GUIDE TO MANAGING RISKS WHEN NEW AND INEXPERIENCED PERSONS INTERACT WITH HORSES

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safe work australia

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1. INTRODUCTION

Horses pose a significant safety risk at work.

One worker is hospitalised each day in Australia due to a horse related injury. For every worker injured another nine non workers are injured, often at workplaces like riding schools, equestrian centres and trail riding businesses[1]. The most common causes of horse related death or injury are falls from a horse or being bitten, struck or kicked by a horse. Information about horse related injuries is in Appendix A.

It is common for young people to develop an interest in horses and many workers, particularly in the riding school environment, are young[2]. This is reflected in Australian injury statistics, with people under 24 years old being most likely to be injured[3].

This guide will help businesses manage the risks likely to be faced by new or inexperienced workers and others when interacting with horses.

Many businesses or undertakings involve work activities where workers and others interact with horses. For example, a worker on a cattle farm might ride a horse daily. At equestrian centres both workers and others will regularly ride and handle horses. Operators of 'farm stay' accommodation may offer riding experiences to their customers.

Despite the differences in these businesses many of the risks and control measures associated with workers and others with little experience interacting with horses are similar. Whether the person is a new worker who handles or rides horses, or a customer of a business that provides riding experiences, this guide will provide practical and useful tips.

This guide complements the range of industry specific guidance, general work health and safety information and horse specific resources currently available. A number of these publications are listed in Appendix B.

1.1 Who should use this Guide

This Guide provides practical guidance for a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) who carries out work activities where workers and others interact with horses.

This Guide is also useful for other people who may interact with horses at a workplace, for example teachers, volunteers or visitors at a workplace.

1.2 Who has health and safety duties?

People who carry out activities which involve interacting with horses as part of their business or undertaking have duties under the model Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws.

1 National Hospital Morbidity Database (NHMD), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) - cases with a date of separation between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2010.

2 Sinclair-Williams, M and Sinclair-Williams, K (2006) Health And Safety Guidance for Inspections of horse riding establishments and livery yards p17

3 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare http://www.aihw.gov.au/media-release-detail/?id=6442464348 accessed 4 October 2013

Table 1 Duties in relation to interaction with horses

Who	Duties	Provisions
A person who conducts a business or undertaking	Ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, workers including volunteers and other people are not exposed to health and safety risks arising from the business or undertaking. This duty requires the person to manage health and safety risks by eliminating them so far as is reasonably practicable, and if this is not reasonably practicable, by minimising those risks so far as is reasonably practicable. Ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the provision of any information, training, instruction or supervision that is necessary to protect all persons from risks to their health and safety arising from work carried out as part of the conduct of the business or undertaking.	WHS Act s 19
A person who conducts a business or undertaking with management or control of plant	Manage risks to health and safety associated with plant including proper use and maintenance.	WHS Regs r 203-226
Designers, manufactures, importers, suppliers or installers of plant, substances or structures	Must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the plant, substance or structure they design, manufacture, import, supply or install is without risks to health and safety.	WHS Act s 22-26
Officers such as company directors	Must exercise due diligence to ensure the business or undertaking complies with the WHS Act and Regulations. This includes taking reasonable steps to ensure the business or undertaking has and uses appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety.	WHS Act s 27
Workers	Must take reasonable care for their own health and safety and not adversely affect the health and safety of other people. Workers must comply with reasonable instruction and co-operate with any reasonable policy or procedure relating to health and safety at the workplace.	WHS Act s 28
Other persons at the workplace such as visitors, volunteers or customers	Must take reasonable care for their own health and safety and take reasonable care not to adversely affect other people's health and safety. Other persons at the workplace must comply, so far as they are reasonably able, with reasonable instructions.	WHS Act s 29

Who	Duties	Provisions
A volunteer association which carries out activities involving horses	None – the meaning of a *person conducting a business or undertaking* excludes a volunteer association that does not employ anyone.	WHS Act s 5
A person who carries out activities involving horses as a personal or recreational activity, excluding public events	None – the WHS laws only apply to these activities if Schedule 1 of the WHS Act is enacted. You should contact your regulator for further information.	WHS Act s 5 and Schedule 1

1.3 What is involved in managing risks?

You should manage the risks associated with interacting with horses by following a systematic process of:

- identifying hazards – find out what could cause harm
- assessing risks if necessary – understand the nature of the harm each hazard could cause, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of it happening
- controlling risks – implement the most effective control measures that are reasonably practicable in the circumstances, and
- reviewing control measures to ensure they are working as planned.

