



The Kind Farm Inc.

Occupational Health & Safety Manual

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Introduction

This Occupational Health and Safety Manual is designed to ensure that The Kind Farm Inc provides a safe workplace environment and promotes safety in the delivery of educational programs involving horses. The manual outlines guidelines and procedures aimed at implementing best practices in risk management within the horse industry training conducted by our organisation.

The Kind Farm Inc. fully endorses the Safe Work Australia “**Guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses**”. This is an authoritative and useful document which helps any business introducing people to horses in any way, with their WHS requirements and responsibilities in keeping their people safe.

This can be found at:

Safe Work Australia - Horse safety guidelines

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/guide-managing-risks-when-new-and-inexperienced-persons-interact-horses>

1. Risk Management Philosophy

Risk management is an integral part of our management practice. It is embedded into our organisational culture, philosophy, practices, and business plans. By integrating risk management effectively, we aim to make safety the responsibility of every individual within the organisation. Our goal is to maximise safety for clients, students, staff, and horses through consistent application of appropriate risk management techniques and standards.

2. Benefits of Effective Risk Management

Implementing effective risk management practices offers several benefits, including:

- **Good Reputation:** Establishing a positive reputation within the community as a safe and responsible organisation.
- **Confidence:** Instilling confidence in staff and students by ensuring their safety.
- **Cost Savings:** Reducing costs related to litigation, staff turnover, and horse health issues.
- **Condition of Employment:** Emphasising that working safely is a fundamental condition of employment, training, and participation at The Kind Farm Inc.

3. Responsibility and Accountability

- **Shared Responsibility:** Safety is the responsibility of every individual at The Kind Farm Inc, from management to employees and participants.
- **Preventability of Accidents:** We believe that all accidents are preventable through the implementation of comprehensive occupational health and safety (OH&S) procedures.
- **Accountability:** All employees are accountable for adhering to OH&S procedures and ensuring their effectiveness.

4. Training and Communication

- **Training Programs:** All employees will receive training in the OH&S procedures outlined in this manual. Training sessions will be conducted regularly to ensure that everyone is well-informed and competent in safety practices.

- **Communication:** Effective communication is crucial for maintaining a safe and healthy workplace. Open communication channels will be established to encourage reporting of safety concerns and incidents promptly.

5. OH&S Program Elements

The OH&S program at The Kind Farm Inc includes:

- **Comprehensive Procedures:** Clear and concise OH&S procedures outlined in this manual form the foundation of our program.
- **Commitment:** High commitment to OH&S by management and employees, fostering a culture of safety.
- **Participation:** Active participation of all employees in accident prevention activities and continuous improvement of safety practices.

Occupational Health and Safety Policy for Working with Horses

Purpose: The Kind Farm Inc. is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all individuals involved in working with horses. This policy outlines our commitment to preventing accidents, injuries, and occupational hazards associated with handling horses, thereby ensuring the well-being of employees, volunteers, and visitors.

Policy Statement:

1. **Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of every individual working with horses within our organisation to adhere to safety protocols, guidelines, and training provided to minimise risks and hazards.
2. **Risk Assessment and Management:** Regular risk assessments will be conducted to identify potential hazards associated with handling horses. Mitigation strategies will be implemented to eliminate or minimise these risks.
3. **Training and Competency:** All personnel handling horses will receive adequate training on safe handling practices, horse behaviour, and emergency procedures. Competency assessments will be conducted to ensure individuals are capable of safely performing their tasks. Visitors and volunteers can only interact with horses to the extent their experience level allows them stay safe. Many guests will only interact with horses over a fence barrier.
4. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Appropriate PPE, such as sturdy footwear and gloves will be provided and worn by visitors/guests as required during horse handling activities. Sturdy footwear must be worn at all times to protect feet and offer grip on all terrain. Sun protection clothing, hats and sunscreen are to be worn as appropriate.
5. **Safe Work Practices:** Standard operating procedures in line with recommendations from Safe Work Australia are established and followed for all tasks involving horses, including handling, approaching, grooming, leading, catching and stabling. These procedures will emphasise safe handling techniques and best practices.
6. **Health and Hygiene:** Measures are implemented to promote good hygiene practices among personnel to prevent the transmission of zoonotic diseases. In the safety induction for all guests and volunteers, hygiene is explained. Hand sanitiser and hand wipes are available. First aid kits and emergency response protocols are readily available and accessible.
7. **Facilities and Equipment:** Facilities where horses are housed or handled will be maintained in a safe condition, and equipment (such as halters, lead ropes, and grooming tools) will be inspected regularly for safety and functionality.
8. **Communication and Reporting:** Effective communication channels will be established to ensure that hazards, incidents, and near-misses related to horse handling are reported promptly. Lessons learned from incidents will be used to improve safety practices.
9. **Compliance and Review:** This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Compliance with this policy and associated procedures will be monitored and enforced.

