

Volunteer Manual



ROCKATEERS@ROCKRIDE.ORG

2025

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Overview

Welcome to ROCK!

We are so pleased that you want to become a volunteer at ROCK Ride on Center for Kids. Our volunteers are the backbone of our organization. Most of the classes require at least three volunteers to put a participant on a horse at ROCK. With well over one hundred forty participants riding each week, we could not financially support all of the programs offered at ROCK without the dedication of our volunteers. In addition, our horses require care and attention 365 days a year – volunteers feed and care for our horses and our property daily, including weekends and holidays.

There are many volunteer opportunities at ROCK and we are confident that you will be able to find your own niche. Whether you become a Side Walker, Pit Crew, Horse Handler, Feeder, or Team Lead, every hour you give to ROCK helps our participants move closer to improved health and greater independence.

A professional, safety-conscious environment for our participants, volunteers and horses is of major importance to the ROCK staff. As a volunteer, you will be a key part of our professional team.

We thank you and honor you for your willingness to give of your time and your heart to our participants and our horses.

ROCK On!

Nancy O’Meara Krenek

Founder/Chief Executive Officer

nancy@rockride.org

ROCK, Ride On Center for Kids

2050 Rockride Lane, Georgetown, TX 78628 - P.O. Box 2422 Georgetown, TX 78627
(512) 930-ROCK - www.rockride.org



Our Mission

Improving independence and life skills
in partnership with the horse.

Our Vision

To be the trusted leader in equine-assisted services through
research, education, and programs.

*ROCK, Ride On Center for Kids (ROCK) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
that provides equine-assisted services to children, adults, and veterans
with physical, cognitive, and emotional challenges.*

ROCK's Story

Nancy O'Meara Krenek, a physical therapist with a big vision, one horse, and four potential participants founded ROCK in 1998. After resigning from her school physical therapist position, she immersed herself in training that would enable her to implement her vision to provide equine-assisted therapy to those in need.

Nancy sought to purchase 5 acres of land and ended up with a donation of 20 acres from George and Barbara Brightwell. Word spread about the positive effects of equine-assisted services (EAS), ROCK took on more participants, added more horses, and hired more staff. EAS was working; participants experienced positive changes and told others about their results.

In 2011, ROCK was contacted by Texas A & M to develop Equine Assisted Services at Texas A & M in College Station. The Courtney Grimshaw Fowler Equine Therapeutic Program (Courtney Cares) was created. ROCK manages all aspects of this program including designing the program, staffing, and accreditation. Courtney Cares partners with Texas A & M Corps of Cadets' Parsons Mounted Cavalry for the use of their horses. The purpose of Courtney Cares is to create a place for Texas A & M students to learn and understand the principles of equine-assisted services.

The demand for equine-assisted services and therapy at ROCK has not slowed. ROCK serves over 350 participants and their families every year, as well as over 350 dedicated volunteers. ROCK continues to grow to meet the needs of the community. The land campaign began with a gift match challenge from Charles Avery in early 2014. By the end of that year, ROCK purchased an additional 20 acres of land adjacent to the existing property. Later, ROCK was able to purchase the 20 acres south of the ROCK campus.

We are so grateful for those who believe in ROCK. Thank you to everyone who has stepped forward to make the land purchase possible as well as those who will be part of this very exciting expansion. Please contact Nancy Krenek or one of the board members if you are interested in exploring how you can be part of building the future of ROCK and enabling even more individuals to experience Healing Thru Horses!

Overview of Programs

Sessions are 45 minutes and include mounted and unmounted activities. They may include riding skills, fitness exercises, gym activities, horse care, arena preparation, and team

building. Each session includes individualized goals. Horses are an essential part of the team as they facilitate learning, motivation, and skill-building.

- Private Lessons – One-on-one instructor support for the participant. The sessions will be offered throughout the week and evenings on a limited basis.
- Adaptive Riding (Semi-Private Session): This consists of one instructor and two participants.
- Adaptive Riding (Group Session): This consists of one instructor and a maximum of four participants. The sessions will be offered throughout the week and in the evenings.
- Speech Therapy or Physical Therapy: This consists of physical therapy or a speech-language treatment that utilizes the movement of the horse to help achieve functional goals. The treatment can specifically address impairments of muscle tone, range of motion, motor planning, timing, attention, awareness, coordination, balance, speech, postural control, and communication skills.
- Adaptive Riding

ROCK offers classes that focus on a broad range and combination of disabilities. These classes fall under the general term “therapeutic riding” but each class is a sophisticated program developed to address the needs of that small group.

