

Saddle Up SAFELY
RIDER SAFETY PROGRAM

Horseback Riding Safety



saddleupSAFELY.org





COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY



Jane Beshear

Dear Fellow Equine Enthusiasts,

As a lifelong horseperson and First Lady of the Commonwealth, I understand how important the horse is to Kentucky. We have long been known as the “Horse Capital of the World” and to ensure we retain this title, we must focus on the health and welfare of the horse and rider. This is why I am proud to support Saddle Up SAFELY, a rider safety awareness program sponsored by UK HealthCare.

All too often, riding injuries occur due to lack of education or understanding of equine behavior and proper riding practices. In fact, a current study shows that half of equine-related injury patients believed their injuries were preventable and due to rider error. Through Saddle Up SAFELY, UK HealthCare seeks to educate current and future riders about the hazards of riding and about simple steps that can be taken to prevent accidents.

Often, riding injuries are attributed to a lack of experience; however, these accidents are not just incurred by novice riders. People who have riding experience are just as susceptible to injuries. Generally speaking, most of these accidents occur because of overconfidence and a lack of awareness in the rider. By learning proper riding techniques and horsemanship and taking the time to practice the safety measures in this brochure, riders of all ages and levels can improve their ability while limiting dangerous situations.

Horseback riding is an extremely rewarding and thrilling sport, but it should be safe as well. Through Saddle Up SAFELY and UK HealthCare, by working together, we can make a great sport safer!

Sincerely,

Jane Beshear



John Long

Dear Fellow Equine Enthusiasts,

As chief executive officer of the United States Equestrian Federation and as chairman of the World Games 2010 Foundation, I know well the importance of the horse to the identity of Kentucky and support the Saddle Up SAFELY initiative sponsored by the University of Kentucky's medical arm, UK HealthCare, and the UK College of Agriculture.

A main part of the Federation's mission statement is to protect and support the welfare of the horse. This can be accomplished in part by teaching proper riding practices, wearing protective equipment, knowing your horse and its unique behavior, and learning the rules for safe riding.

In addition, after holding a Safety Summit last year, USEF teamed up with faculty and students of the UK Engineering Department to develop safer jumps, both for rider and horse. We are proud of our efforts but feel that more can be done to spread the word about safe riding practices.

As a horse owner and rider, I know well the feeling of being seated atop one of these tremendous animals and how easy it can be in the next minute to be unseated. My hope is that through the efforts of the Saddle Up SAFELY program and the University of Kentucky, all Kentucky riding enthusiasts can enjoy a safer and more rewarding experience on horseback.

Best regards,

John Long
Chief Executive Officer
United States Equestrian Federation



Millions of Americans ride horses each year and of those only a small percentage visit an emergency department.

However, if a horse-related injury is treated in an emergency room, approximately 13 percent of those patients will require an overnight hospital stay.

What can you do? First, if you are just learning to ride, take riding lessons from an experienced, certified instructor. Second, if you are an experienced rider, constantly refresh your knowledge of horseback riding and horse handling safety.

Horseback riding safety

Every year, millions of Americans participate in horseback riding activities. Riders are often six feet above the ground on horses weighing more than 1,000 pounds capable of 35 miles-per-hour speeds. So while horseback riding can be very enjoyable, there are inherent dangers in working with horses. In 2007, 78,000 people were seen in U.S. emergency rooms due to horse-related injuries; 9,600 of those were admitted to the hospital for further treatment.

Accidents and injuries do not discriminate. They can happen to experienced and inexperienced riders alike. Most injuries happen during recreational riding rather than in sporting events and may occur both while you are on horseback or while you are on the ground taking care of your horse.

The most common injuries in horseback riding are fractures, bruises and abrasions, sprains and strains, internal injuries, and concussions. Injuries are most often caused by falls, but people can be kicked, stepped on or fallen on by horses. While any horse can cause injury, calm older horses belong with novice riders and inexperienced or high-strung horses belong with experienced riders.



General safety tips

- Ensure that the skill of the rider is matched to the horse's temperament.
- Become familiar with horses and their behavior and safe horse-handling practices.
- Regularly inspect riding equipment and replace anything worn or damaged. Ensure the horse's tack fits well and is suited for the type of riding being done.
- Do not drink alcohol or use drugs while riding or working around horses.
- Avoid loose-fitting clothing that could get caught in riding equipment and cause dragging or trapped limbs.
- Ensure that horse trainers/instructors are trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and basic first aid.

