



Serenity Equine Rescue
and Rehabilitation
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SERENITY EQUINE RESCUE & REHABILITATION BARN RULES AND VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Welcome! This information pack contains all you need to make sure your experience at Serenity is safe and fun.

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BARN RULES

We strive to maintain a happy, safe, and serene environment for the horses who call Serenity home, and those who are interested in helping them recuperate and get ready for new, loving homes. Please read and abide by these barn rules for everyone's safety, well-being, and comfort. Questions? Contact volunteer@serenityequinerescue.com.

All volunteers must acknowledge and abide by these rules.

Farm Hours

- Serenity is a private facility and requires a code for entrance. There is no drop ins allowed and you cannot come to the farm unless you have signed a release form and have an appointment.
- Volunteer hours are anytime between 6:30am and 6:30pm. We start feeding at 6:30am and afternoon feeding is 4:00pm in Winter; 5:30pm in Summer.
- Visitors must make an appointment. On arrival they should be directed to the senior volunteer on site, or to Patricia.
- Please drive no faster than 5mph on farm property. When parking please **do not** drive or park on the grass or block the barn or paddock entrances.

Release Of Liability

- All visitors and volunteers need to understand the risks inherent to an equestrian facility and are required to sign a release of liability in order to be in the barn, arena, or enclosures.
- Our liability sign is posted in our barn and arena. If you do not understand it, please ask.

Age Limits

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- Serenity Equine Rescue strives to ensure the safety of all volunteers, visitors, horses, and staff at all times, therefore:
 - Volunteers 14-18 years of age may only come unaccompanied if they have attended a volunteer orientation session and have parental approval to do so.
 - Volunteers 12-13 years of age must work with parent at the farm, supervised at all times.
 - We regret that we are unable to allow children younger than 12 years of age to volunteer. This age limit is set by our insurance company.

Volunteers Please Sign-In & Out

- So that we know who is on the property at any given time, and in order to track volunteer contributions, please sign in when you arrive and sign out when you leave.
- The sign in sheet is on the table in the volunteer lounge which is the first stall on your left as you enter the barn. Please be sure to close the lounge door when you leave so that the piggies do not get into the garbage.

Pets

- To avoid the risk of incidents, please do not bring pets to the farm unless specifically approved by Patricia.

Barn Safety And Cleanliness

- Keep our barn clean and the aisles clear. Store forks, shovels and buckets safely out of the way in their designated area. Proper storage eliminates tripping hazards and extends the working life of our tools.
- If you get it out, put it away. Trash goes into marked trash bins only. Sweep up hair, hoof dirt and other debris when you are done grooming.

Main Gate

- Always make sure the main gate is closed before proceeding in or out of the farm to prevent animals from wandering onto the road. By law, we are liable if any of our animals is accidentally hit by someone whether they are speeding or have committed any infraction. More importantly, we do not want our animals injured.

Doors/Gates/Fences

- Check stall doors, sliding doors, and paddock gates.
- Paddock gates should remain closed at all times, unless all horses are turned in for the night.
- Tack stall and Feed/Medicine stall doors must be closed and latched at all times!
- Be aware that paddock fences may be electrified – if touched, this will not harm you, but it is definitely uncomfortable, especially when conditions are wet.

No Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs or Firearms will be tolerated on the property at any time.

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- Do not come to Serenity Equine Rescue if you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Safety/Respect

- Do not climb on gates, fences, stalls, etc. No yelling, profanity, aggression or drama please.
- If you notice something that needs repair or looks dangerous, advise Patricia and/or make a note of it on the board, so that we can attend to it.

Supplies

- If you break an item, please let Patricia, or your lead volunteer know, or make a note on the board.
- Tack - Only use items designated for SERR. Return everything to its proper place when you are done with it.
- Medicine Stall - Do not take or use supplies from the medicine/feed stall without permission from Patricia. If you don't have permission to be in the feed room, don't go in.
- Shampoos, detanglers, etc- Please use only what you need and close the items so that they do not leak out and put them away when finished.