In Adaptive Riding, a Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor (CTRI) plans and teaches riding lessons and horsemanship skills for group, semiprivate and private lessons with participants. Our certified instructors complete multiple continuing education courses throughout the year to stay current so they can best serve all participants.

Benefits

ROCK serves children and adults with a variety of cognitive, physical, and/or emotional challenges. Based on input from doctors, therapists, teachers, and parents, the client’s individual goals are designed to complement ongoing therapy and education. Instructors design and monitor individualized treatment plans for each client to address their specific needs while they learn and practice the skills involved in riding. Individual and class goals encourage each client to be the best they can be, on and off the horse.

The premise of Adaptive Riding is that the act of riding on a horse provides a positive mental and physical experience that is especially beneficial to individuals with a disability. Quality of life, from the simplest of tasks to personal relationships, is improved, enhanced, and enriched. The benefits of horseback riding are threefold:

- Physical – The three-dimensional motion of the horse provides the client with hip and back action that simulates natural walking. Riding relaxes and strengthens muscles while improving body tone, posture, balance, joint mobility, and coordination.
- Emotional – Contact with horses and horsemanship training provides a non-competitive setting for learning. New abilities, self-discipline, and improved concentration build self-confidence.
- Social – Horseback riding in a positive environment nurtures a positive self-image. Participants may, for the first time in their lives, experience some independence and a sense of being part of a team.

Accreditation

ROCK is a PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center. PATH Intl. stands for Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International. It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that was formed in 1969 to promote equine-assisted services. PATH Intl. is the largest organization governing equine-assisted services promoting safety and optimal outcomes in equine-assisted services for individuals with special needs.

ROCK has been a Premier Accredited Center with PATH Intl. since 2000. This means that ROCK has voluntarily participated in a site visit from PATH Intl. to ensure that it is following safety standards for horse care, services, and business set by PATH Intl. ROCK goes through reaccreditation every five years. Being a Premier Accredited Center means ROCK implements best practices for the industry.

The Riding Lesson

Each rider may need up to 1 - 3 volunteers to assist in their lesson. Most teams will consist of a Horse Handler, 2 – 3 Side Walkers, and the instructor. Lessons are generally 45 minutes long. Some of the goals of Adaptive Riding classes are to teach horsemanship skills, improve balance, muscle tone, self-esteem, communication, and socialization skills. Lesson plans will vary class by class to address the goals of individual students. In most cases, instructors will meet with volunteers before class to discuss goals for the day.

The Horse Handler: Responsible for grooming, tacking, warm-ups, leading, and untacking the horse. **The Horse Handler needs to arrive at least 30 to 45-minutes before the scheduled class time to adequately prepare the horse.**

Side Walker: Responsible for the safety of the rider providing physical, verbal, and emotional support for the entire class period. Side Walkers are the ones who normally get the most hands-on duties during class. They are directly responsible for the rider. As such, they have the capability to either enhance or detract from the lesson. **The Side Walker needs to arrive at least 15-minutes before scheduled class time to meet with the instructor and be prepared to greet your student.**

The ultimate goal for Adaptive Riding is to encourage the rider to stretch and reach their fullest potential. Help the instructor challenge the rider to the best of their ability. Without you, the volunteer, the program couldn't exist. We thank you for all you give and challenge you to be the best you can.

Part I - The Team

Volunteering at ROCK is a great way to develop personal and professional skills. These skills include sensitivity awareness, creativity, problem solving, and teamwork.

The ROCK Team

Without volunteers, ROCK would cease to exist. Each session involves a team effort consisting of people and horses working together to accomplish therapeutic goals. The ROCK team consists of:

- **The Participant-** The participant is always the purpose and focus of the team and the session.
- **The Horse-** The horse and participant must be well-matched to provide a safe and effective session. The desired temperament and movement of the horse is dependent upon the needs of all our participants.
- **The Instructor-** The CTRI is responsible for determining the necessary horse and tack for each session as well as the goals for the participant. The instructor communicates the intent of the session and instructions to the participant, horse handler, and Side Walker(s). During the session the instructor's focus is typically directly on the participant, communicating with the horse handler and Side Walker through their communications with the participant.
- **Side Walker(s)-** In a PT/ Speech session, the Side Walkers aid the therapist in the physical manipulation and support of the participant. These sessions tend to be very "hands on". In an Adaptive Riding riding session, depending upon the level of independence of the participant, the Side Walker provides emotional and motivational support. The ultimate goal of a good Side Walker is to encourage the participant to stretch, grow, and develop to their fullest potential, while providing a safe environment. Side Walkers work side-by-side with the instructor, **never leaving the participant's side** without direction from the instructor.

