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DISASTER PLANNING FOR YOU AND YOUR HORSE

INTRODUCTION

What happens if you smell smoke in the air, the ground begins to roll under your feet, or the skies have opened with a once-in-a-hundred-year rain? Will you wish you had done your preplanning and set up your home and property with everything you need in an emergency? Or will you, in the terrible beginning moments as you confront the emergency, find there is no one to help you, find what you have is broken or inadequate, or that you can't get to your supplies?

When you plan, always consider the worst possibility: no water (or too much water), no power, gas, roads, or communication! And worst of all, it's probably dark outside.

The following pages have been prepared to start you thinking about the needs of you, your animals, (yes, the ones smaller than horses, too), your property, and your neighbors. PLEASE READ IT NOW, BEFORE YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITH AN EMERGENCY! A healthy and prepared horse owner will reduce risks to himself as well as his companion animals.

Many suggestions are presented, and you must find the answers which are right for your own situation. You must focus on developing the resources necessary for an emergency - things that you will need for at least the first few days, as well as for a possible extended emergency that could go on for weeks, or even months.

In the event of a major disaster, many horse owners will receive outside help slowly because they live in the country. However, suburban horse owners may also find themselves in the same situation. If a major disaster occurs, do not expect city services to be available; concentrations of people will be considered first. We all need to be individually responsible, remain self sufficient, and be able to provide our own personal and community self help.

The suggestions in this booklet have been gathered from many sources, and from survivors of all kinds of emergencies and major scale disasters. We have borrowed extensively from Los Angeles County in California and Sarasota County in Florida, two places which deal with all kinds of disasters on a weekly basis. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's self-teaching internet site on Animals in Disaster, which we recommend to anyone trying to develop comprehensive plans to deal with horses in disasters, was also an important source. We thank our reviewers, Barbara Galbraith of Scottsville, Cathy Stiner DVM of Bloomfield, Jeff Harloff, Ontario County Emergency Medical Coordinator, Donald Barnes, Ontario County Disaster and Fire Coordinator, Ann Dwyer, DVM of Scottsville, and Darlys McDonough of the Ontario County Planning Department.

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PREPARING YOUR LAND AND YOUR SUPPLIES

Part I - HOW DO I PREPARE FOR A FIRE, WINTER EMERGENCY, HURRICANE, OR FLOOD?
(Much of the same information will apply in all major emergencies.)

1. Review your own situation carefully. Decide what items you feel are necessary to sustain your family, residence, property, outbuildings, livestock, pets, etc. during an emergency. Keep a written list of supplies and their location in an obvious spot; by the telephone or on your refrigerator door, perhaps.

2. Keep emergency supplies and fire-fighting equipment in a location that will always be accessible. Do not use these tools except for an emergency, and keep them clean and in good working order. Have motors serviced regularly. Be sure to get proper training on the use of all your emergency equipment.

3. LARGE TOOLS (animal feeding and medical supplies are listed later)

- * Fire Extinguishers, need to be checked/recharged annually
- * Gasoline powered pump and hose to retrieve water from a swimming pool, stream, or farm pond or to drain flooded areas
- * Flashlights and lanterns with a supply of fresh batteries or gas, if gas lanterns
- * Battery-powered radio for monitoring news reports and emergency evacuation broadcasts
- * First aid kits for horses and humans (Contents listed later)
- * Ladders long enough to reach the roofs of all buildings on your property
- * A generator with a fuel supply is the single most useful item in a short term farm emergency, and is essential in a long power outage. You need quick hook-ups to equipment needing electricity installed in advance of the emergency.
- * If you have a generator, keep extra fuel filters, spark plug, and air cleaner
- * A small bucket heater that will run off the generator
- * Extra fuel for generator and kerosene heater, safely stored

HAND TOOLS

Shovel - Sledge hammer - Machete - Rake - Chainsaw - Bolt cutters
Water buckets - Hoe - Pry bar - Leather gloves - Loppers - Pitchfork- Claw hammer - Ax - Burlap bags - Roll of smooth wire - Nails/Staples - Fence wire- Fence posts with tripod bottoms- Plastic bags of various sizes

4. Protective clothing: cotton, wool and leather fabrics are best. Synthetics melt and rubber burns. You will need long-sleeved shirts, and long cotton or wool pants in fire areas, with leather gloves and boots (tennis or rubber shoes can melt). A cotton bandanna can serve as a mask, sweatband, ear warmer, and to protect your hair. Have a good pair of eye goggles to protect your eyes from smoke. Rain gear. Waders(hip boots).

5. Can the Emergency Departments find you and get equipment into your property? Check the width of gates. Your address must be easily seen from the street. If you have an electric security gate, be sure everyone in the household knows how to open it when the power is out.

6. Know where any fire hydrants are in your area to better assist fire personnel. If you have a farm pond, consider installing a dry hydrant. If you have neither, preplan with your fire department concerning the need for a tanker. See the later section on Community Plan Activities.

7. If you have natural or LP gas service, locate your gas shut-off valve and have the appropriate shut-off tool in clear sight.

8. Know where your main electrical service panels are located, and how to shut them off. Know how to hook up the generator.

9. Store supplies of diesel fuel, gasoline, propane, kerosene, etc. elevated and at a safe distance from the house and barn. These must be clearly and properly labeled as hazardous materials.

