



**NZRDA**  
New Zealand Riding for the Disabled

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



First Edition	2011
Second Edition	2013
Third Edition	2015
Fourth Edition	2016

This fourth edition has been produced as an information source for Volunteers to align with the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015. It is also a companion to the NZRDA Volunteer Training Course and the unit standards 17037 - Describe the philosophy, structure and role of the RDA, (L2/C6, Version 4) and 497 - Demonstrate knowledge of Health & Safety requirements (L1/C3, Version 8).

It is to be used in conjunction with the NZRDA Group Resource Library and all documentation either found within an NZRDA Group or on the NZRDA website at The Arena.

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**Volunteers are an integral part of NZRDA - Recruitment, Orientation, Training and Appreciation of Volunteers is a high priority for all NZRDA Groups.**



**Welcome to RDA**

## Welcome to RDA

Thank you for joining our team of over 2,000 people! NZRDA affiliated Groups provide 3,000 children and adults with life-changing experiences every year. Volunteering at RDA and helping those with special needs is extremely rewarding. It also provides opportunities to:

- Learn new skills.
- Make a difference to someone's life.
- Be part of something special.
- Make new friends.
- Enjoy the fresh air, have fun and stay fit.

NZRDA has a role for everyone, whether you want the opportunity to work directly with the Riders, the Horses or as part of the critical administration team that supports the Group.

Volunteers can be involved in a number of activities, according to their interest and expertise including:

- Preparing Horses prior to the Riders' arrival.
- Leading Horses or Sidewalking during RDA sessions.
- Helping with un-mounted activities.
- Assisting Coaches and Therapists with equipment for RDA sessions.
- Fitting helmets and checking riding clothing.
- Providing refreshments.
- Maintaining property, fields, fences and equipment.



- Horse training and horse care.
- Fundraising.
- Committee work.
- Organising events.
- Publicity.

Whatever your role, the Group needs your commitment to be part of an effective RDA team.

***Prior to attending the Volunteer Training Course, you will have already completed*** a police check and signed a Volunteer Contract. You will also have completed introductory orientation and some basic training at your Group.

Reading this booklet and attending a Volunteer Training Course is the next step on your pathway towards becoming a skilled Volunteer, who can contribute successfully and safely to the RDA programme at your Group. Please read this booklet again as a refresher each year.

Good luck on your RDA journey!



## History of RDA and NZRDA

Throughout history, horses have played a significant role in the shaping of people's lives. The concept of using horses for therapy began more than 2000 years BC, when the ancient Greeks and Romans recognised that horses were valuable in maintaining and improving health and well-being.

From the early 1900s through to World War One, a British movement began when horses were used in orthopaedic hospital programmes for the rehabilitation of convalescing soldiers, especially amputees. In the 1950s and 1960s a handful of pioneers explored the use of horse riding to assist people with all types of disabilities, in particular those affected by the polio epidemics of that time.

This cause was greatly assisted when Liz Hartel, who was partially paralysed in her legs, arms and hands, rode her horse to a silver medal at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics. These events laid the foundation for the RDA movement that is now recognised worldwide with over 45 member countries of Horses in Education and Therapy International.

RDA was formally introduced into New Zealand in 1962. Mr Tom Atchison (1909 - 1999), who was the President of the NZ Pony Club, brought information back from the UK which formed the basis for the development of NZRDA. In 1962, riding began as a sub-group of the Pony Club in Waipukurau (Central Hawke's Bay), with other individuals and Groups also providing

opportunities for people with disabilities. It was this interest that prompted the formation of the New Zealand Riding for the Disabled Association in 1972. Retiring Pony Club President, Mr Tom Atchison, was invited to head the new organisation. Travelling around the country targeting particular people involved in the equestrian world, he encouraged and enabled the formation of many NZRDA Groups throughout New Zealand over the next eight years.

Horses in Education and Therapy International (HETI) was founded in 1980. It forms worldwide links between countries and centres, supporting the development of programmes worldwide. HETI is actively involved in establishing international standards of safety and competency in instruction and in encouraging high standards of protection and training of horses for therapeutic purposes. The organisation liaises with relevant bodies for the promotion of equestrian sport for Riders with disabilities. NZRDA is a full member of HETI.



## NZRDA Overview

The RDA movement in New Zealand (“NZRDA”) comprises the RDA Member Groups and National Team. The National Team = NZRDA Board + National Office + Standards, Training & Certification Team.

**RDA Member Groups (“Groups”)** are responsible for providing RDA in their local community. Each Group is a separate Incorporated Society and registered Charity in its own right, and is independently managed and financed. The full list of current RDA Groups can be found on the NZRDA website; there are over 50 Groups nationwide.

