Napa Community Animal Response Team
Animals Search & Rescue
(Field Operations)
HOME STUDY LESSON 5
Shelter In Place, Evac, Animal Handling and Safety
Estimated time to complete: 1 hour, 45 minutes
TOPICS IN THIS SECTION

- Choosing SIP or Evac
- Animal Handling Safety
- Horses & Other Equines, Bovines,
- Difficult Situations
- Trailer Loading
- Ropes and Knots
- Halters and Lead Ropes
Videos In This Unit:
(Watch now or as they appear)

Stacey Westfall Horse Safety: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TudeTWXpcOo

University of Minnesota Cow Handling Series:
1. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbvOeF5dddU
2. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfeom8bhEO8
3. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCMXNwVSz1E

Certified Horsemanship’s Trailer Loading:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjWp0aYZzXM

Using Bolt Cutters http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZnisyblqrs
“Bank Robber Knot” https://youtu.be/FyPwOgjPS70
“Daisy Chain” https://youtu.be/z1MR07j6v-0

Basic Quick Release https://youtu.be/MG831W7EHlo

Warwick Schiller Tying and Using Rope Halters
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyMoCVzggQE

Kansas State Vets’ Alpaca Handling http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nk17LAD2mQ
Haltering Camelids http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8suUEyYU14
Haltering and Leading Tame Ruminants https://youtu.be/OBo4mZLtSfM
SIP or Evac?

• Criteria:
  ▫ Is Evacuation even possible?
  ▫ What is the Owner’s request?
  ▫ How imminent is the threat? Fire approaching?
  ▫ If in a warm zone, is the area safe from the return of fire (or other hazard)?
More Criteria for Choosing SIP or Evac

- Is there an adequate water supply?
- Are feed and water tubs intact?
- Is there shelter? Is the shelter safe?
- Is the fencing safe and intact all the way around the field? Walk the perimeter to make sure.
- What is the Animal’s health, condition, any injuries? (Take pics, contact vet if unsure)
- How likely is theft, poisoning, unauthorized release, or harassment by strangers?
- Are unauthorized people or groups operating in the area? These folks, while well-meaning, sometimes interfere with Shelter In Place. They may feed incorrectly, release animals, and even “evacuate” animals to unknown locations.
Evaluate the Fencing - All of it

Walk the entire perimeter of field or corral to make sure it is safe and intact, because:

- Vinyl fencing melts.
- Wooden fence posts burn.
- Humans may have cut wire fencing.
- Trees may have fallen on a stretch of fencing hidden from your view.
Safe Animal Handling:

- **Don’t be complacent!** Injuries usually occur when we forget basic safety rules.
- **ALL animals** should be considered **unpredictable**.
- Since the horse is the largest and most common species you are likely to be called to evacuate or shelter, the next several slides focus on them. But the same principles apply to all animals.
Horse Handling Safety

- It is beyond the scope of Napa CART to teach beginners how to handle horses.
- If you volunteer for Evac, we expect you already know how to handle a horse.
- However, in the heat of the moment, it is easy to forget safety basics.
Equine Basics:

The Drive Line

Make sure horse can see you

Pressure behind Driveline moves horse forward

Pressure in front slows or stops horse
Horse Safety

Click on picture to start video
The Kick Zone

• An average-sized horse can kick out 6 feet behind them. Stay 6 ft. 1 inch away from their hindquarters!
• Some equine species (donkey, mule, zebra) can “cow kick” out to the side. Position yourself for safety at the left shoulder!
• A horse can also kick forward. When examining a horse’s front legs, stay out of range of the hind feet.
• Horses and other equines can also strike with their front feet.
• Wear a helmet and avoid standing in front of them!
• Your safest position is at their left shoulder or neck, standing a foot or more away from them.
Equine Facial Expressions

This is just “the tip of the iceberg” but it is a good place to start, if you are not around horses much.
What Are The Ears Saying?

The horse’s ears and actions are the key to his emotions. He can tell you what he is paying attention to and how he feels by the way he uses his ears and the way he acts. Following are some tips to his emotions.

