

SUPPORT  
for the  
THINKING  
RIDER

WINTER  
2016

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## Prescription for Equestrian Safety

The Equestrian Medical Safety Association (EMSA) is dedicated to the philosophy, principles and application of safety of people in equestrian activities. This purpose is achieved through education, research and resource.

### MISSION STATEMENT

EDUCATION of health care professionals, organization representatives and individuals, including an emphasis on public awareness;

RESEARCH to better define injury patterns and risks, efficacy of safety measures and equipment, and assistance in equipment design;

A RESOURCE of experience and expertise to be shared and utilized for the benefit of equestrian safety.

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## Winter Weather Plan Including Horses

Extreme cold is a relative term. It is defined very differently in Miami, FL, than in Fairbanks, AK. This Plan is designed to help you to stay safe in a winter storm or in abnormally cold weather for your area. If you know what to do before, during, and after a winter event, you can increase your chances of survival for you and your horse. There are few things more discussed among horse folks than the weather. The constant variability directly influences our daily routines. When weather turns extreme, we need to be prepared and take action.

See *weather.gov* for forecasts and preparation information. Equus Magazine has good preparation ideas at <http://equusmagazine.com/article/15-ways-prepare-extreme-weather-25419>

Rain, sleet, snow, ice, freezing temperatures—winter can be a real struggle for two- or four-legged animals. Those of us with two legs can generally put on a warmer coat or go inside to warm up with a cup of something hot, but it is harder for grazing animals.

### Winter Livestock Management

Dr. Susan Kerr's (WSU-Klickitat County Extension Director) Winter Livestock Management publication, <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/table1.jpg>, discusses water and energy requirements for livestock during storms.

### Water

Horses (requiring ~ 15 gallons of water a day) cannot meet water requirements by eating snow or licking ice. They would need to spend every waking hour eating snow to meet their requirements. Ice and snow consumption also lowers body temperature and increases maintenance energy needs, so it should be discouraged.

Horses drink more when water temperature is 37°F or above. Tank heaters may be required to ensure that water sources do not freeze. Be sure to follow manufacturers' recommendations to prevent fires and electric shocks. If heaters are not used, unfrozen water should be provided several times a day. Ensuring adequate

water intake will encourage optimal health and help prevent serious conditions such as colic and impaction.

### Energy

Assess your feed and hay stock. Heavy snows wreak havoc on transportation, and getting more feed to your farm may be difficult or impossible for weeks. Make sure you have enough feed to last for at least a week. If your hayloft isn't well stocked, start working the phones to see where you may be able to purchase a few bales. A horse that goes without any roughage has a higher risk of colic and other health problems. Horses require 16-30 lbs. of food a day with the majority from roughage.

Everyday nutritional requirements can increase significantly during cold weather. Requirements increase dramatically if animals become wet and/or there is appreciable wind. Lowest critical environmental temperatures (LCT) for livestock vary, but 20° or 32°F are often used as the lowest temperature dry livestock can

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# Letter from the President

Deborah F. Stanitski, M.D.  
EMSA President

January 14, 2016

Dear Fellow Equine Enthusiasts,

Depending on your location, winter may be a “down” time for showing. The weather, however, may be of great concern to those who own horses or plan on riding or travelling in winter conditions. This newsletter contains a plan outlining management issues in winter weather. Attention to these issues will enhance safety for you and your horse(s).

Additionally, this issue contains a management plan in case of a serious horse or rider accident at a competition. This plan includes the handling of the inevitable media frenzy resulting from one of these accidents.

The EMSA highlight at the USEA annual convention in December was Rusty Lowe's video on medical considerations at horse events at our open meeting. Due to a job requirement, Mr. Lowe (an EMT and safety

coordinator for many large events) could not be present. His excellent video presentation was assisted by Ms. Jeffray Ryding and Dr. Pat Maykuth who were present to address any concerns and to answer questions. This presentation was a “live” extension of the medical module presented in our last newsletter and now on the EMSA website (www.emsaonline.net).

Mr. Roy Burek (Charles Owen CEO and EMSA BOD non-voting member) gave a great talk on the ASTM change in the helmet standard. He was very clear on which helmet sizes are affected as well as the fact that current ASTM/SEI certified helmets are just fine and do not require owners to purchase a new helmet.

Charles Owen graciously allowed the EMSA part of their table for our display. This featured holiday card packs of five



SusanJStickle.com

cards each including a 2016 EMSA membership. The beautiful cards were designed by Ms. Laura Trask and the design will probably be used again.

