

Extreme Weather Procedure



Riding Establishment:

Introduction

Extreme weather conditions, such as storms, high winds, or extreme temperatures, can pose significant risks to the safety and welfare of staff, clients and horses. Our extreme weather procedure seeks to ensure that:

- **Safety of Riders and Staff.** Our staff and clients are aware of potential dangers and knows how to respond to keep themselves safe
- **Welfare of Horses.** Appropriate provision is made for the proper care, shelter, and management of horses during adverse weather events
- **Liability and Legal Compliance.** There is a documented procedures that demonstrates that we are taking reasonable steps to ensure the safety of staff and clients and the welfare of horses
- **Emergency Response Planning.** There is a structured plan in place that we allow us to protect everyone on the premises in the event of a sudden weather-related crisis.

Weather Monitoring

We will subscribe to the [Met Officer weather alert service](#) for our location. This will provide advanced warning of rain, thunderstorms, wind, snow, lightning, ice, extreme heat and fog with a seven-day lead time and will allow us to plan an appropriate response.

We will review each warning on receipt to:

- Understand the types of impact expected and an indication of how likely these impacts are
- Consider the advice and guidance being offered with the warning
- Agree our likely response should the predicted extreme weather occur

We will subscribe to the [Environment Agency Flood Warning Alert Service](#).

Communication

We will communicate our response to extreme weather to staff and clients using social media, mailing lists, text and instant messaging and through verbal briefing. This is likely to include a graduated response, initially providing a warning that extreme weather may disrupt coaching and other services, through to the action we are taking (such as cancelling coaching) in response to imminent or actual adverse weather.

Horses and Hot Weather

Staff are to ensure that horses have access to shade or stables and to plenty of water. Horses drink approximately 25 to 55 litres of water per day depending on the weather, diet and the level of work they are in. Young and older animals may use more water if the temperature or humidity is high. Staff are to consider hosing down horses regularly to cool them.

Horses are to be monitored, as part of daily health monitoring for signs of dehydration. Signs of dehydration include an elevated heart rate, changes in gum colour and feel, and a decreased skin elasticity (detectable via a skin pinch test, in which the skin along the neck in front of the shoulder should retract back to normal in less than two seconds when pinched and released). Where horses are stabled and are accessing water through tubs/buckets, water consumption is to be monitored through measuring water when tubs/buckets are replenished.

Exercise and coaching will be rescheduled to either early in the day or later in the evening to avoid the middle of the day and peak temperatures. We will not exercise horses or undertaking coaching when the temperature is greater than 35 deg C.

If a horse shows signs of distress, small amounts of water, with electrolytes, should be offered and the Vet contacted.

Horses and Cold Weather

Horses can generally tolerate cold temperatures well. However, when the temperature drops below freezing (0°C or 32°F), and especially when it combines with wind and wet, the risk of cold stress increases. If the temperatures drop significantly below freezing (e.g., -10°C or lower), and especially if combined with high winds or wet conditions, it is considered extreme cold weather. In such conditions, special attention to horse care is crucial.

In extreme cold weather, we will protect our horses through:

- The provision of adequate shelter, either using stables or the provision of wind breaks to reduce wind chill. Stables are to be provided with ample, clean bedding to provide insulation from the cold floor
- The use of appropriate rugging. The table below provides a guide on the weight of rugs to be used:

Temperature	Stables (Clipped)	Stabled (Unclipped)	Living Out (Unclipped)
5C -to 10C	Medium weight rug (250g)	Lightweight rug (150g)	No rug or lightweight (100g)
0C to 4C	Heavy weight (300g)	Medium weight (200g)	No rug or light-medium weight (150 – 200g)
0C to -10C	Heavy weight (400g)	Medium Weight (300g)	Light-Medium weight (150 – 300g)
-10C or colder	Heavy weight + neck cover (400-500g)	Medium – heavy weight + neck cover (300-400g)	Heavy weight (300-500g)

- Monitoring body condition and adjusting their feed accordingly to maintain a healthy weight
- Ensuring access to clean and unfrozen water at all times. Staff are to ensure that water containers, drinking buckets, troughs etc are free from ice. Taps are to be insulated and, if found frozen, should be defrosted using hot water

Flood

In the event of flood warning or floods, horses should be stabled and prevented from drinking flood water, which may be contaminated with sewage, manure and chemicals. If it is believed that horses may have drunk the water, contact the Vets for guidance and advice.

If the flood is risking the lives of the horses, the Emergency Evacuation Plan is to be implemented.

Drought

A Temporary Use Ban (TUB) imposes restriction on the use of water when the availability of water is poor (normally because of drought conditions). Even when a TUB has been declared, taps and hosepipes can continue to be used to provide water for horses for drinking and cleaning.

Staff are to ensure that horses always have access to fresh, clean water to prevent dehydration. However, staff are to use water sparingly and only to empty water barrels, troughs, buckets if fouled by manure or urine.