



## **Therapeutic Riding Of Tri-Cities Policies and Procedures**

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## **Therapeutic Riding Of Tri-Cities Policies and Procedures**

Therapeutic Riding Of Tri-Cities' (TROT) goal is to provide the highest quality service to our participants and their families. We are continually developing policies to ensure all aspects of our organization are running smoothly and efficiently. Below are our policies that have been created to help us serve our families to the best of our ability.

**TROT's Values:** TROT is a faith based center that provides high quality instruction and safety. Following the standards of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH) and the American Hippotherapy Association (AHA) we require training and education for our therapists, instructors, animals and volunteers to better serve our therapeutic riding community.

**TROT's mission:** Therapeutic Riding of Tri Cities (TROT) promotes physical, psychological and social well-being of people with special needs by providing animal-assisted therapies and activities.

**TROT's Vision:** Enrich the well-being of people with unique and special needs in our community.

### **Our Policy Regarding Participation in/ Discharge from Equine Assisted Activities:**

Recognizing that equine related activities hold inherent risks - all prospective participants will be asked to complete a liability waiver and release. Those with disabilities who will be riding will also need a physician's release to ensure a safe and beneficial experience. In compliance with PATH Intl. guidelines/Accreditation Standards and TROT's policy, the following criteria must be met:

- Participants for Adaptive riding must be at least 4 years of age..A Licensed Therapist may provide 1:1 evaluation and treatment incorporating equines at 2 yrs. of age.
- Participant/parent/guardian/volunteer/staff/ must complete, sign (e-signatures accepted), and date all center paperwork including releases, prior to participation. Forms can be found online at [www.trot3cities.org](http://www.trot3cities.org) as directed during registration.
- **Non-Discrimination Policy:** TROT considers/accepts participants or volunteers regardless of income, race, color, nationality, ethnic origin, gender identity or sexual orientation.

**Eligibility: EAAT (Equine Assisted Activities/Therapies) may not be suitable for all individuals with disabilities.** Upon reviewing completed paperwork and evaluating prospective participants, the TROT Program Director/ TROT Staff will make a determination regarding participation. Returning participants will be re-evaluated annually or as necessary for changes in medical, physical, cognitive and behavioral status, and TROT must be notified of any changes. Our professional staff will assess participant involvement with a risk/benefit analysis (benefit to



participant exceeds any potential risk associated with EAA/T) during a new riders assessment. Requirements for EAA include, but are not limited to:

- Physically able to independently sit symmetrically with torso upright and legs astride the horse during dynamic movement; this includes adequate head and neck control to maintain proper alignment.
- Tolerate a riding safety helmet.
- Behave in a manner that is safe for self, horses and others.
- Ability to accommodate the movement of the horse without pain.

TROT instructors/staff will make final determination for participation based on the new rider assessment and on available resources such as: class availability, volunteer availability, tack modifications, instructor expertise, and horse suitability.

If an individual is discharged from participation, TROT will provide a reason for discharge. Reasons for discharge might include, but are not limited to the following:

- Participant's mobility or weight prevents center personnel from serving clients safely.(Currently we have a 200lb. weight limit)
- Participant's status or behavior becomes a threat to the safety of themselves, horses or others.
- Center does not have a suitable horse for participants.
- Center personnel cannot safely manage the participant in any situation including an emergency dismount or transfer from wheelchair or ramp/block.

Alternatives to mounted lessons may be offered to individuals who may not be best served by Adaptive riding. These might include participating in one of our other programs offered. TROT reserves the right to discontinue an individual's participation in any program should it be deemed to be in the best interest of either the participant or TROT.

### **TROT's Programs**

- **Adaptive Riding** teaches riding skills to people with physical and mental challenges. Improves muscle tone, strength, flexibility, and coordination while increasing confidence and communication.
- **Path To Success** classes are for ages 9 and up and are designed to teach horsemanship fundamentals while incorporating relationship building, responsibility, social communication skills and trust. Path to Success is a 4 week class, there will be one class a week.
- **Horses Helping Heroes (H3)** is designed to benefit Veterans, First Responders, Law Enforcement Officers, and Healthcare workers. H3 is a horse-assisted learning environment in which participants will be introduced to horse and barn care and riding lessons. 3H is a 7 week class with one class per week.