Promoting Serenity

- The best way to help us raise funds, recruit new volunteers and advertise adoptable horses is to tell your friends. We welcome new volunteers. Having horse experience is not a requirement.
- You can also "like" us on Facebook (Facebook.com/serenityequinerescue) . Feel free to invite your friends to like or follow us too!

BARN EMERGENCY CONTACTS AND PROCEDURES

- **Patricia: (206) 484-7998**
- **VET – Dr DeWard: The emergency number is on the white board in the volunteer lounge. (Please do not call Dr. DeWard unless you have been given permission to do so. Let the lead volunteer know if there is a problem if Patricia is not available. They are authorized to make the call.**
- **Police / Fire / Emergency # 911**

In the event of an accident or emergency on the farm, stay calm but immediately contact Patricia/or your lead volunteer on site to report the situation, and call 911 in the case of fire or medical emergency. Our location address is 28818 S.E. 216th Way, Maple Valley WA, 98038.

Other useful numbers include:

- King County Sheriff's Office Maple Valley - (206) 296-3883
- ASPCA Animal Poison Control - (888) 426-4435 (fee applies)

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- National Poison Control # - 1-800-222-1222
- King County Animal Care and Control – (206) 296-7387

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

- In the case of a medical emergency, 911 should be dialed immediately. Report the emergency in detail.
- Send someone to the main gate to flag emergency personnel and escort them back to the barn.
- Call Patricia or your lead volunteer and let them know what's happening.
- If emergency first aid or CPR is required, identify who is certified and assist that person as required.

HORSE MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

- Stay calm. Horses can sense fear and become more excitable.
- **Call Patricia immediately.**
- If Patricia is unavailable or off site or the lead volunteer is not available, call Dr. DeWard. The number is on the board in the Volunteer Lounge.
- Call 911, explain the situation. They will determine if we need a sheriff, ambulance or Animal Control. Please reminding the dispatcher to have sirens turned off on arrival (sirens can really frighten already stressed horses).
- Don't try to save the horse yourself. You could become injured, injure the horse, or imperil the horse by delaying rescue.
- Be patient. Because there are far fewer large animal rescue responders than general first responders, it can take longer for experts to reach the scene.
- Do not allow or expect untrained personnel to jeopardize their own personal safety.

FIRE/EVACUATION PLAN

- **In the event of a fire, call 911 immediately.**
 - DO NOT investigate first!!!
- Everyone is to immediately relocate to a safe location (**our designated assembly area is the arena**) and be accounted for.
 - The lead volunteer on site is responsible for headcount and to confirm that someone has called 911.
 - Send somebody to the property gate to flag emergency personnel and escort them up to the barn.

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- If emergency first aid or CPR is required, identify who is certified and assist that person as required.
- Do not enter any building if it is already engulfed in flames.
- If it is safe to enter the barn, evacuate animals starting with the most accessible ones.
 - Do not simply open the stall doors for horses to escape because often they return to the barn or they might run into someone or impede emergency vehicles - it takes 30-60 seconds to halter and lead a horse to an exit.
- Horses that can be captured and moved safely, *without endangering the evacuation of people*, can be taken to the boys pasture and let loose.
 - Bridles or halters must be removed as horses are released into the pasture.
- If a person sees a fire in its beginning stage and feels capable of extinguishing the fire, get the nearest fire extinguisher and proceed to put out the fire.
 - The fire department should be notified that the fire is put out, but requested to come inspect the area to ensure that the fire has been completely extinguished.
- *Remember, your life must take precedence over the barn and even the horses!!*
- If you are unable to extinguish the fire, LEAVE and inform Patricia or your lead volunteer.
- Should circumstances make any of these procedures impractical (i.e. wind conditions, location of fire) Patricia or the lead volunteer shall make necessary modifications.
- ***Fire extinguishers are located (in the Tack room and the Carriage house.)***
 - ***Fire extinguisher operation***
 - Hold upright, pull ring pin
 - Stand back 10 feet and aim at base of fire
 - Squeeze lever, sweep side to side.

