



HORSESONFILM
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**HORSESONFILM GUIDELINES
FOR THE SAFE USE OF HORSES
IN FILMED MEDIA**

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HORSESONFILM believes that all horses should be treated humanely throughout their lifespan.

We celebrate the special role that horses play in our families and our lives.

Horses appearing in film and television are testaments to the bond through their interaction with their trainers/handlers, cast and crew and ultimately through their effect on audiences.

HORSESONFILM mission is to protect these horses so that they are treated humanely with the respect and compassion they deserve.

The Guidelines For The Safe Use of Horses in Filmed Media are just that... Guidelines!

HORSESONFILM representatives work closely with Producers and The Animal Welfare Institute of New Zealand to facilitate safe, effective and efficient performances by horses on set.

HORSESONFILM works proactively and collaboratively with filmmakers beginning early in pre-production and during filming of the production.

HORSESONFILM will not allow any horse to be treated inhumanely to elicit a performance.

DURING FILMING...

HORSESONFILM recognizes that unique or unforeseen situations may arise that might require on-site judgement differing from these Guidelines. **HORSESONFILM** representatives will make that judgement in the interest of the safety and welfare of the horse.

As part of standard practice, production shall be responsible for notifying **HORSESONFILM** of any changes in horse action as soon as the changes are made.

Production shall provide **HORSESONFILM** representatives with two-way radios when on set.

HORSESONFILM representatives must be consulted and included in any and all safety meetings. Safety meetings will include all relevant cast and crew.

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1. HOUSING AND GENERAL CARE...

Sufficient paddocks, barns and/or pens must be made available so that horses from different herds and/or geographical regions can be kept separate.

When housing or filming horses in panel pens, panels must be 'horse friendly' and connected so that there are no gaps between panels that would allow any horse to get his/her leg, head or neck hung or caught in any gap. There should be no sharp edges or points in the pens and connecting devices such as bolts or slide bolts shall be positioned away from or on the outside of the pen.

The manner in which horses are housed will take into account their age, breed and sex.

During periods of extreme heat, horses will be provided adequate shade.

During periods of extreme cold and wet, horses will be provided with adequate rugs when not on set.

Horses must be provided with sufficient clean water both on and off set.

Reasonable and adequate overnight rest and shelter to protect horses from the elements will be provided.

Horses feed decisions shall take into consideration such as the horse's customary diet, changing climatic and working conditions.

Other than the designated cast members, only **HORSESONFILM** representatives may work with or ride horses on a production.

No cast member or extra shall be allowed to ride or work with an horse unless they have adequate riding skills and authorization by **HORSESONFILM**.

It is **HORSESONFILM** and the Producers responsibility to ensure that cast members obtain adequate training prior to filming.

All background extras required to ride on a production must first be auditioned by a **HORSESONFILM** representative to determine their riding ability. Only riders from the approved **HORSESONFILM** database may be hired. Production must provide adequate lead time for such demonstration and assessment prior to filming. **HORSESONFILM** will have final approval of the skills and knowledge of any rider.

Crew, cast and spectators should be discouraged from petting the horses. Never, under any circumstances, should anyone other than a **HORSESONFILM** representative be allowed to mount/ride or feed them.

It shall be the sole discretion of **HORSESONFILM** to make the decision regarding the use of spurs.

Horses should be trimmed/shod appropriately for the action required. The factors to be considered include the breed and size of horse, the action to be performed and the terrain on which they will be working.

Skid and hock boots should be used in downhill slides or rodeo-slide stops.

Whenever a large group of horses is used for a particular scene, especially when they are brought together from different areas, **HORSESONFILM** may inspect the horses.

Horses must be adequately trained, conditioned and prepped for use on a film set. **HORSESONFILM** has the jurisdiction to pull any horses deemed unfit for use.

For practical purposes, the use of mares is acceptable, but discouraged. No stallions shall be used without prior approval of **HORSESONFILM**.

Horses shall be, at a minimum, trained to halter and lead calmly and accept human handling without fear or stress. Horses must be accustomed to handling in order to prevent stress and accidents with other horses and humans.

When a scene calls for the filming of a 'herd' untrained horses can be used – provided the 'herd' is pre-existing, located on familiar terrain and controlled/moved by **HORSESONFILM** representatives.

Horses should not be left unattended.

Hitching rails shall be fastened in the ground in such a manner that the tugging of a frightened horse cannot pull loose. On set, hitching rails shall be bolted or fastened in a rigid manner.