- **Pit Crew-** Members of the Pit Crew assist in preparing tack, putting tack away, and grooming horses. There are three levels of Pit Crew allowing each level to perform different tasks based on their training and skill set.
- **Horse Handler-** In most cases, the horse handler will remain in control of the horse throughout the session. In some Adaptive Riding sessions, depending upon the level of independence of the participant and at the discretion of the instructor, the horse handler **may or may not** have control over the horse. Regardless, the horse handler remains constantly aware of the horse's movement and behavior and is prepared to step in to take control of the horse at all times.
- **Team Leader-** Oversees the tack room, grooming area, stalls, and horses during sessions. They provide support to Horse Handlers and Pit Crew members during grooming and tacking. Team Leads will get horses ready when needed and do warmups.

In addition to the team members in the arena, it takes many other volunteers working out of the dirt to make ROCK therapy sessions possible. These include:

- **Welcome Wranglers-** Welcome Wranglers are office volunteers who answer phones, greet guests and families, communicate needs, assist the ROCK staff, and help out with numerous office functions.
- **Grooming Team –** Provide horses with the extra love and attention they deserve, fostering their well-being and happiness and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. *Must be a current Horse Handler or be on the Feeding Team to be on the Grooming Team*.
- **Feeding Team:** The Feed Team provides nutritious meals to our herd to ensure a healthy and consistent diet.
- **Equine Assistance Team –** Provide vital support to our equine program by ensuring a clean and organized environment for our horses. This allows the ROCK Equine Team to focus on providing top-notch care and equine services.
- **Facilities Assistance Team –** ROCK sits on 60 acres of land. Facilities volunteers assist our facilities team in maintaining the landscape of the property and general maintenance of the facilities.

- **Special Event Volunteers-** Special Event Volunteers assist with the planning and execution of special events such as the Barn Dance, Cowgirl Bruncheon, Horse Shoe Club committee, Appreciation Dinners and various fund raisers.

Most volunteers find that they prefer to “wear many different hats.” A typical day for a volunteer may include side walking in one session, horse handling in another, prepping horses or answering phones.

We are delighted to have you as a part of the ROCK family.

(Please see Page 34 for detailed [Job Descriptions](#))

Part II - Rock Volunteer Guidelines

The ROCK Volunteer Code of Conduct

- RESPECT ALL PERSONS- Inappropriate actions or language will not be permitted.
- RESPECT ALL ANIMALS- Refrain from loud noises or actions which may startle the horses. Abusive actions or language toward any animal will not be permitted.
- RESPECT ALL PROPERTY- Inappropriate use of the ROCK facilities, equipment or land will not be permitted.
- **Persons who do not adhere to the ROCK Volunteer Code of Conduct will be dismissed from activities and asked to leave the premises.**

Important Information

Volunteers become very attached to the students they assist, and to the roles they fulfill. ROCK makes every effort to honor the desires of our volunteers. However, staffing every class is the most important goal of the Volunteer Team. Therefore, it may be necessary to reassign volunteers on a last-minute basis in the event of cancellations or a shortage of volunteers.

If you are ever asked to do something that makes you uncomfortable, please let your instructor or the Volunteer Team know your concerns. ROCK will never expect any volunteer to do something they do not feel comfortable or safe doing.

Emergency Plan

In case of an emergency, the COO, Chief Program Officer, and/or Instructors are in charge. Follow any and all directions from these staff members.

- The First Aid Kit is located in the Front Office on top of the filing cabinet behind the reception desk. A small First Aid Kit is kept in the Vet Room.
- An AED is in the Tack Room, on the outside wall of the Vet Room, and in the Sport Clips Arena (on the East Side, attached to the 4th beam).
- The Equine First Aid Kit is located in the Tack Room.

You DO NOT need to dial '9' to access an outside line when dialing 9-1-1

- Stay Calm
- Be Accurate
- Call 9-1-1. Provide location information:
 - 2050 Rockride Lane, Georgetown, TX 78626

Horses spook easily, ask that sirens be silenced prior to arrival.

