

DOUGLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S MOUNTED POSSE

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS GUIDELINES FOR HORSE OWNERS

As a horse owner you must be prepared for any type of disaster such as a flood, fire, earthquake, or man-made emergency such as a chemical spill or bio-terrorism. Now is the time to prepare for the safety and well being of your horses, well before such a disaster strikes where you live. Your preparation may mean the difference between life and death for your horses.

BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES

- Develop a written plan of action for each type of disaster that could occur in your area. This plan should periodically be reviewed and updated. Post this plan in a visible area near your horses. This plan should include emergency telephone numbers for people who can help you and who are familiar with your horses, such as names and numbers of neighbors who have trucks and trailers or other resources you may need. Insure that these people can respond in the event you are not at home.
- In case of a power loss, have available at least 3 days of feed and water for each horse.
- Determine the best confinement location for your horses for each type of disaster (Cleared area for fire, high ground for flood, etc.).
- Make plans ahead of time to stay with friends, relatives, or in a nearby hotel which would be located outside of an evacuation area.
- Photograph and inventory your horses in the event identification is necessary. Breed registration papers, brand inspections, tattoos, etched hooves and microchips are permanent means of identification. Livestock crayons or spray paint are temporary means of identification and will work in an emergency. Duct tape fixed to a halter bearing your name and phone number can also be used. **It is preferable that rope halters with cotton lead ropes be used as nylon will melt and halters with metal buckles could get very hot.**
- All horses should be wearing halters in the event they need to be evacuated **or** halters should be readily available near your horses.
- Include in your plan a list of special allergies or dietary requirements and the name of your veterinarian.
- Transportation vehicles such as trucks and trailers should be in usable condition. In the event of an evacuation, your horses must be trained to load in various types of trailer configurations without hesitation. **This may determine whether they stay or go.**
- Make arrangements for stabling options with friends or boarding stables in different directions in case evacuation is necessary.

DURING A DISASTER

Where will your horses go?

- The Douglas County Office of Emergency Management will designate horse evacuation sites. The Douglas County Fairgrounds on Pinenut Road will be the primary shelter unless it is located within the evacuation area. The Douglas County Sheriff's Mounted Posse (DCSMP) will coordinate the arrival and departure of the horses and can be contacted through the Douglas County Sheriff's Office.

How will your horse get there?

- Hopefully you have already arranged in your written disaster plan transportation for your horses in the event you are not available or do not have a truck or trailer.
- If you have your own transportation and no place to take your horses, bring them to the designated horse evacuation site **with halters and lead ropes affixed.**
- **If you need assistance in evacuating your horses due to road closures or other circumstances, contact the Douglas County Sheriff's Office and request assistance from the DCSMP. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE FOR THIS ASSISTANCE AS THE POSSE MAY ALREADY BE VERY BUSY AND UNABLE TO IMMEDIATELY ASSIST YOU.**

What should you bring with you to the evacuation site?

- Communication devices such as cell phones, CB's, and emergency phone lists. These devices will allow you to get updates on road closures and flood or fire paths.
- **Equine identification is critical.** This includes breed registration papers, brand inspections, vaccination records, medical records and photographs of your horses. **You will need these documents to prove ownership at the evacuation site.**
- Bring at least 3 days supply of feed, supplements, and medications for your horses, as well as water buckets, fly masks, and a first aid kit in the event of an injury during the evacuation.

Protocol at the evacuation site

- Inform the DCSMP volunteers of the following:
 1. Permanent and temporary contact information.
 2. Your veterinarian's name and phone number.
 3. Detailed description of your horse and its name.
 4. Specific feed/supplement instructions.
- Tag your horse's halter or create a neck band with your name and the horse's name using luggage tags or duct tape.
- **You will be responsible for the feeding and watering of your horses during the stay at the evacuation site unless other arrangements have been made.**
- Visit your horses frequently to provide comfort and reduce the stress of relocation. Look for signs of discomfort (colic).

BRINGING YOUR HORSE HOME

- Take your horses home as soon as the evacuation order is lifted.
- Inspect your property for safety hazards, burning embers and fire fighting equipment. Walk the fence line to insure it is not damaged.
- Insure feeders and water tanks are clear of fire debris and retardant.
- Make sure you have an ample amount of hay and feed.
- Closely observe your horses to insure they are comfortable in their new surroundings.
- Beware of local wild animals that may have entered your area as they could pose a threat to your horses.

IF YOU MUST LEAVE YOUR HORSES BEHIND

- Your horses are usually safest outside **if** you have wide open pastures free from fire hazards and obstructions such as fallen trees and power lines. **They need room to maneuver to avoid injury.**
- Put on the horse's "tagged" halters in the event they escape from their area and are later found. In an emergency, spray paint your name on the side of the horses.
- **Close all barn doors to prevent your horses from entering this potential firetrap.**
- You may opt to stable your horses in your barn **if** all hay is removed and it is built of fireproof material.
- Insure they have plenty of water.
- If possible, post signs at the property entrance to inform equine rescuers exactly where your horses are located. **Also, inform the DCSMP of the location of your horses in the event evacuation/rescue is necessary.**

THE LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH IN HORSES DURING A DISASTER ARE:

- 1. COLLAPSED BARN**
- 2. KIDNEY FAILURE DUE TO LACK OF WATER**
- 3. ELECTROCUTION FROM DOWNED POWER LINES**
- 4. FENCING FAILURES**

CONCLUSION

Be sure to stay up to date on the latest evacuations and road closures and leave **before** your area is on evacuation alert. If time allows, relocate your horses to a safe area well in advance of the disaster. It would be appreciated if you place your horses with friends to save room at the evacuation site for emergencies.

If you have lost a horse, immediately notify the Douglas County Sheriff's Office who will alert the DCSMP. Efforts will be initiated, if possible, to help locate your horse.

If your horse is burned, seek veterinary medical attention immediately. DO NOT TREAT THE HORSE WITH ANY PREPARATIONS WITHOUT VETERINARIAN ADVICE.

WILDFIRE-EVACUATION CHECKLIST

Laminate and post this checklist of tips for a safe, smooth evacuation.

- ❑ Confirm evacuation sites for your family and horses.**
- ❑ Confirm horse transportation.**
- ❑ Determine safest travel route.**
- ❑ Review evacuation plan with family and neighbors.**
- ❑ Get help from friends, neighbors or the Douglas County Sheriff's Mounted Posse if you need it.**
- ❑ Halter all horses, or keep attached halter and lead ropes hung on each horse's stall.**
- ❑ Tag all halters with your horse's name, your name and permanent and temporary numbers and your veterinarian's name.**
- ❑ Fuel vehicles; leave keys in the ignition so you don't lose them.**
- ❑ Hook trailer to tow vehicle, inspect for safety hazards.**
- ❑ Practice trailer loading.**
- ❑ Pack valid proof of ownership for each horse, first aid kit, 3-day supply of feed, supplements and medication, water, and stable equipment.**
- ❑ Put emergency phone list, cell phone, and CB in tow vehicle.**
- ❑ Close all windows and doors in barn and home, lock home doors.**
- ❑ Place basic firefighting equipment- such as hoses, fire extinguishers, ladders, shovels and rakes near your home and barn.**
- ❑ Stay calm and think!**