

Equine Risk Management

Sections 4.1 – 4.5 are policy requirements that must be met in order to hold a 4-H sanctioned equine event. While there may be many other requirement/forms necessary for enrollment as a 4-H member, the items below are equine specific and may be required in addition to standard enrollment requirements.

Any Equine activity, as with any other program sponsored by Cooperative Extension, must conform to the policies of Virginia Cooperative Extension as well as being approved as a sponsored activity by Cooperative Extension. Virginia Tech, as a land grant university, has been delegated the responsibility, by the Federal Government, for implementation of the 4-H program. This use can be further delegated to volunteers, by the 4-H professional in charge of the program for that unit when appropriate. However, a volunteer's approval to implement the 4-H program in their area can be revoked by Cooperative Extension for appropriate reasons such as failure to follow VCE or 4-H policies.

4.1 Equine Liability Waivers

Equine waivers are required on all individuals involved in an equine activity for Cooperative Extension. Waivers as outlined in the waiver form may be initiated on individuals for a period of a year. A new waiver may be required for each individual activity, as required by the sponsor.

[Equine Release, Waiver, and Indemnification Form](#)

4.2 Head Protection

Effective January 1, 2000, protective headgear is required for youth of 4-H age and younger in all mounted equine activities sponsored by Cooperative Extension. American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) certified protective headgear for equestrian activities is required (including secured harness). It is highly recommended that adults participating in VCE sponsored equine activities wear protective headgear.

4.3 Age Considerations

Individuals involved in Cooperative Extension programs under the age of 9 must follow specific guidelines covered by the Cloverbud Policy as adopted by the Virginia 4-H Leadership Council and Virginia Cooperative Extension on November 15, 1997. Basic Cloverbud guidelines are:

4-H Cloverbuds - Audience: Boys and girls 5-8 years of age

1. Approved 4-H Cloverbud curriculum can be implemented utilizing all 4-H delivery methods of club and enrichment programs. This includes Cloverbud clubs, after school programs, day or residential camps, and with other groups such as recreation, day care centers or churches, or as a home schooler. Cloverbuds may participate through 4-H Cloverbud clubs, subgroups of larger multi-age clubs, school enrichment programs, school aged child care, or special interest groups, depending on the needs and resources of the individual group and the unit's 4-H program.
2. Non-competitive.

3. Adult volunteer involvement/support.
4. When Cloverbuds are involved in mixed age clubs, groups, and/or functions, separate learning/educational experiences should be provided for Cloverbuds.

Curriculum

1. The curriculum shall be determined by Educational Design Team as recommended by the respective Curriculum Component Committee.
2. 4-H Cloverbud members can not participate in 4-H activities and events, in which they are expected to control, solely care for, or otherwise manage large animals or any other animal which presents a safety risk. Large animals are defined as cattle, llamas, sheep, swine, horses and ratites (ostrich, rhea, cassowary, emu, etc.).

Recognition

1. Recognition is needed and desired. Cloverbuds' recognition should be directed towards the individual/group for:
 - a. Participation
 - b. Collaborative efforts
2. The Cloverbud program is a non-competitive program. There is no individual judging.

4.4 Health History Forms

All 4-H youth are required to have an accurate, completed Health History form on file. This form must be signed by the youth's parents/guardians. This form must be updated on a yearly basis. A separate health history form may be required for individual events.

[Health History Form](#)

4.5 Volunteers

All volunteers working on behalf of Virginia Tech through Virginia Cooperative Extension must be registered with the county office or event by completing the appropriate volunteer registration form. Generally speaking, long forms are required by volunteers who have direct supervisory responsibilities for youth. Short forms can be used whenever volunteers serve in roles that do not require them to have sole supervision for youth (for example, instructing a class or workshop in which other trained volunteers are supervising the youth, or short term/one time volunteering at an equine event).

[Volunteer long form](#)

[Volunteer short form](#)

****Additional Information:**

For Accident/Incident policies and forms please refer to the Risk Management website.

[Accident/Incident Form](#)

Code of Conduct

A code of conduct form is required to be on file in the county office for each 4-H member participating in a 4-H sanctioned event. This form must be completed annually. *This form can be altered to add clauses that are specific to equine events and can be required separately for those events.*

[Code of Conduct Form](#)

Standards of Behavior for Volunteers Form

This code of conduct for adult volunteers is required to be on file in the county office for each 4-H volunteer supervising a 4-H sanctioned event. This form is completed once, when the volunteer enrolls.

[Standards of Behavior Form for Volunteers](#)

Media Release Form

A media release form should be on file at the county office for each 4-H member and adult volunteer. This form must be signed by parent or legal guardian of the 4-Her. A shortened media statement can be added to entry forms to cover the release for a specific event.