In choosing to affiliate, a Group recognises significant benefits to enhance its service provision and to generate the voluntary support and fundraising required to operate including:

- Being part of an internationally recognised and respected organisation.
- Being able to use the RDA name and NZRDA brands.
- Independently verified Operational Certificate.
- Standards, training, resources and support.
- Sharing ideas, good practice and feedback within the wider RDA community.
- National marketing and website.
- Access to national fundraising initiatives.
- Public liability insurance.

The key requirements of affiliation are to:

- Obtain and maintain Operational Certification.
- Comply with policy and procedure.
- Complete approved training.
- Complete performance reporting.
- Utilise the NZRDA brand standards.
- Participate in national fundraising.
- Pay a nominal affiliation fee.

Groups are mostly staffed by Volunteers, with some Groups employing paid Coaches and Managers. Positions vary according to the needs and resources of individual Groups.

Groups are governed by an elected Committee ultimately responsible and accountable for everything to do with their Group. These responsibilities and accountabilities can be broadly summarised as follows:

- To focus everyone on using the Horse to achieve successful Rider outcomes.
- To uphold the Group’s Rules.
- To meet the requirements of NZRDA affiliation.
- To implement a strategy and plan to secure the long term success of the RDA Group.
- To keep up-to-date books and records including meeting public filing requirements.

The Committee will usually include a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.



The **NZRDA Board** is responsible for the governance of New Zealand Riding for the Disabled Association Incorporated, an Incorporated Society and registered Charity responsible for leading the RDA movement in New Zealand. The Board comprises elected RDA Members and co-opted Members. The RDA members are elected by the Groups and co-opt other members to ensure the Board has the necessary range of skills required to govern the organisation. The primary responsibility of the Board is to develop and implement a Strategic Plan. The day to day operational management of NZRDA is delegated to a Chief Executive who leads the National Office and National Team. The NZRDA Board meets quarterly and as and when required.

The Annual General Meeting is held in conjunction with the National Training Seminar, usually held in May.

The **National Office** team is based in Wellington. The National Office together with the Standards, Training and Certification Team provide the following services:

- Setting relevant and appropriate **standards** for RDA Groups and RDA specific roles:
  - Through issuing policy and procedure to ensure the safety and effectiveness of RDA programmes.
- Providing **training** and resources for Groups to meet the standards:
  - National, regional and in-Group training courses are available.
  - The Arena, the Group Resource Library and Group Resource Manual are the primary repositories for NZRDA resources.

- **Certification** of people and Groups against the standards:
  - This includes Coach qualifications and the Operational Certificate.
- **Support** to Groups to meet standards, maintain their affiliation status and run operations effectively:
  - This includes support from National Office and the Standards, Training and Certification Team.

National Office also manage national brand standards and fundraise to heavily subsidise the cost of providing the above services to Groups and also provide some direct funding to Groups for their operations.

The **Standards, Training and Certification Team** comprises five groups of Volunteers each reporting to a Team Leader who reports to the National Training Manager. The specialist teams are as follows:

- Operational Certificate Review
- Coaching
- Therapy
- Volunteer Training
- Governance and General



## What is RDA

The **Core Purpose** of NZRDA is to provide interaction with horses to develop increased ability, independence and self-worth for children and adults with physical, intellectual, emotional or social challenges.

Our **Vision** is to deliver safe and effective programmes to benefit more Riders.

Our **Values** are about how we behave:

- **Safety** of people and horses is paramount.
- **Teamwork** working and learning together to achieve more.
- **Respect** for people and horses.
- **Quality** what we do, we do well.
- **Enjoyment** for all as a result of being part of successful RDA outcomes.

The number one Goal of every RDA Group is to achieve Rider Outcomes by providing a life-changing RDA experience. An RDA mounted programme (which may also include learning about horses, their care and equipment) is intended and designed to complement other conventional therapies and education. Groups offer individualised goal-centred riding programmes according to the needs of each Rider in three broad areas.

### Therapy

Interaction with the Horse and the effects of its movement on the human body have significant therapeutic benefits. The rhythmic three dimensional movement and warmth of the Horse is transmitted to the Rider's body stimulating nerves and strengthening muscles, inducing relaxation, suppleness and core stability. This can improve balance, posture and co-ordination, and in those Riders with spasticity, a normalisation of muscle tone and improved function. The exercise increases mobility and endurance, prompting better overall health. Specific goals are designed for each individual Rider by the Coach and Therapists.

