

2010

**Hoofbeats Therapeutic Riding Center, Inc.**  
At the Virginia Horse Center  
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North American Riding for the Handicapped Association, Inc.  
A Premier Accredited Member Operating Center

## **Hoofbeats Policies and Barn Rules**

*Please keep this information for future reference.*

### **POLICIES RELATED TO LESSONS:**

No client will be allowed to ride until all fees are paid and all forms are completed and on file with Hoofbeats (all clients should have in hand a copy of the current "Letter from the Program Director with important information for all program participants," which details the fee schedule, and lists the required forms.) Hoofbeats instructors will confirm class times with clients in advance of each eight-week riding session. Clients are expected to report to the barn for every lesson as scheduled. In the event of inclement weather, Hoofbeats staff will provide un-mounted instruction in the classroom. **Please be aware that the lesson schedule accommodates only a limited number of make-up slots, and in cases where a client must cancel a lesson, it may not be possible for Hoofbeats to reschedule. The need to miss a lesson should be reported to Hoofbeats as far in advance as possible, as Hoofbeats may be able to arrange a lesson swap with another client. Please note: clients who fail to report for a lesson without prior notification will lose all make-up privileges. Hoofbeats will not reimburse clients for missed lessons.**

### **ATTIRE:**

All riders must wear an ASTM-approved riding helmet when mounted. All clients, volunteers, and anyone else who expects to be around the horses, should wear substantial footwear (paddock boots or work boots are preferred.) Never come to the barn in open-toed shoes, sandals or flip-flops.

### **TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM THE BARN:**

Due to insurance concerns, Hoofbeats cannot provide transportation to or from the barn. Please do not request rides from any staff member or volunteer.

### **CHILDREN AT THE BARN:**

Hoofbeats recognizes that it is sometimes necessary to bring along to the barn young siblings of a client, or other visiting children. Please consider such added responsibility carefully: a barn environment is not only inherently hazardous for children, but unsupervised children could cause serious accidents if their behavior frightens horses, or distracts riders or staff during a lesson. **Hoofbeats requires siblings/visiting children to be under the supervision of their parent (or parent-designated responsible adult), AT ALL TIMES. It must be clearly understood that in the interest of clients' safety, the Hoofbeats staff CAN NOT supervise clients' young siblings and friends.**

### **RIDER PARTICIPATION:**

Recognizing that equine related activities hold inherent risks, all new and returning participants will be evaluated by our NARHA (North American Riding for the Handicapped Association) certified instructors

to ensure a safe and beneficial experience. Returning participants will be re-evaluated each year or as necessary for changes in medical, physical, cognitive, and behavioral status. Additionally it is the responsibility of the adult client, or of the rider's parent or guardian to keep Hoofbeats apprised of any changes in the participant's medical, physical, mental, or behavioral status during the course of the riding season.

Please note: horseback riding is contraindicated for some conditions/individuals. Hoofbeats follows the NARHA guidelines for precautions/contraindications for physical restrictions of riding. See the NARHA Guide (available in the Hoofbeats office), or the NARHA website ([www.narha.org](http://www.narha.org)) for detailed information. Riders at Hoofbeats must currently have some trunk control and be able to sit up with little or no assistance (e.g. Hoofbeats does not perform backriding.)

Weight considerations and age restrictions for all riders: maximum weights are listed below, but decisions regarding participation will be based on the availability of a suitable horse relative to the height, weight, cognition, and balance of the participant. The results of a risk/benefit analysis will also be considered. Final decisions regarding participation will be made by the Hoofbeats instructors.

**Maximum upper weight limits for riders in the Hoofbeats program are:**

- 250 lbs. For an independent rider or a rider who only needs a spotter
- 175 lbs. For a rider who needs a leader only, or a leader and spotter only
- 150 lbs. For a rider who needs a leader and 1-2 sidewalkers

**Age restrictions for riders:**

- Children must be at least 4 years of age
- Children under the age of 5 will require a leader and at least one sidewalker, and will only ride at the walk.
- Children will not ride independently until they are at least 7 years

**VOLUNTEERS:**

Volunteers are required to attend an orientation and training session annually (check with staff for the orientation schedule.) Every volunteer will be given a copy of the *Volunteer Handbook*, which details volunteer duties and procedures, and gives other important and helpful information. Volunteers must at all times abide by the Hoofbeats Barn Rules (p. 3 of this document; also included in the *Volunteer Handbook*.) **Each year**, volunteers must fill out a new registration packet of required forms (see the *Volunteer Handbook* or check the Hoofbeats website for the list of forms required.) Forms can be picked up at the barn, or downloaded from the Hoofbeats website.