VOLUNTEER PROCESSES & PROCEDURES

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Basic Housekeeping:

- All volunteers need to attend an orientation session before regularly volunteering at the farm.
- All volunteers are required to read and abide by our barn rules. Failure to do so will result in you being requested to leave the property.
- We encourage our volunteers to respect each other's time and commitment – if you can't make your usual, or agreed-on, volunteer time please let us know with as much notice as possible. Three days or longer is best. Please email volunteer@serenityequinerescue.com so that we can try and balance workload.
- You are responsible for sending out an email to the volunteers to get coverage for your shift. Do not reply to another email's the subject matter will not reflect what you are needing. ie. Do not respond to the schedule email.
- Coming or going, please ALWAYS wait for the gate to close before leaving. This will ensure that horses, piggies or the dog doesn't get out of the farm.
- Please sign in and out so that we can keep track of who's on the farm at any given time, and how many hours people are putting in.
- Volunteer hours at SERR are generally 6:30am if you are a feeder and/or horse handler to 6:30 pm – the morning feed/turn out starts at 6:30am and the afternoon feed/turn in is around 4:30 pm in Winter and 5:30 pm in Summer.
- There is a porta-potty at the back of the barn for volunteer use – please let us know if it needs to be serviced!
- Please remember that this farm is also our founder's home – be as respectful of it and of Patricia as you would want people in your own home to be.
- If you take it out, put it back. If its trash, please put it in one of the barn trash cans. If you break it, let somebody know by making a note of it on the whiteboard in the barn.
- Familiarize yourself with our emergency contacts and procedures, and if you have any questions at any time, please ask your lead volunteer or Patricia.

Personal comfort if you're working on-site:

- Dress comfortably – if it's cold, dress in layers so you can take them off as you work and warm up. Invest in a good set of gloves to protect your hands – garden gloves or leather gloves work just fine.
- Boots or sturdy shoes that cover your ankle are required. We recommend something waterproof, comfortable and with a good tread for those slippery spots when it rains or is icy. No open toed shoes will be allowed.
- Waterproof jackets (and pants if you like) are good to have as we work rain or shine. A lightweight waterproof jacket and pants that go over your regular clothes are a good idea.
- When the sun's out, bring sunscreen and a hat – a breeze can be deceptive and it's too easy to get sunburned.

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- Bring some water to drink so that you don't get dehydrated.

Working with and around the horses:

- Please remember that we are a rescue facility – that means many of our horses have an unknown or traumatic history, which can make them unpredictable and easily spooked.
- Remain calm around the horses – don't run, yell, tease, throw items around or be aggressive with any of our animals.
- **DO NOT** feed the horses treats or carry any food items in your pockets when working around the farm. **DO NOT** pick up hay and hand feed. Feeding treats results in dangerous behavior such as nipping. A horse that nips or bite is not adoptable, and it takes a long time to break the habit.
- Our horses are fed by weight so adding feed to their diet results in weight gain that is dangerous to their health. It may feel good to feed them, but it is not in the horses' best interest to do so.
- It is a privilege to be able to work with and handle the horses, and we require volunteers to help with barn chores or paddocks for a minimum of three (3) months and that they complete the Horsemanship class that is focused on horse behavior. Those that have demonstrated their commitment to the horses at Serenity will be a priority.
- Regardless of your experience, an evaluation is required for *all* volunteers wishing to handle and/or, groom Serenity horses.
- Basic horsemanship and safety awareness needs to be demonstrated to handle or groom horses. Shadowing a lead that is also a Horse Handler while leading them in/out in the morning/evening is required before you can handle or groom on your own.
- Handling on your own must be approved by Patricia.

FEEDING AND TURN OUT/TURN IN

In the morning:

Our morning feed and turn out happens around 7 am. Horse handlers start with feed and/cleaning the boys loafing shed at 6:30 am. Regular volunteers start the barn at 8am.