### Education

RDA activities have a strong learning element and riding skills learnt are transferable to many aspects of daily life. Riders engage in a variety of activities that focus on literacy, numeracy or other key educational activities. Through a well-designed individual Rider programme, many successes can be gained. Riders can learn to:

- Self-manage i.e. put on their own helmet and mount their Horse.
- Recognise text and symbols through games and activities.
- Communicate effectively with the Volunteers and the Horse.
- Follow instructions and accept advice.
- Relate to others.
- Be part of a team through co-operation and competition.
- Experience a working balance of rights, roles and responsibilities – their own, the Horse and RDA team.
- Contribute as active members of their community.

Riders are provided the opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that can lead them to becoming confident learners and community members.

### Sport and Recreation

In addition to supporting the achievement of therapy and/or education goals, horse riding is a wonderful form of healthy outdoor activity and exercise for those who take part in a Recreation Riding Programme. Graduating Riders may also enrol in a Sporting Programme; this could be Special Olympics, Para Equestrian or other forms of competition. On horseback, a Rider with a disability can be helped to overcome fear, gain confidence and achieve success they may not achieve elsewhere.

## Our Riders

Riders may be referred to RDA by Teachers, Doctors, Therapists, other Health Professionals, Caregivers, Parents or by themselves. In all cases there is a defined process that must be followed prior to starting an RDA programme. Most importantly, the relevant medical background needs to be known for the safety of both Rider and the Group, to ensure no harm comes to anyone and that appropriate Rider goals are set. The wider RDA team will need to know some of this information to be effective in supporting the Rider achieve their goals - it is important that this information is kept strictly confidential.

RDA is of benefit to children and adults with a wide range of special needs including but not limited to:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorders.
- Cerebral Palsy, Cystic Fibrosis, C.V.A (stroke).
- Developmental Delay, Down Syndrome.
- Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability.
- Hearing and Visual Impairments.
- Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy.
- Spina Bifida, Spinal Cord Injury (Para/Incomplete Tetraplegia).
- ADHD and other behavioural problems.
- Anxiety, Depression, Bi-polar and other mental health problems.

An RDA Programme can be used to develop, increase and improve:

- Physical ability:
  - Muscle tone, balance, coordination.
  - Muscle strength, flexibility, fitness.
  - Posture, gait, ability to walk.
  - Respiration, circulation, metabolism.
  - Sensory perception and integration.
  - Independence, self-care and mobility.

- Psychological ability:
  - Concentration, problem-solving and decision making.
  - Insight, motivation, self-worth, confidence.
  - Learning/practising concepts e.g. letters, numbers, colours, distances, shapes, body parts, etc.
- Social skills:
  - Communication.
  - Learning appropriate behaviours and manners.
  - Interaction with peers, individuals and groups.
  - Human to animal contact and building relationships.
  - Consideration for others and taking on responsibility.
- Sport and recreational participation:
  - Develop interests.
  - Challenge and success in competition with self and others.
  - Stimulation or relaxation.
  - Integration into a community activity.

The Rider's individual goals will be determined and documented by the Coach and Therapist based on information from the Medical Specialist, School, Parent, etc. They also decide on the appropriate support team who will work with the Rider and ensure the team understand the Rider's specific needs. At the end of each RDA session, notes are made for each Rider to keep an important record of their progress. Rider's goals are set at the beginning of their programme and updated when required. Once goals are achieved, the Rider may graduate from the RDA programme.

## The Team Supporting Rider Outcomes

The Coach, Therapist, Leader, Sidewalker and Horse work as a team to support the Rider to achieve their goals.

- The **Coach** plans the riding programme, organises the sessions and leads the RDA session that enable the Rider to achieve their goals. All Volunteers follow the directions of the Coach.
- The **Therapist** works with the Coach advising on therapeutic goals and strategies for Riders, along with any precautions indicated. The Therapist may also work directly with the Rider during an RDA session.
- The **Leader** is a skilled horse handler responsible for controlling the Horse when the Rider is not able to and taking full control of the Horse in the event of an emergency.
- **Sidewalkers** ensure Rider safety at all times whilst encouraging and enabling appropriate Rider independence. The Sidewalker also assists the Rider in carrying out the Coach's directions by repeating the instructions, guiding the Rider or focussing the Rider's attention on the task they are performing when necessary.
- The **Horse** and the way we are able to use their abilities is our chosen method of achieving Rider Outcomes. Ideal RDA Horses are hard to find – not all are suited to this specialised work. Much time and care goes into their selection and welfare. Many hours of training are needed to ensure they can be correctly matched to their Rider and respond to both Leader and Rider aids. Suitable training programmes are developed for each horse to ensure they are at a fitness level suitable for their work. All training and welfare is documented to keep an accurate record of each horse's individual needs.

