Horse Riding Center

Risk Assessment

CONTACT DETAILS

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL:

Lead:	**Primary Contact:**
Participants:	

SERVICE/ACTIVITY DETAILS

Purpose:	**Date:**

Benefit: Develops physical coordination, balance, and core strength through riding. | Encourages discipline, patience, and responsibility in caring for horses. | Offers opportunities for outdoor exercise and connection with nature. | Provides therapeutic benefits for individuals with physical or emotional challenges. | Supports mental well-being by reducing stress and building confidence. | Teaches essential equestrian skills and promotes teamwork in group lessons.

HAZARDS

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Behavioral issues in horses	Aggressive behavior, biting, kicking incidents	Allowing horses with behavioral quirks to be rehabilitated provides them with a purpose and prevents unnecessary rehoming or euthanasia.	Regularly assess horse temperament and provide appropriate training, enrichment, and exercise. Ensure horses are paired with suitable riders based on experience and skill levels. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Chemical exposure	Poisoning, skin burns, respiratory distress	Safe use of necessary chemicals maintains facility hygiene and pest control, essential for operational standards.	Store all chemicals, including cleaning agents and pesticides, in clearly labeled, secure areas inaccessible to unauthorized personnel. Provide training on proper handling and emergency procedures. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors, horses	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Disease transmission	Zoonotic diseases, infections, parasites	A healthy herd reduces veterinary costs and enhances the center's reputation for animal welfare.	Implement strict biosecurity protocols, including quarantine procedures for new or returning horses. Maintain up-to-date vaccination and deworming schedules for all animals. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors, horses	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Electrical hazards	Electrocution, fire risks, power outages	Using electricity in barns improves efficiency, allowing for proper lighting, ventilation, and power tools to maintain horse care standards.	Regularly inspect wiring, outlets, and equipment in barns and arenas. Keep electrical cords out of reach of horses and install circuit breakers to prevent fires or shocks. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors, horses	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Equipment malfunction	Failure of reins or saddles leading to loss of control, falls, injuries	Utilizing specialized equipment enables a variety of riding disciplines, attracting a broader clientele and enhancing the center's reputation.	Conduct regular inspections and maintenance of all tack and riding equipment. Replace worn or damaged items promptly to ensure safety during use. **(ALL)**	Riders, staff	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Fire hazards	Smoke inhalation, burns, destruction of facilities	Proper storage and safety measures protect valuable assets and ensure the continuity of operations.	Store hay, bedding, and flammable materials in separate, well-ventilated buildings away from stables. Install fire detection systems and ensure accessible firefighting equipment is available throughout the facility. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors, horses	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Handling unfamiliar horses	Injury from sudden horse movement, horse stepping on foot, being knocked over	Introducing new horses enhances the center's offerings, attracting a diverse clientele and providing varied experiences for riders.	Provide comprehensive training for staff on horse behavior and safe handling techniques. Implement a buddy system for initial interactions with unfamiliar horses to ensure support and safety. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Heat-related illnesses	Heatstroke, dehydration, exhaustion	Promotes the well-being of horses and riders, allowing for sustained participation in programs.	Schedule strenuous activities during cooler parts of the day and provide ample shade and hydration for both horses and humans. Monitor for signs of heat stress and adjust activities accordingly. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors, horses	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Horse bites	Bite injuries to hands or arms, bruising, skin lacerations	Allowing close interactions fosters a unique bond between humans and horses, enriching the visitor experience and promoting empathy towards animals.	Educate staff and visitors on equine body language to recognize signs of agitation. Establish clear guidelines prohibiting unsupervised feeding or petting of horses. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Horseback riding falls	Head injuries, broken bones, sprains	Offering riding opportunities promotes physical activity and mental health benefits, making the center a hub for wellness and recreation.	Ensure all riders wear appropriate protective gear, including helmets and boots. Match horses to riders based on experience levels and provide thorough riding instruction before sessions. **(ALL)**	Riders	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Inadequate fencing	Horses escaping, injuries from broken fences, potential road accidents	Secure enclosures provide horses with safe outdoor access, essential for their physical health and natural behaviors.	Regularly inspect all fencing for signs of damage or wear. Ensure fences are of appropriate height and strength for containing horses and are free from sharp edges. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors, horses	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Injury during turnout	Tripping, aggressive behavior, entanglement in fencing	Turnout provides horses with essential movement, reducing stiffness and promoting joint health, which is vital for long-term soundness.	Regularly inspect paddocks for hazards such as holes, uneven terrain, or loose fencing. Introduce new horses gradually to avoid aggressive confrontations. Ensure turnout groups are compatible. **(ALL)**	Horses	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Kicking incidents	Severe bruising, bone fractures, internal injuries	Permitting natural socialization among horses supports their mental well-being and stable herd dynamics, contributing to a harmonious environment.	Instruct individuals to approach horses from the side, avoiding blind spots. Maintain safe distances between horses, especially in confined areas, to prevent crowding and agitation. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Loose horses	Trampling injuries, road accidents, property damage	Allows horses regular turnout, essential for their physical and mental health.	Establish protocols for securely fastening gates and stall doors. Train staff on procedures for safely recapturing escaped horses to prevent injury. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors, horses	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Overcrowding in stables	Increased aggression among horses, stress, injuries	Housing more horses enables greater participation in lessons and events, increasing the center’s accessibility and financial sustainability.	Establish clear capacity limits for stables and turnout areas. Rotate horses regularly to ensure they have enough space and time outdoors. Monitor behavior to prevent stress-related conflicts. **(ALL)**	Horses, staff	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Rider inexperience	Falls, loss of control, injuries due to poor handling	Encouraging beginner riders helps expand equestrian participation, ensuring the long-term growth and accessibility of the sport.	Provide structured training programs for beginners, including groundwork lessons before riding. Assign experienced staff to supervise new riders and gradually introduce them to different horses and riding styles. **(ALL)**	Riders	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Stallion aggression	Injuries to handlers, aggression towards other horses, property damage	Keeping stallions allows for selective breeding programs that improve horse genetics and preserve valuable bloodlines.	Keep stallions in separate, secure enclosures away from mares and other horses unless supervised. Assign experienced handlers for stallion management and provide ample exercise to reduce frustration. **(ALL)**	Staff, horses	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Transporting horses	Injuries during transit, loading issues, trailer accidents	Transporting horses enables participation in competitions, clinics, and new training opportunities that enhance their skills and social exposure.	Ensure trailers are well-maintained, properly ventilated, and equipped with secure partitions. Train horses to load calmly, and only experienced handlers should oversee transportation. **(ALL)**	Staff, horses	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Unsupervised visitors	Accidental injuries, unsafe interactions with animals, rule violations	Allowing visitor interaction fosters community engagement and education, encouraging public appreciation for equestrian activities and responsible horse care.	Establish designated visitor areas and implement a check-in system to track entry. Use signage to inform guests of safety rules and require guided tours for first-time visitors. **(ALL)**	Visitors, staff	Before Measure: **High** After Measure: **Med**
Allergic reactions	Respiratory distress, skin rashes, anaphylaxis	Inclusive practices allow a wider audience to engage with equestrian activities, fostering community involvement.	Inform visitors and staff about potential allergens present, such as hay, dust, and animal dander. Provide designated areas for those with sensitivities and ensure easy access to medical assistance if needed. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Cold-related illnesses	Hypothermia, frostbite, weakened immune response	Maintaining health during colder months ensures year-round operation and care.	Ensure horses have appropriate shelter and are provided with blankets in cold weather. Educate staff on recognizing signs of hypothermia in both animals and humans. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors, horses	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Dust and airborne particles	Respiratory distress, eye irritation, allergic reactions	Allowing horses to live in natural, open spaces with some dust exposure supports respiratory adaptation and overall immune system development.	Implement daily stable cleaning routines and use dust-free bedding to minimize airborne particles. Ensure arenas are regularly watered to reduce dust during riding activities. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors, horses	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Feeding disputes	Fighting between horses, injuries from kicking or biting	Allowing natural feeding behaviors, such as hierarchy-based interactions, supports herd dynamics and encourages natural socialization.	Feed horses in individual stalls or use feeding stations to prevent competition. Monitor horses for aggressive behavior and adjust feeding strategies accordingly. **(ALL)**	Horses	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Inadequate lighting	Trip hazards, reduced visibility leading to accidents	Adequate lighting extends operational hours and enhances safety during early morning or evening activities.	Install sufficient lighting in all areas, including arenas, stables, and walkways. Regularly inspect and maintain lighting fixtures to ensure proper illumination. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Insect bites and stings	Allergic reactions, skin irritation, vector-borne diseases	Enhances comfort and safety, ensuring enjoyable experiences for all participants.	Regularly apply safe insect repellents to horses and maintain clean facilities to deter pests. Educate staff and visitors on recognizing and responding to insect-related allergic reactions. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors, horses	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Noise disturbances	Startled horses, increased stress, potential accidents	Exposure to various sounds prepares horses for real-world environments, improving their adaptability and reducing spookiness.	Minimize loud noises around stables and riding areas. Use signage to inform visitors and staff of noise-sensitive zones and establish quiet hours to reduce stress on horses. **(ALL)**	Horses, staff, visitors	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**

