

Volunteer



RIDING CENTER
CARRIAGE HILL METROPARK

Handbook

2023



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Policies and Procedures



Overview

Carriage Hill MetroPark Riding Center implements the following policies and procedures. Portions of the following policy will be posted in the facility for quick reference. The entire policy is available for public record and can be viewed at the Carriage Hill MetroPark Riding Center office. For the following, “facility” is defined as any and all property, parking areas, structures and trail systems within Carriage Hill MetroPark Riding Center.

Facility Rules and Regulations

The following Rules and Regulations are implemented to ensure your safety as well as the safety of our staff and our equines. Please do your best to help ensure a fun and safe environment for all!

1. Absolutely no alcohol or illegal drug use is permitted on facility grounds.
2. Smoking is not permitted in or near any barn or other structure on facility grounds.
3. No one is permitted to handle any horse at the facility without direct permission from a staff member.
4. No one is permitted to enter a pasture at any time without direct permission from a staff member.
5. Any person engaging in equine activities at the facility is required to have proper signed and dated documentation and understand all inherent risks involved in these activities.
6. All persons engaging in equine activities at the facility are required to wear an approved SEI certified riding helmet.
7. No running, screaming or horseplay is permitted in the barns or around the horses.
8. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times while at the facility.

9. No verbal or physically abusive behavior is tolerated towards other persons, equines, or cats at the facility.
10. All participants must wear proper attire and footwear while engaging in equine activities at the facility.
11. All dogs must be kept on a leash while at the facility.
12. Hand feeding of horses is strictly prohibited.
13. Only facility-provided treats can be provided to the horses and must be given in feed pans.
14. Every person at the facility will respect instructions from staff or qualified volunteers to ensure a culture of safety and appreciation. Every person volunteering or working at the facility will exhibit and maintain mature, professional interactions in regard, but not limited to personal privacy and private belongings.

Weather Policy

Carriage Hill MetroPark Riding Center will cancel programming and/or volunteer shifts in cases of extreme weather conditions, in which you will be notified by our office at least one hour in advance. Trail rides will be canceled in the event of severe weather conditions and/or the conditions of the trail system itself. Final determination for cancellations will be made by the Supervisor or the Instructor on-site and advanced notification will be given to participating volunteers.

Age and Weight Restrictions

To participate in camp, lessons, or trail rides, you must be at least 8 years old and 48" tall. For children between the ages of 2 and 8, we offer pony rides.

Horses can carry approximately 20% of their own body weight; therefore, we attempt to limit our riders to 200-250 pounds. However, the build of both the horse and the rider can affect this number. We request that if a rider has concerns about his/her weight, please contact a staff member, and we will attempt to accommodate the rider.

Disabled Rider Policy

While Carriage Hill MetroPark Riding Center does not operate hippotherapy programs or any equivalent therapeutic activities, modifications can be made to ensure that our programs are accessible. Please contact the Riding Center office if you have questions about accessibility to our equine activities.

Helmet Policy

All participants of equine-related activities at Carriage Hill MetroPark Riding Center are required to wear an SEI certified equestrian helmet. Helmets are provided by the facility and are routinely cleaned and inspected to ensure proper fit and operation. A staff member or a volunteer of Carriage Hill MetroPark Riding Center will assist the customer in properly fitting the helmet before mounting a horse. Customers are permitted to wear a personal helmet providing it is an SEI certified equestrian helmet.

Proper Riding Attire

All participants of equine related activities at Carriage Hill MetroPark Riding Center are required to wear appropriate riding attire. The following requirements are in place to ensure your comfort and safety while riding. Riders must wear:

- long pants
- hard sole shoes with a one-inch heel
- weather-appropriate shirt or jacket
- SEI certified equestrian helmet

Carriage Hill MetroPark Riding Center reserves the right to refuse service to anyone that is not wearing proper riding attire.



Volunteer Policies



Expectations

Treat your volunteer experience as you would a job. This means:

- Report to your shift on time. Once you have arrived for your shift, please check in with a staff member.
- Volunteers are responsible for tracking their volunteer time in Get Connected by "Checking In" to their volunteer shifts.
- If you are running late, or need to cancel a shift with less than 24 hours' notice, please try to contact the Riding Center (937) 689-6939 to let us know your situation.
- Please act professionally at all times. In this volunteer role, you are representing Five Rivers MetroParks and Carriage Hill Riding Center.
- Be present for your entire shift and pay attention to the task at hand. If you need to take a personal phone call or message, please excuse yourself to take it.
- If you have questions regarding your responsibilities, be sure to ask a Riding Center staff member.
- Horse barns are all run differently. If you have questions or concerns about procedures, animal care or health, programming, or operations, we encourage you to speak to a member of staff or volunteer services. We want to share information and reasons for doing things.
- Please wear your volunteer name tag, in particular when you are working with public-facing programs.
- Always make human and horse safety your top priority.
- Every person volunteering at the facility will exhibit and maintain appropriate professional interactions in regard, but not limited to personal privacy and private belongings, topics of conversation, and respectful behavior towards one another.