10a. Have outside faucets on every building. If your Emergency Management office has warned of fire danger conditions, make sure A HOSE WITH A NOZZLE IS ATTACHED AT EACH LOCATION. Check condition of hoses every six months. Consider installing sprinklers in, around and on top of barns. Consider lightning rods.

10b. Store trash barrels filled with water. Use smaller buckets to carry water. Have plenty of burlap bags and/or large bath towels available, since they are useful for fire fighting or for personal and horse protection.

10c. Be prepared to put out fresh hot spots with your stored water and bucket or wet burlap bag. Shovel dirt on a spot fire, if possible, to conserve your water supply.

10d. Large clearings are generally safe for your horse during a fire.

10e. Fire travels extremely fast. Fire travels faster going up hill.

10f. Fire creates its own wind. This can cause cinders to fly everywhere, including to seemingly protected areas where your horses may be.

10g. Proper trimming and pruning of your trees, and clearing under them will make a difference. Using fire retardant plants in landscaping will minimize the air-borne cinders created during a firestorm.

10h. Many trees that are not generally combustible can catch fire and burn simply because debris was allowed to gather underneath. Debris can include manure and bedding that you may have used for mulch. Bedding in your paddock/corral and barn can also burn. Remove bedding, or remove the horse to a safer area if a fire is expected.

11. Keep a list of emergency telephone numbers near all telephones: fire, local sheriff/police, State Police for road closures, veterinarian, your county Disaster Services number, and a list of nearby people with trailers to assist in quick evacuation should this become necessary. Program in key numbers, but don't depend on speed dialing working in an emergency.

12. If you live in an area which may flood, know where the highest spots are where horses or cattle could be moved when the water rises. If you think they will be cut off there, how can you reach them with feed? If you know there is a history of flooding, is there some way the danger can be lessened by rerouting a stream? If so, discuss the options with your local Emergency Management Office. Make sure that local authorities, including law enforcement, know that you have a plan in effect, and what it is. Weigh the options of transporting horses to another location when the water rises to a certain spot. Know your escape routes !

Part 2- WHAT ABOUT MY HORSE IN A FIRE DISASTER?

1. Examine your horse facility. Note what is NOT FLAMMABLE. You will quickly realize that most things burn - wood, plastic, paper, the thinner metals, aluminum, etc.
2. Do not store feed in your house or garage. It is possible that your home owner's insurance could be negated by the storage of feed in improper places. Check with your agent in advance of an emergency!
3. Feed burns! The drier the hay, pellets and grain, the faster it burns. Keep your feed and bedding away from structures. The fine dust left by feed on the floor is also flammable. Dispose of spoiled feed immediately.
4. Hay stacks can become blazing infernos. Use a flame retardant cover over your stack, but if it catches fire - pull the stack apart if you can do so safely.
5. Bedding such as straw and wood shavings in stalls and stacks is extremely flammable.
6. Horse manure burns! Store it in a safe place away from buildings, and have the pile removed often. Spontaneous combustion is possible with manure, which is a good reason to keep it a distance from barn walls.
7. Cobwebs (yes, spider webs) are FLAMMABLE, and will provide a quick pathway for a fire. Sweep them from rafters, walls, and fixtures often.
8. Spontaneous combustion can happen where you store saddle cleaning supplies (such as oily rags, saddle oil, kerosene). Store cleaning materials in sealed fire resistant containers.
9. Eaves on your buildings can attract fire if they are open. Roofs and rain gutters must be kept free of leaves, pine needles and other debris.
10. Examine your horse fencing. Wood fencing burns, and PVC fencing melts. They may not be safe in a fire. Consider the location of your property, and select the safest type of fencing for your animals. Do not count on a "hot wire" to contain your horse. In heavy wind areas, the best fencing is woven wire, since it cuts down on flying debris.
11. Use fire safe equipment for your horse. Nylon halters and ropes can melt into your horse's flesh. Use a leather halter and a cotton lead rope instead. Metal pieces on halters and leads can become burning hot. Don't use nylon or plastic blankets, sheets, or fly masks in fire areas, since they can also melt.

12. Be an aware owner. Horses may panic and become wild with fear when they perceive danger. Their instincts for survival are very strong.

13. Horses that are in a panic state frequently will not leave the security of their stall or corral. Any barn can burn, and horses must be led out and placed in a secured area, or they may run back into the fire area, particularly if the rest of their "herd" is there. Blindfolding a panicked horse may help it accept being led to safety.

14. If you must tie your horse, be certain that you are using a firmly set post. A frightened horse can rip a fence down, and if tied to a rail that becomes loose and hits him, the horse will panic further. Practice tying your horse for extended periods of time so he can be secured during a real emergency.

15. If you own a horse, you may also own a horse trailer and a tow vehicle. Always have at least a half tank of fuel in your truck. Keep your rig in top condition and have it serviced regularly. If you do not own a horse trailer, you need to plan ahead of time for transportation for your horse. Plans should also include a pre-set destination for your horse in an emergency. Let friends and neighbors know about your plan. Consider what would happen if your original destination is in a high risk area. Keep detailed road maps with marked alternate routes.

16. If you board your horse, make sure that the stable manager has an emergency phone number and plan. Go over the plan with the stable management, just as if the whole barn was your own responsibility. Leave several phone numbers with the stable manager and make sure all barn workers know the location of the emergency numbers and have rehearsed the emergency plan, if the manager is not there. Who will go to the barn if an emergency is forecast?