Feeding & watering:

- We feed a number of different hays or grasses. Timothy, Alfalfa, and Teff. Please check the Feed Board for the amount of hay for each horse. If you don't know the different hay or grasses, please ask the person in charge or Patricia.
- Some horses get mash – refer to Feed Schedule in the feed room or on the stall/paddock map for latest information.

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Turn out:

- Halters and lead ropes are at the front of the barn or hanging on each horse's stall door.
- Never handle a horse unless you've been cleared to do so.
- If you are at all nervous or unsure about handling a particular horse, let someone else do it.
- Don't wrap the lead rope around your hand or neck, and don't hold on by the halter – if the horse jumps or bolts, you could be badly injured. Always halter and lead the way you have been taught. Being consistent in handling is extremely important.
- When you get to the paddock, walk the horse through the gate, have them stand and remove the halter – halters are never left on. Hang the halter on the gate for use when bringing the horses in for the night.

In the evening – feeding and turn in:

- The horses that are stabled have to come back in, and the horses that stay out have to be fed.
- Before you bring any horses in, make sure they have clean stalls with food as noted on their information on the white plastic sign. Always check that there is clean water in the stall.
- Put hay out for each of the outside horses. Put the hay in the individual loafing shed stalls. Always feed on the mats if the horse is in an open paddock with a tent. Put the hay in the big black buckets.
- Some horses get mash – refer to notes in the feed room or on the stall/paddock map for latest information.

Cleaning Stalls and Paddocks

The stalls are cleaned daily. This means removing all soiled shavings and replacing with fresh shavings; ensuring fresh, clean water; and putting the horses' evening feed out (and closing the stall door when done!).

Implements:

- Picks, brooms, shovels, rakes and wheelbarrows are kept around the side of the barn – please return them there after use.
- Rinse out the wheelbarrows before leaning them up against the side of the barn.
- If you break any implements, please make a note of it on the whiteboard so we can repair or replace as necessary.

Stalls:

- Use a manure pick and/or a broom and shovel to pick all of the soiled litter and move to a pile at the front of the stall.
- Sweep any clean shavings to the back of the stall and sweep the stall floor thoroughly to allow it to dry/air.

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- Transfer the piles of dirty shavings and manure into the box on the tractor to dump in the manure pile.
- Sweep the stall again now that it's had a chance to dry a bit. Sweep out the door track and sweep up any muck that has spilled into the aisle.
- Add shavings – spread these in the back half of the stall, leaving the floor at the front bare. When shavings are bagged, use half a bag per stall. If shavings are loose, fill a wheelbarrow the large wheelbarrow holds enough for two stalls if you pack it. A shovel is the easiest way to transfer shavings from the pile to the barrow.
Horses that are on stall rest, or who have tender feet, as well as mothers with babies, usually get extra shavings or even straw.

Water buckets:

- Buckets will need to be scrubbed regularly – they should be done every Saturday as well as at least twice during the week (Tuesdays and Thursdays).
- Pull each bucket from its stall and empty it into a large wheelbarrow.
- Dump the barrow outside the far end of the barn (near the porta-potty) so it can drain away.
- Take the buckets up to the faucet at the front of the barn and give them a rinse and a good scrub. Don't stack the clean buckets as the dirt from the bottom of the bucket will fall into the other one!
- Put the buckets back in the stalls – be sure to put the buckets for our miniature horses on the floor or the low hook, so they can reach the water.
- Fill each bucket $\frac{3}{4}$ full – don't dip the hose in the water as this can transfer bacteria or viruses between horses.