Implementation:

- The responsibility for implementing this policy rests with Lucy Scarman - President of The Kind Farm Inc.
- All employees, volunteers, and visitors involved in working with horses are required to familiarise themselves with and comply with this policy.
- Training sessions and resources will be provided to support the understanding and implementation of safe practices outlined in this policy.

Approval: This Occupational Health and Safety Policy for Working with Horses has been approved and endorsed by Lucy Scarman on 4 June 2023.

Review: This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in maintaining a safe working environment for all individuals involved in handling horses within our organisation.

4/6/23

Lucy Scarman, President & Founder of The Kind Farm Inc.



Safety induction for working with horses

It is The Kind Farm Inc's policy that all guests, visitors, volunteers and contractors are given a safety induction before interacting with any horses and/or entering their field/stables.

The safety of visitors, volunteers, staff and horses are our top priority.

Before you begin working with horses, it is essential to familiarise yourself with the following safety guidelines and procedures to ensure a safe and productive environment for both you and the horses:

1. Introduction to Horses:

- Horses are large animals with unique behaviours and characteristics. Respect their space and understand that they can be unpredictable.
- Visitors and volunteers will be instructed into reading horse body language, safe and unsafe places to stand to avoid being kicked, bitten or trampled.
- Visitors and volunteers will be informed how horses react in a herd and under fear.
- Visitors and volunteers will undergo a safety induction before interacting with horses.
- At all times visitors are to be supervised closely.

2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- Wear appropriate PPE at all times, including:
 - Sturdy, closed-toe footwear
 - Gloves for handling equipment and grooming
 - Helmet when working around horses (especially when handling in enclosed spaces)
 - Helmets are not required when grooming one horse in the field, under supervision.

3. Horse Handling Basics:

- Approach horses calmly and confidently, avoiding sudden movements.
- Always approach from the side and make your presence known to avoid startling the horse.
- Avoid standing directly behind a horse, as they may kick.
- Observe body language of horses for early warning signs of a kick or bite - including pinning ears, turning rump towards you, lifting legs.
- Do not approach a horse that is eating from a feed tub or hay on the ground.

4. Safe Grooming Practices:

- Use correct grooming tools and techniques to avoid causing discomfort or injury to the horse.
- Be gentle and patient during grooming sessions.
- In our sessions groom only the shoulder area of the horse, neck and chin and face - avoid chest and further back from shoulders.
- Visitors and volunteers are instructed not to put your head above the horses head at any time - even if the horse lowers its head.

5. Feeding and Watering:

- Follow feeding schedules and guidelines provided by the supervisor.
- Ensure fresh water is always available for the horses.
- Do not feed horses anything, at anytime unless specifically requested to do so.
- Do not feed a horse in the yard or the paddock - always post the bucket through to the horse from the other side of the fence.

6. Stable and Facility Safety:

- Familiarise yourself with the layout of the stable and understand emergency exits and evacuation routes.
- Keep aisles and walkways clear of obstacles to prevent tripping hazards.
- Ensure electric fences are turned off when guests arrive and back on when guests leave.

7. Handling Equipment:

- Inspect tack and lead ropes (saddles, bridles, etc.) before use to ensure it is in good condition.
- Handle equipment carefully to avoid accidents.
- Wear gloves when leading unknown or unsettled horses.

8. Health and Hygiene:

- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling horses, as they can transmit diseases.
- If you have any health concerns or allergies related to horses, inform your supervisor immediately.
- Do not handle or approach a horse who is unwell - they will be tended to by health professionals.

9. Emergency Procedures:

- Know how to respond in case of emergencies such as a horse escaping, injury to yourself or others, or a fire.
- Locate and familiarise yourself with the nearest first aid kit and emergency contact numbers.
- First Aid Kit is in storage shipping container and emergency care in Australia is reached by dialling 000.

10. Reporting and Communication:

Policy to Report Incidents After Horse Sessions

1. Purpose:

- To promptly report and document any incidents or accidents occurring during or after horse riding sessions to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants.