*P.O. Box 5108, Pasco, WA 99302 • 509-412-0112  
[www.trot3cities.org](http://www.trot3cities.org) • [info@trot3cities.org](mailto:info@trot3cities.org) • 501c3 EIN:46-3822277*



- **Trotter Club** provides opportunities for young volunteers (ages 9-15) to gain fundamental horsemanship and develop life skills through teamwork, critical thinking, and working with special needs students.
- **Hippotherapy** is a physical, occupational, and speech therapy that utilizes the natural gait and movement of a horse to provide motor, and sensory input. It is based on improvement of neurologic functions, and sensory processes, and used for patients with physical, and mental disorders. **Eligibility, fees, goals, policies for this service are determined and managed directly by the therapist.**

### Adaptive Riding

**Lesson Description:** All equine-assisted activities are planned for therapeutic benefit with the individual's educational, physical, social, emotional and/or recreational goals in mind. Participants with similar goals may be grouped together. Lessons may include warm-up exercises, skill development, activities or games to reinforce goals, and trail rides. Some lessons/activities may take place on the ground, thus are unmounted. Adaptive riding is held in the spring and the fall. Sessions are typically 4 weeks in length and back to back. The participant can register for one 4 week session or for both 4 week sessions for a total of 8 weeks. Current session schedule: Spring (typically two 4 week sessions back to back) and Fall (typically two 4 week sessions back to back). This schedule is subject to change year to year. **HPOT (Hippotherapy) is scheduled by licensed PT, OT, SLP, or Mental Health therapists only.**

Plan to arrive at least 10 minutes early for your class. Helmets are available to borrow for class or you may bring your own ( If purchasing your own helmet, make sure that it is ASTM/SEI certified for horseback riding and is less than 5 years old from date of manufacture). When you arrive at TROT, you will see volunteers waiting to greet their rider. The volunteer will introduce themselves, give their rider their name tag, and retrieve a properly fitted helmet. The volunteer will wait with their rider until it is their turn to mount the horse selected by the instructor.

Group lessons, two to four riders, are scheduled for 45 minutes. The first 15 minutes is allotted for the instructor to assist riders to mount their horses and instruction is designated for the following 30 minutes. It is possible that the instructor may finish teaching the class 5 minutes early to dismount riders as the scheduled time the instructor has with a group of riders is 45 minutes, so they have to manage their time with the students to include mounting and dismounting within the 45 minute time period.

If circumstances or cancellations result in only 1 rider for a particular class, the class length will change to 30 minutes (private/one rider). When riders are added to the class and become a group lesson (2 – 4 riders), the class length will change accordingly.

Riders in the Adaptive Riding program must remit a registration form and the full registration fee prior to session commencing unless on an approved payment plan. Services will be withheld for



any riders whose account is in arrears. **Registration and payment are the only way to secure your spot.**

**Equine assisted activities are contraindicated:**

1. If staff/volunteers are unable to safely manage the participant in any situation, including an emergency dismount or transfer from a wheelchair or mounting ramp.
2. If staff/volunteers cannot manage participant behavior (including any mal-adaptive or extreme behaviors\_ with verbal prompts and/ or light touch.
3. If safety, comfort or well-being of staff, volunteers or the horse is compromised in any way for any reason.
4. If medically inappropriate based on PATH Intl. guidelines, precautions, contraindications.
5. If weight exceeds the 200lb. max

**UN-MOUNTED LESSONS IN THE ADAPTIVE RIDING PROGRAM**

Listed below are situations and reasons why we may make the decision to do an unmounted class:

- Horsemanship Education: we want to provide the opportunities for riders to learn more skills off the horse such as grooming and tacking and to gain an understanding of what goes into caring for the horse.
- Social skills: un-mounted activities can increase interaction with the horse, other riders, and volunteers. These experiences provide a chance for riders to practice appropriate social skills.
- Weather: to keep our riders safe, during extreme hot or cold, excessive rains, thunder and lightning, excessive wind, we may choose to do an unmounted lesson.
- Horse situations: horses do become ill or injured; when this happens there is some stress placed on the rest of the herd. We do our best to find a substitute horse, but with their schedules this is not always possible. Because our horses do incredible work for us, we monitor their individual workload closely to ensure they are happy and healthy.
- Volunteer situations: over 70 volunteers are required each week to assist us in providing this service to our community. Our staff works hard to make sure each class has the number of volunteers needed for each rider. When we are not able to fill the classes with the adequate amount of volunteers, rather than cancel one rider, or the entire class, we may offer an unmounted lesson.

When a decision is made to provide an unmounted experience, we will make every attempt to contact you before the lesson begins. If you choose not to participate in the unmounted lesson you will not be refunded or credited the cost of the lesson you missed. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, or ideas for an unmounted lesson, feel free to speak with your instructor.



**Weight Considerations:** Weight is generally limited to 200 pounds, but decisions regarding participation will be based on current resources including the availability of a suitable horse relative to the height, cognition, balance and/or behavior of the participant. The results of a risk/benefit analysis will also be considered. Due to the nature of therapeutic riding it may be deemed inappropriate for some individuals.