- **Ears forward but relaxed**
  - Interested in what’s in front of him

- **Ears turned back but relaxed**
  - Listening to his rider or what’s behind him

- **Ears pointed stiffly forward**
  - Alarmed or nervous about what’s ahead. Looking out for danger

- **Ears pointed left and right**
  - Pinned ears
  - Paying attention to the scenery on both sides

- **Ears stiffly back**
  - Annoyed or worried about what’s behind him; might kick if annoyed

- **Droopy ears**
  - Calm and resting; horse may be dozing

- **Ears flattened against neck**
  - Violently angry; in a fighting mood. May bite, bite or kick

**Other signs you should notice are:**
- Tucking the tail down tightly.
  - Danger to the rear. Horse may bolt, buck or kick.
  - Watch out if ears are flattened too

- Switching the tail.
  - Annoyance and irritations:
    - At biting flies, stinging insects or tickling
    - Bolstering actions of a rider or another horse.

- Droopy ears and resting one hind leg on toe.
  - Calm and resting; horse may be dozing.
  - Don’t wake him up by startling him.

- Wrinkling up the face and swinging the head.
  - Threatening gesture of an angry or bossy horse.
  - Watch out for biting or kicking.

You can tell what a horse is paying attention to by the direction of its ears. And pinned ears are not the same as ears listening to something behind them.
Horse Safety Tips:

• Look around: What environmental factors are most likely to spook the horse?
• Keep yourself between the horse and the scary factor and any other animal nearby. That way, the horse will spook away from you, not into you.
• Be calm. The horse wants to feel safe, and is looking for a good leader.
Tip #1 for Leading A Frightened or Unruly Horse: Circle it

Don’t get run over by a frightened or unruly horse! Bend the horse and drive it around you in a circle, moving ever closer to the trailer. A horse cannot rear, buck, or strike if it is flexed and moving in a circle. Giving it something to do other than getting into trouble helps it calm down.
Tip #2 for Leading A Frightened Horse: Keep its Attention; Keep it busy

Keep the horse’s attention on you! Talk to the horse. “You’re with me. You’re okay, Stay with me”

Keep the horse busy. If the horse is kept busy responding to your directions, (s)he will often calm down. Try zigzags and circles as you move steadily toward the trailer. Don’t allow the horse to go faster than you can control!
Donkeys are equines, closely related to horses, and share many similarities. But Donkeys are NOT horses. Key differences:

• Donkeys do not consider themselves prey.
• Donkeys will stop and try to figure it out.
• Donkeys refuse to do anything they don’t understand or don’t consider safe.
• Donkeys are as likely to challenge pressure as to yield to it.
• Donkeys do learn by watching another animal, or even a human.
• Donkeys form strong, long-lasting emotional bonds. Separation from their usual pasture mates is stressful to them.
Donkeys, 2

Donkeys come in three types:

Mini  Standard  Mammoth

Donkeys evolved in the desert, so they tend to be “easy keepers.” Donkeys are prone to the health dangers of obesity: insulin-resistance and laminitis. As desert animals, they don’t do well in wet conditions. Donkeys tend to be far more particular about their water quality than horses are. Keep their water tubs clean!
Mules are a horse-donkey hybrid. They enjoy “hybrid vigor” – usually growing larger and stronger than either parent.

Mules are highly trainable, but you may find them challenging to handle. Fair, kind, but firm and consistent handling works with mules. “Up Your Game.” They need to know that you mean it. If you lose your temper, they will remember it! Mules are not as forgiving as horses.
Zebras and Zebra Hybrids

- Zebras and Zebra Hybrids of other equine species (with horse = Zorse; with donkey = ZeDonk or Zonkey) are attractive animals, with their characteristic stripes. As such, you will sometimes encounter them as exotic pets.
- These animals seldom, if ever, become completely tame or trained, and can be very dangerous.
- Call Animal Control, or handle as you would range livestock – best done from a distance!
Many of us are less familiar with the bovine family than we are with equines. The following 4 videos by the University of Minnesota offer a short crash course in understanding and working with bovines.
Click on picture to start video. Disregard the subtitle about milk production; This video is a good bovine behavior introduction for anyone, not just dairy farmers.
Unsafe (and totally ineffective) Trailer Loading

Unfortunately, in this year of COVID-19 lockdowns, we will not be able to do any live training in trailer loading.

The fact that the horse is not killing these people is testimony to the horse’s essential kindness and patience.

