



CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE HORSE INDUSTRY

REVISED OCTOBER 2009

ORIGINAL VERSION: JULY 2003

JULY 2003

Revised October 2009

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N.B. The Code is not currently being audited by the Australian Horse Industry Council, nor is this organisation providing accreditation for sites. This is a temporary situation due to funding constraints. The Code is still being used as a reference for horse activities throughout Australia.

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE HORSE INDUSTRY

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Australian horse industry is large and diverse. It includes professional and amateur sporting organisations, breed associations, commercial recreational activity operators and education providers. Additionally there are vast numbers of individuals and businesses who use or breed horses for pleasure or professional purposes. The economic impact of these groups and their suppliers is estimated to be \$6.3 billion per annum. (*"The Horse Industry – Contributing to the Australian Economy. A report for the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, June 2001"*)

As well as having a large economic impact, horse related activities make a significant contribution to life style and personal contentment. They are pursued at the Olympic level as well as being enjoyed by casual weekend participants. In addition to their ongoing contribution to economic and social wellbeing, horses and horse activities are also a major part of Australia's heritage.

Despite the size of the horse industry there is not an agreed minimum standard for managing risks related to horse activities. This was highlighted by changes in insurance markets in 2002 / 2003. The lack of a minimum standard for managing risks makes it easier for less satisfactory businesses and organisations to operate within the industry. In turn it is difficult for insurers and members of the public to distinguish between good and bad organisations. While most well established organisations have excellent and effective rules and regulations for the safe conduct of the events that they organise, even these groups may benefit from the establishment of minimum risk management standards.

To allow the adoption of a minimum standard of risk management for horse activities the Australian Horse Industry Council (AHIC), with assistance and funding from the Federal Government, developed this industry Code of Practice. The Code has and continues to assist in addressing the issue of public liability insurance. Hopefully it also enhances the quality of involvement in horse activities experienced by all participants and spectators.

1.2 STRUCTURE

This document sets out the components of the Code of Practice for the horse industry. It is based on a generic model that has been developed by the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs.

Elements of the code are:

- Scope and objectives
- Core rules (the technical requirements clause)
- Monitoring, review and improvement of this code

The code is voluntary i.e. it has no legislative basis. Organisations benefit from the Code by using it as a guide to managing horse related activities.

In addition to this core document, that defines the rules and procedures for operation of the code, there is a range of supporting documents that can be used by associations and organisations that are involved in horse activities. Such documents include checklists, guidance on how to meet requirements, help with risk assessment, and advice on training.

NOTE: These supporting documents are available on the Australian Horse Industry Council website.

2 SCOPE

This Code of Practice for the operation of horse related activities sets out requirements that are relevant to the health and safety of spectators, participants and staff and the provision of suitable facilities, including buildings and equipment. It includes a number of provisions relating to the health, hygiene, amenity and safety of the horses but is not a complete horse welfare code.

This Code should not conflict with any statutory requirements. Where there is conflict or overlap, statutory requirements take precedence. Conversely, compliance with this code does not negate the necessity for complying with relevant regulations.

This Code excludes competition rules for particular events and consideration of non-horse related risks.

3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Code of Practice are:

- To assist in the development of a high standard of risk management throughout the horse industry
- To address, and facilitate the control of, the safety of competitors, participants, and spectators
- To encourage compliance with relevant legislation
- To develop a culture of continuous improvement.

This Code sets out minimum requirements but it is expected that all organisations will strive to achieve a level in excess of these requirements.

4 ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Abbreviations

For the purposes of this code the following abbreviations apply.

AHIC Australian Horse Industry Council

Definitions

For the purposes of this code the following definitions apply.

Term	Meaning
Accident	An occurrence causing physical harm or damage to persons or property, brought about unintentionally.
Activity	The pursuit and/or undertaking of sporting or leisure interests involving horses (e.g. a trail ride, dressage competition, horse racing, pageant, rodeo).
Arena	An area specifically designed or prepared for competition, tuition, training or performance based activities involving horses.
Driver	A person in control of a horse drawn vehicle.
Event	An organised series of activities held in (usually) the one place at the one time. Events have a defined start and end and may involve both participants and spectators. Payment for entrance may or may not be required.
Hazard	An inanimate object or situation capable of causing an accident (e.g. rocks, slippery surface)
Horse	Includes but is not limited to horse, galloway, hack, pony, mule, jenny, donkey and other equines