## Key Responsibilities – All Volunteers

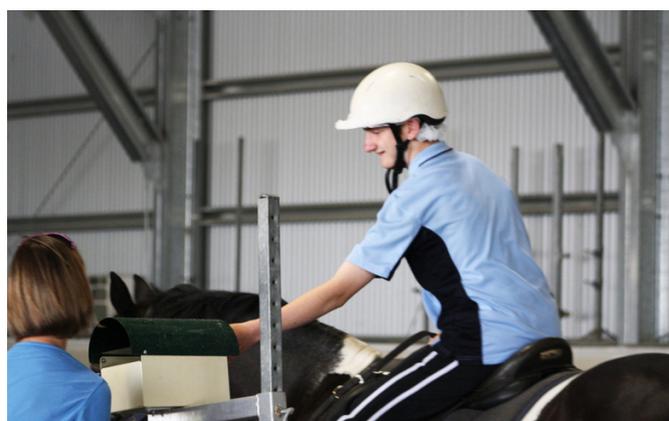
- Participating in relevant induction and training including reading this Volunteer Handbook and other relevant documentation.
- Being safety conscious at all times; taking care of self and others.
- Following NZRDA and Group Policy and Procedure.
- Maintaining and respecting Rider confidentiality.
- Attendance at agreed times and notification in advance when unable to attend.
- Working according to NZRDA's values.
- Effective communication with other members of the team.



## Communication

Volunteers need to feel confident in the tasks they are being asked to perform, and to achieve this, effective communication is vital. Some basic communication tips that will help are:

- Our Riders are individual people first and foremost.
- Riders may use non-verbal methods of communication due to hearing or speech difficulties.
- Look for non-verbal communication like gestures, signs and emotions.
- Use age-appropriate language and ask questions directly to Riders.
- Be yourself in conversation and encourage eye contact.
- Allow Riders to attempt things for themselves.
- Keep directions simple and explicit, and tasks short and achievable.
- Showing rather than telling is often more effective.
- Be generous with quality praise.
- Be consistent with language and terminology.
- Communicate with the other members of the RDA team and talk to the Duty Coach if you have a problem or concern.



# NZRDA Health & Safety Management System

Groups apply the NZRDA Health & Safety Management System (HSMS) which is based on the following Ten Health & Safety Management System Standards.

Standard 1	<p><b>Leadership and Accountability</b> The NZRDA Board, NZRDA CEO, Group Management, RDA People and contractors understand their accountabilities and demonstrate active leadership and a commitment to Health &amp; Safety.</p>
Standard 2	<p><b>Planning and Resources</b> Health &amp; Safety is an integral part of Group planning with Health &amp; Safety goals and targets established to drive continual improvement in performance.</p>
Standard 3	<p><b>Hazard and Risk Management</b> Health &amp; Safety hazards and risks are systematically identified, and associated risks assessed and control strategies put in place to manage their impact to as low as reasonably practicable.</p>
Standard 4	<p><b>Safely Controlling Activities</b> All activities are managed in such a way so as to prevent negative Health &amp; Safety outcomes.</p>
Standard 5	<p><b>Information, Training and Supervision</b> RDA People, contractors and visitors are aware of relevant Health &amp; Safety requirements, hazards, risks and controls, so that they are competent to conduct their activities and behave in a responsible manner.</p>
Standard 6	<p><b>Emergency Management</b> Procedures and resources are in place to respond to, and recover from, all potential emergency situations.</p>

Standard 7	<p><b>Incident Management</b> Incidents are reported, investigated and analysed to determine underlying root cause. Corrective actions are taken and lessons shared.</p>
Standard 8	<p><b>Occupational Health and Wellness</b> Employees are provided wellness support. All RDA People are protected from health hazards associated with their work, and have access to effective injury management processes.</p>
Standard 9	<p><b>RDA People Consultation and Engagement</b> RDA People are consulted on Health &amp; Safety matters and all efforts are made to engage them in the activities required to implement this HSMS.</p>
Standard 10	<p><b>Monitoring, Audit, and Management Review</b> Health &amp; Safety performance and systems are monitored, audited, and reviewed to identify trends, measure progress, assess conformance and drive continuous improvement.</p>



These standards are underpinned by the **NZRDA Health & Safety Policy**:

NZRDA is committed to the creation of a healthy and safe working environment for RDA People, Riders, contractors, visitors and others that may be affected by RDA activities.