Further guidance on the risk management process is in Chapter 2 of this Guide and in the Code of Practice: *How to manage work health and safety risks.*

CONSULTATION

Consultation involves sharing information, giving workers a reasonable opportunity to express views and taking those views into account before making decisions about health and safety matters.

Consultation with workers and their health and safety representatives is required at each step of the risk management process. By drawing on the experience, knowledge and ideas of your workers you are more likely to identify hazards and choose effective control measures.

You should encourage your workers to report hazards and health and safety problems immediately so the risks can be managed before an incident occurs.

CONSULTING, CO-OPERATING AND CO-ORDINATING ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER DUTY HOLDERS

There may be more than one business or undertaking involved in work which includes interacting with horses. In these situations the duty holders should share information about the hazards and risks and work together in a co-operative and co-ordinated way to eliminate or minimise the risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

Further guidance on consultation is in the Code of Practice: *Work health and safety consultation, co-operation and co-ordination.*

2. THE RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Effectively managing the risks associated with interacting with horses should start with identifying the hazards and assessing the risks so effective control measures can be implemented.

2.1 Identify hazards

Identifying hazards involves finding out what could go wrong and what could cause harm.

Make a list of causes of incidents or safety problems at your workplace. Involve workers in this process.

Some possible hazards when interacting with horses are in Table 2. This list is not exhaustive and you should identify the specific hazards in your workplace.

Table 2 Examples of hazards when interacting with horses

PEOPLE	HORSE	ENVIRONMENT
■ riders or handlers not in control of their horse ■ instructors who do not understand how new riders react ■ mis-match of the rider and horse ■ riders or handlers wearing inappropriate shoes ■ visitors or new workers who do not understand how horses behave	■ horse acts unpredictably ■ horse slips ■ animals or cars frighten the horse ■ horses not tied up appropriately ■ horse is not trained or well behaved	■ tripping over equipment left on the ground ■ bad weather ■ dangerous chemicals ■ damaged or worn equipment ■ damaged or broken fencing

Walk around the workplace and observe how things are done and how workers and others interact with horses to predict what could go wrong.

Advice on hazards and risks can be sought from industry experts—see the resources list in Appendix B.

2.2 Assess the risks

The hazards identified will have the potential to cause harm ranging from minor injuries to more serious injuries or death.

It is important to remember a number of hazards can interact together and this might change the risk. For example, in normal circumstances a horse might be calm and not pose a serious risk to an experienced rider. However, when ridden by a beginner on a windy day the horse might be more unpredictable and the risk to the rider may be significant.

For more information about how to carry out a risk assessment see Appendix C.

2.3 Control the risks

The best control measure involves eliminating the risk—that is removing the risk from the workplace. If that is not possible you must minimise risks, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Talking with workers when finding ways to control risks is important and their experience can help you choose the best control.

Some problems can be fixed easily and should be done straight away, while others will need more effort and planning to resolve. You should manage the hazards with the highest risk first.

If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risks, you should:

- substitute the hazard with something safer e.g. replace an intermediate level horse with one suitable for a beginner rider
- physically separate people from the harm e.g. use fences to keep visitors away from horses, or
- use engineering controls e.g. use a wheelbarrow to carry hay to a paddock.

If a risk then remains you must minimise the risk so far as is reasonably practicable by using administrative controls and provide and ensure the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). For example, establish site rules which require riders to wear approved helmets.

See Chapter 3 for further information on controlling risks when interacting with horses.

2.4 Review control measures

You should regularly check to make sure the control measures are working as planned. If problems are found, for example near misses, you should go back through the risk management steps, review the information and make further decisions about controls.

You should also review controls when there is a change at the workplace. Think about whether the changes will create a new risk that existing controls won't manage. If so, identify a new or better control.

Sometimes when reviewing controls a new hazard or risk may be identified. Therefore you should reassess the new hazard and if necessary control the risk.

Further information about the risk management process can be found in the Code of Practice: *How to manage work health and safety risks.*

3. CONTROLLING RISKS TO NEW OR INEXPERIENCED WORKERS AND OTHER PEOPLE

New or inexperienced workers and others who interact with horses are more at risk of harm. For example, they:

- are less likely to understand horse behaviour
- may be nervous or frightened
- are more likely to be young
- may not understand the significance of instructions and directions, and
- are unfamiliar with the workplace environment.