Horse hire	Provision of a horse to a customer for a fee.
Incident	An occurrence which has resulted in, or if repeated could lead to, damage or injury to property or persons.
Instructor	A person providing tuition in horse related activities.
Manager	The person in charge of running horse related activities, events and/or the facilities in which these activities are conducted. Includes, for example, event managers, managers of commercial trail riding establishments, or organisers of special performances.
Organisation	A business, not for profit club or association or other entity that conducts an event or activity.
Participants	Individuals who are participating in an activity and are riding, driving, or leading a horse. They include competitors, paid performers, pupils and customers.
Premises	The buildings and grounds (including associated facilities) used by participants and spectators for, during or in the course of activities or events.
Rider	A person on a horse and who is responsible for controlling the horse.
Spectators	People watching, but not participating in, activities. Includes families, friends and members of the general public.
Staff	A generic term applied to persons working under the direction of (or with) a manager. It includes individuals who are volunteers or who are employed full time or part time. The term also includes officials who may be responsible for different aspects of an event or activity.
Trail ride	An organised recreational ride that operates outside of enclosed areas.
Tuition	Providing organised learning, on a paid or unpaid basis, to a pupil. Includes but is not limited to: commercial coaching, riding schools, club instruction, and clinics.

5 TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1 GENERAL

These technical requirements are aimed at minimising risks to persons or property that may be injured or damaged as a consequence of horse activities.

The main horse related risks include:

- A fall from a horse due to actions or poor control by the rider.
- An uncontrolled action by a horse (e.g. kicking, biting, striking or pulling back)
- A fall by horse and rider due to adverse conditions (e.g. poor arena preparation, slippery surface).
- A fall from a horse due to an unpredictable incident (e.g. loose dog scaring the horse).
- A fall from a horse or other accident due to inadequate gear (e.g. tack failing, footwear failing to release the rider).
- Interaction between a horse and/or rider with a third party (e.g. a road accident).

- A driver falling from a horse drawn vehicle.

And the main consequences are:

- Injuries including soft tissue injuries and fractures to limbs and body.
- Injury to the rider or driver's head from a fall.
- Injury due to a horse falling on the rider or other person.
- Injury to spectators (or a third party) from uncontrollable or unpredictable actions by a horse (e.g. a kick, car accident).
- Death from falls, kicks and crushing.
- Damage to property (e.g. damage to a vehicle from a horse kicking the vehicle).

The likelihood of these incidents occurring is dependent on the nature of the activity involving horses. While this code addresses the majority of common risks, managers should be aware of the unpredictable nature of horses, and risk planning should take this unpredictability into account.

The requirements of this code relate to the use of horses and the need to control or prevent unintended interactions between horses, people and property. In addition to the horse caused risks, there are a number of other associated risks where horses are present. These include (but are not limited to):

- Injury due to physical conditions (e.g. slips, trips, falls)
- Environmental injuries (e.g. sunstroke, insect bites)
- Property damage (e.g. a car crash)

5.2 INTERPRETATION

When reading this code, individuals should be aware of the structure and format of the requirements, and the implications for their interpretation and application.

The following terms have specific meanings:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| <i>Must</i> | A mandatory requirement of this code. An individual or organisation has to comply with the requirement to claim compliance |
| <i>Should</i> | Recommended but not mandatory. Individuals or organisations do not have to comply with these suggestions, but to do so would represent good practice. |

NOTE: Explanation of the requirement, or examples of how the requirement can be met.
Does not contain requirements.

The Technical Requirements are organised into two parts:

<i>General requirements</i>	Requirements that must be met by all organisations or managers.
<i>Additional requirements</i>	Requirements, additional to the general requirements, which apply to organisations or instructors offering the specified activities in the specified sectors.

It is not intended that non-compliance with these requirements should necessarily be interpreted as a failure of duty of care. Further it is recognised that organisations and individuals may satisfy their duty of care in ways that may not be consistent with this code.

5.3 WAIVERS AND RISK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Signed declarations and contractual arrangements (e.g. waivers, indemnity forms, disclaimers etc.), between a participant and an organisation, can be used to limit the legal liability of the organisation in the case of loss or injury experienced by the participant. Legislation supporting these declarations and contracts varies between the States and Territories of Australia. The AHIC advises organisations wishing to use waivers etc. to seek expert advice in the State or Territory in which they operate.

Regardless of specific legislation, signed declarations etc. can assist in management of risks. Firstly if participants are properly informed of the risks of an activity they may modify their behaviour accordingly. Also by being required to acknowledge the risks of a particular activity or event, the participant cannot claim to have been unaware of these risks. Finally, by including in the declaration the participant's self assessment of their capability, claims resulting from mismatch between horse and rider may have a defence (e.g. the participant signed that he was an experienced rider, so he received a horse that was suitable to that level).

It is a requirement of this code that managers be satisfied that all participants are aware of the inherent risks of horse activities prior to participation commencing.

