

# RDA Carine Volunteer Policies and Procedures Handbook:



**Riding for the Disabled Assoc of WA - Carine Group Inc.**

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## Mission Statement

Riding for the Disabled – Carine (RDA Carine) aims to enable people with disabilities to experience enjoyment, challenges and a sense of achievement through participation in equestrian activities to improve their quality of life, attain personal goals and develop life skills.

## Vision Statement

To be acknowledged in Western Australia as a leader in equine – assisted therapeutic, educational, recreational and sporting activities that expand the horizons of those with disabilities leading to the enrichment of their lives.

## Introduction

Riding for the Disabled – Carine (RDA Carine) aims to provide Equine Therapy; Hippotherapy; vaulting and other equestrian activities for children and adults living with disabilities, special needs or mental health issues.

RDA Carine would not exist without the generous support of volunteers.

RDA Carine is an Equal Opportunity organization and will consider all people offering to perform volunteer work for the organization solely on the basis of their skill, aptitude and relevant qualifications.

## International Conventions

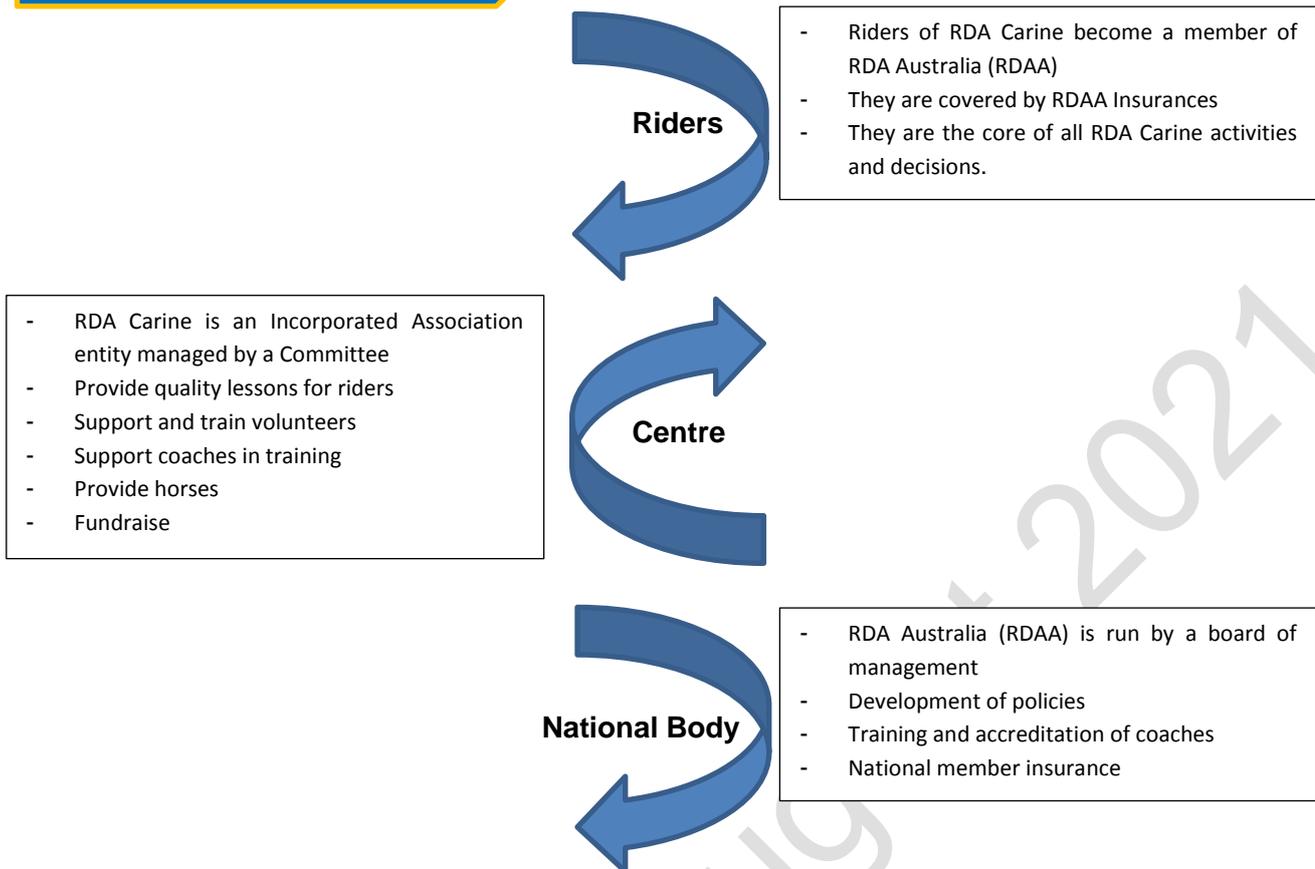
RDA Carine supports and advocates the General Principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. These are:

- Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
- Non-discrimination;
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- Equality of opportunity;
- Accessibility;
- Equality between men and women;
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

People with a disability have often been viewed as individuals who need protection and sympathy rather than respect. RDA Carine supports the view that all people must be provided with the opportunity to reach their full potential, regardless of their situation or abilities.

