

**Louisiana Horsemen's Benevolent
and Protective Association
Safety Manual**

Presented by:

Artex Risk Solutions, Inc.



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Safety Manual

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Safety and the LAHBPA

The Louisiana Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association was established to provide its member owners and trainers with a voice in the horse racing industry and a ready source for information concerning industry events and regulations.

In order to maintain a safe work environment, the horseracing industry must work in a unified manner to ensure workplace safety. This includes the track ownership and management as well as the individual owners, trainers and assistant trainers, exercise riders, and the staff associated with on- and off-track activities.

One resource being offered to the LAHBPA members is a safety and health program intended to provide information concerning workplace safety regulations that affect the work environment of their employees and equestrian athletes. The risk factors associated with the horse racing industry provide a unique and challenging environment when it comes to maintaining a safe workplace with each aspect of the industry, breeding, training and racing, providing their own set of exposures, and training requirements. Absent specific rules promulgated by the various state regulation entities, there is no uniform set of rules that apply to the industry as a whole.

To that end, the LAHBPA offers the following information to assist the membership in recognizing and addressing safety-related issues in their operations.



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Employer/Employee Responsibilities

Employer Responsibilities

It is incumbent upon the employer to actively examine the workplace and workplace practices to determine possible hazards and/or practices that can cause harm to their employees or others. That is, the responsibility is upon the employer to initiate the search for and correction of all hazards that are found in the workplace in order to provide for the safety of all personnel.

Employee Training and Communication

It is the employer's responsibility to train their employees on the specific hazards of their job and job site. The employer must also communicate any new hazards that are identified to the employees and the corrective measures for that hazard.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees are to abide by the regulations that pertain to them and to their actions. They are responsible for their part of safety in the workplace.



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The Role of the Trainer/Assistant Trainer in Workplace Safety

Based on the role of the trainer and assistant trainers as the “manager” and “supervisor” of the employees involved in the training and racing aspects of the pari-mutuel industry, the need for developing and implementing a formal workplace safety program falls squarely in their area of responsibility. As such, it is very important that the trainer understands the many hazards involved and how to properly train their employees to safely deal with these risks.



Implementing a program can seem like a difficult task, one that will require a significant investment of time and money. However, the industry knowledge and experience that most trainers and their assistants bring to the table should really minimize the need to seek outside resources. It becomes a matter of conveying this information to the employees and being certain that the employees understand how to utilize this information in their day-to-day activities.

Due to the specialized skill set necessary to safely work in the pari-mutuel industry, the cost of hiring and training a new employee to replace an injured employee can often exceed the cost of any training that may be required to ensure safe work practices. Additionally, by working in an environment where employees know that they are expected to work in a safe manner can often result in better overall productivity and work performance.

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Safety Topics for Exercise Riders

Safety Equipment and the Racing Environment

- Riding gear such as girth, bridle, reins, stirrups, head collars, leads, and saddle leathers or synthetics in good serviceable condition.
- Saddle and stirrup leathers in good condition with no tears or splits in the stirrup strap eyelets.
- Riding reins have sufficient rubber tread to ensure satisfactory grip.
- Every saddle used in trials, tests, or track work must be equipped with safety irons, and race boots (with a heel) must be worn.
- Track inspection undertaken prior to commencing track work.
- Obstacles on or near the track which could pose a hazard to track riders have been identified, assessed for the level of risk, and most importantly *eliminated* or *controlled*. Those obvious hazards such as track structures, posts, or damaged rails are removed or repaired immediately.
- Policy and procedures are in place and *enforced* at training tracks by training facility management for all types of *approved* track work. This should include proper display of required identification of any exercise riders and outriders. A summary of training track policy and procedures should be clearly displayed at the 'gap' concerning approved track work.
- All track riders must be properly registered with the racing commission and should have appropriate qualifications as required by the governing authorities. Site-specific training track inductions have been undertaken by all track and stable users. Besides track orientation and rules of training, induction may include:
 - An understanding of track and stable hazards and associated risks,
 - Having controls in place at the track to manage risk, including specific risk control solutions used and the overall system to manage safety while training at the track (such as policy and procedure), and
 - Knowledge of the hazard and incident reporting process used by the track.



