

MHARF Foster Care Requirements and Guidelines

The Minnesota Hooved Animal Rescue Foundation often makes use of foster homes for equines and other animals that have completed or nearly completed the rehabilitation process. Foster care providers have played a large role in our ability to take in and care for as many animals as possible. However, our foster care providers must be screened carefully to ensure each placement is in the best interest of the animal/s. Many years of experience have shaped our list of requirements for becoming a successful foster care provider.

Our animals will be placed into foster homes that comply with the following guidelines:

Adequate Food:

- Nutritious feed (hay/grain) in sufficient quality (wholesome, palatable and free from contamination such as feces, mold, mildew, insects, dust, etc.)
- Food shall be provided in sufficient quantity and be of adequate and appropriate nutritive value.
- Diet shall be prepared with consideration for the age, breed/type, condition, size, work level and quantity of equine(s).
- Equines should score, by a veterinarian, no less than a body condition score of 5 on the Henneke Condition Scoring Chart to be considered of adequate weight.
- Equines shall have access to adequate natural forage or be fed daily or as recommended by a veterinarian or MHARF.
- All storage and feeding receptacles shall be kept clean and free from contaminants such as feces, mold, mildew, insects, dust, etc.
- If more than one animal is fed at one time or in one place, it is the responsibility of the caregiver to separate animals for equal feeding.

Adequate Veterinary Care:

- An equine shall be afforded immediate veterinary care if known or suspected to have an injury, accidental or deliberate, or exhibiting such signs as shock, colic, founder, tremors, swelling, broken bones, open wounds, inability to eat or drink, blistering as a result of fire, acid, etc., irregular or abnormal breathing, partial or total paralysis, abnormal discharge or bleeding, signs of disease, severe parasitic infection, loss of appetite, weight loss, abnormal skin condition or hair loss, temperature fluctuation, persistent diarrhea, inability to bear weight on a limb or lameness, or other such signs.
- Hoof care maintenance and trimming every six (6) to eight (8) weeks, or as directed by a veterinarian or farrier.
- Parasites kept under control through worming every six (6) to eight (8) weeks or as directed by veterinarian.
- Annual dental check-up and necessary treatment to ensure proper and adequate food digestion.
- Vaccination as recommended by veterinarian. Proof of testing for Equine Infectious

Anemia (Coggins Test).

Adequate Water:

- Adequate water means clean, potable water available at all times for all equines. Exceptions shall be determined by a veterinarian.
- All water receptacles shall be kept clean and free of contaminants and be positioned or affixed to minimize spillage.

Adequate Shelter:

- An adequate shelter shall have at least a roof and three sides and be kept in good repair and free of standing water, accumulated waste, sharp object and debris.
- Adequate shelter provides protection from inclement weather conditions (e.g. prevailing wind, sleet, rain, snow, and arid temperature.)
- It is the responsibility of the owner/custodian to ensure that each equine, taking into consideration age, breed/type and health, has access to proper shelter or protection from the weather (e.g. relief from more dominant equines that may exclude him/her from the shelter).

Adequate Space:

- Space available to the equine must be usable and safe (e.g. must be provided an area free from standing water, accumulated water, sharp objects and debris, and maintained in a safe and healthful manner).
- Equines shall be allowed to exercise and have freedom of movement as necessary to reduce stress and maintain good physical condition. Space and provisions for exercise must be appropriate and sufficient for the age, breed/type, quantity, condition and size of the equines.
- Enclosed areas should be constructed or modified to allow free flow of air to control temperature, humidity and prevent air stagnation.
- Equines kept in stalls must be allowed a minimum of 4 hours of daily turn out in a suitable and safe fenced area large enough for the equine to exercise.
- Fencing shall be well maintained and in good repair at all times. Fencing adequate for equine needs to be highly visible and of a minimum of 4 feet. Barbed wire fencing is not considered an appropriate fencing for equines. All t-posts MUST be capped.