17. Consider some sort of permanent identification for your horse, such as a freeze brand, chip implant, tattoo, etc., and keep a copy of all your horse's identifiable features in a safe place, including photos. Prepare permanent identification tags for your horse's halter.

18. Pack a Horse Evacuation Kit in a non-combustible container. This should include all the equipment you will need. If possible, keep this evacuation kit in your horse trailer. List of possible items is in the Appendix.

Part 3 -WATER

1. Water storage must be planned. Calculate how much water you will need to take care of human needs, water your animals, and fight a fire. If you are on a public water source, it will probably be cut off. You will need to have water already stored in large tanks or barrels. Store water in several locations on your property, and secure the containers so they will not be damaged. Change the water in your storage containers at least four times a year to insure freshness. Rotate this water into your regular water usage to conserve it. Make sure that your water supply cannot become contaminated. Understand that in a flood you will still need clean water.
2. During freezing weather, earthquakes, floods, major hurricanes, tornadoes, water mains and pipes can rupture, leaving you and your animals without water. Plan ahead for these contingencies by storing water in large tanks. In a cold climate, you will need to consider purchasing a de-icer to keep water from freezing.
3. If you are unsure of the quality of your emergency water keep bottles of household bleach in your emergency supplies to purify the water. For horses, use 1 ounce of bleach for each 20 gallons of water, and allow it to sit for at least 3 hours before using. As an alternative, water purification tablets are available from most camping supply stores. Follow the directions on the tablet container. Because of the chemical content of water from a swimming pool, put the water in a container and leave it in full sunlight for 1-2 days before using it. The sunlight will remove the chemicals, and this water will then be safe for your horse to drink. You can also purchase a test kit for water purity.
4. Different locations for water storage for fire protection need to be assessed. Expect to be on your own and unable to access public water sources. Plan and store accordingly. If you have your own private water storage system, remember that the higher your tank is the more water pressure you will have at your hose. With everyone else tapping into the local water supply (including the fire department), you may not have much water pressure. Purchase a gas powered pump and an appropriately sized hose and nozzle for a farm pond, stream or swimming pool.
5. If your neighbor has an operating well, have you asked for permission to get water from it in an emergency? Get written instructions on how to operate the well. Does everyone else in your household know how to work it?
6. Plan to have a back-up electrical power system (generator) available to run the well pump if necessary.
7. For horses, you will need at least 20 gallons per horse per day. Make sure you have enough water for other pets, livestock and your family as well. Plan to store enough water for at least one week.
8. Know how to contact your local Disaster agency for emergency water drops if you have no stored water available.

Part 4- FEED SUPPLIES

1. Be sure you can store enough feed so that if you are cut off from deliveries you will still have at least a one week supply on hand. Determine how much feed and water you can safely store at a time. Make certain you have stored your feed in the safest place, usually on high ground away from the barn and your home. Place pelleted feed and grain in metal containers with secure lids.
2. If hay storage is outside, purchase a flame resistant tarp to cover the stack to protect it from flying embers. Also elevate the stack to minimize spoilage from water, mud and rodents.
3. If your horse has a special diet or medications, don't forget to pack a week's supply in your escape kit in case you must evacuate your horse. Also, don't forget to rotate this special feed and medicine so it remains in good condition.
4. Keep a feeding chart listing quantities of hay, water, and supplements for each horse, with an extra copy in your evacuation kit. Attach a small copy of this information to the horse if it is evacuated from your property by taping it to the halter, which will be helpful to whoever cares for your horse at the evacuation receiving site.

Part 5- FIRST AID

This section is not intended to replace veterinary care. It is essential that a veterinarian be consulted quickly when an animal's health is in question.

1. First Aid supplies and knowing how to use them are essential. Much First Aid treatment for horses will be the same as for humans.
2. Keep a first aid kit handy in the house, at the barn, and in the horse trailer. (See suggested items at the end of this booklet.)
3. Have a list of local veterinarians and make sure that you pre-select the ones who will be able to reach your animals for treatment during the emergency. Consider the purchase of a layman's book on veterinary care. Become familiar with the portions dealing with emergency treatment ahead of time.
4. Contact your own veterinarian for information on burn treatment and temporary treatment for puncture wounds and lacerations for horses before the emergency. Ask for a list of medications and instructions on how to apply them. Include these items in your first aid kits.
5. Arrange with one or more of your local veterinarians, your local Cooperative Extension office, or a nearby agricultural school to provide a Horse Emergency First Aid Clinic for you and your neighbors at a mutually convenient time.

6. A horse suffering from shock or smoke inhalation, with or without obvious burns, is a serious veterinary emergency. Cover the animal with blankets and call your veterinarian for instructions. Gentle stroking of the horse's neck and soothing words help calm a nervous or shocky horse.
7. Be prepared to treat for eye irritations from smoke and flying cinders if you cannot have a veterinarian do so immediately--some self treatment makes problems worse. If your vet is not available, first aid is to tie a wet compress securely to the horse's head over their eyes.
8. Take courses in human First Aid and CPR. Renew these courses to stay certified; CPR yearly, and First Aid every three years. Your course certificate will tell you when to renew. Many of the skills you will learn carry over to helping your horse in an emergency.