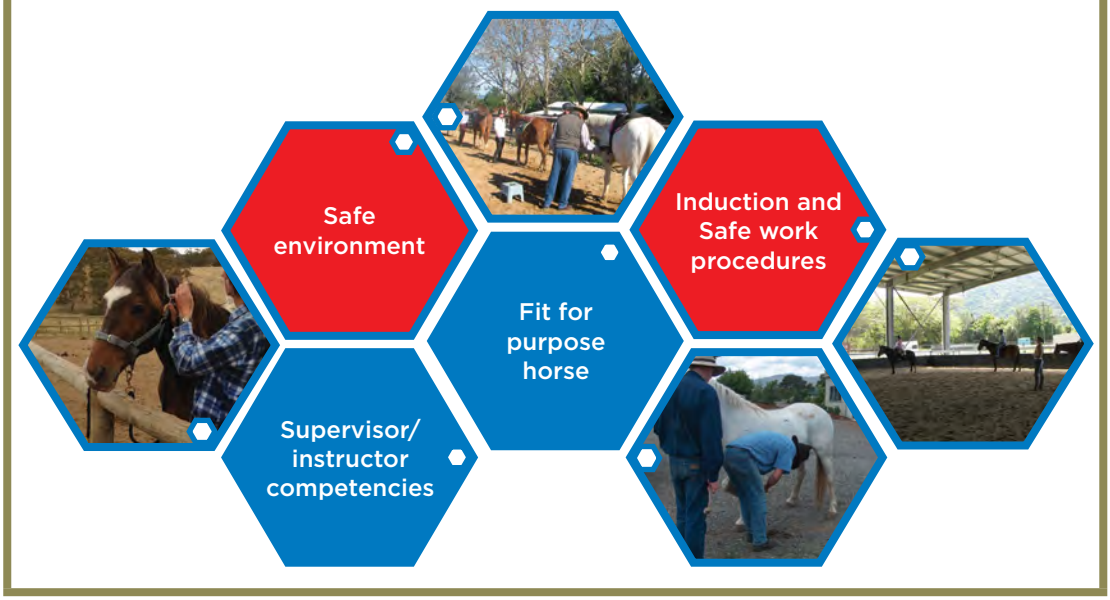
Protecting new and inexperienced workers requires special consideration because:

- they are likely to have limited information to assess their skills and knowledge
- horses of different temperaments and different levels of training will respond differently to them, and
- young people are at different stages of their personal growth and development.

Managing these risks involves:

- creating a safe work environment
- providing induction and safe work procedures
- ensuring horses are fit for purpose, and
- ensuring supervisors and instructors have suitable skills and capabilities.

FIGURE 1 Key aspects of managing risks



3.1 Safe environment

There are a number of hazards that are important to consider in light of new or inexperienced workers and other people. People new to interacting with horses are unlikely to understand the risks associated with horses.

Table 3 Hazards, risks and control measures for stables and yards

STABLES AND YARDS	
HAZARDS AND RISKS	**CONTROLS**
Being crushed or trodden on by a horse.	■ Limit access to the horse keeping areas (see Figure 2). ■ Provide supervision and training. ■ Identify escape routes. ■ Ensure gates open both ways.
Herd behaviour of horses.	■ Train workers and others in leading a horse through a group. ■ Exclude horses that behave aggressively from the herd (see Figure 3). ■ Ensure there is enough space for horses to move around without becoming agitated. ■ Train people on recognising hazardous situations. ■ Identify escape routes. ■ Do not allow feeding of horses in groups until trained to do so safely.

FIGURE 2 Barriers to control access to horses

FIGURE 3 Herd behaviour of horses

Table 4 Hazards, risks and control measures when riding a horse

RIDING IN ENCLOSED AREAS	
HAZARDS AND RISKS	**CONTROLS**
Falling from a horse, being trodden on by a horse and slips and trips.	■ Limit the numbers of riders in the area based on its size. ■ Provide a level riding surface with good drainage. ■ Provide soft fall. ■ Ensure riding helmets which comply with AS/NZ 3838:2006 *Helmets for horse riding and horse-related activities* or equivalent are properly secured. ■ Supervise the mounting process for new riders (see Figure 4). ■ Remove unnecessary equipment. ■ Supervisor or instructor keeps riders together and in their sights at all times - no riders should be behind the supervisor or instructor (see Figure 5). ■ Position horses around the edge of the arena head to tail with a safe gap between the horses. ■ Ensure an appropriate ratio of experienced supervisors to inexperienced riders (1:8). ■ Ensure horses have enough space between them so they maintain a relaxed manner. ■ Provide exercises to help riders gain confidence.
Others entering enclosed area.	■ Provide barriers to prevent unsupervised access e.g. child proof fencing (see Figures 6 and 7). ■ Install warning signs. ■ Exclude other animals like dogs from areas where horses will be present.