Horse activities involve a number of inherent risks. By their nature inherent risks cannot be eliminated by the exercise of reasonable care and skill, without altering integral aspects of the activity. For example the only way to totally eliminate the risk of a rider falling from a horse would be to stop the rider getting on the horse. Inherent risks often manifest because of the unpredictability of a horses reaction to such things as sounds, sudden movements, unfamiliar objects and interaction with other horses. They also manifest because of an inability of riders to follow the movements of a horse while riding, which can lead to a rider falling from the horse.

The degree of inherent risk will vary with the nature of the activity. For example the inherent risks of horse racing are much greater than the inherent risks of dressage riding. While it is not possible to totally eliminate inherent risks, all reasonable steps should be taken to minimise them without unduly compromising the activity.

If services are not rendered with due care and skill, risks that are not inherent to the activity arise. By way of example, rendering services without due care and skill can include but is not limited to:

- providing equipment that is faulty
- not taking reasonable steps to ensure that premises are suitable for the purpose for which they are intended
- hiring dangerous horses
- failing to make reasonable and prudent efforts to ensure that horses hired to participants are suitable for the participant's ability
- committing an act or omission that constitutes wilful or wanton disregard for the safety of the participant or spectator (which causes injury) or
- intentionally injuring the participant.

It is the opinion of the AHIC that participants in horse activities should be made aware of and accept responsibility for the inherent risks of horse activities. However, the AHIC does not support contractual arrangements, between organisations and participants, that lead to organisations not being liable for injury to a participant as a result of the organisation rendering services without due care and skill.

Despite not supporting the use of the aforementioned contractual arrangements, the AHIC accepts that it may be an economic necessity for many businesses and organisations, accredited to this code, to enter into these arrangements. Further, when they do, it is in the interests of all concerned that they do so while complying with the requirements of this code.

5.4 LEGISLATION

This code should not conflict with any statutory requirements. Where there is conflict or overlap, statutory requirements take precedence. Conversely, compliance with this code does not negate the necessity for complying with relevant legislation.

This code does not specifically address requirements under state and local government legislation, although it is a general requirement of this code that all relevant legislation be complied with. Since state and local government requirements differ widely from location to

location, managers are advised to check carefully with the relevant authorities and not rely on hearsay or previous practice.

All horse activities should consider animal welfare acts, land transport codes and bio-security considerations

Additionally, a list (not exhaustive) of the legislation that is most applicable to horse related activities and premises includes:

- Trade Practices Act
- Workplace Occupational Health & Safety
- Environmental Protection
- Hazardous chemicals
- Planning Ordinances
- Child protection legislation
- Fire Regulations
- Employment awards
- Health regulations
- Animal welfare
- Building regulations

5.5 IMPLEMENTATION

This code applies to a wide range of situations and the necessary actions by managers (and staff) to satisfy their duty of care, and meet the requirements of this code, will also vary widely. Consequently managers should assess individual situations in relation to the requirements in this code and take those steps that are reasonable and practical to minimise the occurrence of accidents.

Requirements for horses and horse and rider equipment are an example of how the necessary actions by managers to satisfy duty of care will vary from one situation to the next. The actions necessary to satisfy duty of care will be different when the horse and/or equipment are supplied by the participant as opposed to being supplied to the participant.

As a guideline, for horse and rider equipment, as a minimum it would be expected that:

- 1) Where a participant hires a horse it is the responsibility of the hirer to ensure that the relevant requirements of this code are followed with the exception and proviso that:
 - a) the hirer is not responsible for accidents caused by defects of equipment supplied by the participant; and
 - b) the hirer has inspected, or is otherwise satisfied, that any equipment supplied by the participant will meet the requirements of this code.
- 2) Where a participant supplies their own horse and equipment, managers should:
 - a) Have a set of rules or guidelines in relation to the relevant requirements of this code.
 - b) Have a reasonable expectation that the rules or guidelines will be followed.

- c) When breaches of the rules or guidelines are apparent take appropriate action to correct them.

To create a reasonable expectation that rules and guidelines will be followed, formal procedures may be necessary. Such procedures should be relevant to the age and experience of the participant and the nature of the activity. The procedures may include inspection of horse and participant equipment by managers, or their staff, to determine compliance with this code. (In the case of young or inexperienced competitors and/or high risk events, the need for some form of inspection, or other means to endeavour to ensure that equipment supplied by the participant meets the requirements of this Code, is increased. Conversely, the need to inspect equipment of competent adult riders, not engaging in higher risk activities, is reduced or absent.)

5.5.1 HORSE AND RIDER EQUIPMENT

General

- 1) Properly fitted helmets that provide an adequate level of protection against physical trauma to the head must be worn by:
 - a) All riders and
 - b) All participants (including drivers, grooms and passengers) engaged in speed (timed) or other high risk driving activities.

Helmets that comply with AS/NZS 3838, or ASTM F1163 and are less than five years old from the date of manufacture are deemed to provide an adequate level of protection to the wearer in all circumstances. Helmets that have had significant impacts (i.e. where the strength and integrity of the shell is likely to have been compromised) or have been otherwise structurally damaged must not be used.

NOTES:

There are inherent risks in horse activities. Head injuries caused by a fall are frequent. Consequences of a fall could be death or permanent disability and helmets have been shown to significantly reduce this likelihood.

'Properly fitted' includes use of the chinstrap that is secured and firm.

Compliant helmets will have a 'certification' or 'compliance' mark on the helmet.

Helmets normally have the date of manufacture marked on the helmet. AS/NZS 3838 advises that in general helmets have a usable life of 5 years, and those that are used very frequently may require earlier replacement (Organisers may consider it appropriate to have exemptions from this requirement for activities where the 'character' or conduct of a specific activity may be compromised. (E.g. performances, historical pageants, vaulting) It is recommended that if this decision is made those involved sign appropriate waivers.

- 2) Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times when riding. Where stirrups are used this footwear must enable the uninhibited removal of the foot from the stirrup iron, especially in the event of a fall from a horse. The footwear must also hinder the foot sliding forward and through the stirrup iron, which may result in a rider's foot or leg being caught in the stirrup. Additions to stirrups that achieve the same purpose are an acceptable alternative.

- 3) When handling horses (i.e. not riding) footwear must be worn that provides protection to the top of the foot in the event of a horse stepping on the foot.

NOTE: Boots are preferred. Open toed sandals and thongs provide minimal or no protection and should not be worn.

- 4) For the purpose of minimising discomfort and avoiding breakage or malfunction of equipment that may put riders at risk, all equipment (e.g. saddles, bridles) used with the horse must be matched to the activity being undertaken, in good repair and correctly fitted.

NOTE: 'Matched to the activity' means that stock saddles would not normally be used for jumping, racing saddles for trail rides and so on.

Additional requirements for horse hire.

- 5) Minimum clothing requirements are full-length trousers and a sleeved shirt (short sleeves acceptable) to offer protection from physical injuries or distress to the rider (e.g. sunburn, rubbing and grazes). Staff are responsible for ensuring that all participants engaged in trail riding have adequate protection from the environment taking into account reasonably foreseeable weather conditions and the distance from shelter.

NOTE: Adequate protection should be assessed in relation to the duration of the ride. For example an overnight ride into high altitude areas will have different requirements to a one-hour ride in the same area.

- 6) Saddles must be securely attached to the horse in a manner that keeps the saddle properly and securely in place. A saddle must be secured by at least two points of attachment (e.g. double-buckle girth, girth and surcingle) or by a double-wrapped latigo.
- 7) Items such as bags, cameras and loose jewellery that could become entangled in a manner that may cause an accident, must be carried in a way that will minimise the chance of this happening.

5.5.2 PREMISES

General

- 1) Managers responsible for the day-to-day operation of premises must ensure that those premises comply with relevant state and local government safety regulations before allowing activities or events to take place on the premises.
- 2) When activities or events are conducted at premises managed by a third party, the manager of those activities or events must determine whether the premises comply with relevant state and local government safety regulations before allowing the activities or events to proceed. If compliance cannot be determined, or it is found that the premises are not compliant, activities or events should only proceed after the manager of the activities has undertaken a documented risk assessment of the relevant areas of the premises and is satisfied that events and activities can be safely managed.

- 3) Managers must, as far as practicable, ensure areas designated for public use and areas designated for activities are free of obvious hazards and are fit, proper and safe for the purpose for which they are intended. Information that identifies hazards that cannot be removed should be available to participants and spectators. (e.g. signs, barriers or other warnings)
- 4) In consideration of the nature of the activity and the likelihood and consequences of a horse escaping from the premises, perimeter fencing must be installed and/or other measures must be taken, that will discourage horses from attempting to jump out of or otherwise escape from the premises. Measures others than fencing may include secure tethering, internal fencing or a set of operational procedures that staff and participants should comply with.

NOTE : The objective of the requirement is to ensure, as far as possible, that a horse does not escape onto a roadway. For example, if the premises are located near busy roadways there is a heightened need for effective perimeter fencing. Conversely, events held in remote locations may not require the use of perimeter fencing. Factors to consider in determining the nature of the fencing is the type of activity being undertaken on the premises (e.g. a pony show compared to horseracing), the likely actions of an uncontrolled horse and operational procedures employed to prevent horses escaping.