### **Dress code**

- **Long pants and closed toed shoes are required.**
- We prefer that riders wear a hard-soled shoe with a low heel, like a cowboy boot or paddock boot.
- Sneakers are ok, but they should not have a thick and heavy tread. Sneakers need to be firmly tied so they will not slip off.
- We require that ALL riders wear an ASTM-SEI approved safety helmet no older than 5 years from manufacture date while mounted and in the barn. You may borrow one of ours (a variety of sizes are found in the helmet shed); or, if you wish to purchase your own, please ask your instructor or therapist for a recommendation as to where to buy one.

### **Leaving the premises during your rider's class or treatment:**

We ask that parents and caretakers stay on the premises while the participant is riding. If you must leave TROT while the participant is riding in a class or receiving treatment, please notify the office that you will be leaving the property and get approval as well as confirm that we have a cell phone number to reach you in the case of an emergency while you are off the property.

**Instructor Training/Mentorship:** TROT is committed to providing education and training to individuals interested in our programs and in Equine Assisted Activities. TROT may offer a limited number of mentorship opportunities each year to qualified individuals seeking instructor certification from either PATH Intl. or Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA) There are classes during each session that may be taught by one of these candidates. All lessons are directly supervised by a PATH Intl. or CHA certified therapeutic riding instructor. We can provide further resources on this program upon request.

**Cancellations:** TROT may cancel riding in the event of extreme weather in consideration of all center personnel, participants, parents and equines (e.g., thunderstorms, heat > 95°/weather advisories, extreme cold < 30°, wind, etc.). We generally follow Kennewick Public Schools cancellation policy. TROT will make an attempt to reach participants by phone/email in the event of a cancellation. If a participant must cancel, please send an email to [volunteer@trot3cities.org](mailto:volunteer@trot3cities.org) or call as soon as possible, so that our volunteers/horses will not be waiting. TROT reserves the right to cancel lessons in the event that the safety of all personnel, participants and horses is compromised. We will make an attempt to notify participants of a cancellation at least 2 hours



prior to cancellation. Lessons canceled by TROT may or may not be made up depending on available resources, i.e. barn, classroom or arena space, instructor and/or volunteer staff.

**Refund/Make-up policy:** Regular attendance is expected of participants. In the event TROT must cancel a lesson we will attempt to schedule a make-up class at the end of the session during the designated make-up week. If a participant is unable to attend a class, there are no make-up classes/treatments outside of that make-up week

- If an adaptive rider cancels a month or more from the start of a session, full tuition minus a \$50.00 administrative fee is refunded.
- If an adaptive rider cancels within two weeks prior to the start of a session, 50% of the registration fee will be refunded, unless the cancellation is an unplanned medical necessity with a doctor's note.
- If an adaptive rider cancels after classes have commenced, TROT will not refund the full tuition unless the cancellation is an unplanned medical necessity with a doctor's note.
- If TROT cancels the class or treatment because we cannot offer the service, we will refund or credit the rider's account, rider credit will only be held up to 1 year from receiving the credit.

**Stay home if sick:** Due to the sensitive medical nature of many of our riders we cannot take the chance of infecting others. Considering the vulnerable population we work with on a daily basis at TROT, please DO NOT come if you have flu -like symptoms. If you're feeling ill, please contact the office at 509-412-0112. A good guideline is to wait 24 hours without fever, vomiting or diarrhea. For overall safety, an instructor has the discretion to ask a rider not to ride if they are ill.

**Confidentiality:** Any information pertaining to the participants of TROT must be held in strict confidentiality. It is critical that we respect the privacy of each participant and their families. This is considered one of the most important responsibilities of our staff and volunteers.

**Volunteer Opportunities:** Volunteers are the backbone of this center! If you or someone you know would like to assist with lessons, fund-raising, center development, office work, or even doing barn chores please contact our volunteer coordinator at 509-412-0112 or by email at [volunteer@trot3cities.org](mailto:volunteer@trot3cities.org). Parents of participants often volunteer during their child's lesson time. However, for the most beneficial experience we may ask that parents assist students other than their own children. There are multiple volunteer education classes held each year. Contact us for more information regarding each training session date. Attendance at a volunteer education class is required before volunteering at an adaptive riding session.

**Requirements:** All horse leaders, sidewalkers, and stable hands must be 16 years and older due to safety reasons. Volunteers younger than 16 may be considered for approval on a case by case basis. All volunteers between the ages of 9-15 are considered Trotters. Their main role is to assist the instructor during the adaptive riding classes.



Every volunteer must submit an online volunteer application and sign a waiver and release. This application requires the volunteer to consent to a background check. They also must be able to use our Wranglr program for scheduling purposes.(training on this simple program will be provided by our staff).

**In Case of Injury or Emergency:** Should someone witness or experience an emergency or an injury please report it to the office. Safety is our top concern and an incident form must be filled out for all incidents so that TROT staff can properly follow up on the situation.