



Horse Facilities Advisory Council

# Site Accreditation Questionnaire Package 2010

(for new members)

*The Ontario Equestrian Federation Horse Facilities Council  
acknowledges that the Site Accreditation Program Standards were based on the  
Standards for Group Riding Programs developed by CHA - Certified Horsemanship  
Association.*



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# ABOUT HORSE FACILITIES COUNCIL & ACCREDITATION

## Horse Facilities Council Mission Statement

The Ontario Equestrian Federation Horse Facilities Council (HFC) enhances the horse industry by promoting safety, animal welfare and education as well as providing support and marketing opportunities for equine stable operators in Ontario.

## History

The OEF Horse Facilities Council began as the Association of Riding Establishments which was founded in 1997 after the Riding Horse Establishment Act of Ontario was repealed by the Provincial Government with intentions of eventually becoming a nationally scoped independent organization committed to enhancing the horse industry, and helping to market accredited stables to the general public. The ARE-ONT developed a strong partnership with the Ontario Equestrian Federation and in 2005 amalgamated the two organizations into one Council.

## Why Be Accredited?

- ◆ Because you care about the safety and quality of your riding program.
- ◆ Because your clients, customers and parents care about safety and professionalism.
- ◆ Because it is only a matter of time before government regulations require accreditation or licensing.
- ◆ Accreditation is visible evidence to potential customers that you strive to adhere to industry safety standards.
- ◆ The OEF HFC sign may be displayed to show you care about safety, education and animal welfare.
- ◆ Accredited Sites are listed in a special OEF Horse Directory & Planner, and on the HFC Website.
- ◆ Possible insurance discounts.

## The Purpose of the HFC Standards

There are thousands of people involved in the horse industry each year. The riding programs that service these people have a responsibility to provide safe, high quality service. It is important that there be an accepted standard of equine professionals throughout Ontario.

While compliance with these standards cannot guarantee the safety or competence of any riding facility or program, it will prove that the facility is committed to safety, education and animal welfare. The Ontario Equestrian Federation cannot guarantee that compliance with these standards will guarantee no accidents, injuries or litigation.

**Please take a moment to read through the enclosed “Recommended Site Standards” prior to completing this section. These standards serve as a guide to help facility owners provide a safe, clean and pleasant environment for their horses, staff, customers and clients.**

# SITE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

Following is an outline of the Site Accreditation Standards and the areas that they address. Please keep in mind that not all of the Standards are mandatory, some are recommended.

## SITE STANDARDS

- a safe and convenient area where riders can handle their horses before and after riding
- safety guidelines clearly posted
- indoor and outdoor arena meet minimum safety standards (fencing, footing, free of hazards, size, maintenance)
- riding trails meet minimum safety standards (footing, head clearance, proximity to highways, clearly marked, safe bridges, emergency access, maintenance, environmental impact)
- customer supervision
- emergency plan
- emergency equipment
- safe and appropriate facilities for animals and customers
- policy for persons with disabilities
- understanding the dynamics of running a riding program
- adequate lighting in stable, stalls, arenas, parking lots, etc.
- policy for disposal of animal waste

## PROGRAM STANDARDS

- proof of commercial liability coverage
- understanding the behavioral history of your horses and the ability to decide the suitability of horses for various riders
- policy regarding the ratio of staff to riders
- policy regarding rider attire (helmets, footwear, etc.)
- first aid training, protocol and kit
- head instructor or trail guide experience, training, certification
- release and acknowledgement forms
- incident reports
- staff awareness of responsibilities to the animals, the customers and the environment
- policy regarding staff performance and competency

## MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

- horse management standards (hoof care, deworming, inoculations, feeding, water, tack, equipment, etc.)
- written horse health records
- written feed chart
- free access to clean water
- procedure to check, repair, maintain tack and equipment
- selection process for prospective horses
- procedure to check physical soundness of horses prior to use
- procedure to limit maximum workload per day for each horse
- procedure to ensure proper fitting of tack for both horse and rider

If you are interested in becoming an HFAC Member, please fill out the attached forms and forward to the Ontario Equestrian Federation.

# Bill 12

## Horse Riding Safety Act-2001

An Act to increase the safety of equestrian riders.

### Responsibility of establishment

2. (1) No owner or operator of a horse riding establishment shall permit any rider under the age of 18 years to ride any horse boarded by the rider in the stables of the establishment or transported by the rider to the establishment unless the rider has and is correctly using the following equipment in the manner that it was designed to be used:

1. A helmet that meets current standards for equipment designed and manufactured for use while riding horses as established by the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM), the British Standards Institute (BSI) or the European Safety Standards.
2. Hard soled footwear with a heel of no less than 1.5 centimeters.
3. Tack properly fitted on the horse.

(2) No owner or operator of a horse riding establishment shall permit any rider under the age of 18 years to ride any horse hired out by the establishment, unless the rider has and is correctly using the equipment described in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of subsection (1) in the manner that it was designed to be used.

### Availability of equipment

(3) Every owner or operator of a horse riding establishment shall ensure that the equipment described in paragraphs 1 and 2 of subsection (1) is available for hire at reasonable rates.

### Exception

(4) An owner or operator of a horse riding establishment is not in contravention of subsection (1) or (2) if the rider does not have the equipment described in paragraph 2 of subsection (1) but is equipped with properly functioning and sized hooded stirrups, safety stirrups designed to prevent the rider's foot from passing through or becoming wedged in the stirrups, or stirrups designed to break away when the rider falls from the horse.

### The *Highway Traffic Act* is amended by adding the following section:

#### Duty of horse riders

**104.1** (1) No person under the age of 18 years shall ride or be mounted on a horse on a highway unless that person has and is correctly using the following equipment in the manner that it was designed to be used:

1. A helmet that complies with the requirements under the *Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001*.
2. Footwear that complies with the requirements under the *Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001*.

***Bill 12 in effect as of September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2001***

For more information, please contact the:

**Ontario Equestrian Federation**

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# **MINIMUM SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**

## **for**

# **COACHING AND INSTRUCTION OF RIDING PROGRAMS**

- the facility must have liability insurance in place and be able to show proof of coverage at any time
- 'Release and Acknowledgement' forms must be signed by all participants. Those participants under the age of 18 must have 'Release and Acknowledgement' forms signed by their parent or legal guardian
- signage relative to important rules to abide by when around horses should be posted in a prominent area and should be discussed with and understood by all students participating in any type of riding program
- fire precautions and emergency evacuation procedures should be posted and understood by staff in the event of an emergency
- hazardous material or equipment of any kind should be stored out of reach of horses, riders and the general public
- all head instructors shall be at least 18 years of age, have a minimum of 5 years' experience and hold relevant coaching certification
- assistant instructors shall be allowed to instruct only while under the supervision of a head instructor and must be 16 years of age with a minimum of 3 years' riding experience
- all instructors and assistants must understand and periodically review safety precautions and the steps to be adhered to if an accident occurs
- all instructors shall have a valid first aid certificate and CPR training
- accident forms must be available at the facility and must be completed by the instructor and any witnesses immediately after an accident has occurred
- all instruction will take place in a safe and suitable environment
- no public lessons are to be left unattended
- it is recommended that there be a ratio of 6 students to one instructor (maximum 8:1)
- instructors should ensure that all students can handle the horse appropriately and understand the basic safety and tacking-up rules
- all riders need to be at least six years of age before they are allowed to ride a horse without direct assistance. Until a rider is able to stop, turn, and ride in a balanced and controlled manner, they should not be allowed to ride without direct assistance in an uncontrolled environment
- beginners should be supervised by a knowledgeable employee of the facility during the pre-mount handling and tacking-up of the horse or pony
- an approved (ASTM/SEI/BSI) riding helmet and proper footwear with a defined heel must be worn at all times when riding any type of horse
- all tack must be properly fitted for horse and rider, and must be in good repair
- no stallions, horses under five years of age, sick, lame or blind horses will be used by anyone participating in lessons

