

2023

# REINS Volunteer Resource Manual



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# Welcome!

We're so happy you've decided to volunteer at REINS Therapeutic Riding Program.

This manual has been designed for you to familiarize yourself with REINS and to provide an overview of policies and practices which will give you guidance and direction.

As you know, things are always changing and so our policies, practices, and procedures might need to be modified from how they are outlined here. If such modifications occur, we will notify you in person and via e-mail. Communication is extremely important to us, but as volunteers it is also your responsibility to keep your handbook up to date and keep up to date with e-mails from the Volunteer Coordinator and other staff.

Volunteering at REINS can be a very wonderful experience; however it is a physically and mentally challenging job. Volunteer duties must be performed in a safe and competent manner.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to the Volunteer Coordinator or Volunteer Coordination assistants.

## Our History

At REINS, children and adults with disabilities learn how to ride horses. This is an intense discipline that benefits a wide range of abilities. Our current enrollment is nearly 200 weekly students who come from all over the counties of Orange, Riverside and San Diego. We also have the help of over 100 weekly volunteers who assist in all aspects of the program.

REINS began in a backyard in San Marcos, California in 1984 with a handful of disabled students and their devoted parents. We have since moved twice in our effort to embrace as many students as possible. In 1999, we purchased our permanent property in Fallbrook. In 2009, through a generous donation, we paid off our mortgage and are now able to devote our full attention to expanding the program, welcoming more students, and increasing the quality of the services we provide.

## Our Philosophy

Our program would be unable to run without the help and care of our incredible volunteers. Your time, energy, and talents provide the staff and our students with the help we need to succeed in our mission and provide quality instruction. Your perspective, diversity, and expertise bring so much to the table and allow us to fulfill our mission and staying firmly rooted in our community. You help make REINS the incredible, welcoming, and kind place it is for everyone who drives over our bridge.



## Volunteer Conduct

Volunteers of REINS Therapeutic Horsemanship Program will always:

- Conduct themselves as role models and good citizens
- Act in a way to improve the lives of our participants
- Treat everyone with respect

***Be honest, helpful, friendly, and mature***

## REINS Staff promises to:

- Respond to all inquiries from current and new volunteers in a timely manner regarding their orientation and scheduling
- Match volunteers with tasks that meet their interest and skills with clear instructions, deadlines, materials, and tools to complete tasks
- Foster personal growth among volunteers by volunteering skilled supervision, training, and opportunities to learn new skills
- Be purposeful with assigning meaningful tasks and abundant thanks, directly and frequently
- Consider all volunteer requests, suggestions, and grievances in a thoughtful, respectful, and timely manner
- Work in our community to renew and reinforce our ethos and mission





# Benefits of Volunteering

- Exposure to a diverse group of abilities, disabilities, and talents
- Exercise and time spent outside
- Building of experience and confidence in a nurturing environment
- Building new skills
- Building meaningful connection and relationships to a welcoming community



# Benefits of Therapeutic Riding

Research shows riding benefits student's:

- Emotional
- Cognitive
- Physical
- Social
- Sensory
- Focus
- Responsibility
- Empowerment



Therapeutic horseback riding benefits almost any disabling condition

including: cerebral palsy, autism, down syndrome, head injuries, hearing impaired, visually impaired, multiple sclerosis, seizure disorders, speech & learning disabilities, and sensory integration dysfunction. The physical, mental, and emotional benefits of therapeutic horsemanship are numerous. The rhythmic motion and warmth of the horse stimulates and exercises the rider's muscles increasing mobility of the pelvis, hip, and spine. The rider experiences weight shift and trunk mobility as if he were walking on his own.

As the horse and rider progress through their different gaits, the rider experiences a wide range of sensory input. At a walk, the rider benefits from the calming effort of the rhythmic, three-dimensional



movement. As the horse moves to a trot, the rider's alertness is increased, his posture aligned, and he becomes more aware of his own body. Riders respond to this movement as the lessons, activities and exercises take place. To encourage speech, identify objects, and sequence multiple tasks, students also participate in games and socialize with other students.

# Volunteer Opportunities

## Minors

REINS welcomes minors over the age of 12 to apply as volunteers with permission from a parent or guardian before they begin. The tasks assigned to minors will be performed in a non-hazardous environment and comply with California State's and Federal Child labor laws.

## Groups

REINS has long welcomed one-time volunteer service from groups such as high school, college service groups, church groups, employees on corporate service days, assisted living centers, and Boy and Girl Scouts. Minors may participate with permission from their guardians and under supervision of their group leaders. Group leaders are responsible for obtaining that permission.

## Interning/Service learning

REINS welcomes those looking to intern as part of a school program, job transitioning, or job training. If you are interested in such an opportunity, please reach out to the Program Director.





# Classification of Volunteers

## Regularly Scheduled Volunteers

When a volunteer commits to a period with a regular schedule over some period of agreed upon time. This can be ongoing or over a pre-determined length of assignment like summer vacation.

## Special Event

Special Event volunteers are those who serve only once or occasionally in an event situation. Examples of such events are golf tournaments, tack sales, or the annual Hoedown.

## Seasoned Volunteers

Seasoned volunteers are those who have been at REINS for long enough that they are able to train, retain, and supervise other volunteers.

## Professional Volunteers

Professional volunteers are those that volunteer using expertise according their license, registration, or classification as required by the profession. These credentials must be current to provide these services.



## AB 506

REINS, in compliance with CA AB 506 requires all volunteers to complete a background check as within their first month of volunteering.

The bill can be found here:

<https://rb.gy/arhjs>

It's important to note that this check is limited to criminal convictions in the state of California. The law also requires organizations to disclose to parents if they employ or allow someone to volunteer with the following offenses in their background: sexual assault, public indecency, abandonment and neglect of a child, unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor, child endangerment, or inflicting punishment on a child. Parents must receive the notification at least 10 days before the individual begins their duties.

At REINS, any of the convictions above are disqualifying for volunteer service.

Failure to complete this background check will exclude a volunteer from future service.

REINS background checks are conducted by PeopleTrail at lowered cost to our volunteer pool. If you are experiencing financial hardship and are unable to pay for such a check, please reach out to the volunteer coordinator who may be able to assist.

Links and instructions on how to fill out a background check will be a part of orientation.



# Types of Volunteer Service

We're a large working ranch! This means we have several types of service and positions that volunteers can fill to help us run our program. This section will list and describe designated roles and jobs volunteers may fill. Volunteers often fill several of these roles, switching between as needed.

## Special Project Volunteers

### Facilities/Maintenance Volunteers

Our 10 acres take a lot of work to remain safe and functional. When things need fixing, we depend on skilled Facilities/Maintenance Volunteers. Jobs are ever-changing, so if you have a specific skill set or project you're interested in, feel free to ask our Program Director about it!

#### Qualifications

- Able to frequently sit, stand, kneel, bend, and lift up to 50lbs independently
- Must have prior experience with general maintenance tasks and able to use hand and power tools confidently and safely
- Must be at least 18 years old
- If licensed or bonded in a trade, must be able to present current credentials
- Must be responsible and professional

#### Responsibilities

- Maintain grounds, facilities, and other areas by mowing, weeding, and clearing brush
- May be asked to paint, work with tools, pick up trash
- Other tasks assigned or appropriate to your skill level and training

### Event Volunteers

REINS holds several annual fundraisers on our property and around the area with our biggest being our annual Hoedown! All these events are made successful by the generous time donated by our volunteers.

Event volunteers help:

- Plan and execute day of to ensure events go smoothly and that guests have an enjoyable experience.
  - Set-up/tear-down
  - Greeters, ushers, general assistants, servers, check-out etc.
  - Decorate

If you have experience in event planning and coordination, or if you would love to be a part of this team, let us know!

## REINS Ambassador

Are you a people person who is great at helping with special events? You can help us in the planning, preparation and execution of our fundraising events held throughout the year! REINS Ambassadors are dedicated and contribute to the success of our organization by assisting with special events, fundraisers, and promotions.

### **Qualifications**

- Ambassadors must be 21 years of age or older
- Must be responsible and conduct yourself professionally when in public

### **Responsibilities**

- Ambassadors participate with internal and external events, selling raffle and event tickets, developing corporate partnerships, soliciting in kind gifts, and cultivating donor relationships.
- Ambassadors are encouraged to support as many initiatives as they are able; with a minimum of one each year.
- Ambassadors represent REINS, and all members should strive to exceed expectations with the highest level of professionalism, distinction, and courtesy.

## Barn Team Volunteers

Our program wouldn't exist without the continued care and health of our herd. Barn volunteers help us ensure horses are watered, have clean living conditions, and are checked for other health issues. Barn Team volunteers may be asked to retrieve a horse from the pasture, turnout, or stall in preparation for a lesson.

### **Qualifications**

- Able to lift to 70lbs with assistance or 35lbs independently
- Must be responsible and professional
- Must be comfortable working safely and confidently with large animals
- Minimum age of 12 years old
- Prior horse experience required
- Able to stand and kneel frequently

### **Responsibilities**

- Will be required to comfortably lead and handle horses on the ground
- Will be required to comfortably groom (i.e., picking hooves, bathing, etc.)
- Not necessarily involved with programming or lessons

## Program Volunteers

### Side walker

A volunteer may act as a side walker during a lesson to assist in the facilitation of that lesson. A side walkers primary job is to help the instructor ensure a rider's safety during that lesson.

Side walking volunteers might also assist in:

- Re-directing a student's attention to the instructor
- Assist in positioning
- Help riders understand and implement an instructor's directions.
  - Side walkers must allow a student to process and complete directions from the instructor without too much distraction. This is especially true for students who might already have processing or attention difficulties.

### Qualifications

- Be at least 12 years of age
- Be able to walk and or jog for 30 minutes while maintaining vigilance and often using upper body strength to assist the participant
- Assist the participant with the activities and follow the directions of the PATH Intl. instructor in control of the lesson
- Participate in the activity for the duration of a lesson with no water or bathroom breaks
- Maintain safe control of the participant in all situations, including incidence of unexpected behavior of the equine or participant
- Able to hear, speak, and understand instructions in English
- Able to hold arm raised and out to the side for an extended period
- Must be responsible and professional

### Responsibilities

- Help prepare a horse for its lesson
- Assist with rider support during mounting and dismounting as necessary
- Walk next to the rider throughout the lesson and provide any necessary physical support
- Help the rider follow directions given by the instructor
- Be reliable and on time for your scheduled shift

## Side Walker Holds

### Arm over thigh

This hold assists a rider in maintaining a proper seat and body position on the horse.

- Hold on to the front flap of the saddle or front of the suede pad, placing your forearm over the middle of the rider's thigh applying some pressure.
- Try and provide support at the same level as the instructor on the other side of the horse.
- Be cautious not to involve a student's knee or hip joints in this hold.



*Correct arm over thigh hold*

### Arm over Thigh and Ankle Hold

This hold helps provide support to a rider's seat and prevents the leg from swinging forward or backwards.

In addition to utilizing an arm over thigh hold with your inside arm:

- Place your outside hand at the rider's lower calf, just above the ankle.
- Wrap your fingers around the front of the rider's calf, with your thumb wrapped around the back of the rider's lower calf. This hold provides maximum support to a rider's lower body, helping stabilize both the calf and the knee as well as the ankle.



*Correct arm over thigh and ankle hold*



### **Ankle hold**

This hold helps to provide stabilization to the rider's lower leg and can prevent the leg from swinging forward or backwards and/or deter a rider from kicking the side of the horse.

- With the arm closest to the rider, cup your hand around the back of the rider's heel
- Give gentle resistance to the movement of the rider's foot



*Correct ankle hold*

### **Hand under Shoulder**

This hold will only be performed by seasoned volunteers with training in the hold or staff.

- With the arm closest to the rider, place your hand in the rider's underarm while wrapping that hand around the rider's bicep.
- You will use your forearm and bicep to stabilize the rider's trunk. Be cautious to not drive your elbow into the horse's back while performing this hold.

### **Spotting**

This is not technically a hold, but is a vitally important role for a side walker. You are a spare set of eyes and hands in case of an emergency.

- Keep a hand on the back of the horse's pad so you know where the horse is always.
- Do not get too far behind or ahead of the rider's leg
- Do not step away from the rider unless directed by the instructor.



*Correct spotting position*

### Side walker Mounting Procedure

An instructor will always detail the specific needs of each student during the mount. This will include describing the location of the mount as well as the assistance level needed during that mount. A rider will mount after the rider's tack has been checked and the horse is correctly positioned in the correct location. Side-walkers will be positioned in the right "offside" of the horse.

#### **Ground Mount**

Small riders may mount from the ground with the assistance of an instructor.

A side walker will:

- Help spread and bring the rider's offside leg down onto the horse's side
- Adjust rider position
- Position the rider's foot in stirrups if needed.
- Use caution with hand placement.

#### **Ramp Mount**

Most riders mount from the ramp with the assistance of an instructor. The side walker is responsible for assisting the student in whatever manner the instructor asks for.

A side walker should:

- Help bring a rider's leg and foot over the back of the horse, bringing it down gently against the horse's side, and positioning in its stirrup.
- Help in stabilizing the student as the horse and rider exit the ramp
- Remain close to the rider during the mount
- Do not leave the ramp until the instructor tells everyone to walk on.

#### **Lift Mount**

Riders who utilize the lift will meet the horse and lesson team over by the lift. 3 People are needed to safely mount a rider at using the lift.

- One volunteer and one REINS Instructor will be responsible for assisting the rider in the physical mounting of the rider
- One lift-trained volunteer will be needed to operate the lift.
- Side walkers will:
  - Assist in positioning the rider on the back of the horse as they come down in the lift
  - Assist the instructor in distancing the legs and bringing it down gently against the horse's side
  - Assist the instructor in removing the lift apparatus from the rider or holding the rider in position while the apparatus is removed.

***Communication during a lift mount is especially paramount***

## Side Walker Positioning During A Lesson

***Please let instructor know if supporting the rider is physically challenging for side-walker in any way***

- Side walkers will walk alongside the rider, staying next to and parallel to a rider's knee while assisting when necessary.
  - It is important to retain this position without getting too far ahead, behind, or far away from the rider to maintain both your and the rider's safety.
- At the halt: A side walker will remain at the rider's side unless told differently by the instructor.
- At the walk: A side walker will remain at the rider's side unless told to by the instructor while maintaining the hold assigned by the instructor.
- At the Trot: A side walker will remain at the rider's side unless told to by the instructor while maintaining, or increasing support of, the hold assigned by the instructor.

## Tips and Tricks for Side Walkers During A Lesson

- A side walker may assist in helping correct a rider's body position during a lesson. This may be in the form of a verbal request to adjust position or physical assistance in re-positioning the rider. Repositioning should only occur under the supervision of an instructor to ensure riders safety.
- Though tack differs between riders, and some adaptive tack has different positioning in most cases, a rider will hold most reins "like an ice cream cone" with both hands.
- Volunteers are asked to limit conversation during a class so that a rider's attention is on the instructor.
  - Only one voice should be speaking at a time offering instruction, encouragement, or help.
  - Still, you can have fun! Your commitment and dedication allow this lesson to happen successfully. Your encouragement, praise and positive reinforcement of a rider's accomplishments means so much!!!!
- Side walkers need to always remain attentive to their student.
  - In the case of an emergency of any level, notify the leader and instructor immediately.
  - Our students often have a decreased sense of safety awareness, so your vigilance of their position on an off the horse helps ensure that they remain as safe as possible.
- Try and help your student only when it is needed.
  - Overprotection or assistance prevents a student from progressing and developing independence.
  - This is not to say though that you shouldn't celebrate your student's achievements!
- Listen to an instructor during a lesson for specific instructions and what is being taught.
  - Try to understand and be patient with the student's challenges. While a diagnosis may not be discussed for confidentiality, you are encouraged to ask your instructor for tips on how to better assist and interact with your student.

***Be patient; students may process and learn at a different pace and level than you may expect.***

## Horse Leaders

At REINS, leaders undergo Leading Method training to learn how to lead our herd safely and effectively. Because our horses are handled by so many individuals' multiple times a day, it is important to standardize how we lead our horses. This may mean, even though you have horse experience, we ask you to attend a leading method before we assign you as a leader.

***This may mean even though you have horse experience, we ask you to attend a leading method before we assign you as a leader***

### **Qualifications:**

- Be able to walk and or jog for 30 minutes while maintaining vigilance and control of the equine in the lesson
- Participate for the duration of the lesson without water or bathroom breaks
- Exercise safe control of the equine in the case of unexpected behavior from either the equine or the participant
- Always follow directions of the PATH Intl. Instructor in control of the lesson
- Lead the equine in a manner that maintains the training of the equine and exhibits good ground manners
- Must be responsible and professional

### **Responsibilities:**

- Be reliable and on time for your scheduled shift
- Be conscious of horse health and soundness prior to and during lesson
- Assist in catching, grooming, and tacking horse for their lesson
- Lead the horse during a class, within a group including side walkers, keeping primary focus on the horse while maintaining communication with the team
- Listen to and execute the directives of the instructor
- Assist in un-tacking and putting the horse away after the class



## Leading Techniques

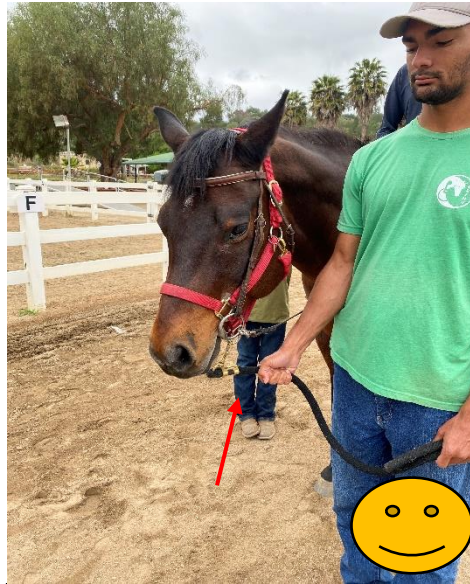
### **Always**

- Stand at the horse's head with the horse on your right side
- Hold the lead rope in your right hand a foot from the buckle where it is attached to the horse
- Fold the extra length of the lead rope in your left hand in a figure eight or a teardrop configuration. Do not wrap the lead rope around your hand.
- Keep reins and lead ropes up off the ground.
- Stay focused on the lesson and on your team. You can occasionally check back on your student and the side walkers.
- Do not let the horse's head get too low to the ground on trail as this might unseat the rider and cause other safety risks. Remember, when on trail no grazing!
- Allow enough room from the side walkers on both sides of the horse, especially the side walker along the wall, and through the gates.
- For safety reasons, refrain from playing with the horse's nose and mouth as doing so can encourage nipping and head butting.
- Be aware of things that might spook your horse. This could include garbage, odd shapes on trails, loud road noise, dark things, dogs, cats, ect.
- Maintain proper spacing of two horse lengths between horses
- Keep a consistent pace throughout the lesson as quick changes can easily unseat the rider

## Holding a Lead Rope



*Incorrect way to hold a lead rope. Leader is holding the rope too close to the buckle and the horse's face.*



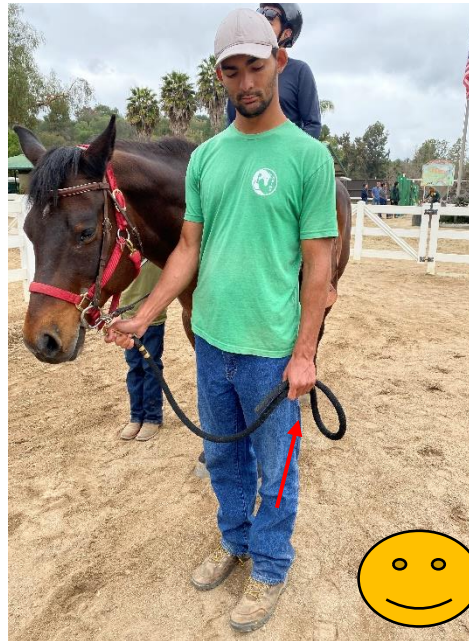
*Correct way to hold a lead rope. Leader is not holding too close to the buckle or the horse's face.*



Don't get too far from the buckle either!



*Incorrect way to hold a lead rope. Leader has wrapped the lead rope around their hand.*



*Correct way to hold a lead rope. Leader has the lead rope folded in their hand with none dragging on the ground.*

## Leading Position



*Correct leading position. Beside the horse's head!*



*Incorrect leading position. Too far in front of horse's head.*



*Incorrect leading method. Too far behind the horse's head.*



## During the Mount

No matter where the rider mounts, it is important to always be aware of the instructor during the mounting.

At the Mounting Block:

- While leading your horse, approach the ramp on the ramp's right, walking on the outside of it 3 feet away. After you've passed the stairs, make a wide left turn so that you are now facing the stairs and chute. Make sure there is plenty of space for the horse to get straight. Approach the chute slowly, turning around to walk backwards when you and the horse's nose are a foot from the stairs. Hold one rein with your lead rope in your right hand, and the other rein in the left hand holding them perpendicular to the horse's nose. This keeps your horse from nipping as you maneuver through the ramp.
- Walk slowly backwards, attempting to keep your horse close to the mounting ramp. When the horse's saddle meets the middle of the mounting platform, woah your horse and wait for instructor's instructions. Try and make sure your horse is square evenly distributing their weight on all four legs.
- As the rider mounts, try and keep the horse still in the chute. You may hold the reins out to either side of the horse's head to prevent nipping or too much movement. You can always ask the instructor how the horse prefers to be held in the chute. It is most important to make sure the horse does not take a step forward or back while the rider is mounting.
- Only when the instructor signals that they are ready to leave the mounting block should you walk on. The instructor will adjust the tack once more before either going on trail or into the arena after exiting the ramp.
- Please do not grab the nose band of the horse. It bothers them and often creates bad habits of the horse throwing their head up to avoid the contact. If you need extra leverage, hold onto the horse's reins.

From the Ground

- Bring the horse to where the instructor says, stopping the horse and keeping them steady as the instructor and team lift the rider onto the horse.
- Only when the instructor signals that they are ready to leave the mounting area should you walk on. The instructor will adjust the tack once more before either going on trail or into the arena after exiting the mounting area.
- Please do not grab the nose band of the horse. It bothers them and often creates bad habits of the horse throwing their head up to avoid the contact. If you need extra leverage, hold onto the horse's reins

At the Lift

- Walk with the instructor and team to the lift area to meet the rider.
- As the instructor prepares the lift, and attaches the rider, wait patiently outside of the lift area with your horse. Please do not allow them to graze.



- When the instructor indicates, bring the horse in the left side of the lift closest to the turn-out, and allow the horse enough room to make a wide turn into the lift chute.
- Bring the horse into the lift chute, holding the reins on either side of the horse's head to help guide them.
- The saddle of the horse will line up with the lift to position the rider.
- Hold the horse steady and listen closely for any directions from the instructor.
- When the instructor indicates, slowly turn around as you exit the lift. The instructor will adjust the tack once more before walking on.
- Please do not grab the nose band of the horse. It bothers them and often creates bad habits of the horse throwing their head up to avoid the contact. If you need extra leverage, hold onto the horse's reins

### **During a Lesson**

- The leader is responsible solely for the horse.
- Take note of the environment and anticipate any problems.
- When following another horse, keep a minimum of 2-3 horse lengths' distance between your horse and other horses in the ring.
- The horse should walk next to the leader with the leader's hand just below the horse's eye and next to the cheek with 1ft of lead rope slack.
- Wait for your student to cue the horse before proceeding unless the instructor tells you otherwise.
- Wait for the student to cue for the trot then you can start slowly jogging next to the horse. Once trotting look up and forward and be aware of your horse's focus and feet. Leaders should be jogging along side the horse's head.
- Always look where you are going and plan ahead.
- Adjust your step to the horse's stride, being careful not to get too far ahead, behind, or away from the horse's left eye, ear, and nostril.
- Limit interaction with the client while leading a horse as the client is the side walker's responsibility.
- When halting for safety and adjustments, let the instructor and other leaders know to keep from getting separated.
- It is difficult for most students to maintain balance on sharp turns, so if you must turn sharply, warn the student first

### **During the Dismount**

#### **To the Ground**

- Most riders dismount to the ground
- Walk the horse up to the color box the rider or the instructor indicates, stopping 5 feet from the carrot box
- Much like mounting, your role is to keep the horse steady and prevent them from stepping out while the instructor is dismounting the rider
- Once the rider has dismounted, the instructor will remove the bridle and reins from the horse
- Wait with the horse, not allowing them to walk forward or backwards

- Once the student has put buckets down and calls the horse over walk the horse to the bucket

#### To the Ramp

- Walking slowly backwards, enter the ramp through the chute, with the horse facing down pasture way
- Listen to your instructor as to when to woah your horse so the rider is directly beside the middle of the ramp platform
- Woah the horse keeping them steady while the rider is dismounting

#### To the Lift

- Riders who mount at the lift will also dismount at the lift
- Instructors will tell you to woah the horse before entering the lift chute so that the instructor and side walker can change sides.
- At the instructor's direction, turn around slowly and bring the horse in through the chute facing the big arena
- The saddle of the horse will line up with the lift rail to position the rider.
- Hold the horse steady and listen closely for any directions from the instructor.
- Please do not grab the nose band of the horse. It bothers them and often creates bad habits of the horse throwing their head up to avoid the contact. If you need extra leverage, hold onto the horse's reins
- The lift will be attached to the rider, and the rider will be lifted off the horse
- Exit the lift chute when the instructor directs
- Unless otherwise indicated, bring the horse back to be untacked at the barn

## Horse Safety

### In the Pastures and Stalls

#### Getting a Horse

Volunteers should always go with a partner to get horses from the pasture or a stall. One volunteer will go to halter the horse, while the second opens and closes the gates to ensure no other horses get loose.

When in the pasture:

- Be aware of other horses as well as the one you are catching.
- Be sure to keep some distance between yourself and the rest of the herd.
- Be extra cautious when going through the gates for any followers.
- Call the horse's name you are going to catch so they know you are approaching and always walk up to them from the side so that they can see you.

When in a stall:

- Be cautious when entering the stall, make sure your horse knows you are coming in
- For most horses, allow the gate to remain barely open in the case of an emergency so you can exit quickly
- Halter the horse as normal
- Open the gate fully before asking the horse to step out

***Be sure to close all the gates after you have gotten your horse***

#### Putting a Horse away

- Confirm with REINS Staff where a horse is to be put away after their lesson.
- When turning out a horse, walk the horse into the pasture while your partner holds on to the closed gate. Remove the horse's halter as they should never be left loose in their stalls or the pasture with *any* tack on.

***Be sure to close all gates after the horse has been put away***

### In the Crossties

When leading a horse up to the crossties:

- Be aware of any spots of grass or loose hay the horse might dive for
- Horses are lead behind the flagpole up the back side of the crossties
- Crossties are attached to the side rings of the halter before the lead rope is unattached (Always be sure to have two points of attachment to the horse before removing the lead rope)
- Lead ropes can unclip from the halters and be hung on the hooks beside the crossties
- Horses are brought up for their lesson 30 minutes before their lesson begins
- No more than two people should work around one horse at a time.

# Aspects of Volunteer Service

## Initial Volunteer Orientation

All new volunteers are required to complete a volunteer orientation prior to starting in any of our volunteer roles. New volunteers will learn about REINS, our history, the work we do, our students, and how our volunteers help us do the work we do every day. The initial orientation will introduce you to much of the information, locations, and resources you will need to get started. Most details you will learn on your first few shifts of volunteering.



## First Shift Orientation

On your very first day you will be paired with a member of the Volunteer Coordination team, other staff, or a seasoned volunteer to work 1:1 to acclimate you to the specific duties and tasks required for your position. This will include horse handling, grooming, tacking, lesson responsibilities, and further expectations. It will also include a review of most of the information you received during your orientation.

## Leading Method Class

REINS conducts a leading method class at least once a trimester to teach our volunteers how to lead our herd and become a horse leader. A leading method class is considered a continuing part of your volunteer education, and oftentimes several leading method classes or further experience may be necessary to lead our more challenging horses. If you are interested in becoming a horse leader, please let the Volunteer Coordinator know and we will get you signed up for a class!

## Supervision

The Volunteer coordinator is your main point of contact throughout the application, orientation, and onboarding process as well as to support organization volunteers throughout their time at REINS.

As a new volunteer you will have a clearly identified supervisor who will directly oversee your role within the organization. This supervisor will be available to you for questions and help.

## Corrective Action and Safety Violation Interventions

Corrective action may be taken following an incident or when it is deemed appropriate. Examples of corrective action include the need for additional training, re-assignment of a volunteer to a new position, suspension, or dismissal from volunteer service.

## Concerns and Grievances

REINS has an open-door policy, this means that at any point a volunteer, staff member, participant, family members, horse donors are welcome and able to voice their concerns and grievances to Program

Directors and Executive Directors. If a grievance is voiced to an Instructor, Volunteer Coordinator, or Program Coordinator, that individual will take that concern to Directors and Executive Directors.

### Recognition

We are so grateful for the time, care, and enthusiasm of our volunteers. Without you all, our program simply could not exist, and we want to recognize you for that. Therefore, we believe strongly that recognition opportunities will occur at the organization level as well as the volunteer level and are often shared with local media.





# Participation Guidelines and Policies

## Drug Free Policy

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is not allowed at REINS. Anyone knowingly engaged in any of the aforementioned things will be reported to law enforcement.

Volunteers may not be impaired by any substance while serving for the safety of our herd and students. Such action will result in your immediate dismissal.

## Non-Smoking Policy

REINS is a smoke/vape free facility. Smoking by staff, volunteers, students, and families is strictly prohibited.

## Dress Code

As a volunteer you are representing REINS through your dress and demeanor. You should dress appropriately for weather conditions and your duties.

### Acceptable Attire:

- sturdy closed-toes shoes and boots
- Hats
- Wear or bring layers, as mornings and evenings can be chilly but mid-day can be hot
- During summer months, be sure to bring/wear sun protection
- Wear a watch to help keep on schedule
- Water bottles are encouraged! There is an on-site water cooler to refill.

### Un-Acceptable Attire:

- Clothing with excessive holes or inappropriate language/pictures/etc.
- Clothes that flap about in the wind are also discouraged as they may scare horses
- Spaghetti strap tank tops
- Crop-tops
- Short shorts
- Pants that are sagging too low/dragging on the ground

***You will be provided with a name tag your first day you are encouraged to wear as a part of the REINS team!***

## Cell Phone Use

We understand today that our phones are essentially extensions of our bodies. However, while in lessons we ask you neither have your ringer on nor answer calls/texts. This is to keep our riders safe and free of distraction.

***Volunteers MUST ask permission to take photographs or videos of lessons prior to the start of any lesson or program REINS is conducting***

## Confidentiality

REINS strives to protect the privacy of our clients and so follows very specific confidentiality rules. While instructors might give you information about a student that will help you safely facilitate a lesson, they will not give out specific personal details or diagnosis information for any student. We ask you respect the student's privacy by not asking about specific health information, ***especially while the student is present during a lesson.*** Please also refrain from speaking about our students, their diagnosis, or other health information outside of REINS, especially in public where you could be overheard and/or misunderstood.

## Harassment Policy

REINS is committed to a work environment that is professional and harassment-free for all employees and volunteers.

Harassment includes:

- Verbal, physical, visual, and innuendo comments/actions
- Unwelcome advances
- Requests for sexual favors
- Sexually motivated physical contact and other verbal or physical conduct
- Visual forms of harassment of sexual nature
- Creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment for employees, volunteers, or clients

***Volunteers should report any issues to their supervisor***

## Dismissal

Individuals who become disruptive, threaten the safety of others, or are no longer suited for volunteer/guest activities, will be asked to leave the property. This may include guests to the center including persons visiting the center who are not regular volunteers, participants, or staff members. REINS Therapeutic Horsemanship Program reserves the right to dismiss individuals who threaten or are no longer considered safe around the facility.



# Better Impact: Our Volunteer Management System

BetterImpact, or MyImpact, is the database and system we use to manage our 200+ volunteers through the week. It is also the system we use to create and see our volunteer schedule.

## Orientation

In order to sign up for orientation, volunteers can go to [Reinsprogram.org](https://reinsprogram.org) -> support -> Volunteer -> and click the large green button that says sign up here to volunteer! You'll receive an e-mail welcoming you and asking about your availability for new volunteer orientation. After you've gone to orientation you'll be able to schedule your shift, see your hours, and log past hours.

## Signing up for Shifts

We rely so much on our volunteers, and we create our weekly schedule around the help we have, and the help we might need. To have a reliable sense of who is on the ranch, we ask all our volunteers to schedule when they are planning on being here through MyImpact. MyImpact is both a webpage, and an app in the Apple and Android Appstore's.

Using the login you created for orientation, you can navigate to opportunities on the sidebar and schedule yourself for the entire session on days you know you're able to be here. The further you are able to schedule out, the better! Most volunteers schedule themselves for one shift a week, and pick that same shift every week for the entire session. For example, Sarah comes every Monday afternoon for 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the year.

We also understand though that schedules change, and emergencies happen. If you have signed up for a shift you know you will have to miss over 1wk in advance, you can unschedule yourself. We also ask you send an email to [volunteer@reinsprogram.org](mailto:volunteer@reinsprogram.org). If you are signed up for a shift you must miss with <24h notice, please e-mail the volunteer coordinator and or give us a call.

## Signing in and Out of your Shifts

1. Locate the iPad in the tack room and log in using your MyImpact username and password
2. Hit "start clock"
3. Log out

When you are ready to leave, the same process will allow you to hit "stop clock" to end your shift

## Why any of this Matters

Besides its importance in scheduling, REINS applies for several grants throughout the year, that we use data from our MyImpact system for.

Examples of important data we collect is:

- Knowing how many volunteers our program has
- How many hours they work
- Where they are from ect.

MyImpact also allows us to:

- Pose direct questions to our volunteers
- Keep up to date contact and emergency information
- Collect any additional data we might need (like steps taken during a shift.)
- **Conduct our annual update of volunteer information including addresses, e-mails, phone numbers, emergency contacts, and releases.**

*Data used will always be anonymous*

# Safety

## Center Policies

***Safety is always our first priority***

REINS is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for everyone who drives over the bridge. The Volunteer and Program Coordinators can provide volunteers with information on facility safety plans and procedures.

- Gum is not to be chewed while mounted
- No pets besides service animals are allowed on the property
- Please be mindful of your tone and volume. No screaming or loud talking.
- Please walk, don't run anywhere around the property unless there is an emergency

## In an Emergency

- Dial 911
- Indicate the location of the emergency
  - **REINS Therapeutic Horsemanship**  
**4461 South Mission Road Fallbrook CA 92028**
  - Physical location on property
- Pay attention and respond to all questions or requests by 911
  - What happened
  - Number of victims
  - What action/help is being administered
- Ask sirens not be used in close proximity to the barn
- Remain on the line until you are told to hang up
- Make sure other people are directed to go to the bridge and open any gates needed to direct emergency staff

***All staff on property are first aid certified***

## Universal Precautions/Handling of Bodily Fluids

Contact with bodily fluids such as blood, drainage from scrapes and cuts, urine, vomit, respiratory secretions may present a risk of infection from any number of germs. Personal protective equipment is the best precaution and always available. It is advised all volunteers check with their Primary Care Physicians to ensure they are up to date on all their immunizations.



# Grooming

## Kit

- Hoof Pick- for cleaning feet. Has a metal pick you use to clean out the frog and stuck debris and a brush you use to brush it away.
- Curry Comb- used to remove dirt, mud, and old coat from the horse. Do not use on bony or sensitive areas (some horses are sensitive to this tool, check with staff before use)
  - Metal- use in the direction of the horse's coat. Is especially useful for difficult to clean spots like dried mud.
  - Rubber- use in circular motions gently against the horse. Is useful to help bring dirt and old coat up from the undercoat of the horse.
- Body Brush- For removing heavy dirt, caked mud, and dust. Do not use on sensitive areas like the head.
- Dandy Brush- also known as a face brush, used for removing dust, dirt, grease from coat mane and tail. Can be used gently on the faces of horses who will allow.
- Sponges/eye wipes- used to help clean the eyes and noses of horses. Wet down and use gently.

## Rules and Tips of Grooming

- Make it pleasant, grooming is the start of a horse's workday.
- Work efficiently, but not in a hurried, frenzied manner that may make the horse fidgety or unsure.
- Work as close to the horse as possible, this gives the horse security and protects you.
- Make a mental note of the horse's physical and mental condition.
  - Report any injuries ect. to the instructor.
  - Never hesitate to ask if you are unsure about how to do something, or about an observation you have made.
- Check with the instructor and the Horse Notes section of the board to see if a horse needs any special treatment, or equipment and who oversees this.