Volunteer Onboarding

All new Carriage Hill Riding Center volunteers begin as a Barn Aide. Barn Aide Volunteers assist with essential daily tasks of our equestrian facility such as cleaning stalls, turning horses out to pasture, and providing them with fresh food and water. New Carriage Hill Riding Center volunteers are onboarded twice a year, once during the March/April timeframe, and once during the November/December timeframe. All Riding Center Volunteers begin as a Barn Aide, and then can complete additional training to assist with Lessons, Camps, Pony Rides, and Trail Rides.

To be eligible to support this opportunity, volunteers must be 14 years of age or older, complete the volunteer onboarding qualifications, and those over the age of 18 must receive an eligible background check.

[Click this Volunteer Onboarding Opportunity link, then hit the blue “Respond” button to get started.](#)

Step 1. Create an account in Get Connected, MetroParks’ online Volunteer Management platform.

Step 2: Complete the following **Qualifications**:

- Complete your volunteer profile
- Submit your emergency contact name and phone number
- Review and sign the Volunteer Policy Handbook
- View the New Volunteer Orientation

Step 3: Submit and receive an eligible background check through our partner, Sterling Volunteers

Step 4: Volunteers are asked to complete a virtual training at home and then attend an in-person Barn Aide Training onsite at the Carriage Hill Riding Center. Check our [Carriage Hill Riding Center Volunteer Training](#) page to access virtual training resources and RSVP for an in-person training.

Communication & Scheduling

COMMUNICATION

- E-mail is the main form of communication. Please check your e-mail regularly to stay in contact with staff. If you do not have an email address, please let the CHRC staff how best to contact you.

SCHEDULING

Once a volunteer has completed the required qualifications, training, and background check (age 18 and up), they can view all volunteer opportunities and sign up for shifts on Get Connected. Go to www.metroparks.org/volunteer and click on any link to Get Connected.

- If you need to make changes to a shift you have signed up for online, please make the change online. If it is within 24 hours, please also call the Riding Center at 937-689-6939.
- In the event you are unable to report to a scheduled shift, please call the Riding Center at 937-689-6939 as soon as possible.

*Due to child labor laws, youth (14 & 15 years old) can only volunteer a maximum of 8 hours per day.

Tracking Volunteer Service Hours

Tracking volunteer service hours is important. It documents each volunteer's commitment of time to the community and allows Metroparks to demonstrate the value of the volunteer program. Volunteer time is tracked and automatically recorded in MetroParks' online Volunteer Management platform, Get Connected, when a volunteer checks in for an opportunity. Volunteers will be able to check-in easily at several site kiosks, by email reminder via their own personal computer or smartphone, via the internet browser on their smartphone, or via the Get Connected free app for smartphones. Volunteers that support unscheduled opportunities will use the Track Hours tool to add their volunteer hours in Get Connected.

Volunteer Correction for Success

As part of your volunteer service with MetroParks, and depending on your volunteer assignment, you can expect to receive ongoing feedback and recognition, and an annual evaluation of your performance. The annual volunteer evaluation process is intended to recognize the standards, goals, and expectations in volunteer engagement, and allow for the opportunity to share constructive feedback from both the staff and volunteer's perspective.

If a volunteer is not performing or behaving satisfactorily to the expectations of their volunteer assignment, the staff lead and the Volunteer Coordinator will address this with the volunteer by utilizing the Volunteer Correction for Success Process and Form, after corrective feedback has already been provided in the field. The Volunteer Correction for Success is a transparent process recommended by Volunteer Services to address and correct volunteer performance or inappropriate conduct by providing clear and constructive feedback through a series of formal, progressive steps including a Casual Conversation, a Formal Meeting, and a possible Dismissal.

Separation from Volunteer Service

We realize volunteers may need to discontinue their volunteer service with us at some point. The volunteer should provide ample notice, in writing, of their intention to resign. Volunteers will be provided the opportunity for an exit interview upon separation.