## **MINIMUM SAFETY REQUIREMENTS for TRAIL OR PACK RIDING ESTABLISHMENTS**

- the establishment shall have liability insurance in place and be able to show proof of coverage at any time
- 'Release and Acknowledgement' forms must be signed by all participants. Those participants under the age of 18 must have 'Release and Acknowledgement' forms signed by their parent or legal guardian
- signage relative to important rules to abide by when around horses should be posted in a prominent area and should be discussed with and understood by all participants
- fire precautions and emergency evacuation procedures should be posted and understood by staff in the event of an emergency
- hazardous material or equipment of any kind should be stored out of reach of horses, riders and the general public
- minimum age for riders is 10 years of age (6 years of age if the rider is ponied by an employee of the facility)
- riders will be permitted only on horses known to be safe, sound and schooled for the purpose intended, regardless of the rider's ability
- no stallions, horses under five years of age, lame, sick, or blind horses will be used by anyone on the ride, including guides
- riders will be matched to horses according to aptitude, suitability and size by stable management. Each horse should be assigned a maximum weight limit
- all horses, including those of guides, must be properly fitted with their own set of suitable tack; bareback riding is not permitted. Girths must be checked and/or tightened before the rider is mounted, and again before the ride sets out, by stable management
- saddles must properly fit the rider
- stirrups must be the proper size for the rider's foot. Length of stirrups must be properly adjusted for the rider's leg length and checked by stable management
- all riders under the age of 18 years, including guides, will be required to wear an approved (ASTM/SEI/BSI) riding helmet equipped with a safety harness. All other riders must have safe riding helmets available for their use, and must have their use strongly recommended to them. If a rider aged 18 or over chooses not to wear an approved (ASTM/SEI/BSI) riding helmet, he/she must sign a 'Release and Acknowledgement' form which states that he/she has chosen not to wear an approved (ASTM/SEI/BSI) riding helmet even though he/she understands that horseback riding is a high-risk sport and that a helmet has been recommended to him/her
- all riders will be required to wear footwear appropriate for horseback riding (minimum half-inch heel, maximum two-inch heel, no platform soles) or the facility will provide appropriate safety stirrups
- while riders are mounting, horses must be held by an employee. The use of a 'mounting block' is strongly recommended
- dismounting during the ride will not be permitted unless the duration of the ride exceeds one hour, and then only with the assistance of the head or assistant guide(s)

- maximum one rider per horse. NO EXCEPTIONS
- it is recommended that all rides have a ratio of one head guide to five riders, with a minimum of two guides per ride
- while riding uphill or downhill, all horses must be kept to a walk. The last five minutes of every ride must be completed at the walk
- every ride must have functional two-way communication with the stable (walkie-talkies or cell phones)
- all guides must have a valid first aid certificate and CPR training
- all guides must understand and periodically review the safety precautions and steps to adhere to if there is an accident
- accident forms must be available at the facility and must be completed by the head guide and any witnesses immediately after an accident has occurred
- all head guides must be at least 18 years old, hold relevant certification and have at least three years' guide experience







# New Member Horse Facilities Council Application Checklist:

- Completed and signed 2010 Membership Application with payment
- Copy of current Insurance Documentation – minimum \$2 million Commercial Liability Coverage
- Completed and signed Site Accreditation Questionnaire
- Copy of facility Emergency Action Plan (information attached on how to prepare an Emergency Action Plan)
- Copy of facility Safety Rules and Polices & Procedures
- Copy of facility Acknowledgement of Risk/Waiver Form

## HFC SITE ACCREDITATION SUBMISSION FORM

Stable Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Stable Owner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

The Horse Facilities Council aims to ensure a standard of safety and care at horse facilities across the province. We understand that although some facilities may not be at the minimum standard in some areas, either they are not applicable or the current situation may not allow for changes/updates to be made at the present time, we encourage facility owners to continue to update and improve their facilities, programs, services and standard of safety and care. If you have any questions, please contact the OEF Office.

**This is to acknowledge I have read and understand the Recommended Site Standards including Bill 12 as it applies to this facility. I acknowledge that the information provided in this questionnaire is accurate. Attached please find a copy of the current Commercial Liability Coverage at minimum of \$2,000,000 for the above named facility.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Owner/Contact/Stable Manager)

Forward completed Horse Facilities Council Package to:

***Ontario Equestrian Federation***

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