

Horse Care Level 1 117 Principles of leading and controlling a horse for inspection under direction

1.1 State when it is necessary to control horses and describe the potential dangers involved Vet, farrier, routine inspections

When carrying out any task with a horse it is important that health and safety is adhered to at all times. Long hair should be tied back, jewellery should not be worn and personal protective equipment (PPE) should be utilised. PPE should include a skull cap, gloves and suitable clothing, e.g. a long-sleeved top, trousers, overalls and suitable footwear. In order to carry out any clinical examination or clinical procedure in the safest possible way, there is a range of recommended handling techniques that should be used.

The vet may need to administer medication, vaccinations or rasp the horses teeth. These are routine things that must be done and the horse could become spooked by this, feel fearful and kick out, bite or try to break away.

The farrier must trim the horses hooves back every 8-12 weeks and if a horse has shoes on they will need to be replaced every 6-8 weeks. For this to be done the horse will need to stand still and allow the farrier near them. Once again the horse could kick, bite or attempt to pull away so it is very important that the horse is tied up securely and a responsible person is there in the event of something going wrong.

The horse should have daily routine inspections for any lumps, bumps, injuries etc and to do this you should always wear the correct PPE and clothing.

<https://veteriankey.com/basic-clinical-procedures-in-the-horse/>

1.2 State the reasons for safety procedures and identify protective clothing

Safety requires both common sense and an understanding of horses. Horse riding is a high-risk activity, but handling horses from the ground can be just as dangerous for the unwary. Whether a beginner or an experienced horse keeper, safety awareness is vital both on the ground and in the saddle. A horse's behaviour should never be taken for granted – even the oldest and quietest can behave unpredictably at times. A horse's natural instinct dictates either "fight or flight" as a defence reaction if feeling threatened. All horses should be taught to understand basic commands and to respond accordingly. They should be taught to stand still and walk clear of the handler when being led from either side.

Sensible clothes should always be worn when dealing with horses. A protective riding hat is essential when riding, and a body protector is highly advisable. These should also be worn when in any risk situation, such as when loading a horse, schooling from the ground or handling an excitable animal. Sturdy boots and gloves should be worn when handling horses and when turning out or bringing in from the pasture. Protective clothing should be fitted correctly and purchased new from a reputable retailer which has up to date product knowledge and fitting skills. When working around horses, the wearing of jewellery should be avoided. Earrings, other piercings and finger rings are easily caught and can either break or cause injury.

<https://www.bluecross.org.uk/advice/horse/safety-around-horses?amp>

1.3 Identify precautions to be taken when controlling horses

Positioning of handler, environment and weather conditions

Assess the horse's behaviour as you approach. This will enable you to gauge whether the horse appears relaxed or distressed and enables you to adopt an appropriate level of caution.

Approach from the horse's left side and towards the shoulder. Horses are generally taught to be handled from the left side, so they are more familiar and therefore more comfortable with being approached from this side. Do not approach from directly in front of the horse.

The eyes of a horse are located on either side of the head and they have inhibited vision directly in front of the head and behind the body. Providing the horse with the greatest opportunity to see you is safest practice.

Use verbal communication. This allows the horse to hear you approaching, particularly if it has not already seen you and it is therefore less likely to be surprised by your presence.

Horses can become very anxious in the wind. This is typically because their environment becomes louder, which affects their ability to hear for potential predators approaching, and obviously things flap and move around a lot more in blustery conditions, which may trigger their

natural flight response. Although we may think of shying as senseless and silly, it is the horse's basic and natural instinct to remove himself swiftly from potential danger. In the wild a horse's life would depend on shying and running away from danger. In a horse's natural environment a rustling in the bushes could be a predator lying in wait. A sudden movement could mean an attack.

1.4 Describe methods for controlling the horse

Bridles head collars, holding up a foot, twitch

A horse bridle is an important piece of equipment since the rider uses it to communicate with their horse while riding. Just like with most other horse-riding tack, there are many options to choose from depending on the type of riding you are doing and if you are competing with your horse.

