

NOCO EQUINE LLC

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RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION

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The safety of the clients, riders, participants, horses and guests of NOCO Equine is our foremost concern. As such, a thorough analysis of the risks involved in our program was conducted for the purpose of determining what procedures and training are needed, identifying issues that can be mitigated, and assisting in setting program goals and protocols.

- A. DUE TO THE FACILITY** The following risks associated with our facility, Red River Ranch, were identified:
- 1. Electrocutation.** The wire, rope and white tape fencing surrounding the pens, pastures, and stalls is electric and has the capability of issuing a small electrical shock to those who come in contact with it. The probability of this occurring is moderate however the level of seriousness is minor. The small electrical shock may cause momentary discomfort but is not life threatening. To mitigate the risk of electrical shock by fencing, NOCO Equine is taking three steps: 1) all participants, guests and riders will be made verbally aware of the risk upon arrival at the facility; 2) The presence of the risk is written in bold typeface in the 'Lesson Information, Barn Rules, and Emergency Plan' document that each rider/participant is required to sign; 3) A sign is placed outside of the pen where NOCO Equine's horses are housed warning visitors of the electric fence.
 - 2. Farm equipment and supplies on site.** Motorized equipment necessary for running and managing a horse farm, such as tractors, golf carts, ATVs, trailers, trucks, heat lamps, weed whackers, mowers, etc., are housed on site. Additionally, chemicals necessary for the operation of the facility such as weed sprays, bug sprays, motor oil, fly sprays, paint thinners, etc. are also housed on site. The presence of these supplies and this equipment may pose a risk to unattended minors on the facility, such as children playing around in the hay shed without permission. The probability of an individual being injured by any of these items is low, however the level of seriousness may be high (ex. a toddler getting into a chemical container). To mitigate the risk of an individual getting harmed by any of these items, NOCO Equine requires that all siblings, guests, participants, and especially minors, stay within sight of the lesson at all times. This is a rule outlined in the 'Lesson Information, Barn Rules, and Emergency Plan' document that each rider/participant is required to sign. This rule will also be verbally communicated upon arrival to the facility.
 - 3. Loss of power.** On occasion, the facility may lose power due to a power outage, electrical concern, or downed power line. Should this occur during a lesson, it is possible that the arena or barn may become too dark to navigate, increasing the risk for tripping or walking into objects. The risk of this happening is low and the level of seriousness is also low. To mitigate the risk of injury due to the loss of power, all riders will be required to dismount their horse(s) promptly. The riding instructor will take control of the horse and escort the rider to his/her parent(s)/guardian(s). The riding instructor will then escort everyone to their vehicles, since the riding instructor knows the terrain and layout of the facility best. All modern phones also come equipped with flashlights. These will be used if such an emergency occurs to help light the way and escort everyone to their vehicles safely.
 - 4. Structure fire.** As with any facility, fire is a risk. The probability of this occurring is low, but the seriousness is high. To mitigate the risk of injury due to fire, NOCO Equine has detailed an Emergency Plan for evacuation of all riders/participants to a safe area on the property. NOCO Equine also expressly prohibits smoking in or near the facility.
 - 5. Uneven terrain.** The driveway and areas surrounding the arena(s), barn, and pens is uneven and has the tendency to become muddy and icy. While this is a normal attribute of most outdoor facilities, this can cause horses and/or people to slip, trip or fall. The slope down to the indoor arena from the barn is of particular concern due to its tendency to become icy and/or muddy. The probability of someone becoming injured due to this risk is low, but the seriousness is moderate. An individual could twist an ankle or fall down in front of a horse that he/she is leading. To mitigate this risk, riders are only allowed to lead/ride

the horse outside of the barn or arena when conditions are deemed safe by the instructor. In cases of excessive mud or ice, the instructor will lead the horse and help escort the rider between the barn and arena.

B. INHERENT TO THE HORSE The following risks were found to be present in our program due to the inherent nature of the horse:

