounds loaded! They do not drive on mud, lawns, pastures, or other unimproved surfaces – they need good wide gravel driveways or concrete or asphalt! They cannot cross bridges that are not rated for 19 to 38 tons on the way to your facility. Get with your local fire station and have them come to your facility and make notes of any challenges they might have if there was an emergency.

Have you added REFLECTIVE CONSPICUITY TAPE to the rear of all horse trailers? In the dark, rain, or poor visibility conditions – you want your trailer to be SEEN, especially if the lights or brake lights aren't working, or you have to stop on the side of the road for an emergency tire change, panicky horse, etc. Most trailers have minimal reflective tape and there are innumerable examples of trailers being rearended by other drivers – making unloading of the horses impossible from the rear doors or ramps. This is a simple and inexpensive best practice for human and horse safety while in transport. Use DOT rated "CONSPICUITY TAPE" Red and White - across the bottom, top, sides of your trailer, inside the rear doors.



<https://reflectivepro.com/collections/horse-trailers>

Thanks to Rebecca Husted, Ph.D. – member of the PATH INTL. Equine Welfare Committee

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Facebook Large Animal Rescue Study Group "Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue"

Be your animal's hero by prevention, planning and coordinating ahead of time.