In scenes where a horse will be required to run extensively, no pregnant or lactating mares, or horse under the age of two years, shall be utilized.

All equipment and tack shall be safe and serviceable. Before and after every use, all tack and harnesses must be thoroughly inspected for any damage or wear that could potentially cause injury to either the horse, rider, cast or crew.

HORSESONFILM support humane training methods.

No device, equipment or practice on any horse shall be used and/or administered that affects the horses gait or causes them to limp.

Prior to and after each day's use, all horse are to be thoroughly groomed, especially in the head, neck and saddle area and have their hooves picked.

Each horse will be thoroughly inspected for saddle and girth sores and other injuries after each use and at the end of the day. It is the responsibility of the **HORSESONFILM** representative to ensure that this is done. Horses with saddle and girth sores shall not be used until healed.

Lead ropes will not be allowed to drag.

Should a scene require a 'loose' horse with a dragging rope or reins, a breakaway mechanism must be utilized and demonstrated prior to filming.

2. COSTUMES, MAKEUP, RIGGING AND PROPS...

Costuming and/or props shall be made available to **HORSESONFILM** for inspection prior to filming. Horses shall be adequately conditioned and trained to wear or use all costumes or props. Costuming and/or props shall be comfortable, provide ease of movement and shall not restrict the horse's breathing or cause the horse to overheat. Consideration should be given to how easily the costume and/or prop can be removed in case of an emergency.

Props used in stunts, such as spurs, sabers, swords, spears, barbed wire or fences, should all be made of non-injurious material.

All horse rigging and equipment must be in good condition and appropriate for the body type, weight and size of the horse, as determined or agreed to by the **HORSESONFILM** representative.

Tie-downs and hobbles shall not be used on horses not properly trained to wear them. Horses shall not be tied or hobbled any longer than what is necessary to accomplish the shot.

Any colour dyes or makeup used on horses must be toxin-free and approved by the **HORSESONFILM** representative prior to filming.

3. STRENOUS HORSE ACTION

When filming intense action or when filming, temperatures rise – especially if humidity is present – production and **HORSESONFILM** representatives must recognize that horses are susceptible to three (3) serious conditions; dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Environmental temperature alone is a poor indicator of discomfort or stress. Humidity, airflow, length of exposure, terrain, breed, hair coat, age, weight and health of the horse all figure in the assessment of the conditions.

Any strenuous horse action including (but not limited to) chase or running scenes, must be staged to prevent overworking of the horses. Special care must be taken when working in high temperatures and humidity. This can be accomplished in the following ways: -

- By filming these scenes in early morning or late afternoon, when temperatures are lower
- By providing sufficient rest periods between takes
- By providing an abundant supply of water directly at the filming location to cool the horse
- By ensuring there are adequate numbers of **HORSESONFILM** representatives on hand to provide cooling to horses
- By providing a sufficient supply of backup horses so the horses can be rotated

Horses should receive ample water at the location and adequate rest periods equal to or greater than their working time.

To ensure horses received adequate rest time, horsemen shall stand down (dismount) between setups, saving the horses backs.

Sitting on the horses for long periods between filming will not be allowed.

Teams will be unhitched between long takes or a tongue prop will be used.

There will be no unnecessary riding or running horses whilst off camera.

4. HORSE ACTION

Only trained falling horses shall be used to perform horse falls; only trained jumping horses shall be used in jumping scenes and only trained rearing horses shall be used in rearing scenes. Rearing horses must not be pulled over backwards.

For running horse falls; the ground shall be prepared to cushion the horse's fall.

In determining the number of falls allowed, consideration will be given to how the ground is prepared, length of approach, condition and skill of the horse, method of fall and other adjacent action.

The ground should be softened either by spreading sand or other soft substances or by digging up the earth, making sure that all rocks and rough clods and any other potential harmful materials/debris are removed. The entrance and exit routes to the prepared horse fall areas must be checked for hazards as well.

When filming horses lying down, production must prepare the ground by make sure all rocks and other debris are removed. The ground should be softened by the use of sand or other soft substances and/or by digging up the ground.

Horse jumps or falls into water should not be more than six feet. Horses must be properly trained to perform these stunts. The water depth must be adequate to cushion the fall. Appropriate underwater footing must be provided and the exit pathway must all provide secure and stable footing.

In horse jumping scenes, the top rails of the jumps should be 'breakaway' or 'fall-away'.