Part 6-IDENTIFICATION

1. Carry personal identification containing your current address with you at all times. If you are away at work or on errands and emergency roadblocks are set up, you will have to prove that you live in the emergency zone in order to gain admittance. Understand that you may not be permitted in an area considered by authorities to be unsafe. Don't be afraid to insist on making the important decisions about the care of your animals....you know them best.
2. Prior to any emergency, coordinate with your local Law Enforcement and Disaster Agencies to determine what criteria must be met in order to allow you to re-enter a previously evacuated area to remove or care for livestock.
3. Have your vehicle identification, trailer identification, and automobile insurance identification readily available.
4. Have current identification for each of your horses: have photographs of you WITH each of your horses. Have identification tags on each horse halter. Keep halters on horses on their stall doors (or on them) at all times, with a lead rope for each one. Permanently mark your horse with non-alterable identification, like a freeze brand, microchip, or tattoo. See if your local Animal Control Agency has recommended identification tags.
5. In the event that you need to evacuate your horse, proper identification is needed. Keep a cattle (livestock) crayon marker in your evacuation kit to write your name or telephone number directly on your horse, in case your horse's halter is removed or lost.
6. Keep up to date on all vaccinations and other routine veterinary care. In an emergency your horse may be exposed to diseased horses. Keep a copy of each horse's health information with matching horse identification in your barn and in your Horse Evacuation Kit. If you are kept from your farm, and someone else has to care for your horses, health and feeding instructions need to be available for each horse.
7. Indelibly label all of your equipment - halters, saddles, bridles, etc. with your name. Your Social Security number and address may also help.

8. Prior to evacuation, have forms prepared which will allow you to track who is removing the horse, the vehicle license number, and the intended destination. If the proposed destination is not satisfactory to you, you may choose to delay the horse's removal. Don't be talked into something you may regret later.

Part 7- PREPARING YOURSELF AND YOUR NEIGHBORS

1. You, as a horse owner living in a rural area, need to be aware of trouble as it is starting. You should always be scanning the skies, listening and sniffing for smells that are not normal. Be aware of early watches and warnings from the National Weather Service (a small weather radio is cheap insurance) and on the media.

2. Assess the CURRENT conditions very carefully, and be aware that they may change rapidly. Stay alert!

3. Determine who in your family is most likely to be home at the time of an emergency and which of your neighbors will probably be home during the day. Know who will be home at night. Be sure that your neighbors know when they can call on you for help.

4. Consider the purchase of a generator and have a licensed electrician install it and show you how to use it. Determine what essential power you will need in an emergency; a well pump, refrigeration, stove, a few essential lights, water tank heater? Make sure that your barn is also wired for its use. Check the generator's operation at least twice a year.

5. Interface with your local Disaster, Fire Department and Law Enforcement Officers. These departments may also assist you in preparing plans for your area for emergencies. They will give priority to neighborhood groups over individuals.

6. Have a COMMUNITY PLAN: Identify individuals who can handle your animals in the event you are not at home. Provide them with a means of access if your property is locked, and a liability release. Find a safe evacuation location for your animals if your property becomes unsafe. Is this location nearby? How far away? Have directions and a map ready to the evacuation site for a hauler if you cannot trailer your horses personally. Make sure that a secure, properly fitted halter with a lead rope is available for each horse and is kept in plain sight at all times.

7. Know how many horses and other livestock are in your community, and where they are located. Network with the owners and establish a mutual support organization for emergencies. The backyard horse owner has as much to lose as the large stable.

8. Network with other nearby communities so that everyone is aware of all locations that can be used as evacuation sites and the respective local organizations. Your county may have an emergency problem, and the best place to evacuate may be in the next county, so think in larger areas.

9. Have trained and registered volunteers ready to work with the Incident Commander, local Law Enforcement Officers, and Firefighters to provide better communications between them and the horse owners.

10. Before giving neighbors general permission to bring horses to your property for safe keeping, check beforehand with your insurance company regarding your coverage and your potential liability.
11. Know who has a tractor and other heavy equipment available in your neighborhood.
12. Know who has a Citizen Band Radio in your neighborhood, or consider purchasing one for yourself. Regular telephone service can be cut off during an emergency. Cell phones may or may not work. You will need a portable battery-operated radio, to tune in to your local emergency station. Keep a supply of large flashlights with backup fresh batteries, which should be replaced with newer ones at regular intervals.
13. Identify neighbors with amateur radio operator's licenses. Many areas have ham radio operator groups ready to function during emergencies.
14. Plan some kind of early warning system for your community, such as a telephone tree (First person calls two people, who each call two people, who each call two people, and continue until all are called. (Someone needs to keep the tree up to date at least yearly and be sure a copy with phone numbers is distributed to all.)

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

REGARDLESS OF YOUR OWN HORSE-HANDLING ABILITIES, and what you believe your horse will do in a difficult situation, **YOUR HORSE CAN HURT YOU, HURT A BYSTANDER, DAMAGE PROPERTY, and even SELF-DESTRUCT!** A horse is a "conditioned response" animal. Therefore the more time spent in preparing the horse to deal with its emotions during a stressful situation, the better able it will be to survive emergency trauma. Information on horsemanship and how to accomplish this type of training is available from books, schools, clinics and professional trainers. The following information is being shared by horse owners who have experienced FIRE, FLOOD and EARTHQUAKE, so that you may be better prepared to handle your horse under stress.

Part I - HOW DO I SAVE MY HORSE?