For more information, [Click here](#)

## RDA Organisation



RDA Australia (RDAA) is part of a world-wide movement of therapeutic riding associations and is a member of HETI (Horses in Education and Therapy International).

At the national level, RDAA is responsible for the development of policies, training and accreditation of coaches and national member insurances.

RDA Centres are members of RDAA in accordance with policies and procedures. All RDA Centres in Australia must have a committee of management. The committee performs the functions of managing finance, fundraising, property management and governance of the Centre.



**Disclaimer:** Throughout this booklet the clients of RDAA and RDA Carine are generally referred to as riders. The term rider, for clients in the Riding Program, may be interchangeable with the term vaulter, for clients in the Vaulting Programs.

# RDA Grievance Policy

## Complaints and Grievances

RDA Carine takes complaints of any nature seriously and focuses on managing each case in a sensitive and supportive manner with the help of an authorized personnel and a step by step mediation procedure. A complaint can be about an act, behaviour, omission, situation or decision that someone thinks is unfair, unjustified, unlawful and/or a breach of RDA Carine policies and Codes of Conduct. The nature of the complaint will determine whether it will be dealt with formally or informally. All complaints will be dealt with promptly, sensitively and confidentially. For more information about the RDA Grievance policy, refer to the National Member Protection Policy at <https://cdn.rda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/RDAA-Member-Protection-Policy.pdf>

### Step 1

As a first step you should try to resolve the problem with the person/s involved if you feel able to do so.

### Step 2

If the first step is not reasonable, or you are not sure how to handle the problem by yourself or the problem continues after you tried to approach the person or people involved, talk to your Head Coach or somebody in the office.

### Step 3

After talking to someone, you may decide that there is no problem, or the problem is minor and you do not wish to take the matter forward, or you may wish to attempt to work out your own resolution (with or without a support person) or you may wish to seek an informal mediated resolution with the help of a third person (such as mediator).

### Step 4

If your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction you may choose to make a formal complaint in writing to the Centre's office or Centre's President or the National Office or approach a relevant external agency such as the Equal Opportunity Commission, for advice.



## The Role of the Volunteer

The volunteer is an integral part of the smooth running of an RDA program within RDA Carine. There may be involvement with physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, doctors and special education teachers, as well as the RDA Carine Coach and the Centre committee. Everyone must work as a team if the Centre is to run successfully.

The roles that volunteers may play are many and varied. Volunteers between the ages of 14-85 are able to assist. Previous experience working with children and adults with special needs and / or working with horses are desirable but not essential.

The following activities are available to volunteers, under supervision of a RDA Carine Coach or the Centre management;

- Preparing horses prior to the arrival of clients
- Leading horses and ponies during the riding lesson
- Assisting the clients during riding lessons
- Helping with activities for unmounted clients e.g. tack cleaning, proficiency award tasks
- Assist the Coach with equipment during games and riding lessons
- Fitting and cleaning of helmets, boots and clothing for safety and hygiene
- Refreshment hosting
- Fundraising
- Committee work
- Assisting with School Holiday Day Camps

## Volunteer Criteria

- Volunteers between the ages of 14 and 85 years must demonstrate that they are physically capable of performing the required duties they are allocated.
- Children under the age of 18 years must have parental permission to volunteer.
- Volunteers over the age of 18 years must undergo the following;
  - Working with Children Card application
  - National Police Check
  - NDIS Screening application
- Work on their own without constant supervision.
- Be able to respond and react swiftly if a horse or client should display erratic behaviour.
- Physically capable of performing tasks including lifting heavy equipment such as saddles, horse blankets, basketball ring.
- Have a genuine desire to work with people who many have any type of disability including intellectual, mental and/or physical.
- Show initiative in the work place and are willing to follow instructions.
- Are committed and willing to give our clients the best possible experience.
- Confident and comfortable working with horses.
- Assist in all areas of cleaning, including picking up horse manure, sweeping up, cleaning tack, keeping the kitchen clean etc.
- Work in inclement weather conditions, including heat/rain.
- Work effectively in a team environment.
- Show empathy, patience, respect and dignity to all volunteers and clients alike.
- Cope with routine changes that will occur due to adapting to weather conditions; rider cancellations etc
- Be prepared to attend any volunteer training sessions (if available)

