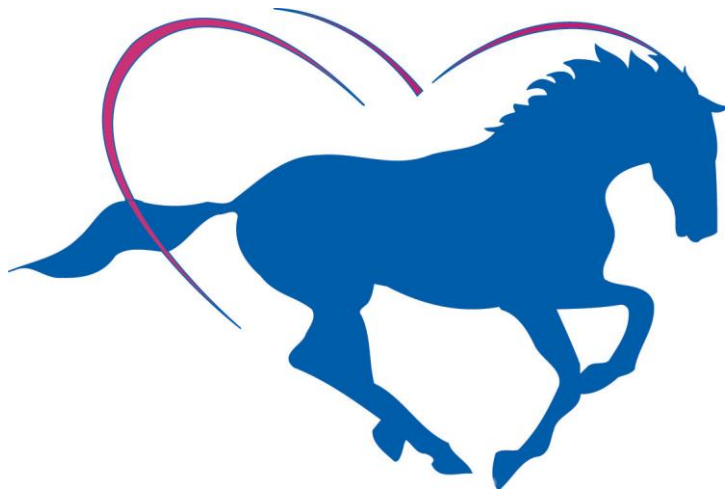


Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.

Revised November 2014



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Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



Table of Contents

Welcome	2
About PATH Intl.	3
About MTR	3
Mission	
Vision	
Programs and Services	
Volunteer Program Information	4-7
Volunteer Requirements	
Volunteer Training	
Volunteer Job Descriptions	
Volunteers with Disabilities	
Volunteer Appreciation and Incentive Program	
Volunteer Procedures, Policies, & Guidelines	8-11
Volunteer Sign In/Out	
Program Closures and Lesson Cancellations	
Volunteer Commitment	
Volunteer Cancellations	
Reassignment and Termination Policy	
Volunteer Scheduling	
Confidentiality Policy	
Communication and Questions	
Name Badges	
Clothing Policy	
Food & Refreshments	
Working with a Special Needs Population	
MTR Operations & Policies	12-17
Program Operations	
MTR Farm Rules	
General Rules	
Horse Rules	
Facility Rules	
MTR's Equine Therapists	
MTR Social Media Policy	
Risk Management	
Emergency Procedures	
Emergency Dismount	
Fallen Riders, Medical Emergencies, Accidents & Injuries	
Calling for Emergency Medical Assistance	
Location of First Aid Kits	
Fire Procedure	
Tornado, Hurricane, or Severe Thunderstorm Procedure	
Your First Day!	18



Volunteer Training Manual **Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.**



Welcome!

Thank you for volunteering at Maryland Therapeutic Riding (MTR)! We are very glad to see you! Volunteers are critical to the success of MTR. We would not be able to provide a high quality program without you and we rely on you to help our program operate as safely as possible.

We hope your experience at MTR will bring you satisfaction, personal growth, and fulfillment. Your spirit of volunteerism is a valuable asset and “thank you” is just not enough to express our appreciation for your time and talents.

We welcome you as a member of the team! Please do not hesitate to share your opinions and questions with us to help our volunteer program be an enriching experience for you.

Contact Information

410-923-6800 (main)
410-923-1432 (fax)
volunteer@mtrinc.org



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



About PATH Intl.

PATH International (PATH Intl.) was founded in 1969 as the North America Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) to encourage best practices in the field of Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) through accreditation, instructor certification, and networking. PATH Intl. consists of over 850 member centers worldwide. Through these programs more than 40,000 individuals with disabilities benefit from activities, which include therapeutic riding, hippotherapy, equine assisted learning, carriage driving, interactive vaulting, and competition.

About MTR

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc. (MTR) was founded in May 1996 by Naomi Parry and is a PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center. MTR serves more than 200 clients each year with a wide range of physical, emotional and cognitive disabilities.

Mission

Connecting humans and horses in a healing environment, Maryland Therapeutic Riding (MTR) helps people to conquer physical, developmental and emotional challenges to achieve their full potential.

Vision

Maryland Therapeutic Riding (MTR) continually strives to provide life-changing experiences that empower the mind, strengthen the body and lift the spirit.

Programs & Services

Therapeutic Riding: At the core of the MTR mission is the therapeutic riding lesson program. PATH Intl. certified therapeutic riding instructors conduct lessons to teach adapted riding skills. The rider receives physical, cognitive, and emotional benefits in addition to learning how to ride with the goal of maximum independence. Physical benefits of therapeutic riding include improved muscle tone, balance, posture, coordination, and motor development. Therapeutic riding offers sport, recreational, and educational benefits while promoting emotional and psychological well-being, confidence, and communication skills.

Hippotherapy: Hippotherapy refers to the use of a horse as a treatment tool by a licensed Occupational, Physical, or Speech and Language therapist to address impairments and functional limitations in patients with neuromusculoskeletal dysfunction. Research has shown improvements in dynamic postural control, balance, mobility, and function. Hippotherapy is also used to improve sensory processing and achieve psychological, cognitive, behavioral, and communication outcomes. Unlike therapeutic riding, specific riding skills are not taught during a hippotherapy session. Rather, a foundation is established to improve neurological and physical function and sensory processing. This foundation can be generalized to benefit a wide range of daily activities.