1. Your horse will react to your panic and fear. You must remain calm.
2. Train your horse to behave well BEFORE an emergency situation arises. Establish with your horse that a human is the herd leader.
3. Sedating your horse in an emergency is not always a good idea. Your horse may lose its natural instinct for self-preservation. It may also lose balance and stability. Most veterinarians will not prescribe sedatives for you to keep on hand, so you need to know how to use non-medical methods of restraint such as the use of a twitch or the new halter-type restraint. Practice using them before you need them.
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 flashlights or glo-sticks around your horse so that he can become familiar with them. Can you find your horse halters quickly in the dark? Can you put on the horse quickly in the dark? Teach your horse in advance to lead with just a neck rope, stirrup strap or belt.
5. If you MUST padlock your corrals, make certain your neighbors know the code or have a key. Combination locks where you can set your own number series may be a better choice than one which is preset, but an emergency worker or your neighbor won't know the combination, and couldn't read the pad in a dark or smoky situation. Most horse owners avoid all locking systems because of the chance that essential time can be lost in opening them in an emergency.
6. Make sure you can unfasten your paddocks/corrals/gates in the dark. Keep a flashlight or glo-stick close by.
7. Do NOT turn your horse loose to fend for itself outside your property's perimeter fence.
8. Learn various knots so you can safely tie a group of horses together on a picket line, if it becomes necessary. Know how far apart horses must be tied to keep them from kicking and biting each other. Practice tying your horses in groups until they accept this as an ordinary routine.
9. Day Sheets, blankets and fly masks easily catch fire, and must be removed from the horse if fire threatens.
10. Be prepared if you are threatened by an emergency while riding out on a trail. Think over carefully what supplies you should always carry with you (first aid kit, water, knife, halter and lead rope, cell phone, etc.). Pack a kit and faithfully carry it whenever you are out riding. HINT: a conscious rider has a better chance of survival after a fall than an unconscious one. Always ride in an ASTM/SEI certified riding helmet.

Part 2-LEAVE OR STAY?

1. Only move your animals if staying will endanger their lives. Horses in particular are generally happier, healthier and safer left at home, even if this means inconvenience to the owner and the animals for a short time. With enough advance warning, you may choose to evacuate your horse and leave your property when you become convinced that it is absolutely necessary. This decision should be done in a timely manner so you don't interfere with emergency vehicles and workers. The Fire Department is in charge of fighting a fire and determining which areas need to be evacuated ahead of the fire. If local Law Enforcement Personnel come through your neighborhood because the Fire Department has requested an evacuation, it is because they value human lives over property. It is strongly recommended, although not mandatory, that you heed their orders. With advance warning of flood, mud or snowslide, blizzard or hurricane, it is best to move your horse to a safer location. If the emergency is earthquake, tornado or fire, and you are sure that you and your horse are in immediate danger, assess the situation carefully before you decide to evacuate. Be certain you are not moving into greater danger.
2. Establish your escape route early. Have alternate routes planned. Move far enough away from the fire or flood danger zone. Use extreme caution. Cars and trailers often get in the way of rescue equipment and personnel.
3. Try to move your horse to a safe area with which he is already familiar.
4. Keep your truck and trailer hitched, facing the exit direction. Leave doors unlocked and the keys in the ignition, or keep a spare set of keys in the horse area of your trailer. Load your Horse Evacuation Kit, feed and water ahead of time. (Or: Keep properly sealed feed in the trailer -hay stored in a canvas or nylon bag, hay cubes or pellets in sealed paper bags. Rotate this feed monthly with your normal feed to keep it fresh.) Keep at least five gallons of fresh water in the trailer. Also in your trailer, keep an extra halter and lead rope, old horse blanket, leg wraps, picket line, and a change of clothes, bandannas, and shoes for yourself. You should also carry a shovel, crowbar, basic hand tools, a knife, an ax and a pair of heavy leather gloves. See suggested First Aid kits in the appendix of this book.
5. Be aware that when you are hauling a horse trailer to remove your horse from danger, winds can INSTANTLY shift a fire into your path, water can rise, or snow may form deep drifts. You may not be able to turn around and you may block or be blocked by emergency equipment and personnel.
6. If a fire is upon you, Fire Departments recommend that you ONLY MOVE THE HORSE IF YOU ARE CERTAIN THAT DAMAGE OR INJURY WILL RESULT IF YOU STAY. Consider the damage from smoke inhalation, not just burns from fire. Most important: stay calm and alert. Pay close attention to the fire conditions surrounding you.
7. Trailering: Trying to load a panicked horse into a trailer is risky and dangerous to you, the horse, others who are helping, and to property. Practice loading your horse at night with only the truck/trailer lights, and take a short drive. Do this activity as many times as necessary until you both feel comfortable with the process. Repeat this practice periodically.

8. Safety check and service your trailer at least twice a year. Pay particular attention to your tires. A tire which has been inactive for an extended period may have good tread, but be completely unserviceable. Change tires regularly whether or not you think they need it.

9. If you do not use your trailer often, check it regularly - flat tires don't go very far. Always keep your towing vehicle's gas tank at least half full.

Part 3- WHAT I DO FOR MY HORSE IF I MUST MOVE HIM?

1. It is stressful for the horse to be moved from its familiar surroundings, but if there are smoke, flying cinders, or rising water with a strong current it may be best to evacuate.