FIGURE 4 Line up for mount

FIGURE 5 Instructor training

FIGURE 6 Enclosed area with fencing

FIGURE 7 Barriers to prevent access

RIDING IN OPEN AREAS	
HAZARDS AND RISKS	**CONTROLS**
Obstacles in open areas.	■ Check route before riding out. ■ Match route to skill level of least capable rider. ■ Ensure riding helmets are properly secured. ■ Keep away from main roads and other physical hazards like cliffs. ■ Individually help new riders to mount. ■ Avoid low tree branches. ■ Avoid other animals and vehicles. ■ Ensure an appropriate ratio of experienced supervisors to inexperienced riders (at least 1:6). There should be at least two experienced riders on all rides. ■ Provide instruction on riding in different environments (see Figures 8 and 9). ■ Ensure inexperienced children are led by a qualified supervisor on a lead rope. ■ Check riders can stop start and turn their horse before leaving for the trail.

RIDING IN OPEN AREAS	
HAZARDS AND RISKS	**CONTROLS**
	■ If the route includes public roads, ensure road rules are followed and basic procedures for crossing roads explained to riders. ■ Provide exercises to help riders gain confidence.
Horses bolting, becoming restless or shying.	■ Test the horses on the trail to verify they will stay calm and well behaved. ■ Exclude horses with history of poor behaviour. ■ Do not permit part of the ride to leave the rest while stops are made for gates or to fix equipment. ■ Only horses proven to be calm in traffic should be allowed on the road.
Rider loses control of the horse.	■ Competent rider adjusts the pace, ensures the route is safe and blocks if a horse tries to pass them. ■ Competent rider never leaves the front of the ride. ■ The drag rider at the back of the ride is the person in charge. Their role is to manage the whole group and to communicate with the lead rider directing them to change the pace or stop as necessary. ■ Distribute supervisors throughout the group to help individual riders. ■ Conduct the ride at a pace to suit the capabilities of the least able participant. ■ Check before starting the ride that riders understand instructions about changes of pace or direction and can control their horse i.e. how to start, stop and turn.
Conditions change affecting rider or horse behaviour.	■ Put in place contingency plans for changes in weather. ■ Supervisors have communication device available and functioning for all parts of the trail.
Heat stress.	■ Introduce new workers gradually to hot work over a two week period. ■ Take drinking water on a trail ride. ■ Include shaded areas on the trail and cool rest areas. ■ Ensure first aid training covers how to respond to heat stress.

FIGURE 8 Riding in the open

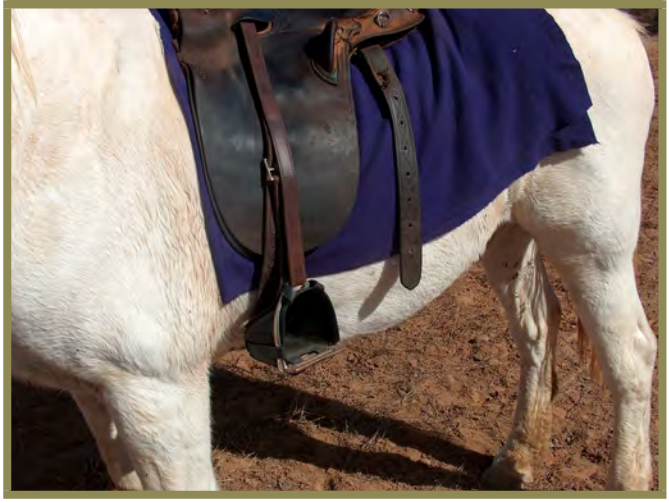
FIGURE 9 Trail ride

RIDING EQUIPMENT AND TACK	
HAZARDS AND RISKS	**CONTROLS**
Tack breaking or failing.	■ Check stitching regularly. ■ Clean regularly (see Figure 10). ■ Replace worn or damaged tack.
Tack not operating as intended.	■ Select tack suitable for horse and rider. ■ Match tack to activity being carried out. ■ Check the tack including the girth/cinch immediately before allowing a new rider to mount the horse (see Figure 11). ■ Fit tack to horse and check tack before riding out. ■ Check the width and height of the rider's stirrups before riding out.
Tack not suitable for new rider.	■ Use saddles with knee and thigh rolls to support rider and help them keep balance. ■ Use saddles with two points of attachment—if using a leather latigo, it should be double wrapped. ■ Use breakaway stirrups or 'toe stoppers' to prevent the foot from being caught in the iron in case of a fall (see Figure 12). ■ Use boots with heels to prevent foot from moving too far forward in the stirrup.

FIGURE 10 Saddle cleaning

FIGURE 11 Adjust stirrups

FIGURE 12 Toe stopper



BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

Other environmental hazards include biological and zoonoses. Biological hazards that arise from animals and zoonosis are infectious diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans.

