

Before you start a horse rescue or retirement facility please consider the responsibility of the lives you are taking on

It takes a good heart to want to save lives. Anyone that would even consider the devotion and self-sacrifice required to rescue any animal, especially horses, deserves all of the help and will of the universe. But remember that the people that have the horses that need to be rescued also probably thought they were going to provide a safe and secure home.

Unfortunately decisions of the heart are usually not economically sound. Business skills are just as important in today's rescue operations as are the saving talents. The least expensive and most exciting process of horse ownership is initial commitment. It is too easy to forget the cost of hay, medical and barn expenses when you are in the passion of saving a life. Feed stores and vets don't accept food stamps.

Please join the rescue effort – equines in Arizona need your help! But think carefully before you take on the responsibility of opening your own shelter or rescue. There are many great rescue organizations in existence that would love new volunteers!

-Michael D. Hutchison, DVM, cVMA

Check Online for Other Important Resources To Review Before You Start!

AAEP Care Guidelines for Equine Rescue & Retirement Facilities
<http://www.aaep.org>

UC Davis 2009 Equine Sanctuary & Rescue Facility Guidelines
<http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu>

Basic Guidelines for Operating an Equine Rescue or Retirement Facility
<http://www.awionline.org>

Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) Equine Animal Standards and Operational Standards
www.SanctuaryFederation.org



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BEFORE YOU START A HORSE RESCUE OR RETIREMENT FACILITY

Going from this...



To this...



Takes more than you might think!

EQUINE RESCUE CHECKLIST

Since an equine rescue is a business, the founder of the rescue will find themselves spending much of their time on issues not directly related to animal care. The following checklist contains the most important components of a successful equine rescue.

These components are necessary to create a reputable, professional and sustainable organization:

Operational Business and Financial Components

- File for incorporation with the state and IRS.
- Develop Articles of Incorporation, By-laws, Mission Statement.
- Establish a diverse board of directors.
- If using the founder's property, implement a lease agreement with the non-profit.
- Provide liability insurance for the rescue and the board of directors.
- Check zoning - secure licenses and permits if needed.
- Develop a budget and bookkeeping plan.
- Open a checking account.
- Keep personal property, finances, and businesses separate from rescue.
- Develop a one month minimum to suggested six month financial reserve in the unexpected event of the founder's inability to continue the organization or for unplanned emergencies.
- Create development and communications programs (fundraising, newsletters, social media, grant writing)
- Establish strategic planning for organization.

Facility Design, Construction and Maintenance Considerations

- Shelters, stalls, shade structures
- Outdoor pens, paddocks, pasture and dry lots (at least 2500 sq. ft. per horse)
- Fencing- non-climb wire or pipe rail preferred, (barbed wire and 4"x4" field wire are dangerous)
- Quarantine facilities
- Manure management
- Storage for hay, feed, bedding, buckets, supplies
- Workspaces for animal care, veterinary care and for sanitation of equipment
- Reliable water, sewer and drainage
- Equipment and tools for property maintenance (tractor, manure spreader, wheelbarrows, rakes, shovels etc.)
- Horse trailer and truck
- Security and fire prevention/suppression
- Disaster planning

Remember that while your facility does not have to be expensive or beautiful, the level of professionalism will influence its reputation.

Animal Care

- Recordkeeping and documentation
- Nutrition and feeding
- Preventative medicine (parasite and insect management, dental care, vaccinations, testing)
- Hoof care
- Veterinary care and emergency medical protocols (attending veterinarian)
- Quarantine procedures
- Social groupings and psychological well-being of equines, enrichment
- No breeding (stallions castrated unless veterinarian deems medically unsuited)
- Euthanasia policy and disposal of deceased animals.

Other Components

- Training program to prepare equines for adoption (if applicable)
- Adoption and foster application/contract and policies
- Community outreach
- Volunteer program, policies, training and documents
- Education program
- Establish relationship with humane law enforcement