## Grooming How-To



*Begin by using a rubber curry comb applying gentle but consistent pressure against the horse's coat moving in circular motions. Do not use over bony areas.*

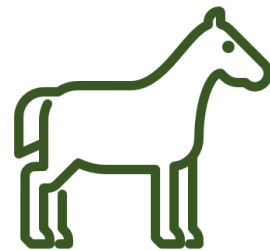


*Use a brush to brush away any coat and dirt the curry comb has disturbed.*



*Use a hoof pick to pick rocks, manure, twigs and dirt out of the horse's hoof. Clean until the frog is visible and clear of debris, using the pick and brush. Hold the horse's hoof as indicated.*

Be sure to go around the front of the horse to groom the other side!





# Horse Body Language

Horses try to communicate with us, just as we do with them. Their body language tells us how they're feeling, what they want, what they're afraid of, and if they really do love that spot you're scratching.

Understanding some horse body language will keep you, and your equine friend safe and happy.

Every horse is different, and some horses naturally display some of the signs that in another horse may indicate a problem. Several of these signs together likely indicate the true feeling of the horse.

## How your horse might say:

"I'm not feeling well"

- Standoffish of the herd: doesn't want to interact with anyone
- Kicking or pawing at their abdomen
- Uncharacteristic girthy behavior
- Reduced activity level
- Repetitive mouth opening
- Intense stare
- Head tossing up and down or side to side
- Repeated tail swishing

"I'm feeling stressed out"

- Forward pointing ears
- Wide-open eyes
- Widened nostrils
- A high head
- Stiff stance
- Raised tail
- Blowing out through their nose

"I don't like this"

- Tail swishing
- Shaking their head
- Gaping mouth or yanking the bit
- Pursed lips
- Raised necks
- Wide open eyes
- Stomping fit

"Buckle up, It's about to get ugly"

**Bolting**

- Getting big
- Rooting for the bit
- Throwing his head up



- Straightening or stiffening neck
- Putting their head straight down

#### Biting

- Wrinkling nose
- Pursed lips
- Quick head movement towards you

#### Bucking

- Back humped
- Low head
- Getting big
- Braces their body
- Stiffens their forelock

#### Kicking

- Pinning back ears
- Picking up a back foot

#### “I adore this!”

- Relaxed eyes
- Calm tail
- Relaxed muscles
- Forward facing ears
- Licking and chewing

**EXPRESSIONS OF STRESS DUE TO FEAR OR FRUSTRATION**

Pet Professional Guild Australia recognised that equine behaviour is complex. Horses express their emotions through their behaviour with some of these only being seen in certain contexts. Some of the more subtle or less well understood behaviours that we see from horses are when they are stressed due to fear or frustration at some level. If you are unsure about any aspect of the behaviour of your horse, please contact one of our force free approved equine trainers listed on our website [www.ppgaaustralia.net.au](http://www.ppgaaustralia.net.au)

Half closed eyes Stress coping behaviour	Blinking Appeasement/ conflict avoidance	Licking & chewing Stress response/ relief behaviour	Yawning Stress response/ relief behaviour	Snatching grass Stress response/ self calming behaviour
Whale eye Fear	Head turned away Avoidance of stressor	Lowering head/sniffing ground Avoidance of stressor	Nose/face rub on knee Avoidance of stressor	
Freeze & stare Evaluating potential threat	Snorting Worried at potential threat	Pawing Frustration	Ears pinned Bite warning to drive away threat	
Snaking Driving away threat	Head toss/twirling Frustration or annoyance	Prancing/calling/running Highly stressed in fear, frustration or panic		

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# Emergency Procedures

## Falls in Class

While falls are rare, they can happen. In the case of a fall, the priority is ensuring that the rider, volunteers and staff are safe and the horse is safe and contained. In the event any one of these participants are injured, order and direction of this outline will change.

***In the case of a fall it is extremely important you listen to the Instructor for directions. Time is often of the essence.***

## Horse Leaders

If the horse is still in hand, swiftly move the horse away from the fallen rider. If the horse is calm, wait some distance from the rider and instructor and wait for instructions.

## Side Walkers

Depending on the situation, there are several roles a side walker fills after a fall.

You may be asked to:

- Assist the horse leader
- Get help
- Call emergency services
- Assist in first aid



## Emergency Dismounts

Emergency dismounts, while also rare do happen. They are performed when it is safer for a rider to come off the horse, than to stay on. Most often, the instructor's goal is to keep the rider on the horse's back and address whatever caused the incident.

### Roles of Leaders

- If a rider is on the horse's back, the number one priority of the leader is keeping a hold of the horse
- Once the rider has been dismounted, if it is unsafe to hold on and the instructor says so you may let go of the lead rope
- If you still have a hold of the horse and they have calmed after an emergency dismount, walk the two of you away from the rider and lesson team
- Please be aware of other horses in the area.

### Roles of Side Walkers

- If the horse is bolting, spooking, spinning, bucking, or rearing please
- quickly utilize a FIRM arm over thigh hold on the rider
- Take hold onto the rider's ankle so that you are relieving the horse of any pressure against their sides
- When the instructor indicates, remove the rider's foot from the stirrup
- The instructor will pull the rider off via the "hug and pull" method
- Assist the rider by shoving the leg sliding over the saddle
- Get a safe distance away from the incident and assist the instructor with the student as needed

**Emergency Dismounts are Practiced during the Leading Method Class**