# Volunteer Recruitment Process

## Stage One - Enquiry

- Initial enquiry to source information, directed to website and FAQ's

## Stage Two - Trial

- Three trial sessions to observe the work that we do within the organisation

## Stage Three - Probation

- On receipt of all relevant documentation, commence a three month trial period

## Stage Four - Graduation

- On completion of the three month probation period, issue of uniform



## Volunteer Code of Practice

**In order to enhance the volunteers' experience and comply with legislation and duty of care, RDA Carine will:**

1. Interview and employ volunteer staff in accordance with anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation.
2. Provide volunteer staff with orientation and training and an opportunity for the development of skills and experience.
3. Provide volunteer staff with a healthy and safe workplace in accordance with current practice and legislation.
4. Provide appropriate insurance coverage for volunteers.
5. Define volunteer roles and develop clear job descriptions.
6. Provide appropriate levels of support and management for volunteers.
7. Make volunteers aware of and provide them with a copy of the RDA volunteers guide and other documents relating to RDA volunteer policies.
8. Provide all volunteers with information on grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures.
9. Acknowledge the rights of volunteers.
10. May reimburse volunteers for some out of pocket expenses incurred on RDA's behalf, providing prior approval has been given by the relevant RDA committee.
11. Acknowledge and respect the contribution of volunteers.
12. Provide volunteers with accurate and truthful information about RDA.
13. Have volunteers confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the National Privacy Act 2001.
14. Acknowledge that the relationship between RDA and volunteers is a reciprocal one.
15. Acknowledge that volunteers are of equal status and deserve the same treatment as paid employees and that RDA can expect the same standards of its volunteers; as it expects of its paid employees.
16. Ensure that volunteers only work in the area of their choice and ability.
17. State and acknowledge the contribution of RDA volunteers in RDA documentation.
18. RDA Carine reserves the right at any point, to cease the volunteer registration if there is a breach of the Volunteers Code of Conduct; inappropriate behaviour; illegal actions or lack of following the mission and values of the organisation.



# Volunteer Code of Practice

## RDA requires every volunteer bound by this policy to:

1. Be ethical, fair and honest in all their dealings with other people and RDA.
2. Treat all persons with respect and courtesy and have proper regard for their dignity, rights and obligations.
3. Always place the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults above other considerations.
4. Comply with RDAA's constitution, rules and policies including the Volunteer Policy.
5. Operate within the rules and spirit of the organisation.
6. Comply with all relevant Australian laws (Federal and State) particularly antidiscrimination and child protection laws.
7. Be responsible and accountable for your conduct.
8. Make a commitment to providing quality service.
9. Not to use your involvement with RDA to promote your own beliefs, behaviours and practises where these are inconsistent with those of RDAA, a Member State or Territory or Affiliated Centre.
10. Demonstrate a high degree of individual responsibility when dealing with persons who are under 18 years of age or vulnerable non-consenting adults with a disability, as your words and actions are an example.
11. Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with persons who are under 18 years of age or vulnerable adults, wherever possible.
12. Refrain from any form of harassment of others.
13. Refrain from any behaviour that may bring RDAA, A Member State or Territory or an Affiliated Centre into disrepute.
14. Show concern and caution towards others who may be sick or injured.
15. Be a positive role model.
16. Understand the repercussions if you breach, or are aware of any breaches of this Code of Conduct.



# General Hints for Volunteers

## Do's

- Be punctual and reliable (advise the office if you can't make it).
- Do not forget that the person comes before the disability. For example Johnny who has Down Syndrome as opposed to the little Downs boy.
- Talk to riders even if they can't verbalise a response. Listen and try to understand their form of communication when they speak to you. Never pretend to understand if you do not. They will not mind repeating themselves. Give the person time to respond.
- Speak directly to the riders, not through their support workers or companions.
- Talk to, and treat riders in a manner that is appropriate to their physical age, not their mental age.
- Remember to use appropriate terminology such as "a person with a disability" instead of a "disabled person", "intellectual disability" instead of "mentally retarded" and so on.
- Keep strictly confidential any information regarding a rider's condition. This means not discussing riders other than in a situation or meeting officially set up for this purpose.
- Seek the help of the Coach if you are unable to handle a rider's behavior or if the rider is distressed. Trying to touch them to soothe them may only make their condition worse.
- Use physical contact only when it is appropriate to the activity they are involved in. For example, holding a rider's leg as support during mounting. If you need to adjust a rider's leg in the stirrup during a lesson, you should tell them that you are about to do so.
- Use Hi-5's and shaking hands as forms of greetings and congratulations.
- Hugging and kissing is a form of affection reserved for family members and should be discouraged in the RDA setting.
- Consult both Coach and the rider about the way they prefer to perform a task.
- Learn about what tasks the rider can perform by themselves and what tasks require assistance. This way you can support the development of independent skills. While every possible care must be taken to prevent accidents, do not be over-protective.

## Don'ts

- Assume a rider can't hear or understand you.
- Move a rider suddenly or force a limb which is stiff as this can cause muscle strain.
- Take any images of children without a written consent by a Parent / Guardian.
- Disclose personal information about the child including names, address, school, phone numbers etc. are not to be displayed.
- Give any food or drink to riders unless approved by a Parent / Guardian / Support Worker.
- Escort a rider to the toilet – this is the Parent / Guardian / Support Worker responsibility.
- Be alone with a rider under any circumstance.