2. If you have to move your horse to a new area, try to take some of his regular feed with you. A change in feed material can make your horse sick, especially in a stressful situation.

3. Accustom your horse in advance to drinking from different or strange water buckets; try using the collapsible type, too. If your horse won't drink unfamiliar water, add flavoring to his water (7-UP, Popsicles, Hawaiian punch, apple cider vinegar, flavored gelatin, etc.) periodically to accustom him to drinking odd tasting water. Then you can use the familiar flavoring at the new location. If you have the ability to bring water from home, it may be possible to mix it with the unfamiliar water, gradually increasing the amount of the new water.

4. When horses feel they are in a safe area, they generally remain calm. You must remain calm also, since your horses will sense your mood. Horses will be calmer if there are other horses they can see.

5. Remember that horses are HERD animals. What the herd leader does all the other horses will copy. A new horse added to a group already penned may cause more stress to all the animals in the pen. Keep stallions separate for safety reasons, and give mares with foals special attention.

6. Quarreling horses turned out together can be distracted by placing feed in several different areas. There must be more feed locations than there are horses. Constant access to hay or grazing will help calm them.

7. Get your horse back his normal routine as quickly as possible to avoid more stress. If your horse has been evacuated, volunteer to oversee him and help the evacuation site managers in any way you can with the other horses there.

8. Create through networking a series of evacuation centers within the neighborhood, town and county if your county Disaster Coordinator does not already have a list. Know the closest evacuation center to your property. List alternate locations in case an extended emergency exists. Keep a list of locations in your evacuation kit, with simple maps for reaching them.

Part 4- THE BARN AND CORRAL ARE ON FIRE!

1. If your barn is on fire, horses must be led out, since they may "freeze" and refuse to move. Great care must be taken in removing a horse from a burning barn. THIS SHOULD NEVER BE DONE IF YOU ARE PLACING YOUR OWN LIFE AT RISK. To leave a horse in danger is the most heartbreaking choice you may have to make as a horse owner, but you must choose your life over his, and make that choice consciously before you are involved in a life-threatening emergency. Do NOT open the door and expect the horse to run out. A horse may run INTO a burning barn, because that is where he felt safest. He may refuse to leave his stall because there is oxygen close to the window.
2. If your horse's feet are planted firmly on the ground and he will not move forward, move him sideways a step or two to get his feet moving. Then take a step or two toward the exit. Do not rush the process. Too much pressure, too soon, may cause the horse to react explosively.
3. If you need to remove a horse from a burning building or corral, you may need to blindfold the animal - know how to do so safely. Practice is the key. Use a large WET cotton towel and tuck it under the halter and over the horse's eyes. Practice this several times when there is no emergency, and get the horse accustomed to being led blindfolded out of the barn and around the paddock.
4. A wet bandannas or other wet cotton fabric makes a good smoke mask to place over a horse's nostrils. Tie them onto the halter.
5. In a fire, wet the manes and tails of your horses, and perhaps your own hair and clothing, or cover them with large wet towels. Be prepared to continue wetting down after the fires passes, depending on the amount of airborne fire particles blowing around you.
6. Synthetic and nylon halters can melt and burn your horse. Don 't use them if your emergency is a fire! Have a leather halter, and a cotton lead rope on hand for each horse. Remove blankets, leg wraps, and fly masks since they catch fire easily.
7. Consider using a lead with a chain for better control. Practice using the chain so you know how to attach and use it safely. The most reliable and humane control comes from running the chain through the left side ring on the halter, looping the chain once around the noseband, threading it through the far side ring, and running it up to the far side jaw ring.
8. Intense heat and dehydration can kill your horse. Smoke inhalation generally causes pneumonia, which if untreated can cause death. Discuss with your veterinarian the length of time a horse can be exposed to smoke without harm. If you think your horse is suffering smoke inhalation, he will need immediate veterinary care to have a chance to survive.

Part 5- HE'S UP TO HIS BELLY IN SNOW OR MUD; THE GROUND IS SHAKING

1. Except for flash floods with strong currents, horses can usually handle water, but deep mud is a very serious life threatening situation. If your horse is trapped in mud you will need to call the local Fire Department, Disaster Coordinator, and your veterinarian for help. They will know if your county has an extrication/horse rescue team available.
2. Some horses are not particularly threatened by the first signs of earthquake, but they are usually aware of them before humans are. They will often stop what they are doing and remain still. When the earth starts rumbling, they may become agitated. Be prepared for abnormal behavior following aftershocks. Some horses will leap and run around blindly. Others may become aggressive and out of control. Often they can be soothed and distracted by feeding them. Provide attention and reestablish a routine as quickly as possible.
3. Check the security of your fences. Extensive flooding or shaking can loosen fence posts and leave your horse unsecured. Remove debris from any area containing a horse.
4. Before a hurricane, where there is plenty of warning, it is probably best to evacuate your horse, especially if you live in an urban area where flying debris cannot be avoided. Remember that high winds make projectiles out of the most innocent items, like potted plants, firewood, patio furniture, bicycles, etc.
5. Check buildings for soundness and for sharp edges after an earthquake, lightning storm, tornado, hurricane, or other emergency. Look for downed or disconnected power lines and/or broken water, sewer, and gas lines.
6. In freezing weather, protect horses from wetness and wind that will rob them of the natural protection offered by their fluffy winter hair coat. Provide shelter in some form. It is not always wise to put a blanket on a wet horse, but if he is wet and cold you can warm and dry him by using an anti-sweat sheet under a blanket or pack straw between his body and a blanket. Horses can be helped to stay warm by frequent nourishing meals of high quality hay, which will provide the calories they need to maintain their body temperature. Also provide plenty of defrosted fresh water. Break ice on water tanks, or install a de-icer if you have the power to run it. Often horses will drink warm water more readily than cold. Remember that dehydration is as big or a bigger problem in the cold than in the heat, because of horses' reluctance to drink enough freezing water.