The EMSA heartily welcomes its newest BOD member, Ms. Peggy Entrekin, whose brief bio is below. Her expertise and knowledge as former CEO of the USPC will be invaluable to the EMSA.

During the December EMSA BOD meeting it was decided that a concrete strategy was key to our future. A task force will address this issue of a strategy on calls in January, February and March of 2016. The EMSA will then have a firm plan for the near future.



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### Peggy M. Entrekin

Peggy lives near Lexington, Ky., and grew up eventing in Pony Club and foxhunting in upstate New York. She received her MS from the University of Arizona with a concentration in Kinesiology and Athletic Training, and has been a teacher and coach at the high school and college level. She recently retired after a second career in equine association non-profit management. Peggy enjoys foxhunting and supporting the many equine activities in her area.



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## Winter Weather Plan

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tolerate without additional energy demands to support normal body temperature. Energy requirements for an animal with a healthy and dry winter coat increase by one percent for every degree the wind chill temperature falls below the LCT. Energy requirements for an animal with a wet coat increase by two percent for every degree drop in the wind chill temperature.

Energy can be provided through grain or additional roughage (hay). Roughage is generally preferable due to its feeding safety, lower cost and greater heat released during digestion. However, grass roughage is in short supply in most areas this winter, so increased grain rations may be desirable. Remember horses are grazing animals so they require daily roughage to maintain their digestive system. Grains are high in sugars and starches, which when consumed in too high a quantity at once can cause colic or laminitis. Large, sudden and short-term increase in energy intake is not healthy for most animals. Although dietary energy increases are necessary during inclement weather, dietary changes, be they increases or decreases, should be made gradually. The best perpetration is routine maintenance of good body condition.

Don't overlook minerals in the winter. Keep trace mineralized salt available at all times and try to protect it from the elements. Horses do well with salt blocks.

Stock up on basic veterinary supplies. Including: bandages, topical antibiotics, ropes, and halters for restraining injured

animals. Keep a one-month supply on hand of medications and livestock supplements. Label them clearly with feeding instructions in case you cannot be there to administer.

### Exercise

Just because it is winter is no reason to overlook animals' need for exercise to promote muscular and skeletal health. The smooth muscle contractions of the gut are aided by movement and exercise. Healthy digestion in grazing animals requires exercise. Overall, the key to keeping a horse's digestive system functioning well is to mimic nature as closely as possible. Horses digestive systems were designed to spend as much as 18 hours a day grazing- with a near continuous supply of chewed grass. When inclement weather forces horses to be confined serious metabolic disruption can occur quickly. Being turned out to move for half an hour helps stimulate gut motility. If icy surfaces preclude turnout, hand walking for half an hour daily should be considered.

### Shelter

Blankets can be used daily or as needed to retain body heat for individual animals. Blankets have to be dry to retain heat. The portion of the blanket closest to the animal should not become wet.

Animals do not necessarily need or want to live in an enclosed barn every day in the winter and barns. Most will choose to spend a good amount of time outside in poor weather. Three-sided sheds, hills, thickets of trees and solid or semisolid fences can all serve as adequate breaks from the prevailing winds. There must be sufficient space for all ani-

mals to benefit or overcrowding can occur. If animals do not have enough space and variety of landscape to select a spot protected from the elements, a shelter should be provided.

If a structure is provided, be sure to keep the bedding dry and as clean as possible. Bedding helps insulate animals from the cold ground. However, in bedding soiled with animal wastes, ammonia fumes can build up quickly in the lower 18" where recumbent animals breathe; irritated respiratory lining is then very susceptible to bacteria and viruses. Provide good ventilation so the air seems fresh, but do not permit drafts in the structure.

Winter is the time for respiratory disease. Besides vaccinating, one of the best defenses against respiratory disease is good structure ventilation. A closed barn accumulates ammonia fumes and dust and provides a warm, moist environment ideal for mold and germ growth. Keep an outside door or window open near each stall.

### Mud Management

Where there are animals in the winter, there is mud. With good management and planning, the negative environmental and animal health impacts of mud can be minimized. Mud is most commonly found where animals are forced or choose to congregate. Mud makes foot and hoof diseases such as foot rot and thrush more likely. The moisture of mud can make parasite survival more likely as well.