## Appropriate clothing for weather and safety

Most RDA Carine activities occur during the day in the outdoors so for your safety and comfort, volunteers should follow these practices:

- Use plenty of sunscreen and insect repellents if necessary (supplied).
- Use well-fitting hats (so they don't blow off).
- For protection from the sun and accidental injuries such as scratches and abrasions, wear long sleeved shirts and long trousers.
- Wear closed, flat, comfortable footwear. Elastic sided or lace up work/hiking boots are ideal. You can also use runners although they offer reduced foot protection if you are accidentally stepped on by a horse. Open foot-wear such as sandals, thongs or high heeled shoes are strictly forbidden around horses in the RDA setting.
- At certain times of the year, a fly net is recommended.

# COVID19 & General Hygiene

On arrival to the Centre:

- All volunteers to **check in digitally via our QR code or manually with the register**
- All volunteers will clean their hands with hand sanitizer
- All volunteers / staff will sign into the attendance book, have temperature tested and recorded

Staff and management of RDA Carine will review all Federal and State Government advice and restrictions as we navigate our way through COVID19. We respectfully request any volunteers that are feeling unwell to refrain from attending the Centre. We will be following; WA Government – Department of Health - Coronavirus (COVID-19) <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/covid-19-coronavirus>

Wash hands thoroughly with your hand sanitizer, pump pack soap and water:

- On arrival to the Centre
- After using the toilet.
- Before and after handling food.
- Before and after assisting riders.
- Before and after handling horses.

Wear disposable gloves when:

- Covering existing wounds or open sores.
- Contact with blood and body fluids is likely.
- Cleaning up spills of vomit, blood etc. As a cleaner, use bleach/water in a 1:9 ration (one part bleach to nine parts water).

Other recommended hygiene practices:

- Wash cups and other food utensils thoroughly in hot water and detergent.
- Where possible, use disposable equipment, e.g. paper towels, disposable cups.
- Wear protective spectacles when leading or side walking riders who may spit.

For people working around horses it is recommended to keep your Tetanus immunization current. It is also recommended to obtain immunization against Hepatitis B. In addition, new COVID19 procedures has been introduced to ensure a clean and hygienic environment.

# Safety Lifting Principles

Always protect your back by following these simple principles:

- Inform Coaches if you have any back issues.
- Do NOT lift any items if you have any concerns.
- Plan your lift.
- Get as close to the load as possible.
- Test the weight before lifting, and get help if the load is too heavy.
- Place your feet further apart than normal.
- Bend your knees and stick your bottom out – keep your back straight.
- Tighten your stomach muscles without holding your breath.
- Lift using smooth movements – do not jerk.
- Use your legs to do the work and pivot your feet (not from your hips).

HOW TO AVOID A MANUAL HANDLING INJURY WHEN LIFTING:



The strain on your back is increased 10 times when you lift a load away from your body and when you bend from the waist to lift.

The best way to make manual handling safer is to redesign the task or environment, to eliminate, or control the risk factors. There are a number of ways to do this:

1. Modify workplace and workstation layout – for example, use hoists for mounting instead of lifting clients and have varying heights for mounting to avoid bending.
2. Change the way things are moved- eliminate unnecessary handling Ensure that all heavy objects are at waist level e.g. saddles on racks.
3. Minimise body movements and forces such as bending, lifting, twisting, reaching and holding.
4. Modify the task – use mechanical aides such as trolleys and carts for moving heavy objects such as hay bales.
5. Modify the object – change the shape, size and/or weight of bulky objects so that they are easier to hold or pack.
6. Evaluate – check to ensure that any changes made to the workplace are working successfully. Changes need to be evaluated to make sure they are being used correctly, are not increasing the risk of injury and help to reduce manual handling injuries. A period of trialling improvements is often needed to find a good modification.

## Workplace Health & Safety

As a volunteer you are required by law to:

- Take reasonable care for your own health and safety.
- Take reasonable care that your conduct does not adversely affect the health and safety of others.
- Comply with any reasonable instruction that is given to you by a Coach or experienced volunteer.
- Cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure relating to health and safety at the workplace.
- Use appropriate personal protection equipment for the task you are doing.

RDA Carine has policies and procedures in place regarding work health and safety. These will be explained to you as part of your Induction and Volunteer Training. If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to ask a Coach. The Coach will allocate you roles and duties to perform. They will ensure that you have adequate training to ensure you are able to safely and effectively perform that duty.

Sometimes volunteers may be asked to perform a different role in the Centre. Please do not see this as a 'demotion'. The Coach will explain why this is necessary and will ensure that you are still a valued member of the team. It is important to ensure duty of care to all clients, volunteers and horses, by making sure all volunteers are fully capable of performing the roles they are asked to do.

### Insurance

Volunteers are covered by personal accident insurance when they are:

- Registered as a RDA Carine volunteer
- Participating in a RDA Carine activity
- Working with RDA Carine accredited horses
- Under the supervision of a qualified RDA Coach and are following RDA procedures.



## General Safety

Like most recreational activities, horse riding presents the participants with inherent risks, and as such safety is a key part of the RDA program. Each volunteer is responsible for their own safety, the safety of other volunteers, clients, visitors and horses. All volunteers must be aware of what to do in case of an emergency.

