

## THE NATURE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF THE HORSE

WHILE DOMESTICATED, WELL TRAINED HORSES ARE USUALLY OBEDIENT, DOCILE AND AFFECTIONATE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT THEIR SURVIVAL INSTINCTS ARE WHAT HAS ALLOWED THE HORSE TO SURVIVE FROM PERHISTORIC TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY.

1. I am advised that horses are unpredictable by nature, with minds of their own, as are all animals both domestic and wild. The horse is often somewhat high strung or nervous by nature. Horses are extremely strong and powerful physically. Horses are extremely heavy weighing from 600 to 1,300 pounds on the average. These characteristics deserve a human being's utmost respect.
2. I am advised that when a horse is frightened, angry, under stress or feels threatened, it is his instinct to jump forward or sideways, to run away from danger at a trot or gallop of speeds up to 35 miles per hour.
3. I am advised that if a horse is frightened or feels threatened from behind, it may kick straight back, sideways in either direction, or even forward with either of its hind legs with tremendous force.
4. I am advised that if a horse is frightened or feels threatened from above it or on its back, it may hunch its back and buck in a way that could throw a rider to the ground with tremendous force. A fall from a horse will usually be from a height of 3 to 6 feet.
5. I am advised that if a horse is frightened or feels threatened from the front, it may naturally react by rearing up with its front legs, strike with one or both front legs, bite with its teeth, throw its head up or from side to side, or run directly over what it fears in front of it.
6. I am advised that a human must always approach a horse calmly and quietly and cautiously, preferably from near its shoulder or lower neck, talking soothingly to it.
7. I am advised that loud and/or sudden unexpected movements, dropping of objects near a horse, approaching vehicles or animals or people, ill-fitting equipment or physical pain can provoke a domesticated horse to react according to his natural protective instincts.
8. I am advised that the first signs of anger or fear in a horse are the sudden tensing of the muscles of the body, possible laying its ears flat back against its head, or quickly tossing or raising its head, or sudden snorting through the nostrils accompanying at least one other warning sign.
9. I have been advised that a horse can see independently with each eye, actually looking in one direction with one eye and another direction with the other eye, or it can focus both eyes on one object somewhere in front of it; that usually the direction the ear is pointing will tell an observer where the eye is looking on the same side, and consequently on what the horse is likely concentrating at that moment.
10. I have been advised that a horse has two blind areas around it in which it cannot see. It cannot see directly behind it or what it is eating. This is the reason it is best to approach a horse close to the shoulder, and never to surprise a horse from the rear, or to reach first for the horse's mouth.
11. I have been advised that while a horse is very sure-footed by nature, it may accidentally step on an object such as a human foot, when it is balancing itself or turning about; also that if a horse is ridden or worked on unstable ground or slippery grass or footing, it could fall down injuring a rider or handler.

Please write out the following statement on the lines below: **"I have read and do understand the above warning regarding the nature and physical character of the horse."**

**Write out above statement here**

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Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Rider \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
(If of legal age and not under guardianship)

