

BACKGROUND

On March 4, 2020, the governor of the State of California declared a state of emergency as a result of the threat of COVID-19. Subsequently, on March 19, 2020, the governor issued Executive Order N-33-20, which ordered all state residents to stay in place and identified certain essential functions that could remain operational. Additionally, the order stated that individuals must adhere to strict social distancing guidance.

According to the governor's order, essential critical infrastructure workers include those in animal agriculture ([covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf](https://www.covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf)). Individuals providing care and exercise to ensure the health and welfare of equines in California are essential workers.

Because equestrian activities do not require direct person-to-person contact, people can enjoy the many physical and mental benefits that riding offers so long as they wear a face mask or covering (except when mounted on a horse), engage in frequent hand washing, practice physical distancing by staying at least 6 feet apart from others on-site to ensure a safe environment, and follow other safety recommendations included in this procedure.

PURPOSE

Safeguarding our community is of the utmost importance. It is imperative that our community self-enforce and strictly adhere to the restrictions mandated by federal, state and local governments. This procedure is intended to reduce the risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus, but it is not a safety guarantee. Residents must use their own good judgment in determining the level of exposure risk they are willing to accept in using any shared facilities or amenities. Risk of exposure involves many factors out of the control of Village corporations and management, including the compliance (or noncompliance) and safe/unsafe behavior of others using the same facilities or amenities.

SCOPE

This procedure establishes formal guidelines for the conditional reopening of the Laguna Woods Village Equestrian Center lesson program, effective March 15, 2021 (for boarders, current volunteers and helpers only), and a procedure for operating the Equestrian Center during the COVID-19 crisis in compliance with federal, state and county guidance, and other applicable rules and regulations.

The procedure reflects Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advice that older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Based on current knowledge, those at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19 include people 65 years and older. Activity should always be in

line with the federal government's advised physical distancing measures defined by the CDC as keeping 6 feet apart, and the state's requirement that all Californians wear masks when outside the home, with limited exceptions.

The Equestrian Center supervisor, with support from the Recreation and Special Events Department director, is responsible for these activities.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Applicability

The Equestrian Center boarding, care and limited availability lesson program will be open to boarders, helpers and current volunteers only. No guests or spectators are permitted at the Equestrian Center.

Hours

The Equestrian Center hours of operation are Monday through Sunday from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Lesson hours will take place from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Hours may expand once conformance with this procedure, as well as state, county and other applicable safety requirements, is evident.

Facilities

The Equestrian Center will remain closed to individuals who do not board or help with horses. Management will adhere to State of California best practices for implementation to remain in compliance with state, county and other applicable safety requirements.

Facility Biosecurity Measures

- Individuals must:
 - Wash hands before entering and wear clean clothes as part of the farm's general biosecurity plan.
 - Strictly adhere to the 6-foot social distancing requirement in all areas at all times.
 - Wear face masks or coverings at all times except when mounted on a horse.
 - Touch only the equipment and supplies necessary for completing tasks of caring for and exercising the specific horse(s).
- Avoid shared use of helmets, grooming supplies, tack and other equipment among individuals.
- Clean and disinfect any equipment that must be shared before and after use.
- Practice good biosecurity methods when handling shared facilities such as trash receptacle lids, hoses, etc., including wearing gloves, gripping items with paper towels, hand washing or other methods as appropriate to avoid transmission.

Cleaning, Disinfecting Measures to Prevent COVID-19 Transmission

The COVID-19 virus can persist on nonporous materials (leather bridles, saddles and halters; nylon halters, lead ropes; gate latches; door handles; spray nozzles) longer than

porous materials (cotton lead ropes, saddle pads). According to the CDC, the coronavirus can survive up to three hours in the air, up to four hours on copper, up to 24 hours on cardboard and up to 72 hours on stainless steel and plastic. Shared items will be sprayed to avoid contamination. For more information, visit cdfa.ca.gov/coronavirus/pdfs/COVID19ResourcesforEquineBoardingFacilities.pdf.

- Clean communal leather tack daily with tack cleaner.
- Per [California Department of Food & Agriculture COVID-19 disinfection guidelines](#), disinfect the following regularly or after contact: gate latches, stall door handles, light switches, feed scoops, hose ends, spray nozzles, cross-tie snaps, pitchforks, wheelbarrows and other frequently handled surfaces.
- No evidence exists that horses can contract or become ill from COVID-19; however, practice good hygiene by washing your hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds or using at least 60% alcohol hand sanitizer after touching a horse, communal areas or communal equipment to prevent environmental spread of the virus. Hand sanitizer is not as effective as soap and water; use it when soap and water are not available. Hand sanitizer stations are placed at the entrance to the barn and in breezeways.

Group size

Group lessons and trail rides will be limited in size to four riders. Riders must maintain at least 6 feet of social distance while in the arena and on the trails.

Distance Between Riders

Groups must adhere to 6-foot social distancing requirements at all times. Avoid passing closely on arena or on trails.

Reservations

Advance reservations are required. No walk-ins, guests or spectators are permitted. Reservations must be scheduled 72 hours in advance by telephone or in person at the Equestrian Center office.

- Call 949-597-4318 to make reservations via telephone.
- Make in-person reservations during business hours (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.).

Equestrian Center Check-in

Lesson clients not already on-site to care for their own boarded horses must arrive no earlier than 10 minutes before their lesson. Upon arrival at the Equestrian Center, riders must wear a face mask or covering, sign in at the front desk and use provided hand sanitizer before proceeding to a designated location to await staff instruction. Riders must wait in a designated area in the GRF courtyard, socially distanced by a minimum of 6 feet, to await instructor directives. This designated area will be marked clearly with signage.

- Riders are required to use hand sanitizer, which is provided at check-in; then wear clean riding gloves for their duration on the property except for while using

the restroom. Riders must wear gloves for the entirety of their riding lesson and when grooming or tacking GRF horses.

In Courtyards, the Arena and On Trails

Riders may remove their mask or face covering after mounting their horse. Riders must adhere to the 6-foot social distancing requirements at all times, including when waiting in the courtyard to go to the arena or on the trail. Trail riders must ride in a row and not side by side to ensure proper social distancing.

- Shared brushes for GRF horses will be sanitized between each lesson; reins will be sprayed with sanitizing spray between lessons.
- Riders, volunteers and staff should not handle other people's tack, brushes or other equipment. If sharing is necessary, use hand sanitizer before and after touching shared equipment; gloves will be required for riding during lessons that require the use of shared tack.

On the Property

All shared touch points associated with the Equestrian Center must be eliminated. Any touch point that cannot be eliminated must be sanitized regularly.

- Frequently used gates and locks will be sanitized three times per day by maintenance staff.
- Drinking fountains will remain off. Disposable cups can be used to access water in the kitchen area.
- All common-area chairs and tables will be sanitized at the end of each day; sanitizer will be placed on tables to use before sitting.
- Other frequent touch points will be sanitized regularly by staff between use:
 - Shared tack and tools
 - Brushes
 - Reins of GRF horses
 - Restrooms

End of Lesson Program

Riders must proceed directly to their car/cart and leave the immediate area to avoid congregating in the area or parking lot.