- Volunteers should familiarize themselves with the basic rules of safety, both for the horse and rider, by consultation with the coaches, attending training days and reading available literature.
- Be familiar with the Centre's Emergency Evacuation Plan and the location of the assembly areas.
- Know where the First Aid Kit is located and who is trained to administer first Aid.
- Ask for help when lifting heavy object. Use correct lifting techniques. To protect your back always bend your knees.

## Pregnancy

- If you become pregnant whilst volunteering with RDA, you must be aware of the risks involved and monitor your own health and well-being on a day-by-day basis. Obtain medical advice regarding your fitness and the risks involved in volunteering at RDA. Advise the Coach or Centre Management if there are tasks you are unable to perform.

## Safety around horses

Horses demonstrate a broad range of emotional responses that their handler's need to learn to recognize for the safety of the RDA program. In their natural state, horses are herd animals. They form a social group, enjoying companionship and leadership from a more dominant horse in their group. Once domesticated, the horse relies on their human handlers to provide that leadership and reassurance. Horse handlers should demonstrate self-confidence when working around horses and know how to respond to the horse during stressful situations. Volunteers should practice their horse handling skills outside of the RDA lesson with another helper until they can confidently work with horses in a lesson. Please do not give food to horses and clients without permission – horses learn to nip and clients may be on a special diets or suffer from food allergies.

RDA volunteers come from many and varied backgrounds, some with little or no horse experience. For this reason, all horse handlers must model safe horse handling practices including:

**ALWAYS** – tie horses using a quick release knot.

**ALWAYS** – speak to a horse as you approach it.

**ALWAYS** – keep at least one horse distance apart when leading, standing with or tying up horses.

**NEVER** – mount a horse that is tied up.

**NEVER** – bend under the necks or lead ropes of horses tied up.

**NEVER** – wrap the lead rope around your hand, carry it with large loops.

**NEVER** – walk behind a horse or allow another person to do so unless shown how to do so in a stall.

## Tying up a horse

Never tie a horse to a gate or moveable objects such as a chair or jump wing. You can attach binder twine to a ring or fixed post. The loop should be at a height of about 1.2 metres (four feet), low enough for children to reach but not so low that the horse can put its foot over the rope. There are various quick release knots that are used for securing horses. It is up to the centre to decide which one they want to use so that everyone is doing the same thing and students and volunteers do not become muddled by different methods.



# Horse Behaviour and Moods

You may work with a huge variety of horses at RDA Carine. Whichever horse you are working with, take time to get to know him, his personality and his likes and dislikes. Your Coach will be a good source of information about this. Being alert to his body language and facial expressions can help you to react quickly in an emergency. Knowing what to expect can keep everyone safe and ensure an enjoyable rider for all.

## EARS

Ears laid back means unhappy, frightened or feeling threatened. Ears moving back and forwards means the horse is listening to his rider/handler. Ears that are forward with tense body means the horse's attention is elsewhere and he may spook.



## TAIL

Unless the horse is swatting flies, excessive swishing of the tail indicates the horse is annoyed, uncomfortable or stressed.



## EYES

The desirable eye in the RDA horse is attentive, calm and relaxed. Horses with eyes half-shut are "switched off", inattentive and may be suddenly frightened because they are not paying attention. Horses' eyes also show worry, stress, fear and in tolerant horses, is the best indicator that the horse needs a break or is in pain.



### Signs of stress include:

- Grinding the teeth.
- Excessive tail swishing.
- Ears laid back
- Biting / kicking horses or handlers.
- Pawing the ground.
- Listlessness or lack of energy.
- Fidgeting

It is important to recognize when a horse is tired, stressed or in pain. Unhappy horses can react in sudden, unexpected ways. Horse handlers should advise Coaches of any changes in a horse's normal behaviour.

**Reading a Horse by Their Ears**

The horse's ears and actions are the key to his emotions. He can tell you what paying attention to and how he feels by the way he uses his ears and the way he acts. Following are some tips to his emotions.

<p>Ears forward but relaxed. Interested in what's in front of him.</p>	<p>Ears turned back but relaxed. Listening to his rider or what's behind him.</p>	<p>Ears pointed stiffly forward. Alarmed or nervous about what's ahead. Looking for danger.</p>
<p>Ears pointed left and right. Relaxed, paying attention to the scenery on both sides.</p>	<p>Ears stiffly back. Annoyed or worried about what's behind him, might kick if annoyed.</p>	<p>Droopy ears, head lowered. Calm and resting, horse may be dozing, can be startled easily.</p>
<p>Ears flattened back against neck. Really angry or in a frightened mood. May fight, bite, kick or rear and strike out with front hooves.</p>	<b>Other Signs You Should Notice Are:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tucking the tail down tightly. Danger to the rear. Horse may bolt, buck or kick. Watch out if ears are flattened, too!</li><li>• Swishing the tail. Annoyance and irritation: at biting flies, stinging insects or tickling bothersome actions of the rider or another horse</li><li>• Droopy ears and resting one hind leg on toe. Calm and resting, horse may be dozing. Don't wake him up by startling him!</li><li>• Wrinkling up the face and swinging head. Threatening gesture of an angry or bossy horse. Watch out for biting or kicking.</li></ul>	

# Horse Preparation

## Horse Preparation

*Horse preparation involves the following tasks:*

- Catching, leading and releasing horses.
- Tying up using a quick release knot.
- Rugging and un-rugging horses.
- Grooming and cleaning hooves.
- Fitting equipment.
- Preparing feeds and feeding horses.

