

Mission Acres Horse Health & Welfare Policies

Mission Acres is devoted to protecting the true nature of our horses. We are committed to honoring their natural instincts thereby creating an environment for them which will foster physical and emotional health. This is reflected in our management policies as they relate to feeding, lifestyle and horse-human interactions.

The Policies for Horse Care and Management at Mission Acres is directed by the Facility Director and the policies will be amended and updated as necessary. Anyone accessing Mission Acres must adhere to our policies and we reserve the right to remove or refuse entry to anyone who violates any of them.

- **Inspection**

Horses will be inspected daily by the Facility Manager for injuries, cuts and wounds. Inspection must occur before noon daily so that a vet can be called promptly during daytime hours if needed. Inspection will include ensuring that blankets are securely fastened if applicable and removed if the horse appears uncomfortable or in distress.

- **Food, available 24/7**

Horses will be on pasture if available.

- Pastures with more than 4 horses must have 2 round bales at a time. When hay is provided it will be done through the use of netting. If straw is provided it may or may not be netted as per the Facility Director.
- Shod horses will be in designated pastures as a tombstone feeder or similar structure will be needed to encircle the hay net so that shoes cannot get caught in the net.
- Horses that require additional food – The Facility Director may recommend that use of a pasture where hay is spread out as opposed to a hay net being used.
- Horses that are Insulin Resistant, have chronic laminitis, or foundered horses - The Facility Director may recommend that use of pasture that will allow the horses to have access to straw during the day (8-10 hours) and access to netted hay bale during the night. Horses will be treated with the same considerations as a diabetic would.

Owners – Horses - If you are concerned about your “hard to keep” horse being on hay nets please get a measurement (use a weight tape or soft measuring tape) of their heart girth and also the widest part of the belly and send the information by email or text to the Facility Manager. Measure your horse in one month's time and send the second findings to the Facility Manager. This information will be relayed to the Horse Health and Welfare Consultant and a decision will be made in regards to the care of the horse (i.e. If necessary, provide some horses with “no net” hay access. This may require that a separate pasture is set up and will most likely result in a herd transition for your horse). We recommend that you measure your horse on a regular basis to ensure the horse's weight is being maintained.

Owners – Ponies – Please follow the instructions above in regards to measuring a horse and send the information to the Facility Manager once a month. The Facility Manager will keep the information on file and will update the Horse Health & Welfare Consultant on a regular basis so that we can ensure their welfare.

Mission Acres Horse Health & Welfare Policies

- **Water, available 24/7**

Water system will be checked weekly for function by the Facility Manager (FM) (i.e. ensure there are no electric issues – place hand in water) and be cleaned as needed. The Facility Manager requests that boarders monitor the water systems too and report any problems to the Facility Manager or designate.
- **Salt, available 24/7**
 - Pasture**
 - A blue cobalt block
 - Loose salt in each shelter pan – it is mandatory that straw feed horses have access to loose salt at all times as it encourages hydration
 - Paddocks**
 - For ease of feeding, all horses in paddocks must also have loose salt. The Facility Manager (FM) will check salt access weekly but boarders are asked to monitor them too and advise FM or designate if salt is required.
- **Shelter, available 24/7**

All horses will have access to shelter no matter where they are located.
- **Routine**

Reduce stress in horses by creating routines for them such as bringing them in or turning them out, feeding, etc.
- **Housing**
 - Box stalls - Horses can be placed in a box stall if needed but for no longer than 3 hours and must be monitored (every 15 minutes). White boards are located at the front of the barn. If you leave the barn for a short period of time OR if you have arranged for someone else to turn out your horse, please hang a white board on the front of your stall with the following info: Why the horse is there, who will turn horse out and by what time.
 - If a boarder or team member feels that overnight box stall use is necessary it must first be approved by the Facility Director.
 - Horses will not be moved from pasture to pasture without prior consultation and approval from the Facility Director. Every effort will be made to discuss the movement of a horse with the owner first.
 - New arrivals will be assigned a pasture/paddock in consultation with the Facility Director.
- **Companionship**

If a horse is by itself in a box stall, paddock, or field another horse will be placed with it or within close proximity; unless it is for a short period of time. Approval for this must be done with the Facility Director.

Mission Acres Horse Health & Welfare Policies

- **Halters**

Halters, including muzzles will not be permitted to stay on a horse when it is in a field, paddock or stall. Note, even if they have quick release mechanism.

- If the use of a halter is because a person struggles with catching their horse, then lessons will focus on the catching issue first so that it can be resolved. Moving horses to a temporary paddock in order to address the catching issue will be done in consultation with the trainer and the Facility Director.
- If the use of a muzzle is for weight loss purposes the horse/pony may be moved to a pasture that supports this goal. See “Food” section of this policy for additional information. Exercise to offset weight is highly encouraged.