If you would like to improve your loading skills, your best bet is to practice with your own animals, if you have them, and to watch YouTube videos (quality varies, of course). In a non-covid year, practice with friends’ animals.
Emergency Trailer Loading - horse

Click on picture to start video
Trailer Loading

• In a perfect world, everyone would teach their animals to load willingly long before an emergency.
• In the real world, you are likely to meet many animals who have not been trained to load.
• A Disaster is not School Time.
• Learn a variety of safe and effective methods to get the job done.
Emergency Loading Tips

- If you’re afraid a horse might get away from you, put two lead ropes on it and have a buddy hold one. (works for dogs, too)
- Shoving from behind or Using a “Butt Rope” can be dangerous (kicking or rearing) and usually doesn’t work. A butt rope can help hold your ground but you still need an additional source of “move forward” energy.
What’s going on here? How many hazards and mistakes can you find?
Loading Non-Trailer-Trained Animals

Below: a “pig paddle” is a giant hollow plastic rattle that can add energy to help move the animals forward. The trick is to adjust the energy to the needs of the situation – enough to get the job done, but not so much as to panic the animals.

Above: A “Matador cape” can be improvised with a tarp, a large piece of cardboard, or a blanket. It not only creates energy, it serves as a psychological barrier to turning around and escaping.

Above: an improvised loading chute; Note the person is applying just enough energy to be effective, but not so much as to spook or panic the animals.
Rolled Snow Fence Loading Chute
The “5 Minute Rule” is “rule of thumb” - not a precise measurement. When time is of the essence, help the greatest number of animals rather than bogging down on just one. 5 minutes is a good guideline.

However:

- Be fair to each animal - *YOU may be the cause of the uncooperative behavior!*
- *NEVER* approach a horse by running at it, yelling or clapping.
- Don’t stalk or creep like a predator.
Leaving an Unloadable Animal Behind

• If an animal won’t load after your best efforts within an allowable time frame, it will have to be left behind.

• Never leave a single animal behind. Sadly, you will have to leave a buddy animal, even though the buddy was willing to load.

• Put them in as safe a place as possible (a dirt or sand round pen, arena or fenced field) with a 2-3 day supply of water and hay, and hope for the best.

• Notify Dispatch to have the animals checked on as soon as it is safe to get back in to the area.

• If you can, run a hose with sprinkler in this site.
Special Challenges: Stallions

- Stallions can be difficult to handle.
- Some stallions are downright aggressive.
- Don’t attempt evacuating an aggressive stallion if you don’t have stallion experience.
- Stallions need to be kept separate from mares.
- A stallion may jump fences or break down a pipe panel in order to get to a mare.
- Mare owners at the shelter may object to a stallion.
- Check with the shelter manager before bringing in a stallion.
- A shelter may not be able to accept a stallion, due to the proximity of mares, lack of strong enough fencing, or lack of qualified handlers.
Reality Check: Tough Situations

- **Scenario:** An aggressive stallion lives with a buddy, who is an older blind mare. Fire is approaching fast – you have about 15 minutes before you need to leave – not enough time to set up a loading chute to get them both into the trailer.

- **Can these two horses be evacuated? Why or why not?**

- **Points to consider:**
  - Does anyone on your team have the skills to catch and load the aggressive stallion? What about the blind mare?
  - Can the shelter handle the aggressive stallion?
Reality Check continued:

- Never open a gate and let horses loose where they can get out onto the road! Horses on roads = accidents and death.
- People are likely getting out of their cars to try to catch loose animals, thus putting the people at risk.
- In the case of the blind mare and stallion, the blind mare would likely not be able to keep up with the stallion, should they take off running, etc. This would cause panic in both horses.
- There are so many reasons not to release them!
- **Ideal Solution:** If you can locate them to some kind of contained “safe area” on the property with bare dirt, heavily grazed, or sand footing, that is your best hope. Hose down site if possible. Provide water, make a plan to check on them.
- Otherwise, you may be in a no-win situation of having to leave them behind with a very poor prognosis for survival.
Making a tough choice can be traumatic

- Keep in mind that you are there to do the most good for the most animals.
- You may not be able to save them all.
- Think about this now. If you don’t think you can handle it, be honest, and volunteer for a different job in Napa CART.
Rope Basics & Safety:
Corral with Multiple Animals

**Risk:** Crowding at the gate: Animals may break loose or run over you.

**Fix:** Use a flag stick or whip to back them off from the gate.

**Risk:** Interacting with each other around you;

**Fix:** Keep a safe space between you and each animal!

**Risk:** Animals may start running and be hard to catch;

**Fix:** Read their body language, stop and give them a second to process, if you think they are thinking of running.
Animals In Stalls or Kennels

- Closely confined animals must be freed for any chance of survival.
- Use bolt cutters to remove an animal from a locked stall.
- Stalls are cramped spaces: A panicked animal can pin you against a wall, kick or bite you.
- Animals may bolt past you when you open the door.
- Halter the animal before letting it out. Ensure perimeter control.
Using a Bolt Cutter to Open a Stall

Click on picture to start video
To Tie or Not To Tie

Things to Consider:
Is the horse trained to tie?
Is the trailer designed for easy access to the knot?
  **YES:** Tying adds stability and safety; Tying prevents crawling under the divider or biting/kicking others.
  **NO:** Tying can be dangerous.
  **DON’T KNOW?** Don’t tie.

