

Recommendations from the Tuesday Talk on “Emergency Preparedness and Management”

February 16, 2016 at the Marion DuPont Scott Equine Medical Center

Co-sponsored by the Equine Medical Center and the Loudoun County Equine Alliance.

Moderator:

Dr. Michael Erskine, Director & Clinical Associate Professor, Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center

Panelists:

Lt. Nicole Artisst, Loudoun County Dept. of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Management
John Dashiell, Equine Ambulance Supervisor, Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center
Nicole Ehrentraut, Team Leader/President, Da Vinci Equine Emergency Transport, LLC
Virginia Newsome, Animal Control Officer, Loudoun County Animal Services

General Introductory Comments:

Every county should have Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue (TLAER) training or a County Animal Rescue Teams (CART).

Firefighters (first responders) get the horses out and vets treat their injuries. Don't expect your vet to rescue your horse. We have to keep our vets safe so they can treat our horses after they've been rescued.

Property Safety Recommendations:

- Causes of fires:
 - Piles of chemically soaked rags spontaneously combust.
 - Lack of conduits around wiring,
 - malfunctioning appliances,
 - barn electrical sockets without covers,
 - overuse of extension cords, especially using indoor cords ,
 - cigarettes.
- Request your local Fire Station to conduct a safety inspection of house, barn and property.
 - They'll check safety of the barn,
 - whether a fire truck can get up the driveway,
 - length of driveway to determine how much hose would be needed,
 - access to water source.
 - They'll develop a plan to get to an emergency at your property for faster response.
 - They will advise on all safety aspects of barn construction.
- Fencing around barn can limit access.
- A dry hydrant nearby or at your pond will reduce your insurance premium. The County has a funding program for dry hydrants.
- Don't park anything in stable that can block ingress and egress.

- Hang halters with leads attached next to each horse's stall. One lead line for all horses and having to look for halters will not get them all out in time.
- Learn your way around stable in the dark in case power is out and you need to get horses out. Close your eyes and practice.

Fire-Rescue response time: a 911 call takes 1-2 minutes to process and this is after you have discovered the emergency situation. It takes a truck 3 minutes to leave the station. Some destinations take 15 minutes for the first truck to reach.

If you call 911 from land line your address will come right up, show cross streets, etc. Smart phones can ping your location but it might be in a radius of a couple of miles. That can depend on the phone.

Some newer barns have installed sprinkler systems but they're costly and require a water source.

You can install a KNOX BOX with key to home that only Fire Rescue and/or Emergency Services can access so they won't have to break in if there is an emergency in house.

Emergency Safety Recommendations

- In emergency situations like a trailer accident, barn collapse or fire, it's important to **secure the area** so horses won't be running loose and add to the problem. Close the barn doors so they can't run back in.
- **The primary responsibility of first responders is your safety and their safety.** If they see something that's an immediate life threat they will stop owners from going into an unsafe barn or trailer to help their horses. If people become part of the problem they complicate the rescue process. They have the tools to get the horses out of trailers and barns. When owners try to rescue horses the results can be fatal to either or both.

Horse Safety and Rescue Recommendations:

- **Put an emergency preparedness packet in barn and trailer** where first responders can easily find it. Forms for providing information are available on the DaVinci Equine Emergency Transport website. If owners sign up, their data will be accessible by Animal Control, Fire-Rescue Services, and Sheriff's Office. If horse is branded, put a photo of the brand in the packet. Electronic Coggins report shows everything they need to know.
- **Don't rely on your cellphone to store the information,** it can get lost or damaged.
- Tell your neighbor where the information is in your barn or trailer.
- **Prepare in advance.**

- If a horse falls and can't get up when on the trail, the first thing to do is protect its head. Call 911, tell location and condition of trail and what kind of vehicle can get there, then call the vet to get ready. The horse will flail its head and legs so stay out of its way.
- To protect the head, do so from behind the ears, not the nose. Sit on the head and kneel behind the ears with all your weight but if you don't know what you're doing, don't try this. The horse will try to toss you off, and can toss you into its legs.
- If you're not sure you can do it, don't try. Call 911 and keep bystanders away.
- If you have to do something, like get a fallen horse off a rider, get a rope around a lower leg and flip the horse over. This is the same procedure as uncasting a horse in a stall. Stay at the horse's back and anticipate where the horse's legs will be when he comes over, so you can get out of the way.
- You can learn how to uncast a horse from Google, or Nicole Ehrentraut will come out and teach you.
- Avoid trailering problems by having the proper size truck to trailer. Check condition of the floorboards. Read the books on safe trailering.
- Check with your vet to see if a horse in distress can be safely trailered. There are methods for transporting horses that are down or can't walk.
- The Equine Medical Center ambulance service isn't available 24/7 but will respond when possible.
- DaVinci Equine Emergency Transport in Frederick County MD will respond to emergencies.
- Loudoun County Animal Services has a large livestock trailer and temporary fencing to contain horses, they will bring a vet and Fire-Rescue personnel to make sure it's safe to remove a horse from a trailer accident. They are available 24/7 with no fee.
- Most equine emergencies are for colic and time is crucial so it's better to have a trailer available.
- Loudoun County Animal Services has a list of haulers and will send it on request.
- The Jockey Club will require chipping in 2017. Animal Control will have a chip reader. Animal Control recommends that everyone chip their horses or at least chip the saddle because most lost horses are still wearing their saddles.
- The Loudoun County Operation Livestock Registry enables police to locate the owners of loose livestock.
- Netposse.com can help find a lost horse.