[Media Release Form](#)

[Media Short Statement \(copy and paste\)](#)

4-H Media Release Statement

Virginia Cooperative Extension periodically uses photographs or video or audio footage or testimonials of 4-H members for local, regional, or state publicity or educational purposes. By my signature on this _____
(Name of form here)
form, I acknowledge receipt of this document and give permission for Virginia Cooperative Extension and _____ to use such
(Name of unit or 4-H Center)
reproductions for educational and publicity purposes.

Parent/Guardian Signature (for participant under 18 years old)

Date

Participant Signature

Date

4.6 Safety Checklists

Listed below is a checklist of items to consider when planning a 4-H equine related event. These are designed to provide some guidance to ensure that reasonable and prudent efforts have been made to ensure 4-H youth and animal safety. The checklists that follow are not meant to be all inclusive. Further information can be obtained from the 4-H Horse Program leaders guide (which can be obtained through Cooperative Extension publications) or publications produced by insurers on providing a safe facility for hosting a public horse event (which can be obtained from those insurers or from the Office of Risk Management at Virginia Tech).

4.6.1 Horse Show Checklists

1. Entrance into, out of and around the show ring and or practice arenas should be well defined and controlled.
2. The areas designated for use by the horse show participants should be cleared of obvious hazards, such as broken glass, trash piles, equipment not necessary for the running of the show, etc.
3. Farm equipment necessary for the running of the show should be parked away from locations of high animal traffic.
4. Appropriate signs should be placed in locations designated as off limits to the public or animals. No smoking, exit signs, etc. should be posted where necessary. Equine Limits of Liability signs are available from the Virginia Horse Council and can be posted if appropriate.
5. Designated parking areas should be marked. To the extent possible, the attending public should be kept separate from the participant areas.
6. Grounds, facilities, and show related equipment should be inspected for safety, good working order and appropriateness of use by experienced horse show personnel associated with the function.
7. Extension cords or other electrical devices should be protected from breaks or pedestrians/equine (trip hazard). Electrical devices used with potential of coming in contact with water should be protected by a ground fault protector circuit.
8. Adult volunteers with little equine experience should be counseled by show management on specific duties.
9. Fire extinguishers should be accessible on the premise with locations clearly marked as appropriate.
10. The rescue squad should be available and/or on call. First aid facilities such as first aid kits and qualified first aid personnel should be provided if possible. Emergency numbers for

humans and horses should be readily available from event staff and /or posted on the premises.

11. Inclement weather or final decisions on weather emergencies should be discussed and procedures for handling the problem established prior to the event.
12. All participants should be aware of the need for accidental healthcare coverage.
13. Check well in advance with your local State Health Department office to conform to their requirements for serving food to the public. All food must be refrigerated appropriately - hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
14. Keep clear and concise records on any planning or work sessions related to the horse show.
15. Be aware of any mechanical equipment to be used such as golf carts. To the extent possible, confine the area in which they can operate. Drivers should be limited to those with a valid driver's license.
16. Maintain Emergency/Fire access lanes to all areas.
17. If dogs are allowed on the show grounds, they should be kept on a leash at all times.

4.6.2 Trail Ride Checklist

1. Review those applicable items in the checklist shown in Section 4.6.1.
2. Organizers of the trail ride should be familiar with the trail and its degree of difficulty. Although trail conditions can change unknowingly, youth events should not be held on trails recognized as hazardous or difficult.
3. Review trail etiquette with participants and any idiosyncrasies relating to the temperament, experience and training of any horse used in the trail ride.
4. Review with participants the trail to be ridden and any potential problem areas.
5. Ensure an appropriate ratio of riders to leaders is maintained which is influenced by the experience level of the riders. Experience level of youth, 18 or under, should be disclosed by the parent or legal guardian.
6. Tack should be in safe working condition and fitted to the horse and rider.
7. All trail rides must conform to the Virginia Tech policies as outlined in sections 4.1-4.5 with respect to helmet requirements, age, waivers, health history forms and volunteer registration.

4.6.3 Pony Ride Fund Raiser Checklist

1. Review those applicable items in the checklist show for Horse Shows and Trail Rides shown above.
2. Youth of Cloverbud age (4-Hers and non 4-Hers) can participate in pony rides to the extent that they are not in sole control of the horse (must be led by a person on the ground and utilize a side walker if appropriate).
3. No youth younger than 5 years of age may participate in a 4-H sponsored pony ride.
4. Mounting blocks used to mount the horse must be in good working condition and appropriate for the task to be undertaken.
5. All pony rides must conform to the Virginia Tech policies as outlined in sections 4.1-4.5 with respect to helmet requirements, age, waivers, health history forms and volunteer registration.

4.7 State Manual

A 4-H Horse Program Leader's Guide is available through Cooperative Extension Publications and provides valuable information on programming within 4-H for Equine activities. This guide should be consulted and followed where appropriate.