- 1. Dangerous equine behavior.** Horses may at times exhibit dangerous behaviors such as kicking, biting, rearing, bolting, or bucking. NOCO Equine specifically selects horses for use in our program due to their quiet nature and calm personalities. However, these behaviors are inherently present in all horses. The risk of someone being injured from one of these behaviors is therefore low, but the severity is high. To mitigate the risk, no minor is allowed to handle or ride one of NOCO Equine's horses without their express written consent or supervision. Should an incident occur with one of NOCO Equine's horses, the horse will be removed from the program for evaluation.
- 2. Loose horse on the property.** Despite best practices, horses become loose on the property. Loose horses can instigate unwanted behavior in horses being restrained for a lesson, causing the horse to display dangerous behavior as detailed in section B.1 above. The risk of this is low, but the seriousness of this is high should a rider become dismounted due to the horse's unexpected behavior. To mitigate this risk, all lessons take place under the direct supervision and close proximity of the riding instructor. Should a horse become loose in the vicinity of the lesson, the riding instructor will assist the student in dismounting and control the horse until the loose horse has been secured.
- 3. Rider fall.** Horseback riding is an inherently risky sport. Horses are prone to behaviors, movements, reactions, and whims that may cause a rider to come off of the horse. The risk for this is moderate and the severity can be high depending on the nature of the fall. To mitigate the risk of riders becoming injured from falling from a horse, NOCO Equine: 1) Requires all riders, regardless of age to wear an ASTM/SEI certified riding helmet to protect the head in the case of a fall; 2) Requires all riders to wear a boot with a small heel to lessen the risk of the rider's foot becoming stuck in the stirrup; 3) Selects all horses used in the program carefully for their quiet demeanors and personalities; 4) Conducts lessons in arenas with soft-sand footing to help lessen the impact of the fall; 5) Cancels lessons when external conditions such as weather may affect the horse's ability to act appropriately.
- 4. Injury to individual by the horse.** Horses are much larger than us, and even the most well-behaved horse may accidentally step on or knock over an individual. The risk of this happening is low and the severity is moderate. To help mitigate the risk of an individual becoming accidentally injured by a horse simply due to their size and nature, NOCO Equine instructs all riders on the proper way to handle, lead, secure, and move around a horse.

C. INHERENT TO HUMANS The following risks were found to be present in our program due to the inherent nature of humans:

- 1. Sun stroke.** Colorado is known for its strong, hot sunny days. An individual riding in the sun may be prone to sun stroke if care is not taken. While the risk of this is low and the severity is also low, NOCO Equine conducts all summer lessons in the mornings to avoid the heat of the day. Lessons are also typically moved indoors, out of the direct sun, when needed. Participants are encouraged to bring water with them to lessons. An air conditioned bathroom facility as well as hose are also on site if needed to help cool a rider down.
- 2. Medical conditions.** Fainting, heart attack, severe illness, chronic illness, panic attacks, mental disabilities, physical disabilities, etc. can all increase the risk of injury when working with horses. While the risk of an individual succumbing to a medical emergency while handling or riding a horse is low, the severity is high should an emergency happen. To mitigate this risk of serious injury, the riding instructor is certified by the American Heart Association in their Heartsaver CPR AED program. A first aid kit as well as emergency contact information is also kept right inside the door to the tack room. The riding instructor always carries a cell phone to be able to place an emergency call quickly if needed.
- 3. Hypothermia/frost bite.** Horseback riding is an outdoor sport. As such, riders can be subject to severe weather conditions. With this understanding, NOCO Equine cancels lessons when the weather is predicted to be below freezing and/or there is a storm system moving through. With lessons canceled during the most severe weather, the risk of hypothermia/frost bite occurring is low.

D. DEPENDENT ON ACTS OF NATURE The following risks associated with acts of nature were identified:

- 1. Wildfire.** Due to Colorado's low relative humidity and frequent red-flag days, wildfires are of concern. While the facility itself is not located in an area prone to wildfires, grass fires could still occur. The risk

for this is low but the severity is high. The mitigation procedure is the same as that identified in section A.4 Structure fire.

2. **Tornado.** On rare occasions, tornadoes may form in the vicinity of the barn. The risk of this occurring is low but the severity is high. To mitigate the risk of injury due to a tornado, NOCO Equine: 1) Details a plan for what to do in a tornado in their Emergency Plan, 2) Identifies the bathroom of the barn as the safest place to take cover during a tornado; 3) Watches the weather carefully and cancels lessons when there is a threat for tornadoes in the area as documented by the National Weather Service.
3. **Severe weather.** Severe weather such as thunderstorms, dust storms, large pressure drops, hail, lightning, strong winds, etc. are known to affect horse behavior. While a light rain or snow shower may be suitable for lessons, more severe weather is not. The risk of an individual becoming injured by a horse due to severe weather is low but the severity of may be high should a rider become dismounted due to an unexpected behavior. To mitigate the risk of this happening, NOCO Equine will cancel lessons when severe weather is forecast to be in the area. Should a lesson already be in progress when severe weather develops, the riding instructor will assist the rider in dismounting and end the lesson early.
4. **Snakes, wasps, bees, and other pests.** Snakes, wasps, bees, spiders, and other pests are normal occurrences on a farm. The risk of injury from these pests are low, but the severity could be high should an individual incur an allergic reaction due to a bite or a bee sting a horse while a rider is mounted. To mitigate this risk, NOCO Equine supplies first aid equipment on site as well as hydrocortisone cream and Benadryl. Bee hives, known spider webs and snakes will also be removed from the property as identified.