Horse Behavior

- Horses are uniquely sensitive animals: they see, hear and feel everything.
- Objects, sounds and movements to which humans and other animals may be oblivious will be noticed by a horse.
- Horses decide quickly whether something is to be feared or not.
- Evolving as prey animals, the horse's natural instinct is to run away from a perceived threat.
- If something is not scary, a horse will either ignore or explore.
- Each horse reacts differently depending on age, breed, training and situation.
- Horses can learn to be less reactive to what frightens them through patient training methods including desensitization.

The Trails Committee of the Town of Woodside

Has prepared this brochure to promote the safe use of public trails in and around construction areas and to educate contractors, subcontractors and their crews to the unique challenges of working in an equestrian community.

Thank you for helping to keep our riders, horses and trails safe!

Building in Horse Country

Trail safety in and around Construction Sites:
Tips for contractors, crews and equestrians

Town of Woodside
2933 Woodside Road
Woodside, CA 94062
WOODSIDE IS A HORSE COMMUNITY

An active equestrian community with hundreds of horses stabled in Woodside and Portola Valley make this area unique from other towns on the Peninsula. Miles of trails extend throughout the area which are used daily by many people on horseback. Job sites are often located close to trails and construction vehicles travel on roadways adjacent to trails in virtually all areas.

Horses are easily started by the activities and sounds commonly associated with job sites and construction vehicles, creating the potential for hazardous situations that would be unlikely in other nearby communities.

FOR CONTRACTORS

- Please inform crews and subcontractors of the best practices listed here and help reduce the risk of injury and property damage.
- Be aware of trails on or near the job site and along routes that will be used by construction vehicles.
- Post a flag man to alert equestrians and monitor construction traffic.
- Large trucks can be very frightening to horses. Decreasing speed, even slightly, can make oncoming vehicles less threatening and reduce the potential for horses to react.
- Avoid parking on trails at any time without prior approval by the Town.
- Locate construction materials and design site circulation to be as far away as possible from equestrian trails and adjacent equestrian properties.
- Make sure any material that could billow or blow is securely fastened.
- Use a heavy duty magnet to pick up stray nails, screws and other sharp metal objects that could end up on nearby trails and cause serious injury to horses and humans.

FOR EQUESTRIANS

- Use caution when approaching a construction site.
- If you are unsure how your horse might react, stop a safe distance away, dismount and lead your horse quietly past the area until it is safe to remount.
- Be alert to things you may encounter but try to remain calm. Horses can sense a rider's tension and will be more likely to react.
- Be aware of construction vehicles entering or leaving a job site. Remain a safe distance away until traffic has passed.
- Riding in the company of someone with a calm, reliable horse will help your horse be less fearful and become more confident over time.
- Explore training options for desensitizing your horse to unfamiliar sights and sounds.