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- First aid facilities and resources available at the track. Ideally first aid resources, such as kits, should be located at the supervisor's box and regularly inspected. Appropriate first aid facilities, such as a dedicated first aid room, should be available in a well-maintained building close to the track
 - At a minimum, track supervisor(s) trained to deliver 'first response' first aid.
 - Emergency evacuation plan and procedure clearly on display and understood by the track supervisor(s).
- Emergency services' advice used in developing emergency management and evacuation plans
 - Emergency services' access to the track is clearly visible.
 - Appropriate communications, including mobile communications, should be available to the track supervisor(s).



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Safety Topics for Grooms, Stable Hands, and Hot Walkers

Basic Horse Behavior

- Horses detect danger through their vision, sense of smell, and keen sense of hearing. They have wide-angle vision, but they also have blind spots directly behind and in front of them.
- For example, when a horse lifts its head and pricks its ears, it is focusing on something far away. The horse lowers its head when focusing on low, close objects. Keep these blind spots in mind and know where your horse's attention is focused so you do not scare it.



- Your horse's ears will give you clues; they will point in the direction in which its attention is focused. Ears that are "laid back," or flattened backward, warn you that the horse is getting ready to kick or bite.
- Always work with calm but deliberate movements around horses. Nervous handlers can make horses nervous, creating unsafe situations.

Approaching the Horse

- Always make sure the horse is aware of your presence. The horse should always have one eye on you at all times.
- When catching a horse, approach from its left shoulder. Move slowly but confidently, speaking to the horse as you approach. Read the horse's intention by watching its body language.
- Be careful when approaching a horse that is preoccupied, such as when it is feeding or resting.
- When approaching a horse in a stall, speak to the horse to get its attention and wait until it turns and faces you before entering and make sure the horse moves over before you walk in beside it. This will ensure that you are in the animal's field of vision.
- Speak to your horse and keep your hands on it when moving around it. Even if a horse is aware of your presence, quick movements can startle it. When walking behind a horse, put one hand on the hind quarters and walk closely behind the hind legs. By staying close to the horse, it cannot achieve maximum force should it decide to kick.
- When approaching from the rear, advance at an angle speaking to the horse, making sure you have its attention. Again, touch it gently as you pass by its hindquarters.

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Working Around the Horse

- Know the temperament of your horse or ask coworkers if they have worked with the horse before. Are there certain actions that will spook a particular horse or that require particular caution?
- It is recommended that the horse be tied securely with a quick release knot or be held by another stable hand with a lead.
- Do not climb over or under the lead line of a tied horse as this may cause the horse to pull back or strike out causing you to trip over the lead or be caught between the horse and the sides of the enclosure. Never crawl under the belly of any horse.
- Work close to the horse as this will minimize the force of any movements such as kicking and stomping.
- Let the horse know what you are going to do. As an example, if you are going to work on the horse's feet, work slowly down the leg. When grooming the tail, work to the side of the animal so it can keep an eye on you as you work.
- Be careful with grooming tools as you should never crawl under a horse to retrieve dropped tools or an implement you may be using.
- Do not rush when grooming your horse as this can stress the animal, particularly if the horse is young or not used to the grooming process. Keep a calm and confident attitude when working around the animal as horses have a very keen sense of nervousness and fear on the part of a groom or handler.
- Jewelry should not be worn when working around horses as rings, earrings, and bracelets can get caught in tack causing serious injury.



Harnessing the Horse

- Have all tack ready prior to approaching the horse.
- Be certain that you have the attention of the horse while approaching from a frontal angle.
- Place the lead rope over the horse's head and put on the halter. Then, fit the halter with the buckles, ties, or straps on the equipment.
- Reward the horse for cooperating with the harnessing process.