The bit, headpiece, and reins all work together to form a means of communicating with the horse. Bits work by applying pressure inside the horse's mouth. Depending on the bit used, it may apply pressure on the horse's tongue, the roof of the mouth, and the corners of the mouth.

Horses are trained to respond to a rider. Generally, applying pressure to one side of the reins pulls the horse's head in that direction. For example, when a rider pulls the bridle reins to the left, the horse receives the signal to move towards the left, and vice versa. Applying a consistent pressure on both sides of the reins generally signals to a horse to slow down or to stop.

Head collars are used to lead the horse to and from the stable and field. They come in many different types and can be used in different ways to control the horse and allow the handler to lead them in a safe way.

It can be useful to hold up the horse's foot to control a horse that may kick as the horse will be unbalanced standing on three feet and unable to kick or move around as much. Lift one of the front feet and hold up securely as if you were about to pick out its hooves. This will help the horse to stand still.

<https://www.farmhousetack.com/blogs/barn-blog/what-is-a-horse-bridle-and-how-does-it-work>

Nose twitches (also called a "grin" or a "touch") are used to restrain horses for short periods of time and facilitate potentially invasive procedures e.g. joint injections with additional safety.

Twitches apply pressure to the horse's upper lip and stimulate the nerves to cause endorphin release. The horse appears to enter a trance-like state and stands still in most cases.

Most horses will stand quietly for a few minutes. If they start getting restless e.g. rolling their eyes, ear flicking, shifting their weight, breathing quickly or extending their head it is time to be taking the twitch off. Eventually the horse may react violently by leaping into the air and kicking out with their forelimbs. Some horses will do this without any warning. It is therefore vital to NEVER EVER STAND DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF A HORSE THAT IS WEARING A TWITCH.

<https://www.vetnursing.ie/nose-twitch>

1.5 Describe the correct use of tack

Various types of restraints

The halter and lead rope are the basics of restraint. A stud shank or chain can be added to the halter for even more control when needed. The chain can be used in several ways; it can go over the nose and be clipped to the ring on the right side of the halter. The chain can also be slipped over the nose and under the upper lip for a lip chain. In many cases, just these simple forms of restraint can be used to do minor procedures.

Many may think that hobbles are used only to keep a horse around when not penned up. However, they can also be used to keep a horse from kicking when the person performing a procedure is at risk. Hobbles are not for all horses and should be used only by those with experience with this type of restraint. Stocks are an excellent form of restraint for many procedures. The horse can be held in one place while the procedure is performed and can be combined with a twitch or chemical restraint to enhance the amount of control placed on the horse. Depending on the type of stocks used, this type of restraint can be very safe for all that are involved. <https://emsvet.com/newsletters/restraint-techniques/>

1.6 State the types of inspection and healthcare procedures which are used

The teeth of adult horses should receive routine professional attention at least once per year, even where no specific signs of a problem are observed. Young horses require more frequent dental inspections, to ensure that the adult teeth come into wear correctly, and to confirm that the milk teeth have been shed successfully. Older horses also require more frequent dental inspections as they are more prone to dental problems and may suffer from loose or damaged teeth, decay or infections from impacted food.

A horse should be checked regularly from head to tail for signs of tension, soreness or pain.

Routine professional hoof care - Hooves should be trimmed and balanced by a registered farrier every four to six weeks for shod horses, and every six to ten weeks for unshod horses.

Regular monitoring and maintenance of correct body weight, together with condition-scoring and assessment of fitness will help to identify subtle changes in physical condition.

Heart or pulse rate, body temperature and respiration frequency (breathing) should be observed at rest, to determine normal levels for each individual horse.

Adult horses should have a complete veterinary examination at least once a year. Geriatric horses (older than 20 years old) should see their veterinarian twice a year.

Vaccinations such as flu and tetanus should be administered by your veterinarian annually and then every two years.