Feed:

- When you're done, and if you have time, put feed in the stalls. If in any doubt, leave this for Patricia, or a lead volunteer. All hay must be weighed and put against the wall with the corner feeder. DO NOT put the hay under the corner feeder but just beside it.
- Check the salt holders in each stall – if empty, get a new salt brick from the feed room.
- ***Be sure to close and latch the stalls (and the feed room!) so that the pigs and the minis don't get into the feed.***

Runs and Pastures:

- Ideally the pastures and runs get cleaned daily. We pick up manure and old/wet hay to minimize the risk of illness and infection to the horses, as well as to reduce the fly burden in summer.
- Always ensure horses have plenty of fresh, clean water – empty and scrub water troughs if necessary and fill them.

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- Start with the small turnouts on the hill (whichever need cleaning the most) and the loafing sheds.
- In addition to picking up manure, you need to rake up and remove any old or wet hay.
- If someone who is approved to use/skilled with the tractor is available, you can use it to haul the muck; if not then use wheelbarrows.
- Use a broom and shovel to clean the pastures and runs. Make sure you position the wheelbarrow against the fence or building so the horses cannot run into the handles. Horses moving at 30 miles an hour can be impaled.
- Keep track of your tools. Never leave a broom or shovel unattended in the paddock. Serious injury can occur if the horse steps on it.
- Always keep an eye out for hazards in the stalls, turnouts or paddocks – broken fencing, loose nails, anything that can injure a horse – remove anything that poses an imminent threat and report all issues on the whiteboard in the barn.

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Safety And Well Being Of Our Horses

Safety/Health Of Horses:

- Because many of the horses on our farm are rescued, please always keep in mind that their history may have been traumatic and as a result their behavior may be unpredictable.
- Do not run at, yell at, tease, throw or swing items at any of the animals on the farm.
- No restraint devices are to be used on the rescue horses.
- If you are concerned about a health or physical issue with a horse, report it to Patricia immediately and make a note on the barn whiteboard.
- Always immediately report any injuries and note on the volunteer sign in and/or barn whiteboard any changes you notice in a horse's wellbeing (limping, skin/coat changes, obvious fevers, listlessness etc.)

Treats:

Do not give treats to the horses or the pigs.

New Horses:

- New rescues will usually have a "Quarantine" sign on their stall or paddock- please read this sign for restrictions and only handle to bring in/out if instructed to do so - they may require medication, sanitizing, etc.

Stall Cleaning:

- Do not go in and clean a stall with a horse in it unless authorized to do so.

Tied Horses:

- All Serenity horses are trained to "ground tie" which means if you drop their lead they will stand quietly. Never tie a Serenity horse.

Riding Rescue Horses:

- Volunteers do not ride the rescue horses. Serenity has a trainer to do this. It is important that training and riding is consistent and be done by a skilled trainer.

Basic Horsemanship

Riding is only 10% of horsemanship!

1. **Approaching a horse:** with their vision field in mind, always approach a horse where they can see you which is to the side, slowly with un-intimidating but intentional body language so they know you are not a threat. Call their name and drop your head to release pressure on them, then step to the left side to halter them.
2. **Touching a horse:** With their senses in mind, always touch a horse gently – with strokes versus pats or slaps. Move slowly and deliberately, always being sensitive to what they are experiencing.
3. **Feeding a horse:** We do not allow any hand feeding of our horses.
4. **Haltering and leading:** We will demonstrate our preferred way to halter and lead a horse.
5. **Grooming:** We will demonstrate our preferred grooming approaches

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Basic Horsemanship: A Horse's Senses:

A horse's senses are extremely acute, affecting how they think and act. As prey animals, their senses are highly attuned towards detecting danger and predators.