- 5) In consideration of the nature of the activity, and the likelihood and consequences of:
 - a) a horse escaping from the arena and causing an accident or
 - b) spectators including children gaining access to the arena and being injured

Arenas must be fenced and/or surrounded by a physical space that minimises the possibility of uncontrolled interactions between horses and spectators. Arena fencing must also be designed to minimise the chance of a rider or horse injuring themselves.

- 6) To minimise the occurrence of uncontrolled interaction between horses, vehicles and people there must be designated areas for different activities (e.g. float-parking, mounting yards, spectating etc).

NOTE : There are a number of operational factors to consider when determining how premises should be designed to prevent uncontrolled interactions between horses and people. These include but are not limited to:

- The nature of the activity including the speed and number of horses involved.
- The likelihood of a horse being uncontrolled.
- The proximity and density of spectators.
- The presence of marshals and/or use of signs warning spectators of hazards.

- 7) Appropriate first aid and/or medical facilities must be present and available at each activity or event. Such requirements may be specified by the occupational health and safety regulations of the state in which the premises at which the activity or event is being conducted. A 'moderate' risk level first aid kit is the minimum requirement for activities and events. The kit must be as close as practical to the activity areas. All Officials and staff are to be made aware of the location of the kit.
- 8) An effective means of communicating with emergency services must be available at all times. This must be as close as practical to the activity areas. Staff are to be made aware of the location of the communications link.

NOTE : For activities or events that occur in remote or 'bush' locations, a satellite phone or EPIRB may be required to maintain effective communications.

Additional requirements for horse hire

- 9) Arena fencing must be of a height and nature that acts as a physical and visual barrier to discourage horses from attempting to jump or otherwise break-out of the arena. The fencing must be designed to minimise the chance of a rider and/or horse injuring themselves (minimum of 1 m for beginner riders). Arena fences must not be constructed from star pickets, barbed wire, ringlock, rope, pigtail or electrified materials.
- 10) Sign(s) warning members of the public that horse activities may be dangerous must be prominently displayed.

5.5.3 STAFF

General

- 1) Managers must ensure that staff involved with horses are able to carry out their duties competently and manage interactions between horses and people so that accidents, either to themselves, participants or other persons, are minimised.

NOTE : Staff that are indirectly involved with horses (e.g. gate attendants controlling people movements in the proximity of horses) should be provided with basic instruction in horse behaviour and safe behaviour for people in the proximity of horses.

- 2) Managers must ensure that staff not involved with horses are capable of carrying out their duties both effectively and safely.
- 3) Managers must have an induction process for new staff. The primary objective of the induction process is to ensure that staff are aware of safety, emergency and operating procedures for the activities or events being undertaken.
- 4) Managers are responsible for on-going staff training in operational, safety and emergency procedures.

NOTE : Emergency procedures should include as appropriate: fire control, evacuation, bush fires, storm, flooding, loose horse, falls from a horse, serious injuries, stand collapse and similar risks that may be identified.

Additional requirements for horse hire and tuition

- 5) Staff (including trail-ride leaders) directly in charge of horse hire or tuition activities must have current and relevant qualifications from a recognised organisation relative to the activity they are supervising.
- 6) Instructors must be a minimum of 18 years old and have level 2 first aid qualifications.
- 7) Instructors 'in-training' must be:
 - a minimum of 16 years old, must have Level 2 first aid qualifications.
 - They must be enrolled in and actively participating in an accredited horse instructor program with a recognised training provider.
 - must be under the direct visual supervision of qualified instructors.

- 8) Staff responsible for the allocation of horses must have a comprehensive knowledge of all available horses specifically in relation to their suitability for participants.
- 9) Instructors working with children must have current police checks, or WWC cards as required by state legislation

5.5.4 HORSES

General

- 1) Managers must have policies and procedures for addressing (e.g. controlling or preventing) the inhumane treatment of horses.

NOTE : As a guide inhumane treatment can be to:

- Whip or beat a horse excessively
- Subject a horse to an electric shock (excluding electric fences)
- Use spurs that puncture or tear skin
- Jab the horse in the mouth with the bit excessively or persistently
- Mount or remount an exhausted, lame or injured horse
- Hypersensitise any part of a horse
- Leave a horse without adequate food, drink, or exercise
- Excessively exercise a horse

- 2) If it becomes apparent that the safety of individuals (e.g. participants, spectators) is compromised by the presence of a horse that shows dangerous or aberrant behaviour, staff must take all necessary action to identify, isolate and/or control the offending horse.