All horses should be on a deworming program that consists of either a periodic deworming treatment (usually by administering a paste) every 4 to 8 weeks or a daily dewormer in the feed.

<https://www.msdtvetmanual.com/horse-owners/routine-care-and-breeding-of-horses/routine-health-care-of-horses>

2.1 Describe the equipment which will be required for the activity

Leading the horse and keeping the horse still - Every horse needs at least one stable and pasture halter at a minimum, and ideally more than one. This is the halter that is used to lead and tie the horse. These halters are available in nylon, rope or leather. Nylon or rope halters are inexpensive, robust and easy to clean.

Leather halters look impressive, but are more sensitive and need to be cleaned with special care products. They are not really suitable as pasture halters, as the leather will quickly become brittle with regular exposure to wind, rain and sunlight. If your horse has sensitive skin, consider buying a padded halter.

A safety halter has Velcro fasteners that immediately release if the horse panics. However, this can also be dangerous. For example should your horse become frightened and jump to the side, the halter will open.

The knotted halter originated in western riding. It is not suitable for tying your horse. A knotted halter is used for leading or lunging, and sometimes also for riding.

A bridle is the most basic part of the horse's headgear. It is used to direct a horse. The bridle is the main source of communication and control with the horse and can be used when leaving or riding the horse.

The bridle is an essential part of the riding equipment because it holds the bit in the horse's mouth and transports the signals from the rider's hands correctly to the horse. This makes the bridle a medium because it mediates the communication between the rider and the horse: The bit, bridle and reins function together to give the rider control over the horse's head. The bit applies pressure to the horse's mouth and reinforces the other aids of the rider which are the rider's legs and the weight distribution. A skilled rider and an experienced horse don't need the reins and the bit as main means of communication but more as a "contact cable".

Traditional twitches consist of a handle (preferably plastic rather than wood), typically 2-3' in length with a soft rope loop on the end.

So called "humane" or self-retaining twitches consist of metal handles with a strand of rope and snap on the bottom to hold them in place by clipping them to the head collar. Their main advantage is that they are self-retaining but they easily fall off and most horses ignore them. If applying a self-retaining twitch position the horse's lip away from the hinged end, to avoid pinching their skin.

<https://www.vetnursing.ie/nose-twitch>

2.2 Describe the methods of maintaining the range of equipment ready for use

Store equipment in a dry, room temperature space, like a heated, well ventilated tack room or in your house. Fully cover the equipment in order to protect from light, dust, and bugs. Use a bridle bag and saddle cover if available, but covering with a towel, blanket, or closable bag works perfectly, too. Putting equipment in a plastic bin with a close fitting lid is also a great technique. Covering or storing equipment in plastic bags is not recommended, as this prevents the leather from breathing and can actually trap unwanted moisture.

<https://www.sterling-essentials.com/blog/2018/2/5/tips-for-worry-free-tack-storage?format=amp>

3.1 Outline the current health and safety legislation, codes of practice and any additional requirements

PPE, footwear, leg and body wear, gloves, hat as required, hair, jewellery

Routine awareness of working with horses in and out of the stable, securing horses, tying up, leading in hand

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Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and Their Hybrids
Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 15 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006

It is your responsibility to fully understand your horse's welfare needs and what the law requires you to do to meet those needs. Breach of a provision of the Code is not an offence in itself, but if proceedings are brought against you for a welfare offence the Court will look at whether or not you have complied with the Code in deciding whether you have committed an offence. You should not cause any unnecessary suffering to your or any other animal; this could constitute a serious offence under the Act.

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 is applicable. Section 2 of the Act states, 'it shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees' Where it is clear that there are employees, this requirement is absolute.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 ("the Act") requires you to ensure that any horse or pony for which you are responsible, whether on a permanent or a temporary basis, has...

- a suitable environment to live in
- a healthy diet (including fresh clean water)
- the ability to behave normally
- appropriate company
- protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease

<https://www.cieh.org/media/1247/health-and-safety-in-horse-riding-establishments-and-livery-yards-what-you-should-know.pdf>