Equine Evacuation Sites during Emergencies

Watson Lawrence, Senior Extension Agent, Chesapeake
Prepared: September 2005
Updated August 2013

WHY HORSE OWNERS NEED TO BE PREPARED

Disaster preparedness is important for all animals, but it is particularly important for horse owners because of the animal’s size and the requirements needed to shelter and transport them. The most important step in protection of your valued animals is to have a plan in place.

HAVE IMMUNIZATION RECORDS CURRENT

Be sure you have a negative coggins test, as well as a health certificate for interstate travel. A new “Equine Interstate Event Permit (EIEP)”, which became available for the first time in 2013, allows interstate travel of horses with many cooperating states in the southeast U.S. Horse owners may elect to obtain the six-month passport in lieu of a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection that is only good for 30 days. Contact your local veterinarian to obtain.

DEVELOP A PLAN

A plan needs to be in place for either of the following decisions:

Evacuation: Most mistakes made with evacuations are waiting too late to take action. Horse trailers are not very stable in high winds and waiting too late to evacuate can force you to be caught in traffic. Make sure horse trailers are ready for road travel.
**Destination Site:** Having a destination site available is also something that needs to be planned in advance. Networking with other horse owners further inland can offer points of destination away from the storm. Listed below are places that have given tentative approval for accepting horses for short-term boarding with impending hurricanes off the coast.

**Important:** Please call ahead to check the status of available stalls.

**Colonial Downs**
10515 Colonial Downs Parkway  
New Kent County, Virginia 23124  
(804)966-7223 ext. 1040  
http://www.colonialdowns.com/  

1. Colonial Downs offers emergency stalls (12’ x 12’) as space is available.  
2. No fee required; however, boarders are asked to provide their own bedding, feed and stall guards as stalls do not have front gates.  
3. Requires recent coggins test and health certificate for immunizations.  
4. 1,050 permanent stalls on site. Must call for availability.

**Senator Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center**
2900 NC Highway 125 South  
Williamston, N. C. 27892  
(252)792-5802 call main office during business hours  
After business hours contact Durwood Taylor 252-799-7659 or Keith Whitaker 252-809-9762  

1. Senator Bob Martin (EAC) has 456 permanent stall capacity.  
2. Reduced rates of $10/stall/day during evacuation event.  
3. Must provide proof of a current negative coggins test.
4. Primary care required by owner for animals sheltered at the facility (feed, hay, watering of animals and cleaning of stalls).

5. The center requires a minimum of 2 bags of shavings per stall. (Shavings must be purchased on-site at a cost of $5.00 per bag. Please do not bring shavings or bedding from an outside source.)

6. Removal of sheltered animals once the event has subsided.

Virginia Horse Center
487 Maury River Road
Lexington, VA 24450

Contact: Stable Office (Cindy or Linda)
(540) 464-2966
ckelly@horsecenter.org

www.horsecenter.org

1. Negative coggins test required.
2. If crossing state lines, a health certificate from a vet may be required.
3. Charge is $15 per day per horse.
4. Bring shavings, cannot use sawdust.
5. Bring extra buckets, feed, and hay that you have stockpiled for your horse’s evacuation, including a portable first aid kit. Bring your horse’s halter and lead rope.
6. Bring all medications and veterinary supplies.
Airfield 4-H Center  
15189 Airfield Road  
Wakefield, VA 23888  
Melvin Atkinson - Director  
(757) 899-4901  
http://www.airfieldconference.com/

1. Airfield has 100 stalls and can board horses on a first-come, first-serve basis prior to impending hurricane.  
2. Fee would be $15.00/day.  
3. Stall cleaning available for $10/day if requested. Shavings for bedding available for $7.50/bag.  
4. Person must stay on-site to care for horse. Lodging rooms available.  
5. Requirements to be admitted on the grounds would include a negative 12-month coggins test and owner to sign a liability waiver issued by the Airfield 4-H Center.  
6. Airfield 4-H Center is just west of Wakefield and not very distal to the coast, so consider whether this site would provide a secure destination from the storm.

Governor James B. Hunt Horse Complex  
1025 Blue Ridge Road  
Raleigh, N. C. 27607  
Contact: Sheri Bridges-Complex Program Assistant  
(919) 839-4701  
http://www.ncstatefair.org/events/HorseComplex.htm

1. Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. Horse Complex has 485 permanent stalls on site.  
2. Temporary boarding of horses fleeing an impending hurricane as long as space is available. There are horse shows there almost every weekend so the availability may be limited.  
3. Reduced rates of $10/stall/day during evacuation event. Full camper/RV hook-ups available for $25 per night.
4. Requirements to be admitted on the grounds would include a negative 12-month coggins test and all horses to be in good health.

5. Owner responsible for primary care (feed, hay, water, cleaning of stalls twice a day).

6. Shavings - minimum of 2 bags per stall, available on site.

7. Removal of sheltered horses once the emergency event has subsided.

**Sheltering in place:** If evacuation is not possible, a decision must be made whether to confine horses to a shelter or leave them out in pastures. Shelters should be sturdy buildings located on high ground. The following are the most common causes of injury or death as a result of hurricanes:

1. Collapsed barns – owners miscalculated the severity of wind.

2. Electrocution – power lines are often down and are a deadly hazard.

3. Fencing failure – wandering horses may be hit or killed on roadways.

4. Debris - the most likely cause of injury is from flying debris.

Whether to shelter or pasture your horses is dependent on your circumstances. Often, animals released to open, safe pastures, away from overhead power lines and potential debris are able to fend for themselves much better than being in an unsafe shelter. Pastures should be not less than one acre in size. Make sure all animals have some form of identification. If your pastures or shelter do not meet these criteria, you should strongly consider evacuation as your best option.