NZRDA will allocate appropriate resources to ensure that the best available Health & Safety management systems are established, maintained and regularly reviewed for continuous improvement, and ensure the NZRDA HSMS complies with all Health & Safety legislative requirements.

Through the Operational Certification process, NZRDA will ensure that Affiliated Groups:

- Implement the NZRDA Health & Safety Management System.
- Ensure effective Health & Safety governance processes are in place to maintain oversight of Health & Safety.
- Manage hazards and associated risks in RDA workplaces so as to prevent harm to others.
- Provide information, training and supervision to RDA People so that they are competent to perform their jobs and tasks safely.
- Integrate Health & Safety into all regular activities.
- Ensure incidents are accurately reported and investigated to prevent reoccurrence.
- Engage with RDA People and contractors in Health & Safety matters.
- Seek assurance that the Group's contractor systems and activities are ensuring the safety of RDA people, visitors, their own employees and members of the public.

NZRDA regards the participation of all RDA People in Health & Safety management as a prerequisite for successful implementation so all Volunteers must demonstrate their commitment to Health & Safety by:

- Personally participating in all Health & Safety initiatives.
- Becoming actively involved in the management of hazards.
- Ensuring their own Health & Safety and that of others around them.
- Providing suggestions and solutions for the improvement of Health & Safety.
- Participating in the review of Health & Safety initiatives and systems.

All Volunteers are responsible for:

- Protecting themselves and any other party from unsafe situations by carrying out their duties in a safe and responsible manner, in accordance with legislative requirements, and by monitoring the safeness of the workplace.
- Actively encouraging safe behaviour from their work colleagues, Volunteers or contractors.
- Reporting all incidents, including near misses, whether or not these incidents involve injury.
- Participating in training and practicing safe work methods including the proper use of safety equipment.

The Group Committee, Group Management and Health & Safety Officer will take lead roles in ensuring that the NZRDA HSMS is implemented at Group level and you will need to understand Group specific requirements such as the emergency procedures.

## Health & Safety Essentials

- Follow the Duty Coach's instructions. The Duty Coach is responsible and accountable for overall Health & Safety during RDA sessions.
- Don't undertake work that you consider is unsafe.
- Always turn your mobile phone off during sessions.
- When working outside on a sunny day:
  - Wear sunscreen and hat.
  - Drink plenty of water.
  - Sun-glasses can hamper effective communication in some instances so avoid wearing them if you can.
- Rain and cold conditions:
  - Rain reduces visibility and may make working conditions unpleasant for horse, Riders and helpers.
  - The Duty Coach will determine if the session should be stopped if conditions become too difficult.
- Fatigue:
  - Fatigue reduces concentration and alertness so take regular rest breaks and/or rotate jobs.
  - Ensure adequate fluid intake during the day.
- Electric fences:
  - Treat all fences as "live" unless known as otherwise.
- Manual handling:
  - Repetitive strain to your back or shoulders can be a painful and debilitating injury so always use correct physical handling techniques.
  - Get help with moving heavy objects or use equipment e.g. trolley.
  - Regularly straighten back and lean backwards to stretch.
  - Stop the activity (e.g. sidewalking) if you need to rest or change positions.
- Occupational overuse syndrome (OOS) refers to a range of conditions characterised by pain or discomfort in the muscles, tendons, and other soft tissues. To minimise the risk of OOS always make sure you pause briefly when completing repetitive tasks.
- Carrying hand tools:
  - Be aware of the results of a slip.
  - All hand tools are to be carried in a way that they can be thrown clear in the event of a fall.
- Handling hazardous substances:
  - Chemicals must be handled with great care. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
  - Correct protective clothing and equipment must be used when handling hazardous materials.
  - Specific training may be required before using chemicals for pasture management.
- Dealing with minor injuries:
  - Get the qualified First Aider or apply first aid yourself.
  - Complete a record of treatment given on the sheet located with the First Aid kit.
  - Advise the Duty Coach and support completion of the Incident Report Form.
  - The Duty Coach will then complete any further requirements with the H&S Officer including advising the caregiver in the case of a Rider.



