

HOOFPHYSICS

Well Prepared

Together for Our Horses

Dear horse owners,

Every day, our horses rely on us to care for them. Much of that care usually works almost automatically: waterers provide water, feed is delivered, and help can be reached by phone when questions or problems arise.

A prolonged power outage, severe weather or disrupted supply routes can temporarily make these routines much more difficult. I would therefore like to encourage you to make a few preparations together with your stable operator. Clear arrangements can help us remain calm and capable of acting even in unfamiliar situations.

Water comes first

Horses need an adequate supply of clean drinking water that is safe for their health. Check in advance whether your waterers still work without electricity and what alternatives are available if pumps or the mains water supply fail.

Know suitable water sources in your area and the routes leading to them. Rivers or streams may be among the options, but flowing water is not automatically clean or suitable for horses to drink. Water quality, possible contamination and safe access must be assessed beforehand. Steep or slippery banks and strong currents are not suitable watering points.

Stored water and an organised way of bringing water to the stable should, wherever possible, prevent horses from having to travel long distances simply to obtain drinking water.

Plan together before a journey becomes necessary

As long as the horses can be safely cared for at their usual location, there is no need to leave. If relocation genuinely becomes necessary, there should be a known and suitable destination with a secure supply of essentials, as well as the safest possible route. Follow official instructions and local authority guidance.

Avoid setting out alone with your horse. Whenever possible, organise with other experienced people and horses that are compatible with one another. Every horse must be handled safely. A manageable, well-coordinated group makes mutual support easier.

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The weakest horse sets the pace

Allow enough time, regular rest breaks and suitable opportunities for horses to drink. The distance and pace should be based on the animals' age, health and fitness. Older or less resilient horses can be led in the middle of the group, with familiar horses in front and behind, provided they are relaxed in that position. Keep sufficient distance between horses. An experienced accompanying person should watch breathing, gait and possible signs of fatigue. Pace and breaks are determined by the weakest horse.

If a horse shows signs of exhaustion or pain, stop the journey and organise help. Horses that are not sufficiently fit for the route need a different solution planned in advance.

Familiar equipment helps

For horses that are healthy and physically suitable, it may be useful to introduce well-fitting panniers gradually and calmly. If relocation becomes necessary, they could carry lightweight first-aid materials or small emergency water reserves.

Equipment and loads must suit the individual horse, be securely fastened and evenly balanced. Water is heavy: one litre weighs about one kilogram. Carried reserves therefore do not replace a planned water supply. Older, ill or untrained horses should not be given additional loads.

Your own safety comes first

Do not put yourselves at risk by using unclear routes, dangerous waterways or situations that exceed what you and the horses can safely manage. Agree now who will care for the horses if individual owners cannot reach the stable. Keep important information, contacts, meeting points and responsibilities written down on paper.

The enclosed emergency checklist is intended to help you work through these questions together and put sensible preparations in place step by step.

Preparedness begins with a conversation, a realistic look at the supplies available on site, and people who are willing to take responsibility for one another.

Warmly,
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