Equine Learning: This program provides unmounted horsemanship lessons for individuals interested in learning skills related to horse health and care, horse handling, barn maintenance and equine body language. This program allows participants to form a unique bond with the horse by learning how to communicate and work with the horse on the ground.

Instructor-In-Training Program: MTR's Instructor in Training (IIT) program is designed to assist candidates in completing the PATH Intl. Registered Instructor Certification criteria. The IIT program



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



also provides mentoring opportunities for individuals interested in pursuing PATH Intl. Advanced Certification. Candidates have the opportunity to train under all instructors so they can have a wide exposure to many different teaching styles and techniques, as well as exposure to instructing riders with diverse types of disabilities. MTR Instructors and Staff dedicate their time, knowledge, and years of experience to each Instructor Candidate. For more information, please contact the Head Instructor.

Internships: Earn school credits while learning about all aspects of the therapeutic riding industry with PATH Intl. Master and Advanced Instructors as mentors. Internships are geared toward college students with strong horsemanship skills. Internship applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. Contact the Volunteer Manager for more information.

Volunteer Program Information

Volunteer Requirements

1. Due to insurance regulations and our PATH Intl. center accreditation standards, all volunteers must be at least 14 years old. **No exceptions to this policy are possible.**
2. Volunteers are expected to demonstrate commitment, punctuality, and reliability. It is preferred that volunteers are available a minimum of 2 hours per week for the duration of a session. Sessions are typically 8-10 weeks. Volunteer assignments and schedules are based on interest, experience, and availability.
3. Volunteer Application and Release forms must be completed and returned to MTR. Volunteer paperwork also must be updated annually to comply with PATH Intl. standards for accreditation. Annual updates are available for completion at the end of the year, and also must be completed when a past volunteer is reinstated to the program.
4. Volunteers must attend the trainings provided by MTR for the role they select.
5. Volunteering may involve moderate physical activity and working outside in varying weather conditions. Please be sure you are comfortable with the conditions of the role you select.
6. Volunteers must be able to work independently with minimal staff supervision.
7. Volunteers must have a positive attitude and be able to adapt to change and be flexible.
8. Volunteers must possess the ability to follow directions and take instruction.
9. Because of the nature of the service provided, MTR reserves the right to make the final determination as to the appropriateness of volunteers for our organization.
10. Due to insurance requirements, the nature of the service provided by MTR and the population served, it is MTR's policy that potential volunteers may not be accepted into the program that have been charged with a crime within the last 5 years.

Volunteer Training

MTR provides a mandatory initial Volunteer Orientation and Training session for all new volunteers. At this orientation session volunteers will be introduced to MTR, our policies and procedures, how to prepare horses for lessons, and sidewalker training. Volunteers are encouraged to attend additional trainings throughout the year to gain more experience and practice their skills. Informational handouts are available on the website, and volunteers are encouraged to check out materials from the MTR Library.



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



Volunteer Job Descriptions

Lesson Program Volunteers: To assist with lessons, volunteers must be able to walk for an hour on uneven surfaces and jog short distances. Lesson program volunteers have additional opportunities to assist with PATH Intl. and AHA workshops held throughout the year.

- **Horse Leaders** are responsible for the care of the horse before, during, and after the lesson. Therefore, they should arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the lesson and anticipate staying 15 minutes afterward. This includes grooming, tacking, and warming up prior to the start of each lesson. Horse Leaders help ensure the safety of horse and rider during the lesson. After the lesson, horse leaders bring the horse back to the barn, untack, groom, and turn out to pasture if needed. Volunteers who wish to serve as Horse Leaders must attend and pass a mandatory Horse Leader Training. Prior to attending the training, potential horse leaders must possess a competent working knowledge and have experience working with horses to understand equine behavior and to demonstrate strong horse handling skills. Volunteers with little or no previous horse experience may attend Horse Handling and Horse Leader Prep trainings to work toward gaining the skills and experience necessary for this role. Please refer to the Horse Leader Training handout for more information.
- **Sidewalkers** walk beside the horse in lessons and provide physical and/or emotional support to the rider. They help the rider to successfully reach their lesson goals, as well as ensure rider safety before, during, and after the lesson. Sidewalkers must be able to hold their arm above shoulder height and support a modest amount of weight. Please refer to the Sidewalker Training handout for more information about this role.
- **Ring Assistants** are responsible for the care of the horse before and after the lesson, getting to and from the arena, and holding for mounting and dismounting. Therefore, they should arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the lesson and anticipate staying 15 minutes afterward. This includes grooming, tacking, and warming up prior to the start of each lesson. Volunteers who wish to serve as Ring Assistants are encouraged to attend Horse Leader Training and may begin the role once approved by the Volunteer Manager.
- **Equine Learning Assistants** help instructors facilitate the teaching of horsemanship skills in unmounted Equine Learning lessons. Volunteers may be eligible after assisting in one session as a horse leader or barn volunteer at the recommendation of the Volunteer Manager.