Percent of emergency room visits requiring an overnight stay in a hospital

Cause of Injury	Seen in Emergency Room	Admitted to Hospital	Percent Admitted
Bicycling	515,871	29,143	6%
Football	455,193	8,061	2%
ATVs/Mopeds/Minibikes	278,671	32,532	11%
Baseball/Softball	277,702	4,413	2%
Swimming	155,322	6,094	4%
Horseback Riding	78,527	10,174	13%

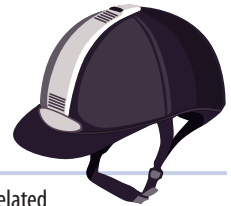
Head, neck and spine injuries

Head, neck and spine injuries are often the most severe horseback-riding related injuries, and head injuries are the most likely to result in death. The likelihood of death from a head injury is greatly increased if the rider is not wearing a helmet. In one study, riders not wearing a helmet were four times more likely to die when injured than those who wore helmets.

Helmets worn while riding and working around horses should be certified by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and the Safety Equipment Institute (SEI). The helmet should fit snugly on the head, with firmly secured but comfortable chin straps. Any helmet that has undergone an impact should be discarded and replaced. Many helmet manufacturers also recommend that helmets be replaced every three to five years due to wear and tear and possible compacting of cushioning materials.

International studies of equestrian-related injuries emphasize that the use of appropriate helmets significantly reduces the number and severity of head injuries.

Modern helmets are affordable and much more comfortable than older versions thanks to better ventilation, lightweight materials and their availability in multiple sizes. Helmets are even available with a Western hat style!



Protect Your Head One out of every nine horseback-related injuries seen in an emergency room is a head injury.

Cause of horse-related injuries of patients admitted to UK Chandler Hospital via emergency room 2006–08

Fell from horse	125	58%
Kicked by horse	40	19%
Horse fell on rider	28	13%
Stepped on	11	5%
Foot caught in stirrup/dragged	4	2%
Bitten by horse	1	1%
Other (hit by car, saddle broke, hit fence, rolled ankle dismounting)	4	2%
Total	213	100%

Source: UK Trauma Registry

Chest and abdominal injuries

Body protectors are available to reduce the risk of bruises, abrasions, and some rib and shoulder injuries. However, they are not capable of preventing serious spinal, chest and abdominal injuries that may be received from falls or kicks.

Body protectors are designed to cover either the chest or the chest and abdomen. Some include protection for the shoulders and collarbones.

Protectors can be worn over clothing or under a jacket. They should be fitted according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Age, storage and temperature ranges can affect the protective material and lessen its effectiveness.

Manufacturer's guidelines for cleaning, maintenance and replacement of all safety gear should be followed at all times.

Tetanus shot

Make sure you have had a tetanus shot within the past 10 years and always get a booster if you suffer an open-skin injury such as a wound or laceration.

Official medical provider for the Games

UK HealthCare is the official medical provider for the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games. UK physicians, nurses and other clinical staff will be on site to handle any emergency care needed and are available to take care of the general medical needs of the 800+ world-class athletes and hundreds of thousands of spectators.



Many rider injuries can be prevented or minimized by common sense activities and preparation

A 2007 *American Journal of Surgery* article showed:

- 27 percent of injuries to riders were due to demands the rider was placing on the horse – that is, asking the horse to perform a maneuver outside of its skill set.
- Half of the patients in the study believed the injuries were preventable and were the fault of the rider.

Chad G. Ball, Jill E. Ball, et al.
"Equestrian injuries: incidence, injury patterns, and risk factors for 10 years of major traumatic injuries,"
The American Journal of Surgery
193:636-640, 2007.