NOTES: Appropriate action could include:

- Securely isolating the horse from spectators and participants
- Removing the horse from the premises
- Imposing special conditions of use (e.g. allocate the horse to mature and capable riders, limiting participation to certain classes, providing additional staff or stewards).

A duty of care exists to ensure the safety of participants and spectators. Where riders bring their own horse the manager cannot simply dismiss the problem as being 'the responsibility of the horse owner'. Managers of an event could be held responsible where it was clearly apparent that a horse posed a risk.

Additional requirements for horse hire

- 3) Horses known to behave dangerously must not be permitted to undertake an activity.
- 4) To avoid discomfort to the horse, horses provided to participants should be groomed before saddling. Particular care should be taken to remove sweat and dirt from areas under the saddle, girth and bridle.
- 5) Horses that must not be hired include:
 - horses that do not yet have their central adult incisors in wear;
 - mares that are more than 8 months pregnant, or lactating and in the first 3 months after foaling;
 - horses unfit because of advanced old age; and
 - horses known to be, or suspected of being, injured, lame or ill, except as advised by a veterinary practitioner.

- 6) Each manager is to keep records for horses hired to participants. These records must include as a minimum:
- When the horse was used and who was the rider
 - Any incidents relating to the use of the horse
 - The training and competence of the horse.

5.5.5 OPERATIONS

General

- 1) Effective measures must be taken to minimise the occurrence of uncontrolled interaction between persons, horses and vehicles. Managers must have policies and procedures for permitting or restricting access to areas designated for horse activities.

Appropriate policies and procedures must include:

- a) separation of vehicles belonging to the public from horses;
- b) separation of vehicles belonging to the public from participant's vehicles and floats;
- c) safe vehicle entry and exit from any public road
- d) safe conduct of horse riding, driving or leading on access ways that are also used by vehicles; and
- e) safe conduct of horse riding, driving or leading on access ways that are also used by pedestrians.

NOTE : A combination of signs, temporary and permanent fences or barriers or marshals may achieve this.

- 2) Areas designated for spectators must be clearly separated from areas designated for horses. Separation is most likely to be achieved by fencing. Where fencing is not practical, and there is a significant likelihood of uncontrolled interactions occurring, alternate means must be provided for avoiding these interactions.

NOTE : Alternatives to fencing can include temporary barriers, a physical space, marshals and/or appropriately placed signs.

- 3) If spectators are permitted to have access to areas designated for horse activities, clear and easy to understand information must be reasonably available advising of the potential risks associated with horses and the relevant activities. Such advice must include any restrictions applying to behaviour, prohibited areas or specific actions that may lead to injuries.

NOTE : Staff could provide advice in the form of signs, notices, or in public address announcements. "Reasonably available" means that the information is readily brought to the notice or attention of spectators.

- 4) Movement of pedestrians, horses and vehicles must be managed with the objective of minimising incidents.

- 5) Managers must be satisfied that, prior to activities commencing, participants (and when the participant is less than 18 years of age their parent or guardian) are aware of the inherently risky nature of horse activities.

NOTES: This is not a requirement for a formal waiver, merely advice about the risks associated with horses and horse activities. Prominently positioned signs or appropriate declarations signed by the participant (or their parent or guardian) may be necessary to meet the requirements of this clause.

- 6) If staff form the opinion that a horse and its rider pose an unduly high risk to themselves, other persons or other horses, actions must be taken to prevent that horse and rider combination continuing in that activity.

- 7) All:—

- a) accidents (physical injuries);
 - b) serious incidents (near misses) where there is no actual physical injury;
 - c) incidents which may have the potential for psychological trauma (e.g. a horse bolting); and
 - d) incidents involving property damage;
- that are brought to the attention of staff, or that require treatment by staff, are to be recorded in an incident report.

- 8) The manager must review incident reports as soon as practicable after the incident and appropriate action must be taken to rectify the cause. On a regular basis all incidents should be reviewed for trends and appropriate corrective action taken to reduce the likelihood of similar incidents recurring. Reviews and actions taken are to be recorded. Incident reports are to be retained for a period as required by local state or territory legislation.

NOTE : Many insurance claims arise three or more years after an accident and claims relating to children may arise much later than this. An incident report can provide invaluable evidence of what actually occurred, rather than relying on memory or possible exaggerated allegations. Names and addresses of witnesses are also important and should be recorded. Insurance companies may require records to be retained for a longer period

- 9) The ratio of staff to participants and spectators must be at a level that:
- a) allows adequate supervision of all participants and spectators;
 - b) minimises potential risks to spectators and other members of the public; and
 - c) allows a rapid and adequate response to emergency situations.

NOTE : The actual ratio of staff to spectators may vary greatly between individual events.

