

PART XIV

EQUESTRIAN TRAINING

SECTION 14.1 - FACILITY GUIDELINES

Guideline 14.1.1

General safety rules and procedures unique to each equestrian training facility should be developed, reduced to writing, and communicated to students prior to training.

- ❑ Few presenters have exclusive, dedicated facilities at their disposal. Generally presenters must train at whichever facility they can obtain on a space-available basis.

Students who are using unfamiliar facilities should be made aware of local rules, conditions and facility requirements. Whenever possible, safety rules should be clearly posted or printed in the course handout.

Guideline 14.1.2

The site selected for equestrian training should be of adequate size and equipped for the training task.

- ❑ Presenters should provide adequate space for staging of trailers and related support equipment. Space for tying, stabling, and caring for animals should also be available.

Ground surfaces that both horses and students will be using should also be evaluated in terms of safety especially during mounted drill training for crowd control when engaged in unit movements and formations.

Guideline 14.1.3

Adequate emergency lighting should be provided at the site of any nighttime equestrian training.

- ❑ Lighting equipment, whether permanent or portable, should be capable of illuminating staging areas and any point at the training site where an emergency is likely to occur. This applies to the trailer area and at any end-of-training assembly area.

Guideline 14.1.4

The equestrian training site should be accessible to rescue and other emergency vehicles.

- Equestrian training will occasionally occur in relatively remote areas. In these instances, presenters should augment first aid kits with additional supplies appropriate to the types of injuries anticipated.

It is further recommended that radio and/or cellular communications be established and maintained throughout the training evolution.

The rescue/EMT response units should be specifically identified prior to training. Emergency routes should be identified and communicated to staff before the event.

The presenter and/or instructional staff should consider notifying the medical facility/hospital of the particular training evolution so it can adequately prepare for the types of injuries typically sustained in an equestrian unit.

Guideline 14.1.5

The training site should be located in an area that minimizes hazards to students, staff and public caused by the movement of horses in training.

- Equestrian training should be physically separated from public activities occurring at or near the training site. Any onlookers should be posted in a safe area away from the active site.

Guideline 14.1.6

The training site should normally be located in an area that is conducive to efficient voice communications with both active and passive students. Environments which inhibit the instructor's ability to efficiently communicate with students should be appropriately compensated for by the use alternative means of communications.

- It is recommended that instructors utilize appropriately designed public address systems and/or radio networks to facilitate communication with students during tactical equestrian training evolutions.

Guideline 14.1.7

Weather conditions, the need to provide shaded areas or shelter, and the need for protective clothing should all be considered in advance of training.

- The presenter should consider the time of year and the type of training to be conducted. It may be appropriate to reserve an indoor or outdoor arena to compensate for weather conditions.

Guideline 14.1.8

The Instructional Staff should continuously monitor facility conditions so that safety hazards can be immediately detected and corrected.

- Inspections of the equestrian training facility should be conducted daily and before students are permitted to commence riding exercises. It is recommended that staff conduct inspections just before beginning each tactical module and before the horses and officers enter the arena or training site.

Any firearms, pyrotechnic devices, and other forms of crowd control or tactical measures should remain under the strict control of instructional staff. Deployment during the training evolution should be closely monitored.

Guideline 14.1.9

Fresh water for the horses should be available at the training site.

Guideline 14.1.10

Rest areas, with available restrooms and water should be available at the site for students.

SECTION 14.2 EQUIPMENT GUIDELINES

Guideline 14.2.1

Clothing and footwear appropriate to equestrian training should be required.

- Boots with heels and long pants should be required. Use of additional apparel, such as long sleeve shirts, chaps; gloves and headgear should be considered. Jackets with snaps, rather than zippers or buttons, should be encouraged to avoid clothing becoming entangled on the saddle horn.

The riding environment, terrain, weather, training task, or requirements of the student's agency will further dictate the appropriate wear.

Guideline 14.2.2

Use of an equestrian safety helmet, or its equivalent, should be a mandatory element of high risk training evolutions.

- A head injury can occur during any phase of training. Use of protective headgear is appropriate at any time. Protective headgear is especially critical during evolutions involving:

- Jumping
- Firearms
- Sensory exposure
- Search and Rescue operations

Use of an equestrian safety helmet is strongly encouraged in mounted patrol training, except in a classroom type setting.

Head injuries can occur during any phase of training, whether on the ground or while riding. Use of an official equestrian safety helmet that meets or exceeds A.S.T.M. and S.E.I. standards is recommended.

The responsibility for providing protective headgear during training should be the obligation of the student or student sponsor, not the instructional staff.

Mandatory safety headgear for training should be clearly identified in the course announcement and description.

Guideline 14.2.3

Each student should be required to carry a pocketknife, folding hunting knife, equestrian knife, or its equivalent.

- A knife is an essential safety tool for cutting horse or rider free from entanglements.

Guideline 14.2.4

Each student should be required to provide tack which is serviceable and in good repair.

- Tack includes lead ropes, halter, headstall and bit, reins, saddle, cinch, blankets and pads, spurs, and other items required by the course presenter or rider's agency.

Daily roll call inspections should be conducted of the following:

- Officer (student) and equipment
- Horse
- Tack

Guideline 14.2.5

Students must provide a mount that is suitable for police service and amenable to training. This requirement should be mandatory for any advanced or update courses.