Arm and leg injuries

Nearly half of all horse-related injuries occur in the arms, fingers and legs. The following precautions can help with safety:

- **Wear proper footwear.** Wearing proper riding boots and shoes can help prevent many horse-related injuries. Shoes or boots should have a 1-inch heel that prevents the foot from slipping through the stirrup. They should cover the ankle. Steel-toed boots are not recommended. Boot soles should have smooth treads.
- **Use safety stirrups.** In the event of a fall, safety stirrups break away or unleash the foot and prevent the rider from being dragged.
- **Use toe stoppers.** Toe stoppers are attached to the stirrups and help riders maintain balance and prevent the foot from slipping through the stirrup.
- **Wear gloves.** Gloves may help prevent the reins from slipping out of your hands and provide some hand protection. Gloves also provide a sturdier grip, particularly in wet weather.
- **Learn emergency dismounts.** Have an experienced instructor show you how to quickly dismount from a horse, which may be necessary on a runaway horse or in other situations.
- **Always approach the horse with caution.** Learn how to read a horse's behavior in order to anticipate sudden movements. Do not approach directly in front or behind a horse. For less experienced riders, grooming and feeding should be done under experienced supervision. Learn how to safely lead a horse.



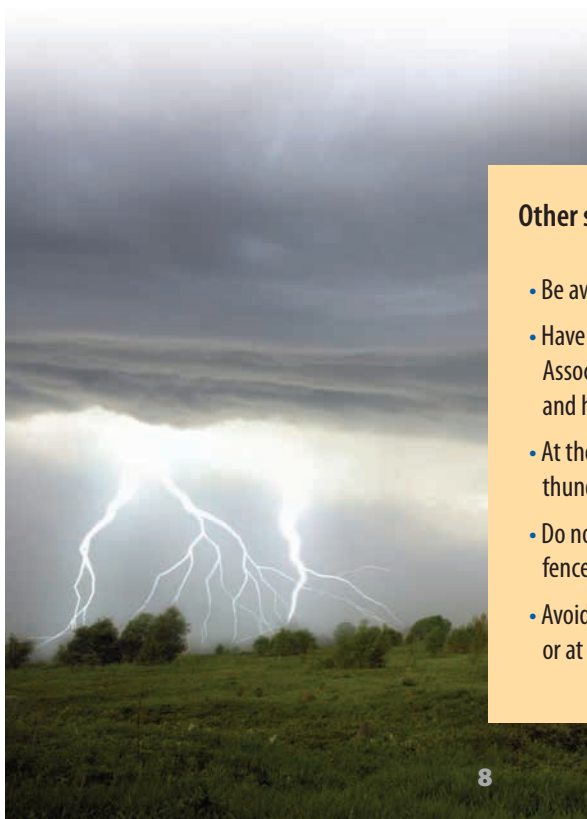
Things that can spook a horse

- Sudden noises such as alarms, screams, approaching vehicles
- Sudden or unexpected movements (by people or animals)
- Crowds of people
- Wasps and other insects
- Dogs that are not confined or on a leash
- Umbrellas opening, camera flashes



Other safety tips

- Be aware of the weather forecast before riding.
- Have a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) weather radio in the barn and heed weather warnings.
- At the first sight of lightning or rumble of thunder, get off the horse and head for a barn.
- Do not stand under trees or by metal gates or fences when it is storming.
- Avoid riding in the woods during hunting season or at least wear bright orange at those times.



Injuries in children

Nearly one in five emergency department visits for horse-related injuries involves a child under age 15.

Special precautions should be taken when children are riding.

Children should:

- Possess the balance and coordination to stand, sit and walk independently. They must be able to interact with the horses and other riders in a safe and efficient manner. They should possess the social skills and maturity that are age appropriate for the lesson, which will allow them to interact properly with the instructors and other students.
- Receive lessons from an experienced, qualified instructor who has a history of safely teaching children. The American Riding Instructors Association and the Certified Horsemanship Association offer a list of certified instructors. See the Resources section of this booklet.
- Take lessons in riding and handling horses. Lessons should take place in a safe, flat, uncluttered, fenced location away from traffic or external noises.
- Ride with supervision and only on horses properly trained for beginner and novice riders.

The North American Riding for the Handicapped Association can direct you to accredited therapeutic equine programs at www.narha.org.



HORSE RIDER SAFETY CAMPAIGN

Together, through increased awareness and education,

PARTNERS



Alltech

Alltech, a leading global animal health and nutrition company based in Kentucky, is the first-ever title sponsor of the FEI World Equestrian Games.



Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games

The world championships of eight equestrian disciplines held every four years.



Buffalo Trace Mounted Patrol

Volunteer Patrol members have provided equine education and assistance to the local community, emergency management personnel and government agencies since 2008.



Certified Horsemanship Association

CHA certifies instructors and trail guides, accredits equestrian facilities, publishes educational manuals, and hosts regional and international conferences.