Table 5 Biological hazards associated with interacting with horses

DUSTS AND ALLERGENS	
HAZARDS AND RISKS	**CONTROLS**
Respiration inflammation, sensitisation or respiratory disease e.g. extrinsic allergic alveolitis or occupational asthma.	■ Remove person from exposure. ■ Reduce dust creation when working e.g. wet the surface. ■ Increase ventilation e.g. groom outside. ■ Use clean or dust free bedding. ■ Where suitable use a particulate respirator that complies with AS/NZS 1716.

New workers or others at the workplace may develop symptoms within minutes of exposure or be delayed for several hours, for example occurring at night, therefore their association with work may not be immediately recognised. However, relief from symptoms during rest days and holidays often points to an occupational cause. The earlier a sensitised person is removed from exposure, the greater the likelihood of avoiding serious damage to health.

Table 6 Zoonoses

ZOONOSES	
HAZARDS AND RISKS	**CONTROLS**

Ringworm, leptospirosis, gastrointestinal and other skin infections.	■ Provide and maintain hygienic hand washing facilities including running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities like disposable paper towels.
	■ Use waterless alcohol based hand rubs.
	■ Instruct workers and others to practise hand hygiene:
	  ■ after contact with horses, handling horse equipment, removing PPE and on leaving animal areas
	  ■ before eating and drinking, and
	  ■ following accidental contamination with a horse's blood and body substances.
	■ Provide designated eating areas away from animal areas.
	■ Prohibit workers and clients from eating and drinking in animal areas.
	■ Maintain stables and yards in a clean and hygienic condition.
	■ Minimise build-up of horse manure and soiled bedding.
	■ Regularly clean horse equipment and tools.

ZOONOSES	
HAZARDS AND RISKS	**CONTROLS**
Ringworm, leptospirosis, gastrointestinal and other skin infections	■ Provide PPE to protect clothing, exposed skin and face from contact with a horse's blood and body substances. ■ Discourage contact with areas such as the muzzle where horse saliva or nasal secretions can be transferred to a person's face. ■ Cover cuts and abrasions with a water-resistant dressing. ■ Ensure vaccination and parasite control is maintained. ■ Isolate horses showing signs of illness from people and other animals. ■ Implement a pest control program and keep feed bins covered to discourage rats and other pests.

Hendra virus	■ Consider vaccinating horses to prevent Hendra virus infection.
	■ Maintain a high level of hygiene for contact with horses and animal areas as outlined above.
	■ Reduce the risk of horses from interacting with flying foxes e.g.:
	  ■ place feed and water containers under cover
	  ■ avoid planting trees that attract flying foxes in or near horse paddocks, and
	  ■ remove horses from areas where flying foxes roost or feed.
	■ Develop a plan for responding to a possible case of Hendra virus and use the recommended PPE. Inform and instruct workers about the Hendra virus plan and the correct use of PPE.
	■ Always consider Hendra virus as a possible cause of illness in a sick horse and take appropriate precautions. Isolate the horse and avoid contact until a veterinary opinion has been sought.
	  ■ If contact is necessary, consider the horse to be potentially infectious and take precautions to protect exposed skin and the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose and mouth from contact with the horse's blood and body substances.
	  ■ Cover cuts and abrasions with a water-resistant dressing and wear PPE including disposable overalls, disposable gloves, safety eyewear and a particulate respirator like a disposable P2 respirator.
	  ■ On completion, remove PPE carefully to avoid contamination, dispose of materials safely and practise hand hygiene.
	■ Wash off accidental contamination with the horse's blood or body substances with soap and water and change clothing.

3.2 Induction and safe work procedures

New workers and others at the workplace who have not interacted with horses before including young or beginner riders need support and assistance to develop skills and confidence to safely interact with horses.

It is important for a PCBU to ensure workers and others at the workplace follow the rules and procedures they establish. It is especially important workers with greater experience or advanced understanding follow procedures as those learning about horses are likely to copy their behaviour.

People learn best by seeing something done and when experienced workers demonstrate the proper execution of skills they will make it easier for new and inexperienced workers and others to put the actions into practice correctly.

INDUCTION

Ensuring workers and others receive workplace induction so they know about health and safety risks and control measures is an important step in helping them understand the workplace environment.

Inductions should provide information about:

- horse instincts and their response to fear
- how to behave around horses
- how to use peripheral vision when handling animals
- determining an escape route
- how to recognise a horse's individual characteristics
- what riders and horse handlers should wear
- listening to and obeying instructions, and
- first aid and emergency procedures.