2. Scope:

- Applies to all individuals involved in or witnessing horse riding sessions, including riders, instructors, staff, and volunteers.

3. Incident Reporting Procedure:

- Immediate Response:

- In case of an accident or incident, prioritise the safety and well-being of individuals involved.
- Administer first aid as necessary and seek medical attention if required.
- Secure the area to prevent further accidents.
- Reporting Process:
 - The incident must be reported to the designated supervisor or safety officer immediately.
 - Use the incident reporting form provided (see attached template).
- Documentation:
 - Complete all sections of the incident report form accurately and comprehensively.
 - Include details such as date, time, location, individuals involved, witnesses, nature of the incident, and any immediate actions taken.
 - Submit the completed form to the appropriate authority within 24 hours of the incident.
- Review and Follow-Up:
 - The incident report will be reviewed by management or safety personnel to determine necessary follow-up actions.
 - Implement corrective measures if required to prevent future incidents.
 - Maintain confidentiality and sensitivity in handling incident reports.
- Training and Awareness:
 - Conduct regular training sessions on incident reporting procedures for all staff and volunteers.
 - Ensure awareness of safety protocols and emergency procedures among participants.

4. Compliance:

- Non-compliance with incident reporting procedures may result in disciplinary action.

5. Review and Update:

- Periodically review and update the incident reporting policy to reflect changes in procedures or regulations.

Incident Report Form Template

Date: Time: Location:

Person Reporting Incident:

- Name:
- Position/Role:
- Contact Information:

Persons Involved:

- Names:
- Roles:

Witnesses:

- Names:
- Contact Information:

Description of Incident:

- Describe the incident in detail, including what happened, how it happened, and any contributing factors.

Injuries or Damage:

- Specify any injuries sustained or damage caused.

Immediate Actions Taken:

- Describe any first aid administered, medical assistance sought, or actions taken to secure the area.

Additional Comments:

- Include any other relevant information or observations.

Recommended Follow-Up Actions:

- Suggest any measures to prevent recurrence.

Submitted By:

- Name:

- Date:

Reviewed By:

- Name:
- Date:

Approved By:

- Name:
- Date:

Notes:

- Ensure all sections of the incident report form are filled out completely and accurately.
- Encourage prompt submission of incident reports to facilitate timely review and follow-up actions.
- Maintain confidentiality of incident reports and handle them with sensitivity.
- Provide training and guidance on using the incident report form and following reporting procedures.

By implementing this policy and using the incident report form effectively, you can ensure a systematic approach to managing incidents after horse riding sessions, prioritising safety and accountability.

Specific OH&S policies and procedures

Hazards

At all times, staff and volunteers are to be scanning for potential hazards and safeguarding themselves by moving out of paddocks (for example, horses running towards you). Communicate the hazard and always consider - what could happen and how could I stay safe?

Participant to supervisor ratios

Because The Kind Farm Inc. cater to participants of all experience levels, our groups are kept to a maximum of 5 participants per group (most sessions are 1 or 2 participants only) with an age limit of no children younger than 5 years. There is no horse riding or sitting on horses. All activities are from the ground and tailored to suit experience and each group. For example, all interactions with horses may be from behind a safety rail/fence/barrier.

Volunteer supervision

Volunteers are to be under close supervision until demonstrated that they have suitable horse experience and are familiar with individual horses and feeding routines to be safe to work unattended. Unattended activities include feeding and cleaning paddocks only. No volunteer or visitor may handle a horse without supervision.

Fire safety

Creating a fire management plan for a horse property in Australia is crucial due to the country's susceptibility to bushfires. The Kind Farm Inc. is fortunate to be located in an area that has never been affected by bushfire and that the main township is within 10 kms from town, with the Showgrounds as a safe evacuation point.

Property Assessment

Property safe space: Horses to be moved to large open (non-treed) paddocks near the road in event of fire or approaching fire.

Identify Fire Hazards: Remove potential sources of fire such as dry vegetation, stored hay, equipment, and electrical installations.

Vegetation Management

Clearing and Pruning: Regularly clear dry leaves, twigs, and flammable vegetation around buildings and fences. Prune overhanging branches near structures.

Fuel Reduction: Implement controlled burns or mechanical clearing to reduce fuel loads in strategic areas.

Infrastructure Preparedness

Water Supply: In fire risk times all tanks are kept full of water and access to the creek is available to pump water.