Barn Volunteers: Volunteers work directly with Barn Staff to assist with horse care, grooming, feeding, and barn chores. While not the most glamorous job at MTR, these volunteers are essential for the care and safety of our very important horses. Please be sure to wear your name badge and touch base with Barn Staff when you arrive and before you leave. Communicate any questions and concerns regarding the horses or your role to Barn Staff or the Volunteer Manager. Please refer to the Horse Care and Handling handout for more information about this role.

*Barn Volunteers scheduled while lessons are occurring are “standby” sidewalkers; where they may be called upon to assist as a sidewalker if the lesson is shorthanded. If your preference is to be a Barn Volunteer *only*, be sure to communicate that to the Volunteer Manager.



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



Horse Buddies: Each horse at MTR is paired with a “Horse Buddy” volunteer to provide additional grooming and care of their belongings. Horse Buddy roles are reserved for long-term, dedicated volunteers who show an exemplary commitment to the program. Buddies are expected to commit to 1-2 hours a week outside of regular volunteer duties and are encouraged to schedule their buddy time for the same day and time each week. Interested applicants should contact the Equine Manager for more details. In order to be considered for a buddy position, volunteers must have completed the following criteria:

- Completed Volunteer Orientation & volunteered at least 1 year with a good history of attendance
- Completed Horse Handling Training
- Completed and passed Horse Leader Training
- Completed Horse Buddy Application
- Completed Horse Buddy Training

Facility Volunteers: Volunteers help with gardening, general maintenance, repairs and improvements to the facility.

Office Volunteers: Volunteers assist with general office support (data entry, reception, etc.).

Special Events Volunteers: Volunteers serve on event committees and assist with various fundraising events held throughout the year to benefit MTR.

Special Skills Volunteers: Many volunteers come with special skills and talents such as photography, computer knowledge, grant writing, etc. and we encourage you to share those skills with us.

Mentor Volunteers: This leadership position is reserved for individuals who demonstrate an exemplary commitment to the program and play a major role in supporting new incoming volunteers to the program. To learn more about becoming a Mentor Volunteer, contact the Volunteer Manager.

Mentor Volunteer Criteria:

- Consistent volunteer service for 1 year
- Attend and pass Horse Leader Training
- Able to lead any horse, even most challenging
- Eager to share information & wisdom in a positive manner, and ability to effectively teach others
- Positive, friendly, patient, flexible, responsible, and mature
- Follow all Staff directions and accepts suggestions
- Demonstrate the ability to assist with grooming, tacking, basic horse handling and barn chores
- Works as a team member, following all MTR guidelines & demonstrating a collaborative attitude
- Willing to continue learning by attending MTR trainings and workshops
- Commit to a regular session schedule
- Knowledgeable of MTR’s policies and procedures
- All staff feel volunteer is safe and effective in their role

Volunteers with Disabilities

Volunteer opportunities for individuals with disabilities are available on a case-by-case basis. Volunteer service by these individuals cannot interfere with the delivery of program services. To ensure that volunteering is a safe and enjoyable experience, volunteers with disabilities that require additional support and supervision must be accompanied by an aid. Service begins with a 2-week trial period to ensure suitability of the role.



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



Volunteer Appreciation and Incentive Program

1. Free Ongoing Trainings

Horse care and handling, horse leading, hippotherapy, tack and equipment

2. Free Educational Workshops

Horse Behavior, equine health, disabilities

3. Discounted Professional Workshops

PATH Workshop and Certification and AHA Workshops

4. Volunteer Appreciation Week & Picnic

MTR participates in the annual recognition of National Volunteer Week each spring. Riders, parents, staff and all those who have worked with and are supported by MTR volunteers are encouraged to express their appreciation throughout the week. The week concludes with a Volunteer Picnic for volunteers and their families.

5. Free Introductory Riding Lessons, Trail Rides, & Ground Lessons

Volunteers who demonstrate a commitment to their service to MTR are eligible for a free introductory riding lesson, trail ride, or ground lesson to be redeemed during a specified time of Break Week. Annual volunteer application paperwork must be up to date to participate. Volunteers must weigh less than 200 lbs to ride. Volunteers are contacted via email to arrange their ride time.

How to qualify:

- a. Maintain perfect attendance throughout a full-length session (minimum 2 hrs per week)
- b. Serve 50+ hours total during a full-length session.
- c. Each time a volunteer covers a shift as a substitute they will be entered for a chance to win a free incentive.

**Incentives are available following a full-length session only (minimum 8 weeks)*



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



Volunteer Procedures, Policies, & Guidelines

Volunteer Sign In/Out

Upon arrival, volunteers are required to sign in, put on their name badge, and check the daily schedule for their assignment. At the end of their service, name badges are returned and volunteers sign out. Recording attendance is necessary for awarding volunteer riding incentives, writing recommendations for schools and employers, applying for grants, board reports, and most importantly to be accountable for all individuals on the property in the event of an emergency. Volunteers may track their own volunteer hours if desired. Please allow up to 5 days to fulfill requests for a record of service or written letter of recommendation.

