

This checklist outlines the basic program training required for volunteers before they commence working within the RDA Riding Program. Volunteers must also complete their Stage 1 – Induction training.

Safety around Horses

DISCUSS the following points:

- How to safely approach a horse, move around and between horses without ducking under lead ropes
- Understanding of moods and warning signs of horse behaviour (refer RDA Volunteer Information Booklet)
- Keeping safe distances between horses when leading

DEMONSTRATE:

- How to safely hold a lead rope and tie a quick release knot
- OPTIONAL: Watch videos on “RDA Program Safety and Emergency Procedures”, “The Hippotherapy Horse”

Safety during lessons

- Volunteers must pay attention to the coach and avoid unnecessary chatter during lessons
- Avoid leaning on the horse
- Stay with your rider/horse at all times
- The Coach is responsible for the overall safety of the lesson. Report any of the following occurrences immediately:
 - o Rider fatigue, illness or change in behaviour
 - o Changes in the horse’s behaviour
 - o Any accident or injury to yourself, the horse or the rider

Interactions with riders

- Treat people with a disability with dignity and respect.
 - o Talk to riders even if they cannot speak. Listen and try to understand their form of communication. Ask them to repeat themselves if you do not understand. Give the person time to respond.
 - o Use language that is appropriate to the physical age of the rider.
- Physical contact with riders must be appropriate to the activity.
 - o Use Hi-5’s and shaking hands and discourage hugging and kissing
 - o Be aware that a rider being left seemingly to struggle with a task might be a deliberate coaching strategy. Always encourage a rider to tackle a task independently. Provide only sufficient help to allow them to accomplish a task. This will help riders feel a sense of achievement
 - o Explain your actions to the rider. Tell them what you are doing and why.
 - o Do not move a rider suddenly or force a limb or joint which is stiff.
- Respect rider’s privacy and confidentiality. You will learn information which will help you assist riders within RDA. This information may be personal and confidential and therefore must not be discussed outside of RDA.

Role of the Side walker

DISCUSS the following points:

- Position Description (refer RDA Volunteer Information Booklet)
- When there is more than one side walker, work as a team with only one person giving verbal instructions, too many instructions will distract the rider from the lesson.
- Walk on the opposite side from the leader when there is one side walker
- If a rider should slip, do not take their weight on yourself. Just guide them safely to the ground, bending your knees.

DEMONSTRATE:

- The correct holds for providing physical support to mounted riders:
 - o Hand over thigh hold (to support balance and when learning to trot)
 - o Hand supporting thigh (for riders not using stirrups)
 - o Hand on ankle/stirrup
 - o Change position frequently to avoid loss of sensation

Role of the Leader

DISCUSS the following points:

- Position Description and role of the Coach (refer RDA Volunteer Information Booklet)
- You must always be aware of:
 - o the height of the rider (when walking under trees and low obstacles)
 - o making sure that side walkers and the rider's legs are not caught going through gates and around barrels
 - o signs of fatigue or illness in the rider (if working without a side walker)
 - o changes in behaviour of the horse or rider and report these to the coach

DEMONSTRATE the following points:

- Correct leading techniques including:
 - o Leading from the horse's shoulder
 - o Do not overly control the horses head, allow a loop in the lead rope when leading
 - o Outline the voice commands commonly used for centre horses
 - o Encourage an active walk through positive body language
 - o Keep at least one horse distance at all times
- PROVIDED WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE LEADING WITHOUT A RIDER BEFORE WORKING IN THE LESSON

Mounting and Dismounting

DISCUSS the following points:

- This is the time when the rider is most vulnerable. Mounting and dismounting should be carried out in an orderly, calm and quiet way with everyone working as a team. It should be undertaken only with a coach or helper specifically trained for the task and nominated by the coach in charge.
- Always follow directions of the coach
- If the horse begins to walk backwards, the leader must release the pressure and re-position the horse.

DEMONSTRATE the following points:

- Role of the leader
 - o To lead the horse in straight and close to the ramp/block
 - o Position and control the horse with a light contact on the reins or head collar
- Role of the off side helper
 - o Counter balance the saddle by pulling down the stirrup leather
 - o Assisting the rider's leg over the saddle (do not pull on limbs or joints)
 - o May assist rider to place their foot in the stirrup
- Role of the near side helper (usually the coach)
 - o Directs the procedure and/or assist the coach with lifting when required
- Describe an emergency dismount outlining the roles of the leader and side walker(s)

DOCUMENTING VOLUNTEER TRAINING

RDA is committed to a quality training program for volunteers. This ensures their safety and the safety of our riders. The Stage 1 and 2 Checklists are essential requirements before a volunteer participates in an active lesson. Basic Program Training can be delivered via a group session or on an individual basis. A record must be held at the centre for every volunteer describing the level of training they have achieved. A volunteer must demonstrate that they are competent (stage 3 training) in their allocated tasks within 12 months of participating in Basic Program Training. A Volunteer Competency Training Card has been designed to assist with competency training.

VOLUNTEER NAME:

DATE:

SIGNED OFF BY: