

20 May 2020

### Cautionary procedures for riding during coronavirus social restrictions

1. **Consider not riding if you live in a highly affected area with a maxed-out health care system.** Should you get injured, medical response might be slower than normal. See item 13 below.
2. **The “trail less traveled” is a good adage to keep in mind for today’s social distancing world.** As much as possible, research and choose trail riding locales with fewer crowds.
3. **Avoid trailering together in the same vehicle with others outside of your household;** drive separate rigs instead.
4. **Park with extra distance between rigs so no one is tempted to visit too closely;** be sure you can comfortably maintain a 6- to 10-foot personal distance between others.
5. **Avoid using public hitching posts or similar places to tie your horse at a trailhead.** Instead, tie your horse to your own trailer, and have others tie their horse(s) to their trailers, as well.
6. **Only take easy-to-load horses** unless someone from your own household will be with you and can help.
7. **Don’t handle horses being used by people outside your household.** The same goes for tack—no sharing or handling other’s bridles, saddles, grooming supplies, etc.
8. **Bring your own water bottle and snacks,** and carry them in your own saddle bags—now is not the time for sharing food!
9. **If you’re riding in a group, maintain at least 6 feet between riders** (a recommended safety practice among riders even in “normal” times.)
10. **Remember to maintain at least 6 feet of distance when passing a hiker, mountain biker, or another equestrian on the trail.** This might require that someone moves 6 to 10 feet off the trail to allow the other to pass.
11. Now might be the time to **wear that bandana you usually save for dusty rides or to wear a mask.** It is important to remember that wearing a mask is not protective for the wearer but, rather, designed to contain spread from the wearer.

12. **Bring hand sanitizer and use it**, especially if you're handling and eating food or using a public restroom. Wash your hands once you return home.
13. **If you're injured, seek alternatives to an emergency room visit**, such as orthopedic urgent care or urgent care facilities labeled "clean" (patients with any respiratory issues are not admitted and instead are sent to designated clinics set up specifically for handling potential COVID-19-positive cases). Call ahead since many medical practices are not seeing patients without appointments during these times.
14. **After addressing any concerns, if you're still in doubt, stay safe and ride another day.** Safety should always be your primary consideration when riding. Avoid taking risks that might burden the health care system at a time when it's dealing with the current COVID-19 crisis—which includes maintaining medical protective supplies.