- **Interacting with horses**

Principles of Kindness and Fairness will be expected at all times while interacting and working with your horse. This way of being is of utmost importance to Mission Acres. Our community includes boarders with a variety of equine experience. Although we do not believe that anyone is ill intentioned, situations will arise that need to be addressed immediately for the health, welfare and safety of the horse and sometimes the rider. In these situations, we do encourage the community to intervene in a respectful and caring manner. If a boarder is moved to speak up in an effort to advocate for the horse or to prevent an unsafe situation from occurring, please inform the Facility Director of your effort as well. We also encourage riders/owners to equip yourself in understanding what signs and symptoms may represent distress in your horse. This will allow you to become pro-active in their care.

- **Warm Up/Cool Down**

This is extremely important especially in cooler temperatures and is necessary for joint, muscle and respiratory health. The warm up and cool down consists of 10 – 15 minutes of walking with or without a quarter cooler and is a mandatory requirement that will be supported by all trainers.

- **Drying horses**

Temperature (below -5): Horses are to be properly cooled down first and foremost (see Warm Up/Cool Down Policy).

- Towel dry majority of moisture off prior to cooler being put on, microfiber is best for this.
- Blow dryers can be used but with caution so that you do not burn your horse. If using a blow dryer keep moving your hand over the area that you are drying and do not put the dryer too close to their skin. A good “rule of thumb” – “If it is too hot for your skin it is too hot for theirs”. Also, note that the hot air can make the horse hotter.
- Once the horse is adequately dried, blanket appropriately for temperature.

Mission Acres encourages you to read the article located at the bottom of this document in regards to drying your horse.

Mission Acres Horse Health & Welfare Policies

- **Blanketing**

Blankets are permitted and, in some instances, required but they cannot be left on if the conditions are such that it is a detriment to the horse (i.e. too hot outside or conversely too cold).

- Boarders are required to decide in advance if their horse's blanket needs to put on or removed. If the boarder cannot come to the facility prior to conditions changing then they must contact the Facility Manager by 9:00 am on that day so that arrangements can be made for the Facility Manager or their designate to do it.
- The Facility Manager is responsible for checking horses and will use their discretion as to whether or not the blanket is appropriate for the conditions and will put a blanket on or remove the blanket accordingly.
- If the blanket is damaged and perceived as unsafe it will be removed and the Facility Manager will contact the owner and advise them.

Note: The Facility Manager or designate rate is \$30.00/hour and the boarder will be charged for the time that it takes to do the task; this includes but is not limited to going to the horse, removing the blanket hanging up the blanket, and contacting the boarder if needed.

GUIDELINES FOR HORSES THAT ARE NOT TYPICALLY BLANKETED OR CLIPPED BUT ARE DAMP FROM WORK OR EXTREME CLIMATE CONDITIONS:

- Temperature (0 to minus 10): Rain sheets can be used in conjunction with a dry cooler to turn a damp horse out. Note, a neck attachment may be necessary if the horse's neck is also damp, especially on colder days.
- Temperature (minus 10 to minus 25): A light fill blanket is recommended
- Temperature (minus 25 plus): A heavy fill (250g - 400g) turnout blanket is recommended

Important notice:

Blankets negatively impact the horses' natural thermoregulatory system so the weather condition and condition of the horse must be taken into consideration when you do blanket a horse.

POLICY FOR HORSES THAT ARE TYPICALLY BLANKETED OR CLIPPED:

- Temperature (0 to minus 10): A light turnout blanket - note, this is mostly to keep the wind off as the majority of horses are still fairly comfortable at this temperature.
- Temperature (minus 10 to minus 20): A medium fill is recommended
- Temperature (below minus 20): A heavyweight fill is recommended and then layer blankets as the cold temperatures increase.

Important notice:

As the temperature reaches above zero the blanket needs to be removed but the wind chill factor needs to be factored in this decision. The removal of the blanket allows the horses body to breathe unencumbered. This gives them an opportunity to roll, condition their coat with their own natural oils and allows them to have a good scratch. Also, to check the condition of your horse when they are wearing a blanket you can place your hand under the blanket at the horse's shoulder. If the horse feels warm the blanket needs to come off. If the horse is at the point that it is sweating you must take it to the barn and dry it off and/or place a cooler on it and ensure it is adequately dry before you put it back outside.