Some people at the workplace may only be present for a short period of time so it is important induction training and the explanation of safe work procedures covers essential information to ensure their health and safety.

An induction should include an assessment of the skills of new workers and others. New workers and others at the workplace should be treated as new to the horse environment unless they can demonstrate otherwise.

The knowledge and skills of new people should be assessed as people may have a history of handling or riding horses but may have developed unsafe habits. People should be assessed in a fenced, level and enclosed area.

New or inexperienced workers should be monitored to ensure they understand the information provided.

Inductions should also include the workplace rules everyone is expected to obey. These rules could include:

- No walking up to a horse in its kicking zone.
- If walking behind a horse, walk close with a hand on its rump.
- A rope which is attached to a horse should not be wrapped around a person's hand.

- The reins of a bridle on a horse should not be wrapped around a person's arm, neck or body.
- No ducking under the neck of a tied up horse.
- No squatting down or sitting in front of or near a horse.
- No rough handling of horses.

SAFE WORK PROCEDURES

Developing clear, simple and effective safe work procedures can play an important part in helping people interact with horses safely.

Some safe work procedures will apply to both workers and others at the workplace, for example the safe mounting of horses and PPE to be worn. Other procedures may only apply to workers and the tasks they perform, for example the safe feeding of horses.

There are several essential safe work procedures that new workers and others at the workplace should be instructed in. These procedures should be enforced at the workplace and include how to:

- catch a horse on its own and in a herd (see Figure 13)
- approach a horse and avoid their blind spots and kicking zones
- access and work around a horse in a stable or enclosed area
- lead horses through narrow places
- tie up horses
- lead horses through a group of loose horses
- stand and hold horses
- tack up horses
- mount and wait while others are mounting (see Figure 14)
- slow and stop a horse by using the reins, legs and body position
- work around a tethered horse
- rug horses
- feed horses, and
- address other related hazards both in confined areas and in a herd.

FIGURE 13 Catching a horse in a group

FIGURE 14 Mounting

3.3 Supervisor and instructor competencies

Supervisors and instructors for new and inexperienced riders need to understand their special needs. Knowing how to ride does not make a person competent to supervise or train new riders. Often experienced riders are not aware of their own poor habits or unsafe practices.

INSTRUCTION

Instructing new riders is a specialised skill and requires a formal qualification as an instructor. Instructors should know how to organise and respond to different types of riders.

Beginners can get confused and nervous which may cause horses to become agitated. They often have no natural instincts in how to communicate with or control horses and are likely to have difficulties translating instructions into actions. Instructors should know how to assess and help beginner riders understand the effect their behaviour has on the horse.

Instructors should be qualified to teach riding—not just in horse husbandry or performance skills— and need a good understanding of communication, risk management, horse control, group control, an ability to teach skills in a natural sequence and use safe procedures for every step in riding and horse handling activities.

There are a number of recognised qualifications available for those intending to teach riding skills as part of a business. These include:

- Equestrian Australia which concentrates on the Olympic disciplines: Level I and above, and
- Horse Safety Australia—a multidiscipline organisation providing accreditation for those working with groups of riders and beginners: Instructor/Senior Instructor and Trail Guide.

Depending on the type of workplace, PCBUs should also consider other courses relating to teaching riding available through higher education providers and private training organisations. Courses such as Certificate III and IV in Outdoor Recreation (equestrian units) and Certificate IV in Sport Coaching Equestrian may be suitable for some businesses.

Riding for the Disabled also has specialist coaching levels for those teaching riding to people with disabilities.

SUPERVISION

Supervision at the workplace is a key responsibility of a PCBU. Supervision is a management function which may be done by instructors or by other workers appointed by the PCBU.

Supervisors need to know enough information about safety in a horse workplace and be able to ensure workers and others are safe. The supervisor of a facility that has a horse riding program should be familiar with limitations and potential problems of riding programs. The safety of the riders should be their foremost consideration.

Supervisors should move around the horse workplace to ensure safe procedures are being followed.

PCBUs should ensure an appropriate level of supervision. The level of supervision will depend on:

- ratios of instructors to horses and learners
- skills and qualifications of instructors or supervisors
- horse temperament and training
- type of riding or horse handling being undertaken
- aptitude and age of workers and others, and
- the environment in which the activity is conducted.

3.4 Fit for purpose horse

SUITABLE HORSE

PCBUs should ensure the horse provided for a new or inexperienced worker or other person at the workplace is suitable and safe for that person.

New and inexperienced riders should be given a quiet, steady horse. The horse should be well trained to slow down in response to pressure on the reins. Incidents can easily be caused by a new or inexperienced rider who may make sudden movements and noises upsetting or frightening the horse, so the horse needs to be tolerant of these behaviours.