Program Closures and Lesson Cancellations

In the event that MTR must close due to inclement weather, rider cancellations, or other circumstances, we will make every attempt to notify volunteers at least two hours in advance to their scheduled volunteer time. MTR reserves the right to cancel lessons based on the availability of instructors, volunteers, and/or horses. Further, any factor or situation considered by MTR staff to be a threat to the safety of students, volunteers, staff, or horses is reason for cancellation.

Weather Cancellation Policy

Lessons will be cancelled if any of the following conditions occur:

- Anne Arundel Public Schools are cancelled
- The high temperature or wind chill for the day is 25 degrees or lower
- The high temperature or heat index for the day is 95 degrees or higher
- The following conditions exist one hour prior to lesson time:
 - Winds exceeding 25 MPH
 - Tornado warnings, severe rain, hail, snow, or thunderstorms
 - Hazardous driving conditions
- Arenas are unsafe due to melting snow on the roof or poor footing

*In the event of extended closures, lessons will be cancelled until the Equine Manager determines the suitability of the horses to return to work.

Please note: When lessons are cancelled, the barn will close at 5:30pm. Barn Volunteers are still needed in the event of weather-related cancellations to care for our very special horses, *except in the case of unsafe driving conditions*. Our volunteers come from near and far, so if driving is hazardous in your area, please do not feel obligated to attend your regularly scheduled volunteer shift.

In the event that a severe weather emergency prevents a Barn Staff member from reporting to the farm, *all volunteers will be cancelled*. A staff member lives on site and will be able to tend to the horses during a severe weather emergency.

When in doubt about whether or not to attend your volunteer shift you may call 410-923-6800; email volunteer@mtrinc.org; or check messages on MTR Facebook & Twitter.



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



Volunteer Commitment

Volunteer service is critical in serving our participants and horses. Our horses and riders depend on you and volunteer attendance is crucial to the success and safety of our programs. MTR requests that volunteers be willing to commit to a minimum of two hours per week (same day and time) for the length of a session to ensure we have the support necessary to hold lessons and provide consistency for the riders. The smooth operation of our program depends on the commitment and reliability of our volunteers.

Excessive absences, defined as 3 times within a given session, may be grounds for reassignment or dismissal at the discretion of the Volunteer Manager. MTR's relationship with its volunteers is of utmost importance; therefore, volunteers will be given an opportunity to discuss their attendance if corrective action is needed.

Volunteer Cancellations

When you commit to your volunteer role, your support is truly needed to serve our riders and care for our very special horses. Please reserve canceling your scheduled day and time for emergencies only. If you must cancel, please call MTR (410-923-6800) as soon as possible so a substitute may be found. If possible, you may make up for your absence by volunteering on another day.

Reassignment and Termination Policy

MTR policies have been determined to serve the best interest of the entire MTR community. Safety and respect for participants, volunteers, staff, and horses are of utmost importance in providing a high quality program, and are the primary reasons for the strict adherence to these policies and procedures.

Volunteers who are not able to perform their volunteer role, or maintain a reasonable level of commitment, or fail to observe the policies and procedures of the program will be given an opportunity to discuss the situation that is perceived to be in violation of the MTR policies and may be provided with job re-assignment. Because of the nature of the service provided, MTR reserves the right to make the final determination as to the appropriateness of volunteers for our organization and may determine that it is in the best interest of the program to terminate a volunteer's involvement with the program.

Volunteer Scheduling

Volunteer assignments and schedules are based on interest, experience, and availability. Volunteers must confirm their shift each session. Volunteers continuing service from the prior session are given precedence for the coming session to remain in their shift. The program schedule may vary slightly from session to session, causing a change in horses, riders, and staff that are scheduled at a given time. We appreciate your flexibility and willingness to adapt to such changes.

Our program faces various operational and capacity limitations which in turn limit the number of volunteer shifts available at any given time. Please do not arrive at a time you are not scheduled. Limited numbers of volunteers are scheduled to ensure that everyone has a safe, valuable, and rewarding experience at the farm. If a volunteer's preferred role or time is not available, they will be placed on the Wait List until there is an opening. Volunteers on the Wait List are encouraged to continue their service by attending workshops, helping with special events, and picking up shifts as a substitute. Thank you for your patience and willingness to grow with us!



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



Confidentiality Policy

Any information in regards to the participants of MTR including: riders, volunteers, horses, and personnel shall remain privileged and confidential. This information may include, but is not limited to, any medical, social, referral, personal, and/or financial information. Information concerning students and horses will be shared with volunteers on a need to know basis. If you have a concern or question regarding a rider or horse, please communicate directly and privately with the involved Instructor, Therapist or Staff Member and remember to maintain confidentiality of the issue. Disclosure of any confidential information shall not be released to anyone not associated with MTR. Volunteers must seek staff permission prior to taking any pictures or videos.

