

DEFENSIVE HORSEMANSHIP

INTRODUCTION

In 1964 Congress passed the Wilderness Act which established a designated wilderness system in the United States, involving public lands. This act set aside vast areas to be held in perpetuity in as natural and untrammelled, by man, condition as possible. The act set aside these lands in their most primitive conditions, with specific exceptions for public recreation, and as a resource benchmark for future generations.

Americans are using our wilderness and roadless areas more and more each year as major recreational areas. Our government agencies are making better and more sensitive management decisions requiring more access and presence in these wilderness and roadless areas.

RATIONALE

The use of pack and riding animals to access the roadless and wilderness areas of Montana has been historically proven. There are many proven and unique skills needed to successfully and safely use horses and mules in these undeveloped lands. The Back Country Horsemen of Montana Defensive Horse Safety Course is designed to train, develop, and improve the safe use of equine in the back country. The BCH of Montana, will initiate a stock safety training format that will be consistent in all Chapters of the BCH of Montana.

GOALS

The goals of the course will be to meet the training requirements of The Health and Safety Code (FSM 6709.11.04.1) and to provide livestock safety training for the BCH of Montana members and volunteers thereby reducing job hazards for volunteers and personnel who work with livestock.

OBJECTIVES

The training will include horse handling, horse behavior and accident potential. equipment and its use, first aid for people and stock, and riding safety skills. This training will require 8 hours with a 4 hour refresher once every three years.

LESSON ONE -2 Hours - An introduction to equine behavior (the nature of the horse) and equipment used in riding and packing into our roadless lands.

OBJECTIVES:

- I. Participants will be exposed to the physical and psychological characteristics of equine.
- II. Participants will develop a clearer understanding of the proper equipment required for safe use and handling of equine. (Bits, saddles, pads, and halters.)
- III. Attendees will learn proper fitting of equine equipment.

- IV. Participants will be introduced to safe equine practices, loading, unloading, hauling, and hauling equipment (trucks and trailers).

MATERIALS:

- A Power Point Program developed and interpreted by Bob Hoverson, Nine Mile Wildlands Training Center, from a video by Dr. Robert Miller, DVM
- Bits: Curb, snaffle and hackamore
- A good riding saddle (for mountain use) and pack saddle with good pad
- Halters with ropes for each participant

PROCEDURE:

- I. Watch and discuss “The Nature of the Horse, a Power Point program.
- II. Discussion of controlling devices (bits, bridles) and hands on demo and practice.
- III. Discussion of good riding saddles for the mountains including pads. This will include a demo of how to fit.
- IV. A demo of how to catch, halter and tie equine.
- V. A display of good stock hauling equipment, trucks or trailers, pointing out safety for equine and handlers.
- VI. Stock behavior and accident potential will be discussed.
- VII. A discussion of proper clothing used around livestock (boots, chaps, raingear) and their safety features.

LESSON TWO -2 Hours - Introduction into proper stock handling techniques including catching, tying, grooming, saddling, bridling, and mounting.

OBJECTIVES

- I. An overall demonstration and hands on equine handling exercise.
- II. Participants will demo proper and safe catching, haltering, tying, grooming, saddling and mounting techniques and become proficient.

MATERIALS

- One saddle horse for demo
- Saddle, pad, proper bit-bridle, halter and rope per student
- Grooming equipment so that all stock can be groomed properly.
- Gentle saddle horse for each participant.

PROCEDURE

- I. A demo of catching, haltering, tying, grooming, saddling and mounting equine safely.
- II. Hands on - all attendees will proceed to catch, halter, groom, saddle, bridle and mount safely.
- III. All instructors will critique safety techniques, add comments on safety to the above procedures.

LESSON THREE - 2 Hours - Attendees will mount and demonstrate safe mounting and riding skills and techniques and all instructors will critique mounting and riding skills.

OBJECTIVES

- I. To develop safe mounting and riding skill by comparing and sharing safety information and demos of experienced riders.

MATERIALS

- One horse or mule, riding saddle, pad, proper bridle, bit, halter and rope per participant.
- Grooming equipment so that all equine can be properly groomed.
- Arena or riding area for hands on practice, observation and demos.

PROCEDURE

- I. All attendees will catch, halter, groom, saddle, bridle-bit equine safely.
- II. All participants will ride equine at a walk and trot and practice figure 8 maneuvers with instructors critiquing safety techniques.

LESSON FOUR -2 Hours - Developing a working understanding of what a good trail veterinary first aid kit should be and some practical skills in how to use it. Developing an understanding of accident probability for people involved in equine activities and what first aid could be given on the trail for both people and equine by lay personnel.

OBJECTIVE

- I. To develop practical veterinary first aid skills for stock and first aid skills for people in stock related accidents for lay personnel.

MATERIALS:

- One complete layman's veterinary first aid kit.
- One complete standard, American Red Cross approved layman's first aid kit for humans.

PROCEDURES

- I. Discussion and demo of veterinary first aid kit contents, where they can be obtained and how to care for them.
- II. Discussion and demo of a standard human first aid kit (American Red Cross).
- III. Identification of symptoms and common equine injuries and illness and how to care for them.
- IV. Identification of symptoms of common human equine accidents and how to treat them. i.e.. broken bone, head injuries, eye injuries, cuts, and bruises.