Opportunity Descriptions



Barn Aide

Required Training:

- Complete Carriage Hill Riding Center 101 Video.
- Review the Carriage Hill Riding Center Volunteer Handbook.
- Review Barn Aide Training Slides.
- Review Horse Care Basics Training Slides.
- Complete Barn Aide Quiz.
- Complete Hands-on Training.
- Complete Practical Exam.

Special Requirements:

- Must be at least 14 years of age.

Basic Responsibilities: All the following responsibilities will be explained in your Barn Aide Training Slides. These responsibilities will be conducted under supervision of a staff member.

- Feed & water
- Clean & bed stalls
- Clean feed pans, water buckets, and water troughs
- Sweep aisles
- Move and unload hay
- Help with Weekly To Do List
- Turn horses in and out
- Groom horses

* Remember, you are a representation of Five Rivers MetroParks. It is your responsibility to always act in a professional and courteous manner with the public. Our utmost concern is the safety of our horses and riders. We want to demonstrate a safe, fun, and exciting environment for everyone to enjoy!

Pony Ride Assistant

Required Training:

Complete 20 hours as Barn Aide Volunteer.
Review virtual Pony Ride Assistant Training Slides.
Complete Annual Hands-on Training.
Complete Practical Exam

Special Requirements:

Must be at least 14 years of age.

Basic Responsibilities: All the following responsibilities will be explained in your virtual Pony Ride Training. Pony Rides must be conducted with two people for the safety of the rider.

- Groom (ponies)
- Tack (ponies)
- Assist rider with helmet
- Re-check saddle before mounting rider
- Assist rider onto pony
- One person leads the pony; second person watches the child to ensure a centered position (this can be a customer)
- Escort the child to and from the pony
- Keep ponies watered and un-tacked during down time

*You will come into contact with young children and their families during pony rides. It is important to use sound judgment when making verbal comments and coming into physical contact with all persons. You MUST always ask for the rider's permission/or parents' BEFORE making physical contact such as when adjusting stirrups, helping the child get on or off the pony. You will receive specific training on how to help a rider mount and dismount safely from the pony.

Equestrian Arena Assistant

Required Training:

Complete 20 hours as Barn Aide Volunteer.
Review Equestrian Arena Assistant Training Slides.
Complete Annual Hands-on Training.
Complete Practical Exam.

Special Requirements:

Must be at least 14 years of age to assist with camp or lessons.

Basic Responsibilities: All of the following responsibilities will be explained in your Equestrian Arena Assistant PowerPoint Training.

- Assist camp counselor/instructor in preparing for the day
- Assist camp kids/students with all ground activities
- Assist riders with all mounted activities
- Be comfortable fitting helmets, checking tack, adjusting stirrups, helping students on their horses.
- Watching for safe spacing in the arena and helping riders create space and reinforce the instructions from the lead instructor.
- Perform all Barn Aide responsibilities as required throughout the camp day
- Please conduct yourself with the utmost maturity and respect.
- Assisting with camp brings added responsibility. Please be sure to ask if you have any questions at any time.

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Equestrian Trail Assistant

Required Training:

Complete 20 hours as Barn Aide Volunteer.
Review virtual Trail Ride Training Slides.
Complete Annual Hands-on Training.
Complete Practical Exam.

Special Requirements:

Must be at least 16 years of age to be a Trail Assistant.

Basic Responsibilities: All the following responsibilities will be explained in your Trail Ride PowerPoint Training.

- Groom and tack horses used for trails
- Leave horses in cross-ties until the trail is ready to go out
- Put bridles on horses with halters over the bridles
- Re-check tack and tighten girths before mounting riders
- Mount riders, fit stirrups to riders, and give basic instruction on control
- Assist with Barn Aide chores while trail is out
- Assist with helping customers unmount after the trail has returned
- Assist with untacking, grooming, and putting horses away (after last trail only)
- Assist with putting up tack and cleaning crosstie area (after last trail only)

* Note: In order to be a Trail Guide, you will need to complete a certain number of hours as a Trail Assistant and fulfill certain riding qualifications.

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Equestrian Trail Guide

Required Training:

Be checked off as Trail Assistant.
Review virtual Trail Ride Training Slides.
Complete Annual Hands-on Training.
Complete Practical Exam.

Special Requirements:

Must be at least 16 years of age to be a Trail Guide.

Basic Responsibilities: All the following responsibilities will be explained in your Trail Ride PowerPoint Training.