Communication and Questions

While you are volunteering...

If at any time, you are unclear regarding your volunteer role or responsibilities, please direct questions to the Volunteer Manager, an instructor, or staff member. During lessons, the instructor is responsible for each rider, horse, and volunteer in the lesson. All directions from the instructor should be followed including the assignment of riders, horses and volunteers, mounts/dismounts and lesson structure. For the safety of all, it is crucial to adhere to the instructor's decisions. In the barn, Barn Staff is responsible for each horse and volunteer. All directions from the Barn Staff should be followed including preparation of the horse for lessons, assignment of volunteers, and tasks to be completed. Always ask if you are unsure of anything or do not feel comfortable completing a task.

Volunteer Lounge

Check the bulletin board and sign-in table for news, messages, and special treats!

Email

Monthly newsletters and weekly substitute requests are distributed via email. *The best way to reach the Volunteer Manager is via email.* Please be sure to notify the Volunteer Manager if your email address changes so you do not miss any important correspondence.

Text

MTR's Text Message Alert System is used to notify volunteers in the event of cancellations. Our hope is that the news will travel to you faster by text message so you will have more notice! We will not send you text messages without your consent. To opt-in to the Text Message Alert System, send a text message containing your First and Last Name to 410-861-0MTR (410-861-0687). We will confirm receipt of your text message and add you to the address book.

Name Badges

Different name badge colors are assigned depending on the role of the volunteer.

Red – Mentor Volunteer

Green – Horse Leader

Blue – Barn Volunteer, Sidewalker, Facility Volunteer, Office Volunteer

**Horse Sticker on name badge denotes exclusion from sidewalking*



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



Clothing Policy

Volunteers should dress appropriately for the weather, and in clothing that does not restrict movement or vision. All volunteers *must* wear protective footwear; a leather boot is recommended or a close-toed shoe that will not hold sand from the arena. Please keep in mind MTR is a professional organization and may often have unannounced visits or media opportunities. MTR logo merchandise may be purchased in our online store. A portion of proceeds directly supports our programs: <http://mdtherapeuticriding.logosportswear.com>

Please respect the following guidelines:

- No open-toed shoes of any style
- No dangling jewelry
- No perfume (attracts bugs/some participants may have allergies)
- No tank tops/halter tops/tube tops
- Modest shorts are permitted, but not recommended due to biting insects
- No obscene logos

Food and Refreshments

MTR provides a water cooler, soda machine, and refrigerator to volunteers. We often have snacks available, but cannot guarantee additional refreshments. Volunteers are welcome to bring food and drinks to MTR. Please label any items put in the refrigerator with your name and date.

Working with a Special-Needs Population

Working with people who have special needs may be a new experience for some volunteers. Please take time to know your participant and direct questions to the instructors. Often, a major barrier for people with special needs is not the disability itself, but the lack of awareness and knowledge by others. Above all, please treat individuals with respect, being considerate and sensitive to their needs.

Wheelchair Etiquette: Many people are unsure how to act when meeting someone in a wheelchair. Please try to keep the following in mind. Always ask the wheelchair user if they would like assistance before you help; be respectful - people's wheelchairs are an extension of their body space. Don't hang or lean on them unless you have permission; and speak directly - be careful not to exclude the wheelchair user from conversations. If the conversation lasts more than a few minutes, sit or kneel to get yourself on the same level as the wheelchair.

General Guidelines for Working with Individuals with Hearing/Language

Impairment: Try to maintain good eye contact, looking at the individual when speaking to him/her. Speak clearly, avoid talking slowly or over-emphasizing words and avoid long verbal instructions/conversation. Become familiar with hand gestures/body positions that the participant may be using to represent words and concepts. Direct questions to your instructor. Provide assistance with communication when needed (i.e., visual cues, gestures, etc). Alert the Instructor if the participant is having difficulty with hearing aid (i.e., ringing).

Escorting an Individual with a Visual

Impairment: If an individual with a visual impairment looks like they need assistance, please ask first if help is needed. Remember that they may only need verbal direction/cues. If physical assistance is needed, allow the individual to hold onto your arm above the elbow and walk one-half step ahead. The individual may also have a specific way that they prefer to have assistance. Repeat/verbalize information that may be written/posted. If you're uncertain of what to do, ask your instructor how you can be of further assistance.

Non-Verbal or Limited Verbal Expression:

Many of our participants are non-verbal or limited in their verbal expression. To enhance communication with these individuals, instructors and volunteers may reinforce requests and directions with basic American Sign Language (ASL).



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



MTR Operations & Policies

Program Operations

MTR conducts lessons year-round except on Sundays and for most major holidays. Volunteers are still needed on days without lessons to help care for the horses. Each program session typically runs for the duration of 9 weeks, followed by a make-up week and break week. No lessons occur during break week, but barn volunteers are still needed to care for the horses.