The PCBU should be familiar with the characteristics of the horse and how the horse reacts to different types of riders and the likely situations it will face, for example people behaving inappropriately and the need to stand still without getting restless. If travelling in open areas the horse needs to be calm around obstacles and traffic.

Horses used for new or inexperienced riders should be thoroughly tested both in the area to be ridden and for their social behaviour as part of the herd involved in the activities.

PCBUs should not permit new or beginner riders to ride horses that:

- are nervous or reactive
- have a tendency to rear, buck, pig root, bite people or horses, kick people when being handled or ridden, shy, bolt or any other behaviour which might unseat an unbalanced rider
- are highly trained and sensitive
- are non-compliant and unresponsive
- regularly trip or stumble, or
- are from a race track without extensive re-training.

Carefully match the horse to the task expected of it. For example, horse work in enclosed and open areas may require horses with different temperaments and characteristics. Not all horses are suitable for both tasks.

Time should be spent training horses to become familiar with the environment they will work in. This will help prevent horses being distracted by things around them when being ridden by a new or inexperienced rider.

HORSE SELECTION

When focussing on the new or inexperienced riders it is important the horses used are properly selected.

When purchasing a horse suitable for a new or inexperience rider, PCBUs should consider a number of factors like the temperament and training, age, conformation, action and movement, breed, sex, size, current workload and current condition.

TEMPERAMENT AND TRAINING

The horse must be calm and easy to handle. Handlers need to feel safe around the horse. It is also important the horse is well trained. Some horses appear quiet but if they are not well trained they may not behave well in a stressful situation.

AGE OF THE HORSE

Young horses should not be handled or ridden by inexperienced people. Horses for new and inexperienced riders should be well trained and preferably over 10 years old so they are not likely to overreact to unusual situations.

ACTION AND MOVEMENT

A horse should be able to move freely but not energetically, without stumbling and tripping, in all the paces.

BREED

Some breeds are considered quieter than others, however do not assume just because a horse is a particular breed it will be quieter. Thoroughbreds straight off the track are never a good choice for a beginner.

CURRENT WORKLOAD

When a horse is not working at the time of purchase it can be difficult to determine what it will be like when working.

CURRENT CONDITION

The temperament of a horse when bought in poor condition may change when its condition improves.

APPENDIX A – INFORMATION ABOUT HORSE RELATED INJURY

Horse riding poses a significant safety risk due to the following factors:

- Horses are capable of acting independently of the rider and the extent to which the rider has control of the horse can suddenly change.
- Horses are capable of acting independently, whether being ridden or not.
- A horse is a large animal and the rider's head can be up to 3 metres above the ground.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) maintains a database on patients admitted to hospital. Between 1 July 2008 and 30 June 2011 a total of 11 635 hospital admissions were recorded for horse-related incidents, with 11.5% (n=1335) being work related injuries. An average of 1.2 workers are hospitalised each day in Australia due to a horse related injury.

- 24% of the patients suffered the injury as a result of being bitten or struck by a horse. The remainder occurred whilst riding.
- Females accounted for two thirds of the hospital admissions.
- For females, the admissions showed a concentration between the ages 10 and 24. For males, the admissions were more evenly distributed between the ages 15 and 64. There were fewer hospital admissions of people in the older age groups. This reflects the different ways in which males, females and different age groups may interact with horses.
- 40% of injuries happened while engaged in sports. Trail or general horseback riding account for 80% of cases within this activity. Only 10% of injuries happened while engaged in working for income. Agriculture, forestry and fishing account for 39% of cases within this activity. For 41% of the cases, the activity at the time of the injury was unspecified.

Research from the National Coronial Information System (NCIS) indicates between July 2000 to June 2012, 98 horse-related deaths occurred. 42% involved a person who worked with horses as part of their profession (farmer, trainer, stable hand, stockman and strapper). The activity at the time of the incident was described as horse riding in 48% of fatalities. Other activities involved moving around the horse (12%), mustering (11%) and horse racing (8%). Data from the NCIS also shows that:

- the vast majority of fatalities resulted from a fall from the horse (74%)
- six deaths (6%) involved children under the age of 10. Young people between 10 and 19 accounted for another 14 deaths (14%)
- 59% of the fatalities involved males, and.
- 28% were known to be wearing a helmet (n=27) and 14% were known not to be wearing a helmet (n=14).

The National Dataset for Compensation Based Statistics shows over 11 years to 2010/11, 4305 serious injury claims were horse related.