Mission Acres Horse Health & Welfare Policies

General Information about blanketing:

The needs of every individual horse will vary depending on their constitution, breed and work but these are basic guidelines. Rain sheets keep horses dry and block wind. As wind and wet will make a horse cold much faster than cold air temperatures, a rain sheet is a must for those older or thinner horses that cannot afford to be losing calories by shivering. Filled turnout blankets are great for keeping horses warm. They can be used by themselves or layered

- The weight of a blanket refers to the amount of fill, or "stuffing", which is measured in grams.
 - Sheets have no fill
 - Light weight blankets typically have 0g to 150g of fill
 - Medium weight blankets typically have 150-225g of fill
 - Heavy weight blankets typically have 250-370g of fill
 - A few ultra-heavyweight blankets have 400g of fill

The key to blanketing is being able to build and retract warmth as the temperature fluctuates. The same blanket cannot be used at -5 as is used at -25, unless specifically designed to do so ex: BUCAS power turnout/power quilt or those with removable liners that you can layer as needed.

If you decide to start clipping or blanketing full time you will need to consistently rotate blankets as necessary because your horse will not be able to develop its natural winter coat, or you will lay down its existing coat negating its own natural thermoregulating ability. You will need to use your discretion with wind chill and damper weather.

Practical Horseman Newsletter on Drying your horse:

Dry Your Damp Horse in Winter

A competitor and veterinarian teaches you how to use a cooler to wick your damp horse dry on a cold winter day.

HEATHER HOYNS

FEB 20, 2013



Mission Acres Horse Health & Welfare Policies

If your horse is wet, a polar fleece cooler will help pull the moisture away from his coat while keeping him from getting chilled. | ? Amy K. Dragoo

Mother Nature equipped our horses with highly effective "clothing" to keep them warm and comfortable in even the coldest, snowiest winter weather. The long hairs of their winter coats stand on end to create an insulating layer of warm air around their bodies. When a layer of snow accumulates on their backs, their coats' natural oils and thick hair prevent the moisture from reaching the skin.

Horses even have a built-in wicking system: When their coats get wet, their body heat pushes the moisture out toward the tips of the hairs where it then evaporates into the air. When the air temperature is below freezing, this moisture may even form icicles on the tips of the hairs, still a comfortable distance from the skin.

For those of us who choose to work with this incredible system rather than replace it with body clipping and blanketing, one of the biggest challenges we face is drying off our horses when they get too wet. Whether your horse is sweaty from a hard ride or "soaked to the bone" by rain, his wet coat temporarily loses its ability to create a warming air space around him. Throwing him into his stall or, even worse, turning him out on a brisk, cold day (temperatures below 40 F and/or windy conditions) without drying him off first may cause him to become chilled and burn extra energy trying to keep warm. But that doesn't mean you have to spend hours towel drying him or leaving him under fancy heat lamps. The simple wicking technique I'll share in this article requires very little time and a minimal budget.

Wicking Coolers

The only essential equipment you'll need is a wool or polar fleece cooler. Both are excellent wicking materials designed to create an air space around your horse. His body heat warms up this air space, which then draws the moisture away from his skin to the outer surface of the blanket. When you see moisture droplets beading on the outside of your horse's cooler that means it is working.

Heavyweight wool coolers are handy for extremely cold days but, if you're on a budget, one lightweight one will do the job for most conditions. In my experience, polar fleece doesn't wick quite as effectively as wool, but it is more durable and easier to work with because it's machine washable and moth-resistant. Coolers are also now available in various types of high-tech synthetic wicking materials. These work well, too.

Mission Acres Horse Health & Welfare Policies

Cotton, on the other hand, is not a good wicking material. It holds moisture against your horse's skin, making him clammy. (If you know any hikers, you may have heard the saying, "Cotton kills.") So, although Irish-knit coolers have been used on horses for years, and they're fine for warm, sunny days, I'd avoid putting one on a damp horse in cooler weather.

Here's how to use your cooler.

Drying a Warm Horse

You know your cooler is working when you see droplets beading on the outside surface. | ? Amy K. Dragoo

After a winter day's ride, your unclipped horse may be damp with sweat even after he has cooled out that is, his body temperature has returned to normal. The key to helping him dry is to enhance, rather than interfere with, the coat's natural wicking process I described above without making him so warm that he begins to sweat again. It's very common for riders to pile too many blankets on their horses after a workout, thinking that their mounts are cooling off as quickly as they are themselves. But equine body temperatures don't drop as quickly as humans' do. A horse's just-worked muscles can easily heat up again to the point where he "re-sweats" if you cover him with blankets, particularly if he is unfit or his workout was harder than usual.

To prevent this from happening, end your ride with 5 to 10 minutes of walking, either under saddle or by hand, to bring your horse's breathing and skin temperature back to normal. Watch his nostrils or sides to monitor his breathing and feel his neck and shoulders with a bare hand to check his temperature. There is usually no need for him to wear a cooler while you walk him under saddle; you can add a rump rug or quarter sheet for the last few minutes of your ride if it's especially windy or cold. (If you cover your horse before his body temperature returns to normal, he may become too warm and break out in a "second sweat.")