MTR Farm Rules

General Rules

- Volunteers should always follow the direction of the supervising Barn Staff member.
- Excessive noise or commotion in or around the stable or riding arena is not permitted.
- All children must be kept under the supervision of an adult at all times.
- Appropriate footwear should be worn around the horses and farm. Sandals/open toed shoes are not permitted.
- The barn and grounds should be kept neat & orderly at all times. Unused equipment must be kept in its proper place. Aisles should be kept clear of wheelbarrows, pitchforks, etc.
- Manure should be removed from aisle way or around the stable immediately.
- Visitors are welcome with prior approval by the Volunteer Manager outside of your volunteer shift hours. All visitors must sign a release of liability.
- Visitors/riders/parents should not enter the barn unless they have the express permission of a staff member – they should be supervised at ALL times.
- Cell phones and car alarms must be turned off as they disrupt lessons and startle horses.
- The consumption of alcohol prior to and/or while at MTR is prohibited, except for events approved by MTR. The use of illegal substances prior to and/or while at MTR is strictly prohibited.
- Please refrain from offering food or other gifts to participants without permission as they may have a medical condition such as food allergies, diabetes, etc.
- Do not perform a volunteer role you have not yet been trained for.

Horse Rules

- No changes to horse's equipment, appearance, feeding or exercise program without the direct approval of the equine manager.
- NO TREATS ARE PERMITTED TO BE GIVEN TO ANY HORSE AT ANY TIME. Treats may be given to the Equine Manager to determine suitability to add to a horse's meal.
- If you see any injury or abnormality on any horse, please notify a staff member immediately.
- Do not enter stalls or fields that contain horses unless you have been asked to do so by a staff member.



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



Facility Rules

- NO SMOKING anywhere onsite.
- No dogs anywhere on the property, especially not left unattended in cars.
- Keep all automobiles in designated parking areas.
- Keep all driveways clear at all times. Driveways are also used as fire lanes.
- Keep all gates closed and latched unless otherwise specified.
- Hay shed, pastures, stalls and farm equipment are out of bounds unless accompanied or invited by a staff member. Volunteers should follow the direction of the supervising Barn Staff member.
- If you notice a broken fence, gate or anything out of the ordinary on the grounds, notify the staff immediately.
- The tack room, medicine cabinet & offices must be locked when closing the barn at night.
- Individuals should call “door” prior to entering the observation or riding doors of the indoor arena if there are horses in the arena.
- Volunteers are not permitted to drive the tractor.

Golf Cart Rules

1. No one under the age of 16 or without a driver’s license is permitted to drive the golf cart unless given permission from a staff member.
2. When driving anywhere on the property speed limit must not exceed 5 mph.
3. Always use caution when driving in and out of paddocks. Make sure there are no horses near the gate before opening and make sure the gate is opened wide for the golf cart to have enough clearance to pass.
4. Keep a safe distance from horses at all times. Never drive up behind a horse.
5. Always look behind you when backing up. Do not rely on the backing signal to warn others.
6. When approaching a horse and rider anywhere on the farm, stop and wait for them to pass you. If they give you the OK to pass, drive slowly and quietly.
7. When driving the golf cart into the indoor arena when activity is taking place, always stop before the entrance, get out of the golf cart, and make sure it is OK to bring golf cart into the arena.
8. When parking the golf cart turn the key to the off position. This will help preserve the battery life.
9. Only 2 people may ride in the golf cart at one time.

Farm Truck Rules

1. Volunteers must have a valid driver’s license, approval of the Volunteer Manager, and a signed release of liability for operating the truck.
2. When driving anywhere on the property the speed limit must not exceed 5 mph.
3. Always use caution when driving in and out of paddocks. Make sure there are no horses near the gate before opening and make sure the gate is opened wide for the truck to have enough clearance to pass. Bring a passenger to assist with the gates when horses are in the fields.
4. Keep a safe distance from horses at all times. Never drive up behind a horse.
5. Always look behind you when backing up.
6. When approaching a horse and rider anywhere on the farm, stop and wait for them to pass you. If they give you the OK to pass, drive slowly and quietly.
7. When parking the truck close all windows and doors. Remove the key and return it to the barn aisle lock box.
8. No passengers are allowed in the truck bed at any time.
9. The truck is intended for farm use only. It may not be taken off the property.



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



MTR's Equine Therapists

Prior to acceptance into MTR's program, horses are extensively evaluated by the Equine Manager. MTR only accepts gentle, sound horses. Each horse receives high quality care and is utilized in compliance with PATH Intl. Standards. Please direct additional questions about our herd to the Equine Manager.

The Horse Champion Club is a giving club that offers donors benefits that include individualized horse interaction. It is a two year commitment of \$5,000 for a total of \$10,000. Giving at the Horse Champion level allows MTR the ability to recruit and purchase horses. In addition, this level of commitment helps to ensure the long term care and unexpected medical costs of horse ownership. This club is critical to the expansion of the herd and ultimately meeting MTR's ability to serve more riders throughout the community. It is our goal to have a Horse Buddy and Horse Champion for each member of the herd. This team of horse specialists, working together to provide additional love and attention for each member of the herd, will assure the highest level of care for MTR's most precious resource. Contact the Development Director for more details.