Horses should not be prepared until a qualified Coach or member of the Coaching team is on site. New volunteers may perform the above tasks under supervision until the Coach decides they are competent in the tasks.

## Volunteers will be taught:

- The correct technique for approaching, catching, leading and tying up a horse using a quick release knot.
- How to rug a horse, how to remove a rug and the reasons for rugging an RDA horse.
- The correct grooming and hoof cleaning procedure, the reason for grooming a horse and the name of items commonly found in a grooming kit.
- To name parts of the saddle.
- Correct saddling techniques.
- To identify the different feeds used at RDA Carine and how to prepare feeds for horses.
- How to safely release a horse into a yard or paddock with another horse (one horse per handler).

## Putting on a saddle

When putting on a saddle make sure that:

- The area under the saddle and girth area is clean.
- The saddlecloth is clean and the correct way up.
- The saddlecloth ends behind the saddle and not under the back of it.
- The front of the saddlecloth is raised up under the pommel and off the withers.
- The girth is clean; done up loosely to start with.
- The pommel is clear of the top and sides of the withers.

## CARE OF TACK

Keep tack in a clean and dry environment. Leather becomes mouldy in damp conditions. Return equipment clean and dry to the pegs and racks they came from. It is recommended to wash bits after every use.

# Mounting (Riding)

## Mounting

Mounting is the time when the rider is most vulnerable. Mounting should be carried out in an orderly, calm and quiet way and undertaken only with a coach of experienced volunteer in charge. The **Coach** is responsible for selecting the most appropriate mounting method for each rider.

- The **leader** stands facing the horse or slightly to the side and must show appropriate control of the horse (see diagram below). The Coach will give direction on the correct method for controlling each horse in the ramp.

- The **nearside volunteer** (usually the Coach) directs the procedure. They help the rider greet the horse, place the aids in the correct position, place the left foot in the stirrup and support the rider's leg as it swings over the horse's rump.
- The **offside volunteer** counter balances the saddle by pulling down on the stirrup leather, positioning the rider's hands and assisting the rider's right leg over the saddle, placing their foot into the stirrup.
- When mounting from a wheelchair, extra volunteers are needed. The Coach will direct and train the volunteers for the specific method to use.
- More independent riders can mount from the mounting block or step.
- When a horse is resisting at the ramp, turn its head away from the ramp and let it approach a step at a time in order to prevent the quarters swinging out away from the ramp.

**Never** mount a rider when a horse is tied up.

**Never** mount or dismount a rider without the permission of the Coach.

## Assisting an ambulant rider to dismount to the ground

1. Position the horse away from fences and other obstacles. If the ground is not level, turn the horse so that the rider will dismount on the uphill side.
2. The rider must have both feet out of the stirrups for safety.
3. The rider holds the reins in their left hand in front of the pommel and leans forward.
4. The rider leans forward and wings their right leg over the back of the saddle and horse's rump, landing with feet together and knees slightly bent, facing the horse's head.
5. If they are able, help them to run the stirrups up on each side, changing sides in front of the horse.
6. Encourage them to thank the horse with a pat and to thank their helpers and Coach before being safely escorted back to the rider waiting area.

## Assisting a non-ambulant rider to use the hoist at the mounting ramp.

For riders that are mobility impaired (cannot weight bear), a transfer between the ramp and a wheelchair can be done using a mechanical aid such as a hoist. The Coach is always in charge of this procedure but will need the help of specially trained volunteers to assist. If you are interested in learning more about this type of transfer, tell your Coach or Volunteer Coordinator that you would like to be trained in this area.

## Leading

During the lesson the leader is responsible for the horse. The leader works in a team with the Coach and the side walker(s).

### ROLE OF THE LEADER:

- Warm up the horse prior to the lesson.
- Ensure gear is correctly fitted to the horse prior to the lesson, check the tightness of the girth.
- Position and control the horse during mounting, dismounting and during ridden activities.
- Where there is no side walker, the leader's job may also involve verbal support to the rider to relay the coach's instructions and explain how to give a command to the horse (see role of the side walker).
- Always listen to the Coach's instructions.
- Complete some basic paperwork as instructed by the Coach.

### VOLUNTEERS WILL BE TAUGHT:

- Correct techniques for leading a horse into and out of the mounting ramp, holding and positioning the horse in the ramp.
- Correct techniques for warming up a horse prior to the lesson.
- Correct techniques for side leading a horse when side-walkers are not required.