- Horses selected for use in police service are selected on the basis of gentleness, and are intended to be free from undesirable traits such as biting, kicking, or striking. Horses used in training should generally not object to saddling or grooming; nor should they balk, rear, or shy under normal circumstances. Horses used in training should also be serviceably sound and free of disease.

Responsibility for student safety rests with the presenter. Horses that exhibit undesirable behavior, are diseased, or which may represent a hazard to students, should be excluded from the training

course. The foregoing requirements should be clearly identified in the course announcement and description.

Guideline 14.2.6

The instructional staff should conduct a full pre-training inspection.

- This is intended to ensure that students have brought the correct clothing, tack, and a suitable mount as required.

Regular and continuous formal and informal inspection of gear and mount should be part of the curriculum.

Guideline 14.2.7

Students shall use suitable eye and ear protection during nuisance training.

- Their use is encouraged when noisemakers, firearms, firecrackers or other distractive devices are employed.

Guideline 14.2.8

Horse trailers and related vehicles used in training should be clean and in serviceable condition.

Guideline 14.2.9

An adequate line set-up (tie-area) in rest and staging areas should be available during training.

- Double horse-length tie-up rule should be in effect in all line set-up areas.

Guideline 14.2.10

Pagers and cell phones should be in off or silent mode during training.

- These devices can be disruptive to the training evolution, particularly during new rider-and-mount tactical orientation exercises. Emergency standby requirements of individual officers should be discussed with the instructor prior to the training session.

SECTION 14.3 - INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Guideline 14.3.1

Instructors in equestrian courses should have a background in general law enforcement, law enforcement equestrian service, and general horsemanship skill.

- Instructors should have attended a POST certified mounted patrol training course or its equivalent. It is recommended that each instructor has attended a 40-hour certified instructor development training, or its equivalent.

Instructor qualifications to be jointly determined by the presenter and POST.

It is suggested that the *Manipulative Skills Instructor Certification Checklist* be completed and submitted to POST as part of the certification request package. See example in Appendix.

Guideline 14.3.2

Equestrian instructors are strongly encouraged to participate in periodic update courses and skills refresher training.

- Networking of equestrian trainers should also be encouraged.

SECTION 14.4 - INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF-TO-STUDENT RATIOS

Guideline 14.4.1

Each presenter of equestrian training shall establish and identify an appropriate instructional staff-to-student ratio.

- Separate instructional staff-to-student ratios should be identified for classroom instruction as opposed to general riding events. Certain riding activities, such as nuisance training, suggest a higher level of student supervision and control.

SECTION 14.5 - PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

Guideline 14.5.1

General safety rules should be reemphasized to students immediately prior to the application phase (riding) of training.

Guideline 14.5.2

Students should be instructed to immediately report any perceived safety hazard to the instructional staff.

Guideline 14.5.3

Specific safety procedures for dealing with unusual occurrences should be reviewed immediately prior to the task.

- Students should be made aware that even the best trained horse can act unpredictably. Problems such as a horse bolting, falling, bucking, rearing, or a dislodged rider suggest the need for a comprehensive pre-briefing of students.

Guideline 14.5.4

Instructors should maintain an appropriate level of discipline over students.

- A professional atmosphere during training ensures that students are held accountable for the rules of conduct.

During briefings, instructions, or commands given during the application phase, the students, when in formation, mounted or dismounted, should maintain silence. Strict attention should be paid to the instructor. Questions should be on-point, and asked at a convenient time. The spirit of this rule is to insure order within the group to ensure everyone receives all necessary information to make the unit mission successful. Mounted operations are, by design, coordinated activities between multiple horses and officers. Teamwork is essential.

Guideline 14.5.5

Instructors should be aware of fatigue factors that affect the ability of the student to perform safely.

- Mounted training is inherently tiring. Long periods of training, environmental conditions, or other factors can unduly fatigue participants and increase the potential of accident and injury. A high smog level or a heat wave, for example, suggests a reduction in instructional intensity.

Likewise, the horses themselves are subject to fatigue. An unduly fatigued horse is more likely to exhibit undesirable behavior.

Regular class breaks are necessary. Generally, a one-and one-half to two-hour riding rule is appropriate in a four-hour training module.

SECTION 14.6 SPECIFIC SAFETY RULES

Guideline 14.6.1

Minimum pre-conditioning guidelines should be considered for students participating in equestrian training.

- Students who are in poor physical condition at the time of training are more prone to injuries, particularly to injuries such as muscle strains and joint irritations. The specific physical expectations of the program should be identified to students and their agencies in advance. For example, students should be notified that they must have sufficient upper body strength to lift a saddle onto their horse. This information should be included in the course announcement and description.

Guideline 14.6.2

A systematic warm-up should be initiated prior to commencement of the application phase (riding) of training.

- Injuries are less likely if riders and horses engage in an appropriate amount of warm-up and stretching before training begins. For example, a suggested four-hour block of instruction could include:

Saddle-up
Warm-up and stretch
Discipline of instruction
Cool down and dismount

Guideline 14.6.3

A systematic cool-down of horse and rider should be initiated at the conclusion of the ride or exercise period.

- This helps to reduce muscle injury after exercise. Systematic cool-down of the horse reduces the potential of the mount to exhibit undesirable behavior that may contribute to student injury potential.