- Dealing with serious injuries:
  - If you are staying with the patient, get others to do these things immediately:
    - Call 111.
    - Get the qualified First Aider and something to keep the patient warm.
    - Tell the Duty Coach.
    - Ensure the access way is clear for the Ambulance, watch out for it and direct it to the scene.
  - Do not leave the injured person alone unless it is essential to get help.
  - Do not move the injured person unless it is essential to prevent further injury.
  - Keep the injured person warm.
  - Once the injured person is being cared for, support completion of the Incident Report Form.
  - The Duty Coach will then complete any further requirements with the H&S Officer including advising the emergency contact for the patient.
- Health & Safety definitions:
  - Hazard; an actual or potential cause or source of harm to any person.
  - Incident; an event resulting in, or having a potential for harm to a person, or damage or other loss to anything else e.g. horses, property. Incidents include accidents and near misses.
  - Near miss; a situation or incident where harm did not occur, but could potentially have done so.
- Hazard, risk and incident management are critical to making your RDA safe:
  - The analysis of incidents and near misses are useful for showing up a pattern that could help avoid future trouble. For example, it could show a certain horse, situation or person is involved in a number of incidents, giving a starting point for trouble shooting or training.
  - Volunteers have a key role to play in hazard, risk and incident management.
  - The Committee is responsible for ensuring all relevant lessons are learnt and important changes made.
- Hazard reporting. If you notice a hazard:
  - Eliminate it if you can e.g. water spilt on the floor can be removed immediately thus eliminating the risk of somebody slipping and hurting themselves.
  - If it was temporary in nature, report it as an incident (see below).
  - If it is ongoing and you can't eliminate it, report it to the Duty Coach or Health & Safety Officer and support completion of a Hazard Identification Form.
- Incident reporting. If you are involved in an incident, near miss or notice a temporary hazard:
  - Report it to the Duty Coach or Health & Safety Officer and support completion of an Incident Report Form.



## Safety Around Horses

- The most significant hazard at a Group level is the Horse and it is important to adopt safe practices to reduce risk.
- Understanding a Horse's characteristics as a fight-flight animal and how they see are key to keeping safe.
- The Horse is a fight-flight animal, using body language to communicate their will:
  - They have a strong social hierarchy (pecking order) and when aggressive they may bite or kick.
  - They have a significant herd instinct, preferring to be in a group and are more alert to danger when they are on their own.
  - Horses can become particularly aggressive to each other at feed times.
  - Horses have a natural instinct to run away if they feel threatened. If their escape route is blocked the Horse may defend itself.
- How a horse sees:
  - A Horse's eyes are placed wide apart; there is only a small area in front of them that they can see. This is called binocular vision (both eyes). Then they use monocular (one eye) vision on each side.
  - They have two blind spots, one directly behind their head and the other three metres directly in front of their head which means that they cannot see you approach from behind.
  - Horses have trouble judging distance and depth, which is one reason why Horses can be easily scared by sudden noises or movement.
  - You can always tell where a Horse is looking by watching their ears; their ears move the same direction as they are looking.

- Horse Body Language:

Emotional State	Ears	Legs / Feet	Tail
At rest / bored	Held at "half-mast"	Still	Low, still
Fearful	Fixed on source	Stands frozen or flees	Clamped
Angry	Pinned back	Stomping, striking, kicking	Swishing

- Tips for staying safe around horses:
  - Approach a Horse from the near shoulder and talk to the Horse as you approach.
  - Be calm, confident and methodical.
  - Avoid any sudden or loud movements.
  - Never stand directly behind a Horse, as this is the Horse's blind spot.
  - If you don't feel confident then don't do it.
  - Avoid wearing loose or flapping clothing.
  - Excessive and dangling jewellery should not be worn.
  - Wear solid footwear.



## Other Important Policies

Complying with NZRDA policy is a requirement of affiliation and a full suite of NZRDA policies, procedures, guidelines and other resources can be found on The Arena and in the Group Resource Library. A small sub-set of the resources available are printed at the Group and held in their Group Resource Manual.

The table below highlights key points that Volunteers must be aware of to comply with relevant policy. The reference shown assists location of the full policy document in the online Group Resource Library and Group Resource Manual. NZRDA require Volunteers to read the policies marked \* in full during their first month.

If you have any questions you should ask the Duty Coach, Health & Safety Officer or any member of the Committee.