HAZARD	RISK	RISK BENEFIT	MEASURE	RISK TO	RISK LEVEL
Poor manure management	Insect infestations, odor issues, increased disease risk	Managing manure properly supports environmentally friendly waste disposal while maintaining pasture health for grazing horses.	Develop a strict waste disposal schedule, ensuring manure is regularly removed from stables and paddocks. Consider composting or repurposing manure as fertilizer for sustainable management. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors, horses	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Poor ventilation	Respiratory issues, buildup of ammonia, discomfort for staff and animals	Good air quality reduces respiratory issues, promoting the health of horses and staff.	Design stables with proper airflow to prevent the buildup of dust and ammonia. Use fans or ventilation systems to maintain air quality, especially in enclosed areas. **(ALL)**	Staff, horses	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Slippery surfaces	Slips, trips, falls leading to fractures or sprains	Maintaining clean facilities ensures a hygienic environment, promoting the health of both horses and humans.	Implement a routine schedule for cleaning and drying barn aisles, walkways, and arenas. Use non-slip flooring materials in high-traffic areas to reduce the risk of slips and falls. **(ALL)**	Staff, visitors	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Water trough contamination	Bacterial infections, dehydration, algae buildup	Providing natural water access enhances horses' hydration and overall well-being, simulating their instinctual drinking behavior.	Clean and refill water troughs regularly to prevent bacteria and algae buildup. Position troughs in shaded areas and use automatic refill systems to ensure a continuous supply of fresh water. **(ALL)**	Horses	Before Measure: **Med** After Measure: **Low**
Unpredicted risks	Illness, injury, death		Continuous risk monitoring conducted by all staff. Any unforeseen hazards must be reported promptly to supervisors or management, with immediate corrective action taken as necessary. **(ALL)**	All	**N/A**

NOTES

Extra notes & activity evaluation:

Completed by	Reviewed/Approved by	Risk Assessment Date	Review Required Date