- 10) Managers must have a set of procedures that address the issue of a participant or member of the public failing to comply with a reasonable direction, the intention of which is to prevent possible injuries or accidents. Key staff are to be advised of such procedures and, where appropriate trained in specific responses.

- 11) Managers must establish and disseminate safety and emergency procedures.

- 12) Participants must be advised of their responsibilities in relation to:

- a) the operating rules and procedures to be followed;
- b) maintaining their own safety;
- c) ensuring the safety of spectators; and
- d) maintaining the welfare of the horses that they ride.

- 13) At least one nominated first aid officer must be in attendance at any activity or event. The first aid officer must have a current Senior First Aid certificate, or recognised equivalent.

- 14) Where activities are being conducted on public roadways, the requirements of statutory authorities (e.g. Local Government, Roads and Traffic Authorities) must be complied with prior to the activity commencing.
- 15) The manager must maintain and comply with current agreements with the land managers responsible for the land on which activities, including trail rides, take place.
- 16) Dogs must either be secured or absent from all horse activity areas, except in activities involving working dogs.

Additional requirements for events

- 17) Free and unobstructed access to the event site(s) must be available for access and egress of emergency vehicles.
- 18) At the completion of each event a de-briefing session should be undertaken with, at least, senior staff. The objective of this briefing session is to identify problems, their resolution and areas for improvement for future events. The identified areas for improvement must be incorporated into the planning for the next event.
- 19) Risks associated with the event must be evaluated prior to the event commencing. Appropriate measures must be instituted to control the identified risks.

NOTES:

- A member of the organising committee, an experienced staff member, or an independent specialist could be appointed as a Risk Manager. The Risk Manager could hold other roles, as long as their risk assessment is independent and unbiased.
- The requirements in this code should be used as a basis for the risk treatment.

- 20) Where sub-contractors are retained for an event, the manager should ensure the sub-contractors have been appropriately contracted.

Additional requirements for tuition activities

- 21) Prior to commencing tuition, instructors must inspect areas of the premises where they instruct to determine whether they comply with the requirements of this code. If they do not, activities should not proceed until the instructors are satisfied that the activities can be safely managed and participants have been advised of any potential hazards and/or risks.

Additional requirements for horse hire activities

- 22) To ensure there is a reasonable expectation that participants will not fall from a horse, or be otherwise injured:
 - a) All horses provided to participants must be allocated on the basis of suitability of the horse relative to the size and ability of the participant.
 - b) The participant's levels of skill, knowledge and experience with horses must be ascertained and assessed.

- 23) Equipment must be checked by a qualified staff member before riding commences
- 24) Riders must mount their horse for the first time in a secure area that has a surface that minimises the risk of slipping and is kept free from obstructions.
- 25) Horses must be held by a staff member when a rider is mounting for the first time. The stirrup leathers must be checked by a staff member and, as necessary, adjusted to an appropriate length.
- 26) A staff member must check the stirrup iron to ensure that it is the correct size for the riders shoe
- 27) Participants must demonstrate an ability to control their horse before they can commence a trail ride.

NOTE: This may be achieved through observing each rider's control of the horse in a series of movements. The rider should demonstrate the actions of moving the horse off at a walk on cue, stopping and turning. Once the trail leader is satisfied that the rider can demonstrate these basic principles, the ride can depart from the secure area.

- 28) The ratio of staff to participants must be a minimum of:

- a) 1:8 for tuition
- b) 1:6 for trail riding, with a minimum of 2 staff members. On any trail ride at least one staff member must be qualified, the other(s) must be in training or already qualified. There must be a minimum of 2 qualified staff members for **any** group of children or beginner riders.

NOTES: Staff and instructors should assess each situation and adjust ratios accordingly as a higher ratio of staff to riders may be required in some circumstances. In determining this ratio, consideration should be given to:

- The experience, ability and age of the participants.
- The nature of the activities.
- The terrain or course.
- The distance to and/or accessibility of emergency services.

- 29) On trail rides, clients less than 10 years old must be on a lead rope held by a qualified staff member (either riding a horse or on foot). This staff member cannot be counted in the normal ratio of staff to clients for that trail ride. If an appropriate mount is available, a child under 10, who demonstrates an ability to control their mount due to their previous experience, may ride off a lead rope.

NOTE: During a trail ride a horse may be attached on a lead rope held by a staff member due to the concerns for the safety of its rider even though this alters the effective ratio of staff to riders

- 30) A staff member must only lead one rider at a time on a lead rope (whether on foot or on horseback).