Ref	Policy	Key points for Volunteers
A04	Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covers personal social media and websites</li> <li>Protect privacy rights/obtain permission of those shown or mentioned</li> <li>Do not speak on behalf of NZRDA or RDA or bring name into disrepute</li> <li>No selling using RDA or NZRDA names</li> </ul>
A06*	Children & Vulnerable Persons (VPs) Protection (CVPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protection of all at RDA – including Riders and Volunteers</li> <li>Discuss any concerns with the CVPP Officer, Duty Coach or President only, not with anyone else</li> <li>Follow the prescribed process and guidance</li> </ul>
A07*	Safeguarding VPs and RDA people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adhere to the practices described to ensure a safe and enjoyable environment is established and sustained</li> <li>Never be alone with a Rider</li> <li>Take care with manual handling of a Rider</li> </ul>
A10	Harassment-free	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zero-tolerance for harassment</li> <li>Dealt with through Group Complaint Process</li> </ul>
A13	Complaint and Dispute Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get a copy of your Group Complaint Process on day 1</li> <li>Report complaints regarding National Team members to National Office</li> </ul>
C03	Duty Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead accountability for ensuring the safety of all present</li> <li>Follow the Duty Coach's instructions</li> </ul>
C10	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use appropriate sun protection</li> <li>Wear suitable hand protection</li> <li>Check the labelling on chemicals and other hazardous products before use</li> <li>Wear appropriate PPE when undertaking a task where there is a risk of exposure to a hazard which the PPE acts as a control</li> </ul>

C29	Hygiene & Infection Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regard all people as potentially infective</li> <li>• Wear gloves if likely to be exposed to body fluids</li> <li>• Wash your hands thoroughly and often</li> </ul>
C35	Smoke-free	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smoking in buildings is prohibited</li> <li>• Your RDA Group may permit smoking in a designated area</li> </ul>
C36	Drug & Alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zero-tolerance for possessing or using illegal or recreational drugs, being under the influence of drugs, being above the legal limit for driving</li> <li>• Understand your performance limitations when using medication</li> </ul>
D01	Rider PPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers must wear a helmet and suitable footwear when riding</li> </ul>

This Volunteer Handbook details the things that ***everyone*** needs to know. If you take on a specialist role in the Group, also look on The Group Resource Library to find out other specific policy and procedure that might also be relevant.



# Leading and Sidewalking

## Leader

- Key Responsibilities:
  - Handling and controlling the Horse when the Rider is not able to.
  - Taking full control of the Horse in the event of an emergency.
  - Preparing and warming up the Horse, checking for soundness and readiness to work effectively in an RDA session.
  - Listening and following the instructions of the Coach.
  - Keeping your Horse at a safe distance from other Horses and people.
  - Informing the Coach if Horse behaviour changes or you feel unsafe.
  - Holding the Horse while the Rider mounts.
- Key points to note:
  - Leaders need to be effective and aware Horse handlers, that is able to lead a Horse from walk to trot smoothly, bring a Horse to a quick square halt and be able to identify when a Horse is becoming agitated.
  - When working in an RDA session, the Horse must be bridled and lead with a properly fitted halter and lead rope. Stay alongside the Horse's neck to avoid being stood on.
  - When a Rider is mounting and when the Horse is halted during a riding session, stand slightly to the side at the front of the Horse and be attentive to the Horse to prevent it moving off.
  - Hold the lead rope 10cms below the clip, giving the Horse's head room whilst remaining in control.
  - Never wrap the lead rope around your hand or entwine your fingers in the clip or ring; fold the rope in your free hand.
  - Riders must be supervised while near/leading or grooming the Horse.

- A Horse must never be tied up while someone is still mounted.
- A Horse must never be disciplined when a Rider is mounted and without direction from a Coach.
- Constant handling of the Horse's head can cause nipping and restlessness.
- Horses should be tied up to something fixed and solid using a quick release knot onto breakable twine/string, with the rope short enough so that it cannot put a leg over the rope. Horses must be secure in yards/stalls when people are around. Only let loose in paddocks when it is safe to do so.
- Avoid walking under the Horse's neck when tied up.
- When working around or with the Horse's legs or feet, do not kneel. Always stay on your feet, ready and able to push yourself away.

## Sidewalker

- Key Responsibilities:
  - Ensuring Rider safety at all times whilst encouraging and enabling appropriate Rider independence.
  - Listening and following the instructions of the Coach and/or Therapist.
  - Assisting in teaching and learning processes, to achieve the desired Rider outcome.
  - Reporting Rider fatigue, changes in behaviour or illness immediately to the Coach.
  - Communicating with the Leader when necessary.
  - Ensuring that any physical contact with the Riders is necessary and appropriate to the activity.
  - When there are two Sidewalkers, ensuring only one gives instructions to the Rider.
  - Informing the Coach if you are fatigued or feel unsafe.
  - Making the rest of the team aware if you have to leave a Rider that you have been assigned to.
- Key points to note:
  - Riders must always wear a helmet unless contraindicated.

- Riders must never be attached to a Horse in any way.
- Avoid leaning on the Horse, digging elbows into the Horse's sides or flanks, or resting your arm behind the Rider.