Does the horse have known pull-back issues?
  **YES:** Do not tie.
  **DON’T KNOW?** Don’t tie.
Whenever You Tie:

- *Always* use Quick Release Knot OR a Commercial Quick Release device
- Never use a Square Knot or Other Hard-To-Release Knot
- Never leave a rope dangling out the trailer window.
Quick Release Knots

Watch: How to Tie Quick Release Knots Videos:
“Bank Robber Knot” [https://youtu.be/FyPwOgjPS70](https://youtu.be/FyPwOgjPS70)
“Daisy Chain” [https://youtu.be/z1MR07j6v-0](https://youtu.be/z1MR07j6v-0)
Basic Quick Release [https://youtu.be/MG831W7EHlo](https://youtu.be/MG831W7EHlo)
Basic Quick Release Knot

Click on picture to start video
The “Bank Robber Knot”

Click on picture to start video
Halters and Lead Ropes

You may have your favorite types, but you will encounter all types, so learn to use them!

There are two basic types: Rope Halters and Web or Leather Halters. You are more likely to be familiar with rope halters if you come from a Western or “Natural Horsemanship” tradition, and the web or leather halters are more from an English or show tradition.

Lead ropes, too, come in two types: tie-on and clip-on.

There are advantages and disadvantages to every piece of equipment. Learn to use them all properly, and practice so that it becomes second nature and you don’t have to think too much about it while busy during an incident.
Rope Halters

Rope halters offer a high level of “feel” which can be an advantage in training or controlling a difficult animal, but the halter must be put on and fitted properly. Don’t let it constrict nostrils and interfere with breathing.

Left: Halter with loop for clip-on lead rope

Right: “One piece” halter with tied-on lead rope
Using Rope Halters

Click on picture to start video
Web and Leather Halters

These are standard if you ride English, or if you show. Many people just prefer the comfort and sturdiness of this type of halter.

Use what the horse is used to. For your own animals, as with anything new, carefully introduce them to both types of halter and lead rope ahead of time, before being needed.
Lead Ropes

Lead ropes either tie on or clip on. The critical element with clip-on ropes is the soundness of the hardware. Light hardware might be fine for low stress situations, but it can easily break under pressure. Heavy hardware is heavy - but it is more likely to perform during an Incident.
Stud Chains

These can be applied to a web or leather halter for added control of a hard-to-handle horse. Never tie or trailer a horse with a stud chain on though.
Tying Rules:

Only tie a horse if:

- The footing is safe, so the horse can’t slip or step on something scary or dangerous
- The rope can’t break
- The object the horse is tied to can’t break
- AND only if you have a sharp knife with you, to cut the rope in case the horse gets into trouble.

Watch: Why you should never tie a horse to a gate or pipe panel, and always carry a knife:

https://www.facebook.com/louise.ballanger.3/videos/531470971086798
Handling Alpacas

Click on picture to start video
Haltering and Leading Camelids (llamas, alpacas, camels)

Click on picture to begin video
Haltering and Leading Tame\(^*\) Ruminants

*(you won’t be able to halter and lead any animal who is not accustomed to handling. Don’t attempt haltering and leading range animals)*

Click on the picture to begin video
Bedding on the Trailer Floor?

**Pros:**
- Bedding is absorbent.
- Sick or injured animals can lie down more comfortably.

**Cons:**
- Embers can blow in through trailer vents and windows and catch fire.
- Bedding fragments can be blown into nose, mouth, ears, and eyes, causing irritation or choking.
- Cleaning = more work, more time, more waste.

A trailer with good rubber matting should not need bedding for **most** situations.
SAFETY FIRST!!

Your first responsibility is Safety:
1. Your own safety
2. Your teammates’ safety
3. The animals’ safety
IN THAT ORDER!