Contact your local conservation district for recommendations on how you can prevent mud management problems in congested areas. Suggestions

may include the development of a sacrifice area and/or use of geotextiles, gravel, tile, gutters, sand or woodchips to manage wintertime water movement and minimize mud accumulation. It is far easier to do these tasks in the dry season when demand is less and delivery trucks can get close to the muddy areas.

Runoff from large, flat areas such as driveways, parking lots, or hillsides can significantly complicate mud and ice management in horse areas. Ditches, grassy swales, dry wells, water diversion bars, and culverts are useful means for diverting water away from confinement areas and barns.

## SNOW AND/OR ICE STORMS

### Preparing before

Heavy snow can immobilize a region and paralyze transportation stopping the flow of supplies, and disrupting emergency and medical services. The weight of snow can cause roofs to collapse and knock down trees and power lines. Homes and farms may be isolated for days and unprotected livestock may be lost. In the mountains, heavy snow can lead to avalanches. Your primary concerns at home or barn during a winter storm are loss of heat, power and telephone service and a shortage of supplies if storm conditions continue for more than a day. In either place, you should have available:

- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio and portable radio to receive emergency information
- Extra food and water such as dried fruit, nuts and granola bars, and other food requir-

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 4*



ing no cooking or refrigeration.

- Extra prescription medicine
- First-aid supplies
- Heating fuel: refuel before you are empty; fuel carriers may not reach you for days after a winter storm
- Emergency heat source: fireplace, wood stove or space heater, properly ventilated to prevent a fire
- Fire extinguisher, smoke alarm; test smoke alarms once a month to ensure they work properly
- Extra animal food and warm shelter
- Review generator safety. You should never run a generator in an enclosed space.
- Fires are common each winter when trying to stay warm and keep pipes from freezing.

and winterize your vehicle before the winter season begins. Carry a Winter Storm Survival Kit that includes the following:

- Mobile phone, charger, batteries
- Blankets/sleeping bags
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Knife
- High-calorie, non-perishable food
- Extra clothing to keep dry
- Large empty can to use as emergency toilet, tissues and paper towels for sanitary purposes
- Small can and waterproof matches to melt snow for drinking water
- Sack of sand or cat litter for

- Candle and matches to provide light and in an emergency, lifesaving heat.
- Compass and road maps, don't depend on mobile devices with limited battery life
- Keep your gas tank near full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines. Avoid traveling alone. Let someone know your timetable and primary and alternate routes.

### During the storm

Try to stay in shelter during the storm. Close off unneeded rooms to avoid wasting heat.

Stuff towels/rags or paper in cracks under doors. Close blinds or curtains to keep in some heat.

Eat and drink. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat. Drink lots of water and other non-caf-

overheating, perspiration and subsequent chill.

### If Your Heat Goes Out

Stay inside as much as possible.

When using heat from a fire place, wood stove, space heater, etc., use fire safeguards and properly ventilate.

- Carbon monoxide poisoning is one of the leading causes of death after storms when areas dealing with power outages.
- Never use a portable generator inside your home or garage. Review generator safety.
- Let your family and horse friends know that you're okay so they can help spread the word.

### If you must drive during a storm, take the following precautions:

- Slow down! Even if the roads just look wet they could still be slick.
- Make sure your vehicle is completely clear of ice or snow before starting the trip. Flying snow from cars causes accidents.
- Let someone know where you are going and what route you will take. If something happens, this person will know where to start a search.
- Don't leave the house without the following a fully charged mobile phone and car charger and emergency supplies.
- If you are driving and begin to skid, remain calm, ease your foot off the gas and turn your wheels in the direction you want the

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### Equip your car or towing vehicle

- If you are traveling during or through a winter storm, stock your vehicle.
- Plan your travel and check the latest weather reports to avoid the storm! Fully check

traction

- Shovel
- Windshield scraper and brush
- Tool kit
- Tow rope
- Battery booster cables
- Water container

feinated, non-alcoholic, drinks to prevent dehydration. Cold air is often dry.

Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Remove layers to avoid

front of the car to go. If you have an anti-lock braking system (ABS), apply steady pressure to the brake pedal.

- If you are having trouble seeing due to weather conditions, pull over to the side of the road and stop until visibility improves. Turn off your lights and use your parking break when stopped so that another car won't mistakenly follow your tail/brake lights and end up hitting you.

### **If your car gets stuck during a storm:**

Stay in the vehicle

- If you leave your vehicle, you will become disoriented quickly in wind-driven snow and cold.
- Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat.
- While running the motor, open the window a little for fresh air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Clear snow from the exhaust pipe to avoid gas poisoning.

Be visible to rescuers.

- Turn on the dome light at night when running the engine.
- Tie a bright colored cloth, preferably red, to your antenna or door.
- After snow stops falling, raise the hood to indicate you need help.

### **After the storm**

- Check stalls to make sure that they are clear of debris, water and wildlife before putting your horses back in them.
- Check your entire fence line for damage and either repair it or put up emergency orange plastic construction

fencing to keep your horses from getting onto roads or other potentially dangerous situations.

- Most animals are used to being outside in bad weather and will simply need clean feed, a dry place to stand, and water to help them recover from stress.
- Make sure they have plenty of water and food, which has not been contaminated by pollutants. In some cases, it is necessary to truck in water and food. Add a few drops of bleach to standing water to prevent disease.
- Most owners can deal with minor injuries such as cuts. If animals are more severely injured, call your veterinarian. Young animals are more susceptible to stress than older animals and may need more care.
- If you've lost an animal, contact veterinarians, humane societies, stables, surrounding farms, and other facilities. Listen to the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) for groups that may be accepting lost pets or livestock.
- If you find someone else's animal, isolate it from your animals until it is returned to its owner or examined by a veterinarian. Always use caution when approaching and handling strange or frightened horses.

These preparations can help carry you and your horses through the cold, dark, and wet months of winter. Preparing for a chore-efficient winter season reduces stress and effort during the storm. North American winters can be cold, wet, and windy. For much of the continent, you can add snowy and icy to that list. There always seem to be a few storms that bring horse care routines to a screeching halt for days on end, occasionally stretching into weeks for the unfortunate. But as with most things, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. As winter happens every year, preparation for it is a routine part of life with horses.

**To download a printable copy of this article, please go to:**

[http://emsaonline.net/wp-content/uploads/gravity\\_forms/1-5f7def01e62df8eee656c247c514b181/2016/01/Winter-Weather-Plan-Including-Horses.pdf](http://emsaonline.net/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/1-5f7def01e62df8eee656c247c514b181/2016/01/Winter-Weather-Plan-Including-Horses.pdf)

# Response Plan at a Horse Event for a Serious Accident

## Purpose

To establish as clear a factual picture of what happened, how systems worked and to follow up with the community around the injured horse or rider. Where necessary to help governing bodies have an accurate summary of what occurred and to provide competition with materials for media release.

- The facility should have a written emergency plan available.
- Designate a person who will lead any investigation of the emergency and will prepare required reports.
- If not already in place, the competition should appoint a committee to gather data and information from the incident. This should be made up of two or three insightful people not actively participating in the incident. They should understand that the findings are given only to the facility and their discussion of the incident will cease after the report. No information from this committee should be shared by any individual.
- This committee will make note of all actions taken by Show Management, officials, liaisons, designers, builders, veterinary, medical, volunteers, spectators, competitors, etc. to provide a full summary of all information and actions from the incident to closure. Witnesses of the incident should be interviewed broadly (meaning as many as possible) not just the chatty authoritative ones.

- It is important to recognize that the people who witnessed this saw a very traumatic event. They will each have their personal response to it.
- The official photographer and videographer need to be contacted if present. They are often of limited value but may be informative.
- The show should establish a Competitor Liaison.
  - This person will aid in keeping communications open between the Competitor, Show Organizers, Vets and Officials.
  - In case of a horse accident, they will aid the competitor in finding follow up information, i.e. status and location of horse. They may aid in obtaining any mementoes as requested by the rider and/or owner.
  - They will aid in finding answers to any questions the Competitor may have.
  - They will obtain information about ownership, insurance and permissions if horse involved.
  - In the case of a rider accident, they will aid in making arrangements to care for the horse.
    - o They will follow up with the groom or person taking charge of the horse to aid in any way needed.
    - o They will aid in keeping the involved parties up-to-date on developments.
      - This person should help with the notification of family and/or owner of the horse.
  - This person should arrange for reach out with follow up contact with the involved parties (rider/owner/family) in the next few days and to continue to offer support/sympathy, etc.
- The show should have complete directions and contact numbers for the hospital, veterinary hospital to be put in the hands of family and support people and to assist them in responding to the hospital.
- If requested by news media, names and other information should NOT be released.
- A general statement that an accident has occurred resulting in injury can be made. A statement that the accident is still under investigation would be appropriate.
- Remember the needs of the injured person and/or horse take precedence over the resumption of the event.

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