For jumping, lie down and rearing scenes, the number of jumps/rears allowed and the duration of a lie down, will be dependent upon the action, the horse's skill and condition and other environmental factors.

Sliding or riding down sand banks or earth slides should be done only by experienced riders on experienced horses.

Saddle drags will only be accomplished by horses trained to do so.

Breakaway materials must be used in scenes where horses paw, strike or kick stationery scenery or props.

An adequate number of pick-up riders will be utilized during stampedes, charges, runaways, wagon crashes, riding, liberty work, herd and running scenes to maintain control of the situation at all times and to aid in the event of an emergency. The riders and their horses should be experienced and the horses should be in excellent condition.

Runaway wagons will be set up to ensure the horses will break free before the wagon crashes.

When moving large groups of horses, care should be taken to prevent stampedes. An adequate number of pick-up riders must be provided to control the set.

In stampede scenes, when a large number of horses are restricted to a certain path or enclosed area (such as a Western town), the following applies: -

- The streets must be watered down to prevent dust from restricting the vision of trailing horses.
- Hitching rails must be designed or attached without the use of nails, spikes or any material that can impale or lacerate should the rail become dislodged through contact
- Prior to the stampede, a **HORSESONFILM** representative shall inspect the area with the stunt co-ordinator

When any horse is used for a stampede scene occurring near any cliff, hill, knoll or other steep face of earth, the following applies: -

- Fencing or other devices and/or an adequate number of pickup riders must be positioned to easily retrieve any horse (s) that might stray from the herd being filmed
- Neither the horse (s) nor the pickup riders shall be allowed any closer than 75 feet from the edge of any cliff, hill, knoll or other steep face of earth
- At no time may any horse (s) be left unattended
- Adequate pickup riders must be positioned when placing or holding the herd in an area waiting to be filmed
- In the event that a helicopter or other aircraft is used to film the stampede, please refer to **AIRCRAFT SAFETY**

5. **AIRCRAFT SAFETY (helicopters, airplanes)**

Animals must be adequately conditioned to work in and around aircraft prior to filming. Should animals become stressed, they shall be removed from the filming area immediately.

The producer, **HORSESONFILM** representative, pilot and/or aerial co-ordinator shall work together to ensure the safety of the horses, cast and crew.

When filming in remote locations, **HORSESONFILM** should be included in location scouts pertaining to horse action.

The following are indicative safe distances whenever engine and rotors are running: -

- The rear of aircraft should be avoided at all times
- When an aircraft hovers or steadily flies directly above animals during filming, the aircraft shall not come closer than 100 feet
- When flying at other angles, the aircraft shall not come closer than 100 feet

When an aerial sequence is to be performed, all persons involved should be thoroughly briefed on any potential hazards or safety issues prior to filming.

Once airborne, no changes will be made that affect the horse action without notifying the producer and **HORSESONFILM** representative.

6. HARNESS / ARTILLERY SCENES

A driver or experienced **HORSESONFILM** representative will maintain direct, hands-on control of hitched teams at all times.

All horses in a hitched team must be of similar size and stature, and in good health and condition.

All harnesses must be in good condition, well fitted to the horse (s) used and appropriate for the work being performed. Adequate adjustment and fitting of the harness to the horses is necessary to reduce sores on necks from collars or of flanks from britching.

All apparatuses to be pulled (e.g. wagons, carriages, artillery pieces) must be in good working order: no rotten, cracked worn or missing parts or ungreased fittings.

A harnessed horse must never be left unattended. Horses shall never be unbridled while still hitched.

It is important to establish a safe working distance around a hitched team. This includes the sides and rear of the apparatus the horses are hitched to. **HORSESONFILM** suggests that the camera/insert cars maintain a safe distance of 25 feet around the entire hitch. Cameras/booms should keep a safe distance of 15 feet and should only be utilized with horses that have been trained to accept a boom/crane camera that moves into different positions during filming. Dry runs with camera/insert cars and cranes should be done to ensure horses are comfortable with the setup.

When a hitched horse is being reset or waiting for a take, it is important that all cast and crew stay back 25 feet from the team. No film crew personnel should approach a hitch without permission from the **HORSESONFILM** representative.

A tongue prop should be used whenever horses are harnessed and at rest – especially when any additional weight is added to the tongue.

When shooting intense action in harness (i.e. stunts or water crossings), horses should be hitched with quick release snaps or clevises to ensure the quick removal of a horse when necessary.