31) Staff directly in charge of trail rides must:

- a) Ensure that all participants understand how to apply the basic riding aids to make a horse stop, turn and move forward
- b) Ensure that all participants understand the commands that will be used throughout the ride and adequately warn participants when changes of pace, direction or terrain occur
- c) Have a contingency plan for sudden weather changes that may affect the activity, and identified access or strategies for response by emergency services
- d) Ensure that participants have adequate protection from the environment taking into account foreseeable weather conditions.
- e) When the ride traverses public roads, in order to avoid an accident involving riders and other users of the public road, staff must explain to riders basic safety and riding procedures to be followed when riding along the road.

32) There must be a minimum of two people with current first aid qualifications on all trail rides.

5.5.6 AGISTMENT.

1) Operators must ensure that there is a contract between the operator and the agistee that covers:

- f) Agistee responsibilities
- g) Veterinary care
- h) Accounts and charges
- i) Rules and procedures that include reporting of incidents and safety issues as soon as practicable and reasonable after they occur or become apparent.

5.5.7 DOCUMENT AND RECORD MANAGEMENT

Documented procedures and associated forms should be controlled by the organisation by either issue date and/or version number to ensure that only the current versions are in use.

Records should be legible and stored in a manner to ensure their accessibility and to prevent their deterioration. Some records may need to be secured and retained for extensive periods as indicated in state and federal legislation.

6 REVIEW OF THE CODE

To ensure that HorseSafe is a 'living document' at intervals to be determined by the AHIC, the AHIC will review the code

Objectives of the review are to:

- Continually improve the code to ensure it reflects current attitudes and values
- Ensure it reflects new trends and developments in horse handling and equipment (i.e. technical requirements).
- Include new developments in risk assessment and risk management, particularly in the areas of participant and spectator safety.

Inputs to this review process will include:

- Submissions from stakeholders in the horse industry (e.g. associations, government bodies).
- Submissions from individuals.
- Legislative changes.

The review will be advertised and submissions invited.

The review will be undertaken by a specially convened working group with members representing:

- the AHIC;
- the HorseSafe Committee;
- horse associations in the commercial, sporting and not-for-profit areas; and
- government (state and/or federal).

The working group may recommend an amendment to the Code. Any proposed amendment will be submitted to the full Board of the AHIC for consideration.

If approved, the AHIC will update the code and notify relevant associations of the changes.

7 DISCLAIMER

The AHIC believe that the technical requirements and other information contained in this Code are a useful aid to assist organisations conduct horse activities safely. However this Code is not intended to be a complete guide for the safe conduct of horse activities. Nor is this Code intended to seek to replace those rules and guidelines of organisations that are designed to protect participants and spectators of horse activities. Further, no warranty is made as to the accuracy or reliability of any opinions or recommendations or other information contained in this document, or decisions pertaining to the operation of this Code of Conduct, and to the maximum extent permitted by law the AHIC disclaims all liability and responsibility for any direct or indirect loss or damage which may be suffered by any organisation or person through relying on anything contained in, omitted from or pertaining to the operation of this Code of Practice.

8 CODE OF ETHICS

8.1 PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY

Organisations involved in horse activities shall

- Ensure that their professional actions and their general conduct help maintain the prestige of horse related activities and contribute to the quality and responsibility of horse operations.
- Seek opportunities to be of service to their community in matters relating to the horse industry.
- Help create within the community an awareness and appreciation of the beneficial impact that horse related activities have on society.
- Provide the community with information that will assist it in formulating policies and making decisions on matters affecting horse activities.
- Within the limits of their responsibilities, ensure that areas of scenic or recreational significance, special scientific or archaeological sites, and the natural environment are respected, and that the requirements of land managers are followed.

8.2 RESPONSIBILITY TO INDIVIDUALS

Organisations involved in horse activities shall:

- Provide their services conscientiously and competently.
- Not breach public trust, or the specific trust of their participants, clients, staff or competitors.
- Ensure that advice and directions provided give full and proper cognisance of personal safety.

8.3 TECHNICAL SKILLS

Organisations involved in horse activities shall:

- Continue to develop their professional knowledge and technical skills.

- Not undertake activities they are not competent to perform and, when in doubt, obtain appropriate advice and assistance that will allow these activities to be competently carried out.
- State qualifications, experience and prior responsibilities accurately.

8.4 BEHAVIOUR

Organisations involved in horse activities shall:

- Maintain a high standard of integrity, and apply honesty and fair dealing in all aspects of their operations.
- Carry out their professional duties with due care and diligence.
- Conduct themselves in a manner which is neither derogatory to their colleagues nor likely to lessen the confidence of the public in horse related activities or the Code of Practice for Horse Related Activities.
- Communicate with the public in a professional and responsible manner.