MTR Social Media Policy

- Facebook.com/MTRiding
- Twitter.com/MTRiding

Social media platforms are used to promote MTR's mission and share information related to its programs, operations, needs and events. MTR reserves the right to monitor its sites for inappropriate messages or misuse and remove offending material at our discretion. Inappropriate use of MTR sites includes, but is not limited to, posting spam, unauthorized advertising, offensive statements, inaccurate information, foul language, and irrelevant, hurtful or unconstructive criticism of MTR, the MTR family, or the greater therapeutic horsemanship community. Postings on MTR social media sites constitutes permission to use comments, photos, and videos (provided they do not violate privacy policy) in both online and offline venues, including but not limited to our website, social media platforms, presentations to supporters, brochures, direct mail, and publications.

Social Media Guidelines:

1. The MTR Team will monitor our social media sites daily to ensure that cases of exploitation or misuse are dealt with promptly.
2. MTR staff will respond to user feedback in a timely manner, directing inquiries to the appropriate staff member to follow-up.
3. MTR will acknowledge mistakes when they are made and address them in a timely and open manner with an eye toward continuous improvement.
4. MTR will correct inaccurate information when it is posted on one of our sites.
5. MTR will remove postings on MTR social media sites that purposely or inadvertently violate our riders' rights to privacy.
6. We will remove vulgar or inflammatory postings.
7. MTR will review postings to ensure that they do not violate our riders' privacy and that they have consented to release of photos or other audiovisual material depicting them. If they have not consented, the images will be removed.
8. We will remove postings that represent advertising for products or services not associated with MTR.
9. We will remove negative postings on MTR social media sites about competitors.
10. MTR will respect copyright restrictions in what is posted on our sites, ensuring where possible that sources for information, photos, and thoughts are cited properly.
11. Postings, including photos and videos, on MTR social media sites become part of the public domain and are subject to exchange and sharing.



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



Risk Management

Volunteers are responsible for knowing and following all safety rules, emergency policies and procedures as indicated, supporting all efforts to promote safe working conditions, making full use of safety equipment, immediately reporting any unsafe working conditions or behaviors, and knowing the location of first aid kits, fire extinguishers, emergency exits and emergency plans.

Emergency Procedures

Policies and procedures are put in place and expected to be followed for the safety and well-being of participants, staff, volunteers and guests of any and all MTR programs and facilities. When working with horses, as much as we care and love them, a human's life must ALWAYS come first. It is of utmost importance to remain calm, reassure riders, and take direction for MTR staff and instructors. MTR staff are responsible for managing the emergency and applying any first aid required. Volunteers may be called upon to assist.

Emergency Dismount

During riding sessions, the instructor performs rider mounts and dismounts. However, in certain situations, the instructor may ask volunteers to perform an emergency dismount. For a detailed description of emergency dismount procedures, please refer to the Horse Leader Training or Sidewalker training handouts.

Fallen Riders, Medical Emergencies, Accidents, & Injuries

The MTR staff Manager on Duty must be notified of any injury or medical emergency occurring on the property. The manager on duty is responsible for managing the emergency including evaluating the scene, determining if additional medical assistance is required, and providing any first aid required. Designated volunteers may be asked to assist by retrieving a first aid kit, calling for emergency medical assistance (911), and locating emergency medical forms. An occurrence report must be completed by staff and involved individuals for every incident. Blank occurrence report forms can be found in the red binder on the bookshelf in the Program Director office or in the black binder located under the TV in the Volunteer lounge. Both binders are labeled Occurrence Reports. Completed reports should be left on the desk of the Program Director for review.

The following codes will be used in the event of a rider fall or emergency dismount:

- a. Code Red - Rider thrown to the ground or rider hits ground with significant force, emergency assistance needed. Manager on duty immediately goes to site of incident and calls 911 with cell phone in addition to assigning someone to escort parent or caregiver to the scene of the incident. The manager on duty will also assign someone to copy the most recent medical records in the participants MTR file.
- b. Code Blue - Minor incident (rider comes off balance and hits ground with minimal force, rider's fall is cushioned by the support of sidewalkers, emergency dismount from equine). Manager on duty to go to location of incident and assess rider, environment and equine and determine if it is safe to continue lesson. Parent or caregiver notified of the incident by the manager on duty before resuming activities or leaving the property.



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



Calling for Emergency Medical Assistance

In the event of an emergency, volunteers may be asked to call for emergency medical assistance. They may use a personal cell phone or find a telephone located on each desk in the Main Office and Volunteer Lounge trailers, Main Barn aisle, and Indoor Arena. Emergency call information is posted beside each telephone.

Location of First Aid Kits

Human First-Aid Kits

- On top of kickboards in indoor arena, near toy area
- In Main Office trailer to left of television
- In Volunteer Lounge trailer on the floor beside the sign-in area
- In Main Barn on top of white cabinet in feed room

Horse First-Aid Kit

- In the Main Barn inside the white cabinet in the feed room
- Additional equine medical supplies are kept in the Volunteer Lounge trailer beside the Equine Manager's desk

Fire Procedure

- A Staff Member may extinguish fire with fire extinguisher if the fire is smaller than an office trash can.

