

Emergency Evacuation Plan

Can you get all your horses out, before a natural disaster hits?

- The emergency event management approach needs to vary with each type of emergency event (bushfire, flood, cyclone, etc).
- In all situations, the better prepared you are, the better survival chances for all your family and animals.
- Horse management priorities during a emergency event should focus on immediate safety.

How will you get your horses out, and where will you go?

Animal evacuation from a emergency event area must occur in a prepared and coordinated manner, but in reality many people put themselves and others at risk attempting to rescue horses at the last minute.

Leaving early requires planning, as many horse owners don't have the vehicles or enough vehicles, resources, experience and practice to move all their animals under a variety of conditions.

This fact sheet includes many options that can help you plan how to protect your horses and your family during an emergency event.

Evacuation - Leaving early is the key to success

- **Make arrangements** ahead of time for a place to temporarily relocate your horses. Options may include showgrounds, sale yards, parks, racetracks, pony club grounds or placement with family and friends.
- **Contact** your local emergency management officials or your local animal control officers ahead of time, to find out where they recommend you take your horse/s and if any procedures are in place.
- **Monitor** state and territory government websites and radio stations for information about road closures and traffic alerts in emergencies.
- **Be prepared** to move your horse out of harm's way.
- **Don't delay** if you have decided to evacuate. The worse thing that could happen to you is to be caught in congested traffic, difficult conditions, or closed roads when the flood, storm, cyclone or fire arrives.
- **Late evacuation is a deadly option.** Once the fire or storm is close, visibility will be very poor and travel will be hazardous. Fallen trees, power lines, abandoned cars and even firefighting vehicles can easily block roads. Your horse float or truck will not survive the power of a cyclone and you are not going to outrun a flash flood or bushfire.

Evacuating in your own truck/float

In the days before the event:

- Check your float and truck to make certain they are ready to transport horses.
- Check the floor, tyres, brakes, lights and hitch to be sure they are in working order, fill the fuel tank.
- Check and replenish your emergency survival and first aid kit.

Other options

If you do not own a truck, float/trailer, contact a neighbour who does and find out if they would be willing or able to help you evacuate your horse in an emergency. Take into account that despite the best intentions, in an emergency they will be dealing with their own animals and may not be able to accommodate any more.

Commercial Transport

If you plan to use a commercial transporter, you can't leave the decision to evacuate to the last minute. Arrange to have them pick the horse up well in advance of a mandatory evacuation.



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- Safer places may include:
- Showgrounds
 - Saleyards
 - Public reserves and parks
 - Racetracks
 - Pony Club grounds
 - Property of family/friends

Have a list of phone numbers for:

- Neighbours with horses.
- Horse transport companies in your area.
- Club contacts (local pony or riding club).
- Local vet, farrier and stock supplies.
- Local emergency management and animal control officers.

Training

In case your horses ever need to be evacuated by either yourself, rescue services, or neighbours, ensure your horses are:

- Thoroughly handled, and trained to lead and load into different types of floats and trucks, in daylight, in darkness and under pressure by different people.
- Trained to be loaded by a single handler.
- Trained to be led with a group of horses.

Where to and how to get there? Evacuation Routes

To plan your evacuation route, contact your local emergency management officials, your regional law enforcement officials, or your local animal control officers to find out what they recommend and what procedures they have in place for emergency events.

- Planning an evacuation route to a pre-arranged destination where the animal feels familiar & comfortable.
- Make plans for more than one evacuation route in case of bush fires or floods and storms cut off one of your exits.
- Prioritise the routes.
- Drive all the evacuation routes with your horse float or truck.
- The exit routes must pass the questions of:
 - Can I get out with my size of float/trailer/gooseneck/truck?
 - Is it passable in all weather conditions?
 - What if there was flooding and a bushfire at the same time?
 - How would the routes be affected?

If evacuation is not possible, do you have a 'safer' place on your property?

- If evacuation is not possible or practical, identify a 'safer' area on your property or a neighbour's where horses can stay during an emergency event. Discuss this with family, friends and neighbours in case you are not there at the time of the event. The area chosen will depend on the threat (fire, flood, storm, etc). High ground in case of flood, an arena with no trees or buildings nearby, or a closely grazed or irrigated large paddock with a dam, situated away from any buildings, bush or tall grass, and clear access in the case of fire. Importantly, your horse should be familiar with the planned safer place (i.e. location of water, feed, other horses etc). Remember horses feel safer in a herd, so it is recommended they are not isolated but kept contained in a group during an emergency.



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