- Groom and tack horses used for trails
- Leave horses in cross-ties until the trail is ready to go out
- Put bridles on horses with halters over the bridles
- Re-check tack and tighten girths before mounting riders
- Mount riders, fit stirrups to riders, and give basic instruction on control
- Make sure the customer you are helping is taken care of before mounting your own horse (Staff will tell you when you should mount depending on your position in the line up.)
- During Trail: Verbally or physically assist customers. For example: reiterate directions given by lead guide, help customers with horse issues like eating, and assist with any other situations or questions that may occur while out on trail.
- Post trail: Once you have put your horse in their assigned crosstie, assist with helping customers to unmount
- Assist with untacking, grooming, and putting horses away (after last trail only)
- Assist with putting up tack and cleaning crosstie area (after last trail only)

* Note: In order to be a Trail Guide, you will need to complete a certain number of hours as a Trail Assistant and fulfill certain riding qualifications.

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Practical Exams



Barn Aide

Minimum Required Hours: 20

| Task | Notes | Staff Initials/Date |
|---|-------|---------------------|
| Stall Cleaning (remove all manure and urine) | | |
| Add Bedding (bulk and pellets) | | |
| Dump, Scrub, & Refill Water Buckets | | |
| Sweep Barn Aisles & pick up debris | | |
| Assist with letting horses in for feeding and turning out | | |
| Catch and release horse from/into pasture | | |
| Retrieve/release horse from/in stall | | |
| Set Grain (location and amount) | | |
| Hay (location and amount) | | |
| Refill Water Troughs | | |
| Approach Horse | | |
| Lead Horse | | |
| Crosstie Horse | | |
| Grooming (order and use of tools) | | |

Barn Aide Quiz []

Pony Ride Assistant

Minimum Required Hours: 20

| Task | Notes | Staff Initials/Date |
|---|-------|---------------------|
| Set up Pony Ride Pen (indoors & outdoors) | | |
| Halter Pony | | |
| Lead Pony | | |
| Cross-Tie Pony | | |
| Groom Pony | | |
| Water Pony | | |
| Tack Pony (Western) | | |
| Tack Inspection | | |
| Greet Customers | | |
| Fit Helmet | | |
| Escort Rider to Pony | | |
| Hold Pony for Mounting | | |
| Ask permission to Assist Rider | | |
| Mount Rider | | |
| Lead Pony Properly | | |
| Dismount Rider | | |
| Escort Rider Out | | |

Equestrian Arena Assistant

Minimum Required Hours: 20

| Task | Notes | Staff Initials/Date |
|---|-------|---------------------|
| Check In With Instructor | | |
| Approach, Halter & Lead Horse From Stall | | |
| Approach And Catch Horse From Pasture | | |
| Cross-Tie Horse | | |
| Groom Horse | | |
| Tack (English) | | |
| Tack Inspection | | |
| Assist with Bridling Horses | | |
| Fit Helmet | | |
| Assist with mounting using 4-Point Check (helmet, girth, stirrups, reins) | | |
| Watch for safety and correct spacing | | |
| Help Dismount | | |
| Help Untack Horses | | |
| Sweep Aisle | | |
| Pick Up Manure and Dump In Pile | | |
| Help Pick up any Training Obstacles (cones ,poles, jumps) | | |

Equestrian Trail Assistant

Minimum Required Hours: 20

| Task | Notes | Staff Initials/Date |
|--|-------|---------------------|
| Approach, Halter, Lead Horse from Stall | | |
| Cross Tie Horse | | |
| Tack Horses (western & English) | | |
| Bridle Horse (Bitless & Bit) | | |
| Halter Over Bridle | | |
| Check Horse's Equip. (Tighten Girth) | | |
| Hold Horse for Mounting | | |
| Ask permission to Assist Rider | | |
| Mount Rider | | |
| Adjust Stirrups | | |
| Demonstrate Rein Control | | |
| Escort Rider Out | | |
| Dismount Rider | | |
| In-between Trails Loosen Girths, And Offer Water | | |
| At End of Day Help Untack, Sponge, Scape Water, Pick Out Hooves. | | |

Equestrian Trail Guide

Minimum Required Hours: 20

| Task | Notes | Staff Initials/Date |
|---|-------|---------------------|
| Ride Middle position on Trail Ride | | |
| Ride Drag position on Trail Ride | | |
| Verbally Assist Customers on Trail Ride | | |
| Physically Assist Customers on Trail Ride | | |
| Show understanding of Emergency Protocols for Trail Rides | | |