**BARN RATS:**

In cases where older children wish to volunteer their help around the barn, it will be a joint decision between the instructors and the parents/guardians of that child as to whether he or she is mature enough and responsible enough to be present without parental supervision. Unattended young people must follow directions, and act in a safe, responsible manner, or their privilege of being there on their own will be revoked. All Barn Rats receive a copy of the "Barn Rat Code of Conduct," and are required to understand and abide by its terms. Parents please note: it is imperative that, for each scheduled work day, a Barn Rat's drop-off and pick-up times be confirmed **in advance** with the Hoofbeats staff. In addition, on any day that a parent can not be reached via the phone number(s) on file in the office, the staff must be provided with an emergency contact number. Should a Barn Rat misbehave, the parent will be notified, and will be asked to pick up the child within 30 minutes of the call.

## HOOFBEATS BARN RULES

**ATTENTION! The following rules apply to all program participants, staff members, volunteers, and anyone who visits Hoofbeats. These rules are designed to insure safety, a primary concern here at Hoofbeats. Please help us to enforce these rules!**

- No abusive, threatening, or violent behavior towards people or animals will be tolerated on Hoofbeats' premises.
- Alcohol and illegal drug use is prohibited on the Hoofbeats grounds, or at any Hoofbeats-hosted events.
- Absolutely NO smoking or use of open flames is permitted in the barn, or anywhere on the Hoofbeats' premises.
- There will be NO RUNNING OR SCREAMING in the barn or around the horses.
- No one is permitted in the barn, or in the adjacent paddocks and pastures, unless a Hoofbeats staff member is present on the premises.
- No one may enter a pasture containing horses unless accompanied by a staff member.
- No one is allowed to handle program horses, feed, or pet horses, unless supervised by a staff member.
- No one may ride a program horse unless supervised by a staff member.
- No person will be permitted to ride a program horse until s/he has submitted to Hoofbeats a completely processed set of the required forms **for the current year**.
- **All riders must wear an ASTM-approved helmet** while mounted, and use safety stirrups or wear hard-soled shoes with heels.
- No one may bring a non-program horse onto the Hoofbeats premises without prior permission from the Hoofbeats Program Director
- Children on the Hoofbeats premises must be supervised at all times.
- Dogs MUST be on a leash
- Barn aisles must be kept clean and free of obstructions.

### **Additional safety-related requirements:**

- Report all accidents, injuries, or hazardous conditions to a staff member as soon as possible.

Denial of services: Hoofbeats reserves the right to deny services to any individual based upon concerns for the applicant's safety and/or the safety of the horses, volunteers, staff, property owners, or for other reasons in accordance with NARHA operating center guidelines. Clients of Hoofbeats shall have no history of inappropriate behavior with fire, or any tendencies or history of abuse or violence directed toward other people or animals.

## **HOOFBEATS POLICY FOR THE DISCHARGE OF PARTICIPANTS:**

**Riders at Hoofbeats** may be asked to leave the program for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to:

1. The development of a contraindicated condition or the deterioration of a condition to the point that therapeutic riding is no longer beneficial, or could be harmful to the participant, or where safety for the rider or others has become a concern.
2. Weight gain above the maximums stated previously
3. Failure to complete and sign all required forms for the current riding season (see list of required forms above)
4. A display of fire-starting, threatening behavior, animal abuse, the abuse of children or adults, verbal abuse of volunteers or others, alcohol or drug use on the Hoofbeats grounds, or behavior that is disruptive for the normal functioning of the program
5. Frequent missed lessons without advance notification
6. Mainstreaming of an advanced independent rider whose riding has progressed beyond the ability of our program horses.

All dismissals will be handled by the riding instructors. The Program Director will be informed of the situation and be part of the decision-making process whenever possible. A written reason for dismissal will be recorded in the client's file. The grounds for dismissal will be discussed with the rider and/or the rider's parent or guardian in private. Riders or parents or guardians of the rider may appeal the dismissal in writing at the next Hoofbeats Board of Directors meeting. The decision of the Board will be final.

**Volunteers at Hoofbeats** may be asked to leave the program for various reasons, including, but not limited to:

1. The use of drugs or alcohol on the grounds or at a Hoofbeats event
2. Breach of the confidentiality policy
3. Verbal or physical abuse or sexual harassment or other inappropriate behavior toward participants or other volunteers or staff members
4. Mistreatment of the horses or other animals at Hoofbeats
5. The expression of vulgar language, inappropriate jokes, or disrespectful language
6. Frequent missed work times, without prior explanation
7. Abuse of phone or computer privileges
8. Smoking or the use of open flames in prohibited areas.
9. Persistent disruption of staff during lessons or special events
10. Any behavior deemed inappropriate by Hoofbeats or the Virginia Horse Center

All dismissals will be handled by the riding instructors and/or the Program Director. The grounds for dismissal will be discussed with the volunteer and/or the volunteer's parent or guardian in private, and a written record of the reasons for dismissal will be attached to the volunteer's registration forms and kept on file. Volunteers or parents or guardians of the volunteer may appeal the dismissal in writing at the next Hoofbeats Board of Directors meeting. The decision of the Board will be final.