1. **Sight** – horses basically have monocular vision (as opposed to binocular vision like humans), due to the position of their eyes on either side of their head. A horse cannot see behind their hips, and have limited vision within four feet directly in front of them. They are extremely sensitive to what is in front, behind and directly above them. In addition, because of the way the two hemispheres of a horse's brain work, they may grow comfortable with something they can see on one side but react as if it's something completely new when viewed from the other side. This is why it is important to allow a horse to move its head, so it can "see" you with both sides of its brain.
2. **Hearing** – a horse is keenly aware of every sound around them. Ears will move in different directions based on where the sound they are listening to is coming from. Loud noises upset and confuse them, so voice tone should be low and soft, calm and soothing, positive and rewarding.
3. **Feeling/Touch** – horses are extremely sensitive to touch: they can feel a fly landing on their back in a strong wind! They use their feet, the whiskers on the end of their noses, their skin to sense the world around them and to compensate for any blind spots in their vision. Horses are also very intuitive and can feel your energy - good or bad, happy or sad, angry or calm. Soothing strokes are much preferred to pats and slaps, while gentle, calm, intentional touch is far better received than rough, quick or careless contact.
4. **Smell** – horses have a superb sense of smell. They can detect odors that humans cannot, which is probably a good thing! They can tell good water from bad, and which horse has marked a particular spot. They can smell if a predator is near. Horses are also able to identify herd members and familiar people through their sense of smell. Because their sense of smell is so sensitive we encourage you to keep the strong perfumes for date night and not for the barn.
5. **Memory** – horses have incredible memories and retain details of good and bad experiences. They remember people and old herd members. Bear this in mind, and the potentially abusive or neglectful backgrounds some of our horses have experienced, when working with horses. Try to make their future memories good ones.
 - a. Remember: rescued horses are here because they may have experienced something traumatic; this place is their therapy as much as it can be ours. Treat them as you would a human with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Kindness, compassion and consistency are core to their positive rehabilitation and will be most effective in helping them move onto the next part of their journey.
6. **Thinking** – just like us, all horses think and learn differently. Neither horses nor humans function best under stress. When facing a stressful situation, horses and humans will shut down, attempt to leave the stressful environment, resist or even fight if the stress is great enough. Humans may yell at each other but horses resort to a more physical response: sometimes they run away hard and fast, dragging their person along or leaving them

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stranded. They may also whirl, kick, strike, pull back, buck, and dance sideways, rear and a host of other not-so-fun reactions.

Working with our horses shouldn't be a struggle on a regular basis, and it should never involve trying to force our will on our horses. It SHOULD involve teaching ourselves to understand our horses and allowing them to understand us. It should involve teaching them that we can be a trusted and effective leader in our relationship with them. Horses are a herd animal and learn very well by imitating the leaders of the herd.

Horses are learning all the time. As their human partners, we are teaching them good things as well as bad things. It isn't that we want to teach them something bad, but since the horse has no concept of good or bad, he assumes anything we teach him must be the right thing. We don't mean to teach those bad lessons but sometimes we do it out of a lack of understanding about how the horse learns. There is no difference between a good lesson and a bad lesson to the horse. As we work with our horses, they can't discern between the two. Only we know whether it was wrong or right; the horse only knows that he did something in response to what we asked of him. If we discourage a particular behavior, the horse simply learns to do something else. We need to learn how to make that "something else" the RIGHT thing; the RIGHT answers. We must make the right thing easy and the wrong thing difficult so they horse can make the appropriate choice.

Every horse knows more about being a horse than most people know about being human. Unlike humans, the horse has no motivation to get ahead, think badly of another horse, gossip or hold grudges because of words said or deeds done. Many behavioral scientists believe that all babies babble and cry in the same language at birth – their language and behaviors are altered later by their cultural surroundings and the manner in which they are nurtured. But all horses talk in the same language regardless of what country they are from, and no amount of our training ever changes that. They are horses and still speak "horse"; they do not learn to speak or believe differently than their cousins in Mexico, Europe, South Africa or Brazil. And no matter how we influence them, they will still speak "horse."

When we learn how to "speak" to our horses in a way that the horse comprehends – less with words and more with body language – we get better results. Most important, understand that you are always "speaking" to your horse. The messages you have conveyed, however, may not have been what you intended, resulting in confusion and perhaps negative behaviors in the horse, and frustration for you.

Taking the time to learn a better way to "speak" to your horse will make your horse/human relationship a more rewarding one.

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