



Tijuana River Valley Equestrian Association

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR HORSES AND THEIR OWNERS (2023)

In Southern California we've learned that wildfires can occur and spread throughout the urban areas as well the backcountry. Some experts say our fire season is now year-round.

The San Diego rainy season runs from about November to April. During this time our rivers drain expansive mountainous watersheds. A relatively small amount of rain falling upstream can quickly result in floods downstream. And, as a reminder, our river beds are usually full of dense vegetation that can also burn.

Let's not forget that earthquakes have no season and are unpredictable.

Some of the more recent devastating events:

- The fast-moving Cedar Fire of 2003 started near Ramona and in less than 24 hours moved 30 miles to the southwest and burned through the well established suburb of Scripps Ranch.
- The livestock evacuation center at the Del Mar Fairgrounds was itself evacuated to Fiesta Island in Mission Bay Park during the Witch Creek Fire of 2007.
- Heavy rains in December 2008 resulted in a huge amount of runoff that flowed into the Tijuana River carrying with it vast quantities of trash and sediment. Nearly a hundred horses were evacuated. Many goats as well as horses drowned.
- The Lilac Fire of December 2017 began as just a small brush fire at the interchange of I-15 and SR-76 near Bonsall. That fire killed 45 racehorses.
- The 2018 Woolsey Fire started in the Santa Monica Mountains north of Los Angeles and very quickly spread west to the Pacific Coast Highway. It burned to the ocean.

Those are just a few examples of real emergencies in which people had little time to think. You must be prepared to react. This takes planning and practice, even training. As we've seen in previous fires, neither the

suburbs nor the coastal areas are out of fire danger. And the same thing goes for floods. If you or your horse live near a creek, river, flood plain, or other low lying area, winter rains upstream can quickly have a devastating effect on the surrounding area.

Whether it's fire, flood, or an earthquake planning is key. Start preparing weeks before fire season and winter rains. Know your roads and routes, both primary and alternates. Drive these routes with your horse trailer to become familiar them and know if they're passable with your rig. Consider the possibility of fire and flood happening at the same time. How would you get out?

Keys to Planning for an Evacuation

1. Be familiar with as many routes as possible.
2. Team up with a neighbor — you might not be at home or in town when an emergency strikes.
3. Have a horse identification packet (microchip, photos, brands, etc) prepared. Keep a remote but easily accessible digital back up.
4. Keep an equine first aid kit stocked and readily available.
5. Maintain 3-5 days of horse medications on hand and ready to go.
6. Make a prioritized list of the tack you want to take.
7. If your horse lives with you know where you'll take your horse. Maybe it's the Del Mar Fairgrounds or maybe it's a boarding facility.
8. Have an emergency contact who lives outside of your area. That person can keep your friends and family informed of your situation.
9. Once you've developed your plan prioritize the tasks.

EQUINE EVACUATION CHECKLIST

PLAN AHEAD FOR FIRE / FLOOD SEASON

Vehicles

- Safety check your trailer
 - tire inflation
 - lights
 - hitch / coupler
 - doors close properly and lock
 - clean the water tank
 - remove shavings
- Safety check your tow vehicle if infrequently driven
- Keep tow vehicle's gas tank topped off
- Practice hooking up your trailer for day and nighttime evacuation

Documents

- Review and/or update digital copies of your horse records
- Review and/or update emergency contacts, review your plan with them
- Review [Del Mar Fairground Evacuation Instructions](#) and print out [forms](#)
- Post your evacuation plan in a conspicuous place at your barn (tack shed for boarders)

Evacuation Routes

- Plan and drive evacuation routes, ensure they're passable with your rig
- Print out maps of your evacuation routes

Prepare your Horse

- Practice loading your horse in a trailer for day and nighttime evacuation
- Locate or replace your horse's emergency ID device
 - identity ribbon / ID tag braided into mane and/or tail
 - fetlock band
 - identification collar
 - paint (water-base is safest)
- Place your *flat* halter with lead near stall gate
- For fire evacuation use a *leather* halter and *cotton* lead
- Mark the halter with horse's name, in white so it's easy to read by flashlight

- Update horse identification packet and include medical and safety concerns, e.g., allergies, kicks, etc.

Equipment and Supplies

- Inventory and restock first-aid kit
- Check flashlights and headlamps, replace or recharge batteries if needed

RED FLAG WARNING or EVACUATION IS IMMINENT

Get Your Horse Ready

- Name and tele on horse, e.g. fetlock band, ID tag, paint (water-base is safest), etc
- Put a neck collar on hard-to-catch horses

Pack Your Tow Vehicle Ready

- Evacuation map
- Extra flashlights / headlamps and batteries
- Horse supplies and equipment
- Hay, feed, supplements
- **Do Not put hay or other flammables in the truck bed**
- Equine first-aid kit
- Extra halters and lead ropes
- Dressage and/or lunge whip
- Rope
- People go-bag
- Case of water
- Work gloves
- Fire extinguisher

SUPPLIES and EQUIPMENT – HORSES

Feeding

- Feed pans, hay nets and clips
- Water buckets
- Hay / Feed (3-5 day supply)
- Supplements (3-5 day supply)
 - beet pulp
 - salt
 - supplement mix
 - electrolytes
 - probiotics

Cleaning

- Muck fork
- Broom

Grooming

- Fly spray
- Grooming kit

Health

- Equine first-aid kit
- Medications (7-day supply)

Equine First Aid Kit

- Banamine
- Bute
- Oral sedation, e.g., ACP, ACE
- Betadine solution
- Box of disposable gloves
- Blunt-nose scissors
- Hoof pick
- Tweezers
- Duct tape
- Cotton balls
- Q-tips
- Gauze pads (nonstick)
- Maxi pads
- Instant cold packs
- Antibiotic ointment
- Wound wash / sterile water
- Wound spray
- Towels
- Vet wrap rolls
- Gauze wraps
- Standing wraps
- Paper and pencil

SUPPLIES and EQUIPMENT FOR PEOPLE

Documents in Waterproof Container

- Ownership records, identification, photos
- Horse health records
- Horse registration
- Emergency contacts
- Trailer registration
- [Del Mar Fairgrounds forms](#)

Communication

- Cell phone and charger
- Backup power, e.g., solar cell charger, batteries, generator, etc)
- Emergency contact information

Tools

- Flashlight, headlamp, camping lamps and/or chem-lights, batteries
- Pocket knife and/or multipurpose tool
- Wire cutters
- Bailing twine
- Duct tape
- Face masks for smoke, e.g., N95, bandana
- Safety goggles
- Work gloves
- Trash bags
- Trash cans with lids

Essentials

- First aid kit
- Non-perishable snacks
- Water (one gallon per person per day)
- Maps, as a backup to your phone

Personal Go-Bag

- Cash and credit cards
- Identification and personal records
- Back-up prescription eyeglasses
- Toiletries (toothbrush, lip balm, TP, etc.)
- Medications
- Blanket
- Change of clothes (including socks and underwear)
- Extra hat
- Extra work gloves
- Towels
- Plastic resealable bags (to separate wet and/or dirty things)

Additional Supplies for Flooding

- Waterproof cell phone bag with lanyard
- Probing stick to check ground stability
- Tall waterproof boots / waders
- Rain gear
- Towels
- Warm dry change of clothes

Earthquakes can cause extensive damage to infrastructure and basic services. The water supply may be interrupted because power is out, not just because the supply lines are broken.

Consider reviewing the [County of San Diego Disaster Preparedness for Livestock](#) for more information to develop your plan,