Access Roads: As per council requirements, access is open and available.

Emergency Equipment: Water pumps and hoses are on hand - stored near water access areas.

Evacuation Plan

Evacuation Routes: If sufficient warning and risk, evacuate all horses and humans to Show Grounds in closest town.

Evacuation Protocol: If possible, evacuate all horses, If only some can be evacuated, bring the less mobile horses. If staying, bring all horses into open paddocks, remove all synthetic rugs, halters, boots, lead ropes. Stay and defend. In event of catastrophic fire, evacuate humans and open gates leading away from fire.

Communication and Warning Systems

Alert Systems: Subscribe to fire alert services and install smoke alarms in buildings.

Communication Plan: Maintain a communication plan with neighbours, local authorities, and emergency services.

Community Engagement

Collaboration: Coordinate with neighbours and local community groups for mutual aid and support during emergencies.

Awareness Campaigns: Raise awareness among staff, visitors, and neighbors about fire risks and safety measures.

Seasonal Precautions

High-Risk Periods: Management is particularly vigilant during high-risk seasons (typically hot and dry windy periods).

Weather Monitoring: Monitor weather conditions closely and adjust fire management strategies accordingly.

10. Emergency Contacts

Emergency Numbers: 000 - ask for fire brigade.

SUN SAFETY

Sun Protection Measures:

- Encourage the use of broad-spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 30, and SPF 50+ for individuals with fair skin.
- Ensure employees and visitors wear sun-protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts, wide-brimmed hats, and sunglasses with UV protection.
- Promote the use of shade structures, umbrellas, and portable shade devices for outdoor work areas.

Training and Education:

- Provide training and information to employees on the risks associated with sun exposure and the importance of sun protection measures.
- Educate employees on how to recognize the early signs of skin damage and the importance of early detection.

Session and Work Scheduling:

- Schedule outdoor work activities to minimize sun exposure during peak UV radiation hours (typically between 10 AM and 4 PM).
- Where possible make visitor sessions in morning and late afternoon and/or where it is possible for humans and horses to be in shade.

First aid and making emergency calls

Designated First Aid Personnel:

- All instructors are to hold a current first aid certificate.
- Ensure they are familiar with first aid procedures specific to equine emergencies.
- Be within close proximity of a mobile phone at all times. Dial 000 for emergency assistance.

Handling horses

Only experienced staff are to handle horses. Volunteers and visitors are not to be handling, leading or catching horses. Initially, volunteers can do this only with supervision.

Cleaning shelters, stables and paddocks

Inexperienced volunteers can only clean open paddocks where there are no horses or less mobile horses. No shelters or stalls are to be cleaned with horses present.

Working alone

Visitors are always supervised. Volunteers are only to feed and clean alone after demonstration of horse safety

Hot and adverse weather

As per our sun protection guidelines - where possible all volunteers, staff and visitors are to wear protective clothing and/or sunscreen and avoid standing in the sun for longer than 20 minutes at a time.

Transporting horses

Transport of horses is carried out by staff and professionals only. Volunteers and guests are not involved in transporting horses.

Trimming and inspecting hooves

Trimming of horses hooves is carried out by staff and professionals only. Volunteers and guests are not involved in hoof trimming.

Children

Children under the age of 5 are not allowed to participate, even with a parent or guardian. Children participating are in small groups only and if they are unwilling or unable to follow instructions, the group will either stop and make arrangements to continue without that participant or interact with horses only over a safety rail.

Allergies

People with severe allergies to horses, hay or dust are not permitted to participate in horse connection sessions.

Chemicals

The use of substances to clean include ag lime and hydrogen peroxide. Volunteers and visitors are not asked to use these substances. Staff use masks and gloves to handle lime and advised not to use hydrogen peroxide if they have an allergy to this.

Horse safety - feeding, supplements

Feeding of horses is critical to their wellbeing and horses are to be fed only the diet as outlined on the whiteboard at any time. No treats or snacks are to be given to horses.

In particular, when feeding hay or opening a new bale - both baling twine strings must be removed, tied in a knot and disposed of. This is to avoid a swelling risk by horses.

All feed drums and storage are to be locked to avoid a horse accessing food supplies.

Participant Acknowledgement of Risk

All volunteers, visitors, staff and guests must sign a acknowledgement of risk form so they are aware of the risks of interacting with horses. This is available on our website www.thekindfarm.org