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INTRODUCTION

The June 2008 Lightning Fires in Tehama County caused the evacuation of R Wild Horse Ranch and the need to evacuate and care for approximately 100 head of horses. Local community members and R Ranch owners were able to get many of the animals out. The fire did not burn in the R Ranch and the remaining animals were unharmed and cared for “sheltered in place” in a dry lot area of the property.

In this instance, the impromptu and ad-hoc actions taken were enough to cause a positive outcome. However, had the fire behavior been different, the outcome may have not been a success. Thus, it is recognized that Tehama County horse owners need to have a formal plan in place, which they can activate in the event of evacuation in their area. Horse owners must be responsible for their stock in emergencies.

Tehama County has large populations of other livestock as well, from cattle to goats, sheep, swine and more exotics like alpaca and llamas. This information kit specifically addresses the evacuation of horses, although the principals may be applied to other stock as well.

The information and forms here are provided to serve as guidelines from which individual horse owners, trainers and boarding stables can create their own evacuation plans.



ASSESSING YOUR SITUATION

The best time to assess your horse evacuation situation is well before there is a threat or potential threat to your property. Much like knowing where the flashlight and batteries are before the lights go out on a stormy night, having an evacuation plan with contingencies in place before an emergency will help you to act with optimal efficiency in case of threat.

Go through the Assessment Check List below. Are you comfortable with your capacity and capability? What are the areas where you need practice: Working on getting the horses to load better; Honing your trailering skills (backing and hooking up the rig)? Is there a neighbor who may need your help?

Assessment Check List:

How many horses do you have? _____

How many trailer spaces do you have? _____

How many tow vehicles do you have? _____

(Example: You have 8 horses and 2 trailers, a stock trailer that can hold 6 horses and a 2-horse tandem trailer. You have adequate trailer spaces, but do you have 2 tow vehicles?)

Do all of your horses know how to load? _____

If you have inadequate trailer space or tow vehicles, can you call on a neighbor for assistance?

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Do you have a neighbor with horses who will need your help?

Name: _____ Phone: _____

How many ways out are there from your property? _____

Are you familiar with all the roads in your area? _____

Do you need 4WD for any of them? Can your vehicles travel on them with horses in the trailers? _____

Are you and others in your household able to drive a vehicle with a loaded horse trailer in tow? _____

How many other horses can you take in on your property? _____

WHO YA GONNA CALL?

Although there are a number of disasters generated by nature and humans that can cause evacuations, the greatest threat comes from fire. If a fire is in our area, we will see or smell a fire before seeing it on the news or getting an evacuation notice. Sometimes, fire spreads quickly and follows an unpredictable course and we do not get any notice or have a lot of time to react. If you are away from home when fire is spreading in your area, you may not be able to get back in. In these dire instances, everyone must do the best they can. No one plan is going to be perfect for every situation, but some preplanning with alternatives may help you safely evacuate your animals.

During large fires and other emergencies, Cal Fire will have special Information Office phone numbers. The local television and radio stations will provide these numbers on a going basis by running a streaming “ticker” at the bottom of the television screen and via frequent announcements. If no special information number is available, call the main phone number (530) 528-5199 and you will be connected with someone who can assist you.

Do not call 9-1-1 for fire or evacuation information. Use it only for immediate threat emergencies.

KRCR Channel 7, KNVN Channel 24 and KHSL Channel 12 are all very good resources for news updates during fire and other threats. KPAY, 1290 AM has frequent updates during fires, too. The Redding Record Searchlight, The Daily News and The Chico Enterprise Record will post news updated to their websites, prior to the next printed publication. These papers also print the phone numbers of information centers and locations of evacuation centers.

You should also develop a “phone tree” with friends and neighbors so that in case of threat, you can coordinate efforts and offer help where needed or get help you may need.

Phone Tree Data	
Family Name	Number of Horses
Names of Individuals in Family	Trailer Spaces
Home Address	Tow Vehicles
Home Phone	Special Needs
Cel Phones	Other Instructions
Work Phones	Number of Horses They Can Keep

It is very important to keep the phone tree up to date. Check it at least once a year for accuracy. In the case of a threat or actual evacuation, keep a log of whom you called, whom you left messages for and what actions were promised/agreed upon by each party.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

Not every evacuation will require you travel far from home or to a formal evacuation location. In fact, if you can avoid taking your animals to a mass evacuation center you can eliminate a lot of stress for yourself, your horses and the volunteers who run them. Part of the phone tree concept is to set up evacuation locations with friends and family who do not live in your “neighborhood”. Work out scenarios and agreements in advance of any threat. Example: “If you have to evacuate your horses, bring them to our house and we can put them in the arena.” Think about provisions for water, shelter, feeding and fencing.

Fairgrounds are sometimes used for large animal evacuations when there are wide-spread wildfires. Before you load up the horses and head for the fairgrounds though, be certain that is there is something set up there. Often an incident is developing faster than provisions can be put into place. Call the fire information line and/or watch the television for location information.

Understand that in most instances, there will not be a mass evacuation center set up for large animals at all. This is another reason to have a plan of your own with alternatives developed in advance, so that you will have a place to bring your horses.

HOW WILL YOU GET THERE?

You have the truck and trailer hooked up; the horses loaded and you are heading out to your friend’s house well away from the fire area. You get out onto the road toward her house, only to find it is blocked by fire and equipment. What are your alternatives? Do you have another way around? Can you maneuver your rig on those roads?

Before an emergency situation, when you are anxious and worried about your house and driving in the smoke and chaos, is the time to know all your escape routes. Know the roads, the turns, and the steep hills and gully crossings, etc, before having to travel them in a stressful situation.

