



Dear Thurston County Resident,

Many of you are aware of the Mima Prairie Fire near Capitol Forest that occurred on September 8, 2020. The rescue efforts and support from friends and neighbors were overwhelming and fortunately people and horses escaped safely. Follow up discussions with horse owners in the community indicate a need for an additional emergency egress, improved planning, coordination and communication.

Our NW climate is changing and consequently we have a higher fire risk in the summer now than we did even five years ago. We all recall Thurston County wildfires at Scatter Creek in 2018, Grand Mound in 2019 and recently Mima Prairie in 2020. Additionally, our flood season is our most common emergency as it relates to equine safety and Thurston County is one of the most susceptible of Washington's counties for flooding. Livestock/horses have been evacuated as a result of flood events in 1996, 2007 and 2009. Couple these events with other past natural disasters including mud slides, volcanos and earthquakes in Washington State and the need for emergency planning is critical.

To that end, **Thurston County Equine Outreach (TCEO)**, is a volunteer organization that supports the Mission of Thurston County Emergency Management in planning, preparation and response to emergencies, disasters and incidences involving horses. Initially established as Thurston County Sheriff's Office, "Mounted Patrol" in the 1990's, the unit changed the name to **TCEO** and transitioned under Thurston County Emergency Management in 2017, due to the changing needs of our community.

Do any of the following questions sound familiar?

- Have you ever been in a significant fire, flood, earthquake or volcano eruption where you needed to evacuate your horses?
- Have you ever volunteered to help evacuate horses from a wildfire situation and were not allowed near the site by law enforcement to assist?
- Have you ever been out of town or at work and you get a call that your horse is being evacuated and you aren't there to give any pertinent information on their diet, medical or special needs?

If so..... you might be interested in reviewing the **"8 STEPS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN FOR YOUR HORSE, BARN OR BOARDING/TRAINING FACILITY"**. The process is simple and straight forward and can be tailored to your individual situation. The components are as follows:

1. Complete **"EMERGENCY READINESS SURVEY"** to identify specific issues to be addressed.
2. Utilize the **"NAVIGATION INSTRUCTIONS"** to develop your personal Emergency Response Plan.
3. Review the **"EQUINE RESPONSE TO-DO LIST"** to ensure your Emergency Response Plan fits with your horse, barn or facility needs.
4. Establish an individual **"EQUINE RESPONSE GO-BAG"** with supplies, emergency items and equipment for your vehicle and trailer.
5. Complete the **"EQUINE INFORMATION FORM"** (two-sided) on each horse/mule.
6. Place **"EQUINE INFORMATION FORM"** in the **"EQUINE EVACUATION COLLAR"** waterproof pouch for each horse/mule.
7. Place **"EQUINE EVACUATION COLLAR"** on stall door, pasture (keep in waterproof bucket/container) or easily accessible location next to halter.
8. Compile a **"BARN BINDER/NOTEBOOK"** that contains your **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN; EQUINE INFORMATION FORM** for each horse; a list of **emergency phone numbers** of law enforcement, fire stations, neighbors, boarders and other interested parties. Place your **NOTEBOOK** in your barn, facility or easily accessible location. Share as appropriate.

Resource lists, articles, fillable forms and information on becoming a **TCEO Volunteer** are on our website at www.co.thurston.wa.us/em/vol/TCEO, join us on our private Facebook page, **Thurston County Equine Outreach** or email us at thurstoncountyequineoutreach@gmail.com.