7. BREAKAWAY SCENES

In scenes with breakaway wagons, the number of horses in the hitch shall be limited to four; using more horses makes this action more dangerous

Distance the 'broken away' team has to run must be taken into consideration. The longer the distance, the more dangerous the action becomes. Prior approval of this action must be obtained by the **HORSESONFILM** representative.

Slides or drags are suggested for use on breakaway teams. When the hitch is broken away, the slide or drag keeps the traces in the proper position behind the horse, preventing the team from becoming entangled in the traces or getting hit.

Under no circumstances should a hitched horse be allowed to traverse water higher than its bottom line (stomach). A harness limits an horses head movement, preventing them from keeping their heads out of higher water.

When driving more than six horses, it is suggested that two **HORSESONFILM** representatives (drivers) or a brakeman be utilized.

Quarter straps should be utilized on all harnesses with britching any time harnessed horses will be cantering or performing action shots.

An adequate number of **HORSESONFILM** representatives (outriders) should be utilized at all times with harnessed horses. The horse ridden by an outrider should always be faster than the horses used in harness. As a general rule, there should be one outrider for each team in harness (i.e. for a 6-up, 3 outriders should be utilized) and a minimum of two outriders at all times.

HORSESONFILM representatives should be numerous enough to assist the driver during turns for resets and while waiting for action to begin. When needed, one **HORSESONFILM** Representative (Horse Wrangler) should hold each team by means of a lead rope or by the harness bridle until action is ready to begin.

8. ARTILLERY SCENES

Only an artillery harness designed for use in conjunction with the operations of pulling or towing artillery pieces may be used.

Horse gun sections should always have an **HORSESONFILM** representative (outrider), either in uniform on camera or a **HORSESONFILM** representative (wrangler) off camera, to help adjust harnesses or make repairs while the drivers stay mounted or hold their teams.

All activity during the movement of guns should be done in a walk or trot. **HORSESONFILM** representative (gunners) may ride the limber box at these gates. No **HORSESONFILM** representative (artillerymen) should be on the limber box when the team is at a canter or gallop.

If using heavy guns (3-inch ordinance guns or 12-pounders), a tractor or 4 X 4 should be available to haul the cannon back to the starting position to save the artillery horses for additional takes.

If the distance on each take is short, have the gun, limber, and team physically rolled backwards rather than make the team do large, repeated circles back to original position.

9. EXPLOSIVES / GUNFIRE

When firing pistols from horseback, the weapon shall be held at no less than a 45-degree angle to the horse's head. This will decrease the chances of powder flashes causing burns to the horse's corneas.

When firing pistols or carbines from the ground, the weapon shall not be pointed at a horse.

When firing any type of artillery piece around horses, quarter loads must be used. Though a horse may be accustomed to loud noises, there is still a danger of damage to a horse's ears from the percussive force of the ammunition.

Artillery pieces being fired must be a minimum of 25 feet from the nearest horse.

All mortar potholes must be filled after battle scenes if the hole is no longer necessary. This is to prevent any injury to horses that may be used in that same area for different scenes.

10. SABER / SWORD / LANCE FIGHTS

The use of sabers or lances while on horseback must be done with the utmost safety. **HORSESONFILM** encourages the use of rubber, plastic, or other "prop" sabers and swords, and balsa wood lances scored to break away. In the event real sabers must be used, all sabers should be dull. However, it should be kept in mind that they are still pointed on the tips. Therefore, all activity with the saber should be done with the blade in a vertical position.

All saber fighting should be done with an experienced horses accustomed to close body contact.

When engaged in hand-to-hand fighting with sabers, **HORSESONFILM** representatives shall at all times keep their sabers above the heads of both riders and horses.

No activity should occur with the saber blade below the head level of the horse, which could strike the horse in the head or ear area.

When sabers are in the carry position, the blade should be in a neutral position at all times. This means either straight up or resting in the hilt (handle), and they should rest on the right thigh of the cavalryman. This will stabilize the blade and minimize any lateral or horizontal positioning of the blade during a march or charge.

11. HORSE RACING SCENES

For scenes depicting horse racing, only experienced and trained horses shall be used.

For scenes depicting horse racing, a **HORSESONFILM** representative and/or licensed racehorse trainer will be utilized.

In the event of an accident or injury, **HORSESONFILM** representative (jockeys) will dismount immediately and await assistance.

When filming racing scenes, an adequate number of horses shall be on hand for use as backup horses, as racing puts great stress on their musculoskeletal system. The **HORSESONFILM** representative will have in place a racing schedule for each horse that takes into consideration the distance to be run.