Adequate Companionship:

- Equines are herd animals and are very social. Equines need to be kept with another equine at least another grazing animal like a goat or cow.

MHARF Foster Care Frequently Asked Questions

- **Does MHARF cover routine feed expenses while the equine is in foster care? What is the foster provider expected to pay for?**

Ideally a foster care provider will provide pasture/hay/grain as needed to maintain a healthy weight for each individual equine. If you feel you can't afford to cover all of the costs of pasture/hay/grain, please let us know ahead of time so we can discuss other options. If additional nutritional supplements are needed, MHARF will cover the expense pending approval from our director and/or veterinarian.

- **Does MHARF cover routine farrier and veterinary work?**

Every equine will have routine veterinary and hoof care completed before going into foster care. The foster care provider is responsible for additional routine hoof care (trim every 6-8 weeks on average) while the horse is in your care. MHARF will assume responsibility for any emergency veterinary care while the horse is in foster care. The foster care provider must contact us **immediately** when there is any question or concern about the health and well-being of the horse. The foster care provider must contact a veterinarian **immediately** in a case of emergency.

- **Will I be required to do any training with the horse I foster?**

For the most part you can choose how much "hands' on" work you want to do with the equine you foster. When you contact MHARF about fostering we can discuss your experience and comfort-level with horses in different stages of training. We do require that any foster care provider be knowledgeable about horses and be able to handle the given horse on the ground. However, we have horses of all different temperaments, training levels, needs and requirements, and we will match them with the foster homes that can best meet their needs. Ideally, at a minimum, a foster care provider will be willing to work on basic ground manners so that the equine doesn't pick up any bad habits while in foster care and so that the equine can be handled if a prospective adopter chooses to visit. As far as more extensive groundwork and any under-saddle training, that can be discussed on an individual basis.

- **Will I be required to speak with potential adopters?**

Yes, you will be required to provide contact information so prospective adopters can contact you and make arrangements to see the equine in your care. Once these animals have completed the rehabilitation process, our main goal is to find them new homes. The foster care provider must be willing to assist in this by being accessible to potential adopters by phone or by email. The foster care provider must be willing to allow potential adopters to visit their property to meet the animal. If a potential adopter would like to ride, it will be at that person's own risk. The foster provider will not be held liable for any injuries/accidents as long as the Liability and Risk sign is posted and the potential adopter is made aware of this beforehand. However, the foster care provider should provide the safest possible environment in which to ride, preferably an enclosed area. MHARF highly recommends the use of helmets when riding any equine. The foster care provider must also be willing and able to provide updated information and photos for the MHARF website.

- **Will I have any input into the adoption process?**

Yes, as a foster care provider you will have first-hand experience of the horse's temperament and training level. Your input will help us make necessary decisions to make the best possible match between adopter and animal. Please remember, however, that all final adoption decisions will be made by MHARF and all adoption fees will be set by MHARF. We ask you to never make any claims or promises to a potential adopter without previous approval from MHARF.

- **Will I have First Option to Adopt My Foster Horse?**

Yes, we often have foster homes decide they just can't part with the horse they are caring for. If you do decide you want to adopt, you will be given the option before the horse is placed elsewhere. However, a foster care provider must never discourage potential adopters because they want to keep the horse in foster care.

- **Are my "donations" of hay/grain/pasture/bedding for my foster horse tax deductible?**

You will be given a donation receipt from MHARF. However, it will be up to you and your accountant/tax preparer as to what you can claim as a deduction. We recommend you keep an itemized list of all expenses along with receipts.

Fostering an equine or other animal for MHARF is a large responsibility. However, we have heard from many of our foster care providers that it is a very rewarding experience! Please remember that by fostering a horse you are helping to save a life!

If you feel that you meet these guidelines and would like to schedule a time when a MHARF volunteer can visit your farm and review it for suitability, please contact us at either info@mnhoovedanimalrescue.org, or via phone at 763-856-3119.