### **Emergency Dismount (ED)**

As with most activities, riding has an element of risk no matter how well trained the Horses are. The Rider introduces another element of uncertainty; poor balance, epilepsy, fainting and behaviour disturbances are some examples that Volunteers may be confronted with. So the Sidewalkers must be ready to remove the Rider at any time.

The Emergency Dismount is only to be used in a real emergency. If the Leader and Sidewalker are fully engaged in their roles and observant then emergency situations with either the Horse or Rider should be anticipated and action taken, or if necessary, a quick normal dismount executed.

Two examples of when an ED of a Rider may have to be performed are when:

- The Horse is potentially going to get out of control (e.g. the Horse receives a bee sting); or
- The Rider is having problems regaining their balance (e.g. epileptic seizure; gear failure).

If the Leader determines an ED is required, the Leader tells the Sidewalkers "RIDER OFF!". If one of the Sidewalkers determines an ED is required, they tell the Leader "HALT emergency dismount" and quickly remove the Rider from the Horse. The Sidewalkers need to respond quickly, co-ordinate with each other and get the Rider off safely. The Leader needs to know how to get the Horse clear of the Rider and Sidewalkers following the ED.

In these situations, there is no time to query the command. It must be obeyed instantly and without question. Occasionally it may be unnecessary, but far better to be aware of danger and be in control than to be sorry in retrospect.

### **ED Procedure**

- If the Horse spooks suddenly and then continues normally, the safety holds used by the Sidewalkers

are usually sufficient to prevent a fall. Simply halt, make any adjustment to the Rider's position and carry on.

- However, if the Horse continues to react, take the Rider off. A fall is more likely if the Horse moves sideways or spins around.
- Where there are two Sidewalkers a "ball call" should be used to save time and confusion. It is the Sidewalker who is in the best position who calls "mine" or "over to me".
- The Rider is taken around the waist/hips and is removed from the Horse by the Sidewalkers. The second Sidewalker (if there are two) can help by moving the Rider's leg clear over the Horse.
- The Leader turns the Horse's head towards the dismounted Rider to prevent the danger of being trodden on or kicked and then removes the Horse.
- These procedures need to be practiced regularly by everyone as part of in-house training.

### **Rider Fall**

- The Rider's assigned Sidewalkers attend to the fallen Rider.
- The Leader must keep hold of the Horse and move it well away from the fallen Rider.
- Other Leaders must move their Horses well away from the fallen Rider.
- Other Sidewalkers reassure the other Riders and stay with them unless requested to help with the fallen Rider.
- The Coach will stop the ride, reassure others and attend to the fallen Rider calling for assistance as required.

### **Mounting and Dismounting**

- Mounting and dismounting are the times when a Rider is most vulnerable and potentially at risk.
- Procedures are carried out in an orderly and calm manner under the direction of experienced RDA people following NZRDA guidelines.
- Special training will be given to those Volunteers involved in these procedures.

## Where to from Here

The Volunteer Coordinator or other person designated by the Committee will support your ongoing training.

Since starting at RDA, you have worked through the Volunteer Induction Checklist. This included:

- Health & Safety briefing including emergency procedures.
- Understanding the Group organisation chart and your specific job description.
- Basic training in the job you are doing.
- Starting a Volunteer Competency card.
- All other relevant information and training to enable you to participate safely from day one.

You have now read this Volunteer Handbook and have attended (or will shortly attend) an NZRDA Volunteer Training Course.

Your future training depends on where your RDA career goes. All Group personnel are expected to participate in training for their own and the Rider's safety and delivery of Rider outcomes so at a minimum you will complete annual refresher training for your role.



Additional opportunities for training include; attending Group workshops to develop further skills in e.g. Leading, Sidewalking, Mounting/Dismounting. Every year RDA people get together for the NZRDA National Training Seminar. This comprises workshops and sessions along with discussion on matters of significance to all Groups and Riders. Obtaining First Aid certification through a recognised provider is also useful.

You may even want to qualify as a Coach. As part of the Primary ITO Sector, NZRDA offer the National Certificate in Equine (NZRDA Assistant Coach) and the National Certificate in Equine (NZRDA Coach) qualifications. There is also a limited credit package available; Introduction to RDA Equine skills. These qualifications are made up of unit standards from several different subject areas and specific NZRDA unit standards.



Also ask National Office to add you to the monthly **NZRDA Update** and follow us on **Facebook**

You can find lots more information on the NZRDA website

**rda.org.nz**

and on the The Arena

**<http://www.rda.org.nz/thearena.htm>**

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE NZRDA TEAM**



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