## IMPORTANT TIPS:

- NEVER try a new method training/disciplining a horse during a lesson unless instructed by the Coach.
- NEVER discipline a horse when a rider is mounted.
- DO offer as little assistance with guiding the horse as is necessary for the rider to develop their skills.
- DO keep the horse still when the rider is performing exercises at the halt.
- DO keep the horse in a straight line when trotting. Keep an even pace and don't go too fast.
- DO keep the horse moving an even pace and avoid sudden changes of direction to prevent unbalancing the rider. Take wide turns.
- DO stay aware of what is happening in the lesson.
- ALWAYS keep one horse's length between your horse and the horse in the front at all times.

## Correct Leading Techniques

### WARMING UP PROCEDURE

The warm up session prior to lessons should include:

- The horse walking forward actively.
- Transitions between walk and halt, slow walk and fast walk, walk and trot.
- Rein back for 3-5 steps (assists the positioning of the horse in the ramp)
- Walk and trot in both directions
- Walk the horse for 5-10 minutes before the rider mounts, particularly if they have been standing for any length of time.

### LEADING IN THE LESSON

- Hold the lead ropes in loops in your hand (do not wrap around your hand)
- Walk at the horse's shoulder on the left or on the inside track so you can see and hear the coach's instructions.
- When passing by or under obstacles or going through openings, sufficient clearance should be left for the horse, the rider's legs and head, and the helpers who may be side walking.
- At all times, but particularly when trotting and during games do not become carried away by enthusiasm.
- Be ready to overtake or stop if the horse ahead stops suddenly. If the rider needs to stop, move off the track.
- When the rider no longer requires side walkers and is learning to steer, the lead rein should gradually be lengthened so the rider can control the horse. The leader walks behind the horse's shoulder and acts as a 'safety net' only.



## Side Walking

During lessons the side walker is responsible for the rider. The side walker works in a team with the Coach and the leader. When there is more than one side walker, work as a team with only one person giving verbal instructions.

### ROLE OF THE SIDE WALKER:

- Greet the rider and assist them to correctly fit their riding helmet.
- Check the rider is correctly attired for riding (jackets to be buttoned / zipped and not flapping closed-in shoes are worn etc). Alert the Coach if clothing is not appropriate.
- Escort the rider from/to the mounting area.

- Some riders require special equipment to be fitted to their horse. Ensure that special equipment is available and correctly fitted.
- Assist the rider to carry out the Coach's instructions.
- Walk level with the rider's body, do not drop behind.
- Monitor your rider for fatigue or discomfort and alert the Coach.
- Complete some basic paperwork as instructed by the Coach.

### **VOLUNTEERS WILL BE TAUGHT:**

- How to fit helmets, adjust stirrups and other equipment.
- How to assist a rider at the mounting ramp or when using a hoist.
- Safe transfer techniques.
- Appropriate handholds for supporting a rider e.g. open hand, changing position frequently.
- To recognize common signs of fatigue, illness and onset of seizure activity.

### **IMPORTANT TIPS:**

- NEVER hold onto the horse or rider or gear as a means of support for yourself. If you are getting tired, inform the Coach immediately.
- When giving instructions to a rider, ensure you use their name.
- Allow time for riders to process instructions (this can be between 2-30 seconds)
- NEVER leave a rider. You must stay with the rider at all times, this includes walking through puddles on trail rides.
- ALWAYS relay the instructions as given by the Coach. Changing instructions can cause confusion and can delay the rider's response.
- ALWAYS show respect for your rider and use language that is appropriate for their age.

### **WORKING WITH HIGH SUPPORT RIDERS**

Riders with poor balance and/or impaired muscle tone may require additional support throughout the lesson. When using handholds you should:

- Change the positions of your handholds frequently to avoid loss of sensation in the rider's leg.
- Only physically support the rider if instructed by the Coach; likewise you must not remove physical support without prior consent of the Coach.
- Let the Coach know (or your team members) if they are getting tired.

### **Hand-over-thigh hold**

This is most commonly used for unbalanced riders. It provides a feeling of security whilst allowing the rider to develop core strength and balance. When using this hold take care to walk forwards parallel to the horse without twisting your body. Look where you are going!



### **Knee and ankle support**

Keeps the knee in position as well as the lower leg. Provides stability and balance. This position should not be held for very long as it is uncomfortable for volunteers to maintain. Swap sides regularly. You can also just hold across the knee and not the ankle. Or visa versa.

If a rider should slip, do not take their weight on yourself.  
Just guide them safely to the ground bending your knees.

## Heel hold

Best used for beginner riders learning to trot. Can also be used in progression from the hand-over-thigh hold as the rider's balance improves. Keeps the rider's heels down and the lower leg in the correct position and prevents the lower leg from slipping forward.

## WORKING AS A TEAM:

- The RDA environment contains many distractions which can affect a rider's concentration. Where there are two side walkers, decide who will give instructions to the rider. Keep verbal instructions to a minimum.
- Riders work hard both emotionally and physically. Try to make the riding sessions fun for everyone. Use positive encouragement where appropriate.

## Using Transfer belts in the RDA environment

Transfer Belts play a specific role in the RDA environment for:

- Transferring riders from wheelchair to horse, or into an RDA carriage.
- Adjusting a rider's position in the saddle.
- A management strategy for behaviourally challenged children to provide support during transitions or during an emergency dismount.
- For safety, when a rider's sitting balance is compromised.
- Riders should be regularly assessed and use of the belt discontinued when their condition improves.