In Case of Major Illness or Injury

1. The instructor(s) will appoint volunteers to:
 - a. Call 9-1-1
 - b. Get the First Aid Kit
 - c. Get the Green Folder of the injured from the front office (black file cabinet behind the reception desk).
 - d. Go to the road and wait for emergency vehicles. Stop the driver and have the lights and sirens turned off. Direct the medical attendant to the person needing medical attention.
2. Instructor appoints a volunteer or other instructor to stay with the injured individual once the individual has been stabilized.
3. The instructor will direct the Side Walkers and Horse Handlers to remove the other riders to a safe, contained area for dismounting and the removal of the horses and riders from the arena.

An AED is in the Tack Room, on the outside wall of the Vet Room, and in the Sport Clips Arena (on the East Side, attached to the 4th beam).

In Case of Minor Injury

1. The instructor will ensure that the needs of the individual are met, i.e., bandages, ice, and removed to a comfortable area.
2. If the individual requires medical attention, arrangements will be made to transport the individual to a hospital or doctor's office.
3. If the individual is not ambulatory, a wheelchair is available in the therapy room.
4. The instructor will determine if the other participants may safely continue the class or if the class should be terminated and take appropriate action.

All incidents, minor and major, must be officially reported. A staff member will fill out the appropriate form. If you are involved in or a witness to any incident or accident, please do not leave the premises until you have talked to the staff in charge and provided any information

you know. Timely, first-person, thoughtful input is critical to having an accurate and thorough report.

In Case of an Injured or Sick Horse

Horse Handlers, Team Leads, and Side Walkers should notify the instructor and/or the Equine Team immediately of a suspected illness or injury to a horse. Observing the horse closely can prevent an injured or ill horse from entering the arena or the necessity for an emergency dismount.

1. The instructor will safely dismount the participant and remove him or her from the arena.
2. The Horse Handler will maintain control of the horse until the instructor or Team Lead takes responsibility of the horse.

In Case of Fire or other Natural Disaster

FIRST - Call 9-1-1

1. In case of fire, evacuate all students, families, volunteers, and staff before assisting the horses.
 - a. Evacuate all students, families, volunteers, and staff to outside the front gate by the windmill, or other designated areas (per the directions of staff).
 - b. Close the front gate.
 - c. If it is deemed safe, ROCK staff members may open stall doors and gates to release the horses.
2. In the event of a Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm Warning, the tack room is a fully enclosed cement block building rated safe to a Level 4 tornado. Horses may be moved only under the direction of a qualified staff member.
 - a. Immediately evacuate all students, families, volunteers, and staff to the tack room.
 - b. If it is deemed safe, a ROCK staff member may open stall doors and gates to release horses.
 - c. Horses can be unpredictable animals.
 - d. Horses are 'flight' animals that can become startled by sudden movements or noises.
 - e. Horses are 'herd' animals and often feel the need to return to their group when frightened.

ROCK horses have an easy-going temperament necessary for therapy work and work daily in a stressful environment. Please be aware that your horses are still horses and can and do still spook.

Horses have sharp peripheral vision but cannot see directly in front or behind their bodies. Always acknowledge your presence while approaching your horse by speaking with a calm and soft voice. Never run up or jump in front of a horse as this might cause them to spook. Always approach the horse at the shoulder so they can clearly see you. Horses do not have to turn their heads to see an object. They also have a keen sense of smell and do not need to sniff an object to smell it.

Common Sources of Equine Accidents

Carelessness and over confidence	Lack of understanding of the horse
Outside disturbances	Inadequate training of the horse
Equipment failure	Inattentiveness
Inadequate training of the personnel	
Failure to anticipate and plan for emergencies	

Dismissal Policy and Procedures

- Volunteers found violating the ROCK Policies and Procedures or Safety Guidelines may be asked to undergo additional training or dismissal.
- Volunteers found violating the ROCK Volunteer Code of Conduct may be asked to undergo additional training or dismissal.

ROCK maintains a ZERO TOLERANCE policy when it comes to any form of:

- Sexual abuse and or inappropriate touching, behavior, or actions
- Any form of sexual harassment
- Any form of physical abuse
- Alcohol abuse
- Drug abuse
- Inappropriate and/or offensive language

This policy applies toward the treatment of ROCK participants, volunteers, staff, and guests.

