

Horse Yard Safety

Horse Yard Safety: Keeping Everyone Safe

Managing a horse yard comes with its share of safety hazards, but with careful planning and awareness, we can significantly reduce the risk of accidents and emergencies. Horses are inherently flight animals, so it's vital to create a calm environment that minimises the chance of spooking. Here are some essential tips to ensure safety for both humans and horses.



Emergency Preparedness

- **Keep Important Contacts Handy:** Display contact numbers for the yard manager and a local vet in visible areas around the yard. In case of an emergency, having these numbers easily accessible can make a crucial difference.
- **First Aid Kits:** Equip the yard with first aid kits for both horses and humans. Make sure everyone knows where these kits are located. It's also wise to consider taking a first aid course; the British Horse Society (BHS) offers courses specifically for equine first aid.

Fire Safety

Stables can contain a lot of flammable materials, making fire safety a top priority. Here's how you can minimise fire risks:

- **Install Fire Extinguishers:** Ensure your yard has well-maintained fire extinguishers and that they are serviced regularly.
- **No Smoking Policy:** Enforce a strict no smoking policy on the premises to prevent accidental fires.
- **Avoid Naked Flames:** Do not use open flames anywhere on the yard.

- **Regular Clean-Up:** Regularly remove cobwebs, dust, and discarded hay or bedding to prevent buildup.
- **Electrical Safety:** Check and service all electrical wiring and



equipment on a routine basis.

Tip: Your local fire and rescue service can provide free fire safety advice and may even be able to visit your yard to identify potential risks.

In Case of Fire

Preparation is key. Here's what to do if a fire occurs:

1. **Evacuation Plan:** Have a clear evacuation plan in place. Make sure everyone knows the procedure and that it's posted visibly around the yard.
2. **Designate a Safe Area:** Allocate a secure field as a safe place to move horses away from a fire.
3. **Call Emergency Services:** Dial 999 for the fire service. Be ready to provide your name, the address, postcode, and a phone number.
4. **Clear Access:** Ensure that access routes are clear for emergency vehicles.
5. **Sound the Alarm:** Follow evacuation procedures. Start by removing horses closest to the fire and guide them to safety. Loose horses can pose additional dangers as they may try to return to their stables.
6. **Fight Small Fires:** Only attempt to extinguish small fires if you can contain them immediately and have the right equipment.
7. **Follow Fire Service Instructions:** Once the fire service arrives, answer their questions and follow their directions carefully.

Important: The priority is always the safety of humans and animals first; buildings and equipment can be replaced.

General Safety Tips for the Yard

- **Secure Horses:** Ensure that horses are always kept in secure areas. Gates should be fully closed to prevent escapes onto roads.
- **Clear Walkways:** Keep walkways and fields free of machinery and equipment like jumps to prevent injury.
- **Stay Calm:** Always be calm and quiet around horses. Sudden movements or loud noises can easily spook them.
- **Careful with Gates and Doors:** Make sure gates and stable doors are wide enough for horses to pass through without risk of injury. Ensure they don't slam shut on a horse.
- **Store Chemicals Safely:** Keep medicines and chemicals like disinfectants stored securely away from horses.
- **Monitor Conditions:** Be aware of ground and weather conditions—ice in winter and mud can cause slips, while windy weather can agitate horses.
- **Tying Up Horses:** Use baling twine to tie lead ropes, which will break if the horse pulls back. Never tie lead ropes directly to solid objects, and ensure horses are not too close together.
- **Wear Appropriate Clothing:** Dress suitably for the yard. Sturdy footwear with good grip is essential, as well as tying back long hair and limiting jewellery. Gloves and a hard hat are recommended when handling horses or riding.
- **Electrical Safety:** Use circuit breakers with electrical equipment and keep cables away from horses and water to prevent electric shocks.



By following these guidelines, we can create a safer environment for both horses and humans, ensuring everyone enjoys their time in the yard without unnecessary risks.