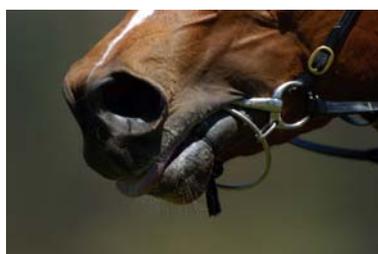
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Leading the Horse

- The standard practice is to hold the lead line with the right hand approximately 8-12 inches from the horse's head while holding the end of the lead with the left hand. In the event the horse rears or becomes agitated, the close hand can be released while still holding the lead with the left hand.
- Never wrap the lead line around either hands or arms as this can lead to serious injury should the horse rear or break away.
- Teach your horse to walk beside you so that you are walking at its left shoulder. It is a good idea to walk with the right elbow angled at the horse as this posture provides a buffer between the horse and the handler should the horse swerve or sway while being led and helps the handler anticipate the horse's movements.
- Remember, you are walking the horse; the horse is not walking you. It is important that the animal feels that you are in charge of the situation. Maintain proper position relative to the horse with the animal not being allowed to get ahead or behind the handler.
- To lead a horse through a doorway, you should step through first, and then quickly step to the side out of the horse's way. Keep an eye on it, as some horses try to rush through narrow spaces.
- After you remove the halter, make the horse stand quietly for several seconds before letting it go completely. This will help prevent the horse from developing a habit of bolting away and kicking at you in the process.

Bridle and Saddle the Horse



- Prior to proceeding with any saddling activities, it is important to inspect the tack to fully to ensure that all equipment is in proper and sound working condition.
- It is a good practice to have a routine process so the horse knows what to expect while being saddled and bridled. Once again, a calm and consistent approach is recommended when readying a horse for exercise or racing.
- It is a routine practice to groom the horse prior to saddling to remove any dirt or foreign material that may cause irritation and to check for any injuries that may be in the saddle and bridle area. In most cases, saddling and bridling are generally done from the near side of the horse and standard practice is to first saddle then bridle the horse, but trainers have different procedures and the staff should be trained in the desired methods.
- Proper adjustment of the saddle and bridle are critical to the safety of the rider and the horse as well as preventing injury or irritation to the horse. Take the time to do it right.
- When removing the tack from the horse, basically follow the procedures in reverse. This is a good time to visually inspect the horse for any injuries and to reinspect the tack before putting it back in storage.

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Equine Pool Safety

- The use of swimming pools in the training, care, and rehabilitation of horses has proven to be a very beneficial training activity. Pool workouts do, however, present certain work-related safety hazards for the trainers and their personnel and should be addressed. The initial introduction of the horse to the pool environment may create stress in the animal causing it to react aggressively and possibly cause bodily harm to the staff working with the horse. As such, all employees should be properly trained in how to handle horses in this situation and how to introduce them to the water environment. As horses are natural swimmers, this should be a routine task once the horse is properly acclimated to the pool.
- All equine pools should be equipped at a minimum with a certified life ring and preferably a “shepherd’s hook” rescue device as well. It is quite possible that an employee working with a horse at a pool does not know how to swim, so there is a potential for an employee to be pulled or fall into a pool. In addition, as the training personnel will be fully clothed and may be wearing heavy clothing, this can make it difficult for someone to extricate themselves from the pool. Should an employee fall into a pool with a horse, there is a potential for the employee to be injured should the horse panic, so a team environment with at least two employees working at any given time is desirable.

Additional Safety Material – For additional safety guidelines, see “**The Workplace Audit for Race Horse Trainers**” attached to this document.

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Safety Meeting Agenda

DEPARTMENT/JOB SITE: _____

MEETING DATE: _____

1. **Open Meeting & Present Safety Topic:**

2. **Read minutes from previous meeting.**

3. **Persons present:**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. **Old Business:** Status of previous recommendations. Discuss pending old business if any.

5. **Accidents:** Discuss accidents and near misses that have occurred since the last meeting. Brief summary of accidents to date by number and type. Note any trends. Discuss corrective action taken, or needed. Concentrate on accident causes to make everyone more aware.

6. **Inspection Reports:** Report on findings and recommendations of any inspection reports made since last meeting.

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7. **New Business:** Solicit employee suggestions. Discuss new procedures, changes to company safety policy, etc.

TIME MEETING STARTED: _____

TIME FINISHED: _____

MEETING CHAIRED BY: _____

TITLE: _____

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The following safety check lists have generously been provided by:

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