Locations of Fire Extinguishers

- Main Barn (2) – next to bathroom; outside of last stall before exit to Wash Stall
- Hay/Shavings Shed (1) – on wall on hay side
- Pony Palace (1) – to the left of gate entrance
- Indoor Arena (6) – placed around perimeter of arena, behind kickboards
- Main Office Trailer (2) – on wall in meeting room and in employee bathroom
- Volunteer Lounge Trailer (1) – to the right of the library
- If the fire cannot be extinguished without the assistance of emergency personnel, a Staff Member will call 911 and ring the fire bell located outside of the Mounting Area by the Main barn to notify individuals on site that a fire is in progress.
- All persons will evacuate and congregate at Arena A, letter C. No one should leave until a staff member indicates it is safe to do so. Volunteer Manager will take head count of volunteers; instructors/therapists will take head count of riders. Manager on Duty will complete overall head count.

Equine Procedures

- Horses will be evacuated by Barn Staff to fields away from danger.

Lesson Procedures

1. Riders will be dismounted and remain with their parents or caregiver and go to designated area out of harm's way.
2. Instructors/Therapists will direct volunteers to remove equipment/untack horses and turn out in field away from danger. Equipment may remain where it is.
3. All persons will congregate at Arena A, letter C.



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



Tornado, Hurricane, or Severe Thunderstorm Procedure

Manager on Duty is responsible for monitoring the weather forecast for the farm via Weather.com for Crownsville, MD.

If a severe weather advisory has been announced or there is an imminent threat, all lessons will be cancelled and volunteers will be advised NOT to come to the farm if there is sufficient time to do so and the following procedure will take place:

1. Any person that arrives at the farm or is already present will be asked to leave if it is safe to travel.
2. Riders will be dismounted and remain with their parent or caregiver in a designated safe area.
3. Instructors will direct volunteers to untack horses and return them to a safe place, such as their stall.
4. If it is not safe to move horses to their stall from riding arena, they should remain in the indoor arena, un-tacked if possible and held by a competent person.
5. Equipment can be left safely out of the way.
6. Instructors will remain with volunteers and horses in the indoor arena if they cannot return to barn.
7. Barn Staff members will tend to the horses.
8. Horses will be untacked and provided with a safe place, such as their stall, with plenty of water and supply of hay.
9. Stall doors and windows will be closed with at least one window cracked for ventilation
10. No one should enter stalls for any reason.
11. Lights and electrical equipment should be turned off and unplugged.
12. The large barn doors can be closed.
13. Humans should seek safety in buildings and possibly in doorways until the threat has passed.
14. Riding helmets can be worn if needed.



Volunteer Training Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.



Your First Day...

“Wow! This has been a lot of information to remember!” Once you get used to the routine at MTR, it really is quite easy. Always feel free to ask a staff member any questions you may have. This page has been provided as a quick reference to help you get started as a MTR volunteer.

When you arrive

1. **REGISTER YOUR ATTENDANCE** in the Volunteer Attendance Book (located on the table in the Volunteer Lounge). If you leave keys, jackets or other personal belongings, please remember that MTR is not responsible for loss of those items. When possible, items should be locked in your car.
2. Put on a **NAMETAG**. If yours is missing, make a temporary one. It is very important to wear your nametag so others can identify you. *Notify the Volunteer Manager if you need a new name badge so the appropriate color can be assigned.*
3. **CHECK BULLETIN BOARDS FOR ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS, FLYERS, OR SIGN-UP SHEETS**. Please remember to check for updates by reading MTR e-mails.
4. **CHECK IN WITH THE BARN STAFF**. Check the schedule for the day posted in the Main Barn and Indoor Arena.

LEADERS - Help groom, tack, and warm up your assigned horse.

SIDEWALKERS - Greet your rider, and, if necessary, assist them with their helmet. Then wait with the rider until time to mount. While waiting for your rider, you may help with the horses or you may be needed to help set up the arena for the lesson.

BARN VOLUNTEERS – Communicate with Barn Staff about tasks for the shift.

Before you leave

1. **LEADERS**: Make sure all grooming kits and tack are put away. If the horse is not used again, you may leave him in the stall or turn out to pasture at the request of the Barn Staff.
2. **SIDEWALKERS**: Once your last rider has left, you may help put away equipment and pick manure from arena.
3. **BARN VOLUNTEERS**: Inform the Barn Staff before you leave.
3. **ALWAYS CHECK WITH INSTRUCTOR OR BARN STAFF BEFORE YOU LEAVE**. If the rider to whom you are assigned is absent, you may still be needed to help with other riders or the barn.
4. **RECORD VOLUNTEER HOURS** in Volunteer Attendance Book. Collect any personal belongings and return your nametag.

Thank you for your volunteer service and commitment to MTR!