If any abuse or safety concern of any kind is suspected, the offender will be immediately escorted off ROCK property. The police and/or proper authorities will be notified immediately, and the incident will be investigated. ROCK staff will cooperate fully with law enforcement officials to ensure that the offender is **prosecuted**.

Anyone dismissed from the volunteer program will be asked to leave the premises immediately and is prohibited from returning to ROCK property, ROCK sponsored events, or any event benefiting ROCK, without the express permission of the Executive Director/CEO.

Confidentiality and Privacy Agreement

ROCK respects and closely guards our participants' and volunteers' privacy. While we encourage our volunteers to talk to their friends and family about the wonderful things that take place here at ROCK, we request that you do not use our participants' real names.

Many of our parents are willing to discuss their child's condition, but some feel it is a very private matter. Therefore, we request that you do not discuss a participant's condition with their family or caregiver unless a family member or caregiver offers the information to you. However, please feel free to ask the instructor privately if you have any questions or concerns regarding a particular participant.

All participant and volunteer records are considered confidential and can only be accessed at a staff member's request.

ROCK Contact Information

Location

2050 Rockride Lane
Georgetown, Texas 78626

Mailing Address

PO Box 2422
Georgetown, Texas 78627
Phone: (512) 930-7625
Fax: (512) 863-9231

Hours of Operation:

Sunday: Closed
Monday: 8am – 8pm
Tuesday: 8am – 9pm
Wednesday: 8am – 8pm
Thursday: 8am – 8pm
Friday: 8am – 5pm
Saturday: Closed

ROCK Policies and Procedures

Absences- It is your responsibility to notify ROCK at least 24 hours in advance of your shift if you will be absent or late. Please email the Volunteer Team at rockateers@rockride.org at least 24-hours in advance when possible. We understand emergencies do occur, you can either email the Volunteer Team at rockateers@rockride.org ASAP or call the front office at 512-930-7625 Ext. 325. Failure to communicate your absence with the Volunteer Team in advance will result in a 'no-show'. Two occurrences of no-show could result in a six-month suspension.

Age Requirements- All volunteers must be at least 14 years of age.

Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy: ROCK does not discriminate based on gender, race, color, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, relation or disability. ROCK does not, and will not, tolerate any type of harassment of our employees, participants, their families, or volunteers.

Arrival Times- It is very important that sessions begin on time. Side Walkers should arrive at ROCK no later than 15 minutes before their scheduled session time, and horse handlers should arrive no later than 30-45 minutes prior to their scheduled session time.

Assignment Boards- There are printed Assignment Boards located in the Tack Room and posted next to the Volunteer Department. These boards have the session schedule and volunteer assignments for the day. Please refer to the Assignment Board for the most up-to-date information. Please double check the arena you will be working in for your shift. You can view a live copy of the assignment board here: <https://bit.ly/3SgZZrN>.

Attendance- Regular attendance is very important. Whether you can commit to one hour or ten hours a week, we appreciate every hour you can give to ROCK. We ask that volunteers commit to a full session and/or set times. It is your responsibility to keep track of the days and times you have agreed to work.

Background Checks- All volunteers and staff are required to do a background check. ROCK pays for all expenses for a background check.

Cell Phones- No cell phones are allowed in the arena. If you feel you must carry your cell phone, please turn off the ringer. **Volunteers should never take calls in the middle of a session!** This is very disruptive and can be a safety hazard. If you have family members

experiencing an emergency and attempting to reach you, please have them call ROCK at 512-930-7625.

Clocking in: Each volunteer is issued an ID Badge with their name on the front. Upon arrival, sign in using the attendance sheet in the volunteer lounge. Please make sure you sign out as well. You can also go online and enter your hours: rockride.org/volunteer/Log into The Volunteer Portal / Report Hours.

Code of Conduct: It is mandatory that everyone comply with all posted safety rules and abides by all posted off-limits areas. ROCK is a no smoking facility and the use of drugs and alcohol on the property is strictly forbidden. No mistreatment, abuse, or suggested abuse of any person or animal will be tolerated. In accordance with the Texas Penal Code 30.07, ROCK does not allow the open carry of weapons on the premises. ROCK reserves the right to ask anyone to leave the premises.

Communication - Email is the primary mode of communication from the Volunteer Team to the volunteer. The email address used is rockateers@rockride.org. Please make sure this is not going into your spam folder.