Part 6- HELPERS & HINDERERS

1. With all good intentions - sometimes we rush to interfere when we shouldn't. Assess the situation very carefully before taking action.
2. Horses cannot cope with being trapped, whether by other horses or by people. Many horses will run over people when they feel trapped; try to avoid placing yourself and others in this kind of danger. It's better to let the horse run himself out of his panic, or kick another horse, than to get in the way and suffer serious injury.
3. Volunteers, even experienced horse owners, can be injured when handling strange horses. Whenever possible have the horse's owner deal with him.
7. If the horse has panicked, you will have a very difficult time controlling him. Calm yourself, take a deep breath, and try to regain the horse's full attention before you try again to control him. Be patient with him; talk in a soothing voice and stroke his neck slowly. His instincts are screaming at him to run away or to escape by using his teeth and hoofs to protect himself.
6. Horses are survivors. They are strong. They follow their instincts, which allowed them to survive without human help for millions of years. The moment may come when your life is in peril. Let go of the horse, and save your own life.

COMMUNITY PLAN ACTIVITIES

1. Ask local Disaster, Fire and Law Enforcement agencies to attend a general neighborhood planning meeting. Include the local Animal Control Center, if there is one in your area, and your Emergency Equine Response Team if you are lucky enough to have one.
2. Ask local Red Cross or ambulance squad personnel to offer First Aid and CPR classes.
3. Have a local veterinarian give an Emergency Equine First Aid treatment clinic.
4. Run a neighborhood fund raiser: Make up first aid kits for sale, including glo-sticks, a test kit for water purity, I.D. tags, and other horse related items.
5. Create a neighborhood map and a list of horse owners, with their addresses, phones, number of animals, types of facilities and types of fencing. List indoor and outdoor arenas or large paddocks available in an emergency to use as possible staging areas. Share this information with your Disaster Coordinator.
6. Identify geographical areas on a local map: who has the safest location in an emergency? Who has water (wells)? Generators? Gasoline powered pumps?
7. Determine who has equipment available: Tractor, 4-wheel drive vehicles, C.B. and ham radios, feed (amount stored), wells for water, water purification systems, portable telephones and AM radios.

8. Generate your own Equine Emergency Response Team (E.E.R.T.) with qualified and equipped "First Responders." Resources for these will be found in the bibliography at the end of this booklet. Ask your New York State Horse Council Vice President to sponsor drills for fire and emergency personnel to learn to deal with trailer rollovers and horse barn evacuations. Several NYSHC Regions are already providing leadership in this area, with the help of local veterinarians and emergency managers.

9. Practice a "HORSE FIRE DRILL" with your neighbors and your local fire department. Ask your local Emergency Manager or Horse Council Vice President for a copy of a suggested lesson plan.

10. Keep active lines of communications open between community groups and your Disaster agency. Volunteer to serve on an Advisory Board or a Disaster Preparedness Committee.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS:

EMERGENCY NUMBER, 911 OR OTHER:

LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT:

LOCAL AMBULANCE:

YOUR VETERINARIAN:

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE:

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION:

NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP:

NEW YORK STATE HORSE COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT:

HORSE EVACUATION KIT

- * Fire Extinguisher (If you keep this extinguisher in your horse trailer, you will need to check its charge more often than extinguishers you keep on a wall at home or in the barn. The movement over roads in your trailer may cause the chemicals to condense.
- * Water bucket
- * Halter
- * Lead rope
- * Equine medications & instructions (See list below)
- * Identification papers for each horse, including photos to show color and size
- * Feed instructions
- * 50 foot cotton rope
- * Equine and human first aid kit (See list below)
- * Flashlight
- * Roll of Duct Tape
- * A Cattle Marking Crayon
- * A change of clothing for you
- * Identification tags on your spare halters and lead ropes.
- * Leg wraps (4 track bandages) with padding, or shipping boots
- * Blankets
- * Waterproof tarp

FIRST AID SUPPLIES

Know how to use each item or product. Consult your own doctor and veterinarian.

SMALL COMBINED FIRST AID KIT TO TAKE ANYPLACE

- _____ Adhesive bandages, assorted sizes, 6 each.
- _____ Sterile gauze pads, 4x4-inch size.
- _____ Gauze roller bandages, 2 rolls, 3- & 4-inch widths.
- _____ Adhesive tape, two rolls, 1- & 2-inch widths.
- _____ Stretch bandages, 2 rolls.
- _____ A bandanna to use as a sling.
- _____ Bandage scissors.
- _____ Safety pins.
- _____ Alcohol towelettes in individual packets.
- _____ Antiseptic, antibiotic and/or antifungal ointment.
- _____ Electrical tape
- _____ Anesthetic spray, gel or ointment.
- _____ Pain reliever, non prescription.
- _____ Eye drops or ointment
- _____ Sunscreen for skin and lips (use on your horse, too).
- _____ Insect repellent, spray on or wipe on.
- _____ Tissues and Cleaning Wipes.
- _____ Clean water in a sterile plastic pouch for cleansing wounds.
- _____ Pocket knife & hoof pick.
- _____ Cotton lead rope.
- _____ Whistle & matches in water proof container.
- _____ Flashlight, extra batteries and glo-sticks.
- _____ Shoe laces for instant tack repairs.
- _____ Hoof boot.