## FITTING THE TRANSFER BELT:

- Belts are to be fitted around the waist, not around the chest.
- Place the belt around the waist and fasten snugly without being tight.
- Ensure that the belt does not compromise pegs, abdominal feeding tubes or drainage devices.

## INCORRECT USE OF THE BELT:

- The handles of the belt are not to be used to support, hold or drag a rider into position when mounted. Refer to the appropriate hand holds for supporting riders.
- You must not use the handles of the belt to restrain a rider.
- Do not lean your weight onto the handles of the belt or loop your hand through the handles. This will result in your elbow digging into the horse's rump and can cause unpredictable behavior from the horse.

## Emergency Drills

Occasionally events occur in the RDA setting that require participants to be dismounted quickly for safety reasons. Such events may include:

- A rider becoming unwell or over-excited.
- A horse stumbling or becoming excited.
- Sudden weather changes such as lightning or squalling winds.
- A foreign object in the arena (a plastic bag)
- Centre needs to be evacuated (for fire etc).

## PRACTICE DRILLS REGULARLY

It is important that volunteers are prepared for emergency dismount situations and that they are regularly practiced. At least twice a year all volunteers should practice emergency drills using light, able-bodied "practice" clients if physically able to do so. If you are not able, you must tell the Coach in charge this information.

## EVALUATION

Following any emergency procedures, you should debrief with the Coach. Some incidents will require completion of an Incident/Accident Report.

### Emergency drill for Riding

A standard emergency dismount to the nearside (left) is as follows:

1. The leader stops the horse, turning its head towards the nearside (where the rider will be dismounted)
2. Side-walkers remove the rider's feet from the stirrups and reins from their hands.
3. The near-side walker holds the rider's hips and pulls the rider sideways and lowers them gently to the ground.
4. The off-side walker can assist the rider's leg over the saddle.
5. The leader moves the horse away from where the rider has landed. The rider is assisted from the arena to a safe waiting area or is attended by a First Aid Officer.
6. Fill out an incident report and accident report if appropriate and follow up.

### Emergency drill for Vaulting

1. Halt the horse and dismount vaulters.
2. Have the horse moved away from the accident area.
3. Calmly attend the injured person and send someone after any loose horses.
4. Follow first aid procedures and call for medical aid if needed.



## Tips for Assisting Clients

- All riders benefit from regular rules, routines and consistent instructions.
- Break complex tasks into simple steps, offer one task at a time and wait until it is completed before giving them the next task. As riders become more competent you can string more tasks together.
- To avoid confusion, speak very literally, telling riders exactly what you want them to do. For example, if you ask a rider to touch their head, they may remove their helmet in order to comply!
- Always keep instructions simple, repeat instructions using the same words where possible, and give the rider time to respond. Some riders take longer to respond than others.
- Keep verbal communication and physical assistance to a minimum.
- Remind riders of appropriate behaviours, use social greetings, “please” and “thank you’s”.
- Reassure riders, as nerves can make muscles tight and posture stiff.
- Check that riders are sitting in a correct upright position so they get the most exercise from the movement of the horse.
- Handle arms and legs with care as muscle tendons and ligaments can be strained if limbs are not correctly supported. For some riders it is important that their feet are kept in the stirrups at all times.
- Watch for riders who show signs of fatigue or illness and report these immediately to the Coach.
- Many riders are susceptible to temperature and should be dressed according to weather conditions. Report any signs of cold or overheating to the Coach.
- Make sure you face riders with vision and hearing impairments when speaking to them.
- Regularly participate in emergency drills for dismounting riders.
- Learn some simple sign language to assist your riders.
- Watch for “bunched-up” clothing or lumps in the seat/saddle which may cause pressure sores for riders with low sensation.
- Make sure you do not use a heavy or tight hold when supporting riders as this can impair their circulation.
- Allow time to process instructions, many clients take about 20-30 seconds to do this.
- Address clients using their names before you give instructions.
- Encourage the riders to have FUN!



## Are you feeling unwell?

### We respectfully request that you abide by COVID19 good practices:

- Practise physical distancing (keep at least 1.5 metres or two arms lengths from each other)
- Practise good personal hygiene (wash hands often with soap and water, or hand sanitiser and cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use your elbow)
- Stay home if unwell and if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms get tested for COVID-19
- Keep up to date with current restrictions
- Contact our office - Sarah or Jo - Please TEXT only at 0410 180 346 or Phone office - 9448 6376
- Call the coronavirus (COVID-19) information helpline on 13 COVID (13 26843)

**Coaches Mobile: 0410 180 346**

COVID-19



**Stay home if sick  
and get tested**



Even if you have  
mild cold or flu-like  
symptoms

[healthywa.wa.gov.au](http://healthywa.wa.gov.au)

**If you are unwell, unavailable or on holidays, please text the coaches.**

**Coaches Mobile: 0410 180 346**