If there are dirt or gravel roads, or a tricky road condition such as a narrow bridge that you may have to use as an alternative, travel them with your empty trailer as a practice run and be confident you could handle them with a full trailer in an emergency.

WHEN SHOULD YOU LEAVE?

“If in doubt, take them out.” Definitely leave if you receive a reverse 9-1-1 call or a visit from a Law Enforcement Official advising you to evacuate. Many households have eschewed landlines for cel phones - remember that you may not receive a reverse 9-1-1 call if you no longer have a landline. If you know there is fire in the area, keep the television on and watch for updates. **Start early and do not get trapped.**

A NOTE ABOUT ROAD CLOSURES

During emergencies, especially during fires, road closures become necessary. Roads are closed to evacuated areas and during times there is active firefighting, danger from trees falling, downed power lines and firefighting equipment moving. If you are trying to get back in to evacuate your horses and are stopped by a road closure, you must obey the closure. You will be upset, unhappy, scared for the horses. If you remain calm and are polite and patient, you will be able to get as soon as it is possible. Law Enforcement personnel understand your anxiety and will let you through, often in groups with escort, when Fire Officials feel it is safe enough to do so. Arguing and threats may get you arrested. **You will not get through if it is not safe no matter how much you plead or argue.**

WHAT WILL YOU NEED?

First and foremost, you will need a plan. Where are you going and how will you get there? Unless the flames are licking at your barn door, do not just load up and go without a plan.

Make sure your rig is in “towable” condition. As a matter of course, you should have your wheel bearings packed annually and frequently check the condition of your floorboards, brakes and tires. Trailer tires can have good tread but the sidewalls can be worn and splitting from age and weather exposure. How is your spare? Is it usable and do you have a tire iron that fit the lug nuts? Can you jack it up if you need to change a tire? Do the lights and turn signals work?

Is your truck fueled up? Are the tires properly inflated? Do you have the correct hitch drop and ball size on it?

For the horses:

- Halters and lead ropes in good condition.
- Buckets for water and at least 5 gallons of water for each horse.
- Feed.
- Necessary medications or supplements.

It is a good idea to mark your horses with your phone number and coat them with fly spray before loading them into the trailer. When you get to your destination either you or the horses (or all of you) may be riled up and you do not need them dancing around while you try to do these things. Use livestock markers for a water resistant long lasting result. If you are leaving your animals somewhere that you are not staying, be certain to leave your name and contact information with the person in charge. Neatly block print the information in pen, so that anyone can read it. Leave more than one phone number and try to include at least one landline number in case you are out of cel range. Be sure to leave medication instructions, too. If a supplement or medication is not absolutely vital and can be skipped for a few days, leave them behind.

Phone Tree

Family Name	Number of Horses
Names of Individuals in Family	Trailer Spaces / Type of Trailers
Home Address	Tow Vehicles
Home Phone	Special Needs
Cel Phones	Other Instructions
Work Phones	Number of Horses They Can Keep

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Notes:

Check List Evacuating Your Horses

➤ Tow Vehicle

- Fuel Tank Level
- Tires Properly Inflated
- Correct Hitch

➤ Trailer

- Tires Properly Inflated
- Lights, Turn Signals and Brakes in Working Order
- Spare Tire, Jack, Tire Iron
- Floors are Safe

➤ Horses

- Halter and Lead
- Marked with Phone Number
- Fly Spray
- Medications and Instructions
- Feed
- Buckets
- Water

➤ Self

- Told _____ where you were taking the horses.
 - Spoke with, emailed or left message? _____
- Left notice(s) for fire fighters/ law enforcement that animals are evacuated.
 - Location(s) of Notice(s) _____
- Cel Phone Charged
- Phone Numbers and Addresses
- Water Flashlight Gloves Mask or Bandana
- Snacks Toilet Paper First Aid Kit

Check List Evacuating Others' Horses page 1 of 2

➤ **Tow Vehicle**

- Fuel Tank Level**
- Tires Properly Inflated**
- Correct Hitch**

➤ **Trailer**

- Tires Properly Inflated**
- Lights, Turn Signals and Brakes in Working Order**
- Spare Tire, Jack, Tire Iron**
- Floors are Safe**

➤ **Horses (For Each Horse)**

- Location Taken From** _____
- How Many** _____
- Number Each: Mares/Geldings/Foals/Stallions**

- Location You are Taking Horses** _____
- Halter and Lead**
- Marked with Phone Number**
- Fly Spray**
- Medications and Instructions**
- Feed**
- Buckets**
- Water**
- Take Digital Photo**

➤ **Horses That May Be Locked In**

- Bolt Cutters**
- Wire Cutters**
- Hammer**

Check List Evacuating Others' Horses page 2 of 2

➤ Owner

- Name _____
- Address _____
- Phone Numbers _____

➤ Self

- Told _____ where you were taking the horses.
 - Spoke with, emailed or left message? _____
- Left notice(s) for fire fighters/ law enforcement that animals are evacuated.
 - Location(s) of Notice(s) _____
- Cel Phone Charged
- Phone Numbers and Addresses
- Water
- Snacks
- Gloves
- Toilet Paper
- First Aid Kit
- Knife
- Flashlight
- Mask or Bandana

Remember: Some horses are not trained to load. Do what you know and work only to your ability. Do not tranquilize unless you are qualified to do so. Reluctant horses will often load more easily into a stock trailer that is backed up to a pen, paddock or stall. **This is a triage. Get the ones you can in a reasonable amount of time.** If the horses are gone, leave a notice and contact the owner.