- _____ Needlenose pliers
- _____ Pen or pencil & small note pad.
- _____ Quarters for telephone or calling card number.
- _____ Identification including your physician and veterinarian.
- _____ First Aid Booklet.
- _____ Survival type pocket tool.
- _____ Thermometer, human and horse type; digital works best for both.
- _____ Plastic bags in various sizes, including 33 gal for raincoat, shelter
- _____ Plain water, at least one liter, for drinking.
- _____ Food: Simple sugars (like a granola bar), and complex carbohydrates-protein (peanut butter protein bar).

ADD FOR YOUR BARN OR TRAILER KIT

Dressings & Bandages:

- _____ Adhesive dressings, assorted sizes, 6 of each.
- _____ Butterfly closure tapes, 6, for human cuts.
- _____ Non-stick sterile pads, 2x4 inches, 6
- _____ Adhesive tape or non-allergic tape (3 rolls, 2 each of 1, 2 & 3 inches wide).
- _____ Pre-moistened antiseptic towelettes (4-6).
- _____ Gauze roller bandages (3 rolls, 2-, 3-; & 4-inches).
- _____ Self-adhesive elastic bandages (1 or 2 rolls, 3-, or 4-inch).
- _____ Non-adhesive elastic bandaging, (not Ace, too elastic) (3 rolls, 4-inch).
- _____ One triangular bandage or bandanna.
- _____ Petroleum jelly gauze pads (nosebleed packing or any cut).
- _____ Soft cleansing kitchen wipes (cleaning, bandage, splint tie)
- _____ Disposable diapers (2, makes an absorbent dressing with a waterproof backing).
- _____ Small and large cotton towels.

Instruments & Other Supplies:

- _____ 60cc Dose Syringe with large catheter tip
- _____ Tweezers, or pen knife with tweezers and scissors.
- _____ Eye dropper or ear bulb syringe (for human eye or horse wound irrigation).
- _____ Stethoscope.
- _____ Safety pins (6 large, to fasten sling or bandages).
- _____ Tourniquet (rubber, to control bleeding in horses, not humans).
- _____ Wooden tongue blades or depressors (for spreading ointment).
- _____ Plastic bottle with tapered nozzle and cap (for drinking water or eye or wound irrigation).
- _____ Canteen for water or Water Purification tablets.
- _____ Cord or nylon rope.
- _____ Wire Cutters.

Medicines (Topical or Local); many can be used on both horses and humans

- _____ Antiseptic scrub, a cleansing solution for wounds.
- _____ Soothing cream, for minor cuts, abrasions, skin irritations.
- _____ Topical antibacterial powder for wounds and sores.
- _____ Antibiotic ointment (water soluble).
- _____ Talcum powder or cornstarch, for hot weather chafing and prickly heat.
- _____ Anesthetic ointment or aerosol

- _____ Rubbing Alcohol
- _____ Antibacterial liquid or ointment.
- _____ Witch hazel for strains, sprains or bruises.
- _____ Epsom salts.
- _____ Bee sting kit, if allergic to bees.
- _____ Saline solution for irrigating.
- _____ Sterile eye wash for humans (not helpful to horses)
- _____ Ice chest, if ice is available.
- _____ Instant cold packs.

Medicines (Oral) - for Human use:

- _____ Antacid tablets or liquid, (Pepto Bismol is also good for horses and can be used for the next item)
- _____ Diarrhea medication
- _____ Nausea or vomiting medication.
- _____ Allergy or asthma medication.
- _____ Cough medication.
- _____ Special medications for any personal conditions.

SPECIAL NOTE FROM OUR VETERINARY ADVISORS:

If your chosen escape area is covered by a DVM other than yours, ask for a recommendation; a good starting place is from the list of American Association of Equine Practitioners members.

BIBIOGRAPHY

City of Los Angeles, Department of Animal Regulation: "What Do I Do With My Horse in Fire, Flood, and/or Earthquake"

Ditz, Elizabeth Ann: "Horse Owner's Fire and Earthquake Prevention and Survival Manual"

Ferguson, Cindy: Sarasota County (Florida) Emergency Management publications

Humane Society of the United States: various publications and handouts.

Maryland State Animal Disaster Plan

Monroe County, NY Animal Disaster Plan

INTERNET

Emergency Animal Rescue Services: www.EARS4PETS@aol.com
Gives an idea of what an Emergency Response Team for animals can do in a disaster.

Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov/EMI
Self-taught internet courses on disaster planning.

RESOURCES

New York State Horse Council: www.nhshc.org
Has a map which gives contact information for Regional Vice-Presidents
Safety Chairman: Dru Malavase (o) 585 396-4308 (h) 585 657-7053
Email: drumalavase@hotmail.com or Drusilla.Malavase@co.ontario.ny.us

United States Pony Clubs, Western New York Region. Youth groups with older members and parents with horse handling experience.

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