COVID Policy- If you have COVID or any other illness we ask that you do not volunteer until you have been fever-free for 24 hours.

Day Care- Children under the age of 14 are not allowed at ROCK unless they are supervised by a parent or guardian. Children under the age of 14 are not permitted to act as volunteers. Volunteers must make prior arrangements for childcare.

Designated Areas- Only staff and volunteers are allowed beyond designated visitor areas. Off limit areas include, but are not limited to, the tack room, horse grooming area, stall areas, mounting area, west end of the arena, and the arena. There are designated visitor areas for families and visitors on the north (office) side of the arena.

Dismissal- Volunteers serve at the request of ROCK, Ride on Center for Kids. Volunteers who do not adhere to the policies and procedures of the organization are subject to the ROCK Volunteer Dismissal Policy. Any volunteer may request an opportunity to discuss the reasons for dismissal with the Volunteer Department staff and/or Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operations Officer, or Chief Programs Officer.

Doctor's Note – We value you as a volunteer and want to always ensure a safe and healthy environment for you. When you have been under a doctor's care due to illness or injury, we

do require a doctor's note releasing you to your volunteer duties before you return. You can bring the note in and give it to the Volunteer Team or have the doctor's office email it to rockateers@rockride.org. **You do not need to include any personal** information about the injury or illness, the note only states you can return to your volunteer duties.

Donations – ROCK gratefully accepts donations. There are many ways to help. Some ideas are listed below. Donors will be provided a ROCK contribution form, which can be used as a donation receipt for tax purposes.

Ways to help:

- Sponsor a rider by contributing to the financial assistance fund.
- Join the Horseshoe Club where you can feed or care for the needs of a therapy horse through a monthly, yearly, or one-time donation. Current sponsors and a list of needs are posted in the volunteer lounge.
- Make a donation in memory or honor of a special person, pet, or horse.
- Become a partner. There are many opportunities for you or your company to partner with ROCK. Contact us at 512-930-7625 and find out more information.
- Check if the company or corporation you work for matches donations. This is a great way to double your donation to ROCK.
- ROCK Wish List. It doesn't matter what season it is, ROCK is always in need of items; be it for humans or horses! With approximately 30 horses, 350+ participants, 300 volunteers, the arena and the land, the list just seems to grow. Please call ROCK for more information.
- Donate a Horse. If you feel your horse is ready for a rewarding career as a therapy horse, we invite you to contact our Equine Manager at 512-930-7625. ROCK is currently seeking middle-aged, more experienced horses for sale or donation.
 - Therapy Horse Criteria
 - Calm, patient, and friendly temperament with excellent ground manners.
 - Sound in all three gaits (walk, trot, canter or walk, jog lope).
 - Symmetrical confirmation with no injuries or vices.
 - Ideally between the ages of 8 and 20 years old.

- Training in a Western or English discipline preferred.
- Show ring experience a plus.

Dress Code- Volunteers should dress appropriately for horse related activities around children:

- Wear comfortable, safe shoes for walking in the sand. No sandals, crocs, or open toed shoes. No steel-toed shoes.
- Wear weather appropriate attire for physical activity (dress in layers).
- No tank tops, spaghetti straps, midriffs, or halter tops. No shorts with an inseam of less than 5 inches. No revealing clothing.
- No clothing advertising drugs, alcohol, firearms, or other inappropriate subject matter.
- No dangling jewelry that can get caught or tangled on straps or grabbed by small hands.

Feeding Horses - Never Hand Feed the Horses- Some of our horses may have dietary restrictions that you are not aware of. Please do not bring treats from home to feed the horses.

Fire/Medical Emergency: Fire extinguishers are located throughout the facility. They are bright red and clearly labeled. If a fire is growing larger and cannot be contained, all people will move inside the Hero's Trail. All instructors are trained in CPR. Any injury to a person at ROCK should be reported to the main office as soon as possible, and an incident report completed. Should it be necessary to call for emergency medical assistance, ask that the responding agency turn off their siren when approaching ROCK to avoid any discomfort to the horses and riders.

First Aid: First Aid equipment is in the main office, in the tack room, and at the Sport Clips Arena. Included in the first aid equipment are a blood pressure monitor (in the main office) and an AED defibrillator (in the tack room and at the Sport Clips Arena). An injury to anyone should be reported as soon as possible, and an incident report completed.