After you've cooled him out, dismounted and untacked, give him a quick brushing to "straighten" any hairs that were matted or mussed by sweat and tack, then dress him in your lightweight cooler. Secure it well enough to keep it from shifting as he moves around in his stall. Some coolers come fitted with chest and belly straps for this purpose. More traditional, square coolers need to be closed in the front with a blanket clip a large metal utility-type clip and held in place with an elastic surcingle. (Both are available through tack stores and online catalogs.)

If you plan to turn out your horse after your ride, cover the cooler with a lightweight, water-resistant, breathable turnout sheet. This will protect the cooler from rips and tears and help hold it in place. Things tend to slip around more when horses are turned out, so fitted, secured coolers are best in this case. The turnout sheet also will provide some defense against the

Mission Acres Horse Health & Welfare Policies

elements while your horse's natural "weatherproofing" system is being restored to normal. But it won't prevent your horse from drying off thoroughly. (On the other hand, if you put on just a turnout sheet without a cooler underneath, you'll lose that valuable air space above the skin and slow the wicking substantially. I would only recommend doing this with a horse that is just slightly damp in the flank area, for instance.) Some manufacturers now make breathable, water-resistant turnout sheets with mesh linings that create the air space necessary for wicking moisture. These can be used on damp horses without a cooler underneath.

With this clothing secured in place, you can leave your horse to dry off on his own, so long as you're sure he's completely cooled down and not over blanketed. (To check this, slip a hand under his cooler to feel his chest and flank areas. They shouldn't be any warmer than your own skin. The first few times you use the cooler, you may want to check him again after half an hour or so.) Depending on how wet your horse is, it may take him an hour or more to dry off completely after a ride. I often go back to work after a midday ride, leaving my horse's cooler on until I get home in the evening. If you ride late in the day and need to turn out your horse for the night, it's OK to leave a cooler and turnout sheet on overnight. When you do remove his clothing, "fluff" up any matted or flattened hair with a stiff brush to restore its normal texture. (Like wet hair, matted hair loses its ability to trap warm air around the horse's body.)

Additional Drying Tips

On most days, the process I described above should dry your horse sufficiently. However, if he's extremely wet, you may want to do a little manual drying before applying a cooler. I've had the best success with a household-cleaning product called Micro Fiber or Miracle Cloth. It is made of super-absorbent fabric that holds many times its weight in moisture. You can rub it over your horse's dampest areas, such as the saddle and girth area, ears and flank, wring it out when it's saturated and rub some more.

In rare cases, an extremely wet horse may saturate a cooler with sweat before he's completely dry. This will slow down the drying process. You'll know it has happened when the cooler feels wringing wet. Leaving a saturated wool or polar fleece cooler on your horse is still better than exposing his damp body to wind and cold. However, if you have more than one cooler, replacing the saturated cooler with a dry one will speed things up.

Placing handfuls of hay or straw underneath your horse's cooler or between two coolers can enhance the wicking even further. Not only does the hay or straw absorb some of the moisture, it adds an extra layer of air space around your horse, helping to draw the water droplets to the outer layer of clothing where it can then evaporate. Be sure to put hay in front of your horse as

Mission Acres Horse Health & Welfare Policies

well, so he's not tempted to reach around and eat what's under his cooler. It's usually not a good idea to try this on horses turned out together, as it encourages them to nibble at each other's coolers.

Drying a Cold Horse

All of the above techniques also work for drying a horse brought in soaking wet from rain. However, if the weather has chilled your horse, too, he won't have the added benefit of body heat to drive the moisture away from his skin. So to keep him from getting too cold and to speed up the drying process, you may need to use a heavier cooler or an additional blanket layered over the cooler. A little extra rubbing with the Magic Cloth will help, too. As your horse dries, be sure to monitor his temperature carefully, feeling his chest and flanks for overheating and watching for shivering that would indicate he's too cold. In the latter case, you may need to replace the first cooler with a dry one or add more layers to warm him up again.

***Dr. Heather Hoyns** is an equine veterinarian with her own practice, Evergreen Equine, in West Windsor, Vermont. She also has competed in trail and endurance riding since the late 1970s. Down-to-earth stable management techniques help her make time for conditioning two horses for 50- and 100-mile rides, in addition to working a full-time job. She explains, "I'm a fan of the KISS principle?Keep It Simple!" Among other recent successes, she and her 14-year-old partner, Just Bill, won the second day of the 2006 Mustang Memorial 50/50-mile ride in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey.*