Jockeys' Guild

The Jockeys' Guild protects the welfare of all riders across the United States.



Keeneland

Keeneland has been investing in the future of the Thoroughbred industry since 1936.



Kentucky Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Kentucky Department for Public Health

Helping people be well through prevention, promotion and preparation.



Kentucky Horse Council

The Kentucky Horse Council is a nonprofit organization dedicated, through education, to the protection, growth and development of the equine industry in Kentucky.



Kentucky Horse Park

An educational theme park dedicated to the horse. Home to the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games.



Lexington Herald-Leader

The Herald-Leader and Kentucky.com are the No. 1 source for news, sports, advertising, and entertainment information in Central and Eastern Kentucky.

SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

we can make a great sport safer and more enjoyable.



TheHorse.com

TheHorse.com is a multimedia education provider to hands-on participants in the equine industry.



Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center

KIPRC works to reduce injury through education, policy initiatives, public health programming, surveillance, risk factor analysis, direct interventions and evaluation.



The Lane Report

For 25 years, The Lane Report has compiled valuable business news, economic data, and opinion for use by Kentucky's business, professional and political leaders.



UK College of Agriculture Equine Initiative

The equine initiative's mission is to discover, share and apply new knowledge that will enhance the health, performance and management of horses commensurate with the signature status of Kentucky's equine industry.



UK College of Public Health

Providing comprehensive public health approaches to better understand and to help reduce the burdens of public health problems on individuals, families and communities.



UK HealthCare

Providing the most advanced medical care to the people of Kentucky and the Midwest. UK HealthCare is the official medical provider for the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games.



UK Spinal Cord and Brain Injury Research Center (SCoBIRC)

Discovering pharmacological, gene or cellular therapies to minimize damage and promote repair mechanisms in the nervous system following spinal cord or brain injury.



S U P P O R T E R S

Special thanks to Ariat, Brain Injury Alliance of Kentucky, Kentucky Horseshoeing School, Northern Kentucky Horse Network, North American Racing Academy, Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital, PHI, United States Dressage Federation, and Welch Printing Company.

Resources

Equestrian Medical Safety Association

This association provides education, research and resources to protect riders and improve safety within equestrian sports.

369 Montezuma Avenue, No. 342
Santa Fe NM 87501

1-866-441-2632 (toll-free)
www.emsaonline.net

American Riding Instructors Association

The American Riding Instructors Association promotes safe, knowledgeable riding instruction and certifies trainers for teaching.

28801 Trenton Court
Bonita Springs FL 34134-3337

239-948-3232
www.riding-instructor.com

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Offers fact sheets, videos and podcasts on adult and child safety for horse riding and handling.

1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta GA 30333

1-800-232-4636 (toll-free)
1-888-232-6348 (toll-free)
www.cdc.gov

Certified Horsemanship Association

www.cha-ahse.org

Footnotes

1. www.emsaonline.us/emsafaq.html
2. www.facs.org/trauma/ntdb/fantus/1106.pdf



For more tips, information,
and donor opportunities,
visit our Web site at
saddleupSAFELY.org.

**Official equine
higher education program
for the 2010 Alltech FEI World
Equestrian Games**

More than 50 faculty and staff
across nine College of Agriculture
departments currently conduct
equine work at UK.



Ways to get more involved with Saddle Up SAFELY

The Saddle Up SAFELY program can arrange for speakers to address your organization about horseback riding safety issues. Call **859-323-5508** to schedule one of our speakers for your event.

Read Dr. Fernanda C. Camargo's horseback riding safety blog by following the link at **saddleupSAFELY.org**.



Suggestions or comments may be directed to **859-323-5508**.

To make a donation to the Saddle Up SAFELY program, please call **859-323-8587** or write to:

Saddle Up SAFELY
UK HealthCare
2347 Sterlington Road, Suite 110
Lexington, KY 40517

To share advice on horse riding and handling safety, go to **saddleupSAFELY.org**.

Those who provide advice that is used will be eligible to win four tickets to the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games, one of a number of gifts including \$150 gift certificates for Ariat merchandise, four reserved seats to a Keeneland race, tickets to the Kentucky Horse Park and more gifts.



Request our booklet *Horse Transmitted Diseases* by phone or through our Web site.

Information in this booklet developed by

University of Kentucky

UK HealthCare

UK College of Agriculture
Equine Initiative

UK College of Public Health



saddleupSAFELY.org