HORSESONFILM shall be notified prior to filming and must approve of the racing schedule. Approval will depend on the distance to be run in each take, the frequency of runs, the track surface, the individual horse (age, health history), weights to be carried, and environmental conditions such as heat, cold, and rain. In the case of steeplechase or hurdling racing, the number, size, and design of fences should be carefully assessed.

Mares that are known to be pregnant shall not be raced at any time.

Racetracks and racing surfaces should be designed and maintained to reduce risk of injury. Particular attention shall be paid to crossings, uneven racing surfaces, and extremes in surface quality.

Participation in steeplechasing and hurdling shall be restricted to horses with demonstrated jumping ability.

HORSESONFILM does not condone the use of whips on horses. Whips may be used as props and the desired visual effect may be accomplished by simulating the action. At no time will a horse be whipped to run faster.

HORSESONFILM encourages the use of horses that have been trained to load easily into starting gates. Horses shall be prepared adequately so as to be familiar with loading procedures. Barriers should be properly designed and safe. Methods used to load horses into starting gates should be limited to encouraging the horse without causing harm or fear.

12. **RODEO SCENES**

All horses used for rodeo scenes must be controllable and conditioned to the work they will be doing, as well as to the environment in which they will be performing (e.g., crowds, arenas, chutes, cameras and other film equipment).

All horses in riding events must have performed in at least one prior rodeo as a bucking horse before being filmed. No completely wild horse shall be used in rodeo scenes

Rodeo events must be filmed in a manner consistent with normal rodeo practices.

All horses used in filming rodeo scenes shall be easily identified at all times with a numbering or other type of identification system, such as halters, bands, or tags with names or identification numbers.

Should a horse become sick or injured between the time it is scheduled to be used, that horse shall not be used.

HORSESONFILM representatives may declare any particular horse unsatisfactory and shall eliminate such horse (s) from filming.

Injury During Rodeo Filming: The **HORSESONFILM** representative has the right to remove any horse that has become injured from filming.

No Stimulants or Hypnotics: No stimulants or hypnotics may be given to any horse used for contest purposes or scenes.

Acclimating Horses: All timed-event stock shall be run through event chutes and through the arena prior to the start of filming.

Removal of Horses After Competition: Horses must be removed from the arena after each filmed competition is completed, unless the horse is necessary for use in the background to complete the scene.

Construction of Chutes: Chutes must be constructed to prevent injury to the horse. Maintenance personnel and equipment shall be available at chutes to assist in removal of any horse should it become necessary.

Horses Excessively Excited in Chute: Any horse that becomes excessively excited or in any way appears to be in danger of injuring itself must be immediately released from the chute.

No Sharp Objects in Cinch, Saddle, Girth or Flank Straps:
No sharp or cutting objects in cinch, saddle girth, or flank straps shall be permitted. Flank straps used for horses must be either sheepskin or neoprene-lined, and shall be of the quick-release type. Sheepskin or neoprene-lined flank straps shall be placed on the horse so the lined portion is over both flanks of the horse.

Prods and Other Artificial Stimuli: Electric prods may NOT be used for the purpose of making a horse perform.

Unsafe Arena Conditions: If the arena conditions, or other area where the rodeo action will take place, are deemed at any time to be unsafe by **HORSESONFILM** representative, competition may be stopped until which time the conditions are deemed satisfactory by the **HORSESONFILM** representative.

Conditions of Arena: The arena must be free of rocks, holes, and unnecessary obstacles.

Bareback Riding. Cinches and Latigos: Cinches on the bareback riggings shall be made of mohair or neoprene and shall be at least eight inches in width at the center, but must be tapered to accommodate cinch "D" rings. Latigos must be of leather only.

Bareback Pads: Required bareback pads shall completely cover the underside of the rigging and extend a full two inches behind the rigging.

Pads Must Cover Underside of Rigging: Pads used under riggings must be leather-covered on both sides. No hair pads will be allowed. Only a high-density foam pad at least 3/4-inch thick will be allowed. In addition, the pad must have 3/19-inch-thick leather that covers the handlebars and extends at least 1/2-inch on either side of the handlebars.

Lining for Timed Event Boxes: In order to protect the horse, the back and side opposite the timed event chute of timed event boxes shall either have a lower rail that is less than three feet above ground level and have no obstruction in the arena from the ground level up to the lower rail, or be lined from the ground level up to a minimum of three feet high with a solid panel. Box pads are likewise required for each timed event box.