The Safe Work Australia 2013 Work Related Injuries Fatalities on Australian Farms Report found that horses are a common cause of deaths on farms, with 11 fatalities occurring over 8 years, five occurred while mustering and two while training.

APPENDIX B – LIST OF USEFUL RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

HORSE SPECIFIC INFORMATION

- The Australian Horse Industry Council: http://www.horsecouncil.org.au/ahic/
  - AHIC Horsesafe self assessment checklist: http://www.horsecouncil.org.au/ahic/index.cfm/horse-safe/resources/
  - AHIC *Code of Practice for the Horse Industry* 2009 http://www.horsecouncil.org.au/ahic/index.cfm/horse-safe/code-of-practice/
- Horse Safety Australia for information about safety, procedures, qualifications, courses, clinics: http://www.horsesafetyaustralia.com.au/
- Horse stables and track riding Safety http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/WorkSafe/PDF/Guides/Horse_racing_stables.pdf
- Commonwealth of Australia. *Trail Guide: Horses Competency Review Tool*, 2006 http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/67207
- Myers, J. Horse Safe A Complete Guide to Equine Safety. Landlinks Press, Australia, 2005
- Queensland Government. *Horse Riding Schools, Trail Riding Establishments and Horse Riding Establishments Code of Practice 2002* http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/resources/pdfs/horse-riding-cop-2002.pdf

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY CODES OF PRACTICE

- How to manage health and safety risks
- Managing risks associated with plant at the workplace
- Work health and safety consultation, co-ordination and co-operation
- Managing electrical risks in the workplace
- Managing the risk of falls in the workplace
- First aid in the workplace
- Managing the work environment and facilities
- Hazardous manual tasks, and
- Managing risks associated with hazardous chemicals in the workplace.

Codes of practice are available from your state or territory work health and safety regulator website or from:

http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/model-whs-laws/model-cop/a-z-cop/pages/a-z

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATORS

Contact details for state and territory regulators can be found on the Safe Work Australia website.

APPENDIX C – HOW TO CARRY OUT A RISK ASSESSMENT

WORK OUT HOW SEVERE THE HARM COULD BE

To estimate the severity of harm that could result from each hazard you should consider the following questions:

- What type of harm could occur e.g. muscular strain, fatigue or laceration? How severe is the harm? Could the hazard cause death, serious injuries, illness or only minor injuries requiring first aid?
- What factors could influence the severity of harm that occurs? For example, the distance someone might fall will determine the level of harm that is possible. The harm may occur immediately something goes wrong e.g. injury from a fall or it may take time for it to become apparent e.g. illness from long-term exposure to a substance.
- How many people are exposed to the hazard and how many could be harmed in and outside your workplace?
- Could one failure lead to other failures? For example, could the failure of your electrical supply make any control measures that rely on electricity ineffective?
- Could a small event escalate to a much larger event with more serious consequences? For example, a minor fire can get out of control quickly in the presence of large amounts of combustible materials.

WORK OUT HOW HAZARDS MAY CAUSE HARM

In most cases, incidents occur as a result of a chain of events and a failure of one or more links in that chain. If one or more of the events can be stopped or changed, the risk may be eliminated or reduced.

One way of working out the chain of events is to determine the starting point where things begin to go wrong and then consider: 'If this happens, what may happen next?' This will provide a list of events that sooner or later cause harm.

In thinking about how each hazard may cause harm, you should consider:

- the effectiveness of existing control measures and whether they control all types of harm
- how work is actually done, rather than relying on written manuals and procedures, and
- infrequent or abnormal situations, as well as how things are normally meant to occur.

Consider maintenance and cleaning as well as breakdowns of equipment and failures of health and safety controls.

WORK OUT THE LIKELIHOOD OF HARM OCCURRING

The likelihood that someone will be harmed can be estimated by considering the following:

- How often is the task done? Does this make the harm more or less likely?
- How often are people near the hazard? How close do people get to it?
- Has it ever happened before, either in your workplace or somewhere else? How often?

You can rate the likelihood as one of the following:

- certain to occur – expected to occur in most circumstances
- very likely – will probably occur in most circumstances
- possible – might occur occasionally
- unlikely – could happen at some time, and
- rare – may happen only in exceptional circumstances.

The level of risk will increase as the likelihood of harm and its severity increases.

The Code of Practice: *How to manage work health and safety risks* has a table of questions to help you rate the likelihood of harm occurring should you need to carry out a risk assessment.

THIS GUIDE PROVIDES PRACTICAL GUIDANCE ON HOW TO MANAGE HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH ACTIVITIES WHERE WORKERS AND OTHERS INTERACT WITH HORSES.