Hands on Training: Volunteers wishing to serve 'in the dirt' must complete a 2.5-hour training course conducted by our instructors. This training teaches you how to be a Side Walker and do emergency pull-offs. Successful completion of this course is required for anyone wishing to be a Side Walker.

- Side Walkers must demonstrate they can keep a participant safely on a horse during sessions and successfully dismount the participant in the event of an emergency.

Side Walkers must be able to lift 20 pounds, walk at a steady pace for 45 to 50 minutes in uneven dirt (similar to deep sand on a beach) and occasionally jog a short distance.

Heat Exhaustion / Stroke: Strenuous exercise during the hot summer months can cause dehydration to both humans and horses. Sweating, paleness, dizziness, severe headache, and nausea are observable symptoms of over-heating. The simplest prevention is to drink plenty of water. ROCK's temperature policy is that horses will not be ridden if the temperature + the humidity exceeds 115°.

Stay Hydrated- Participation at ROCK can require strenuous activity. It is very important – especially during summer months – to stay hydrated. Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day and take frequent breaks.

(ROCK's) Herd: ROCK's therapy horses are carefully screened for health, training, and temperament before they are accepted into the program. After screening, a horse undergoes a 90-day trial period to determine if it is a good candidate for the program.

Liability: As of September 1995, Texas enacted the following law:

- Texas Law (Chapter 87, Civil Practice and Remedies Code), an equine professional is not liable for the injury or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risk of equine activities.

Logging Hours: It is important that all volunteers log hours, as we often receive grant money based on the number of volunteer hours accumulated each year. Sign in using the attendance sheet in the volunteer lounge. Please make sure you sign out as well. The Volunteer Team is always available if you have any questions.

Lost and Found: We are not responsible for items left on the property. Found items will be placed in the lost and found box in the ROCKateer lounge, on the bench by the nametags. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity at the end of the program year.

Medical Conditions- If you have a medical condition that may affect your ability to safely perform your volunteer duties, please discuss this with the Volunteer Director prior to entering the arena for the first time.

Medications- Please be aware that some medications (such as allergy medications, pain medications, or muscle relaxers) may cause drowsiness or interfere with your reaction times. If you are experiencing any side effects from medication that may hinder your ability to safely perform your volunteer duties, please notify the Volunteer Team or your instructor.

Milestones: While we know you don't volunteer for the material rewards, we love to honor our volunteers for their many hours of service. We have 'milestones', gifts we give to volunteers as they accrue hours. (See [Logging Hours](#)) Here are the gifts you will receive:

- 50 hours – ROCK Red T-shirt
- 100 hours – Hard Plate Name Tag
- 200 hours – ROCK Baseball Cap
- 350 hours – ROCK Beanie
- 500 hours – ROCK Vest
- 1500 hours – ROCK Jacket

Name Tags- Always wear your name tag. It is very important that everyone knows who you are and what training you have had.

Non-Discrimination – ROCK maintains a policy of non-discrimination and is fully committed to the principles of equality in volunteer employment and opportunity for all, without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, age, or handicap. Volunteers will likewise not discriminate against a client, other volunteers, or ROCK staff based on the above-mentioned parameters.

Parking- Leave personal belongings locked in your car. ROCK is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Park in designated areas along the north side or east side of the building. Please do not block emergency thoroughfares and do not block trash dumpsters. ***The handicapped parking spaces and the spaces directly in front of the offices are reserved for participant parking only.***

PATH Int'l – ROCK is a PATH Int'l. Premier Accredited Center. PATH Intl. stands for Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International. It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that was formed in 1969 to promote equine assisted services. PATH Intl. is the

largest organization governing equine-assisted services promoting safety and optimal outcomes in equine-assisted services for individuals with special needs.

ROCK has been a Premier Accredited Center with PATH Intl. since 2000. This means that ROCK has voluntarily participated in a site visit from PATH Intl. to ensure that it is following the safety standards for horse care, service, and business set by PATH Intl. ROCK goes through reaccreditation every five years. Being a Premier Accredited Center means ROCK implements best practices for the industry.

Pets- Personal pets are not allowed on the property without the prior consent of the Chief Operations Officer or the Chief Programs Officer. While the State of Texas may approve of an animal being a service animal or emotional support animal, our horses do not know the difference and are easily spooked by other animals. This could be a safety hazard for our riders.

Physical Requirements- Volunteers working in the arena must be able to lift 20 pounds, walk at a steady pace in the dirt (similar to deep sand on the beach) for 45 to 50 minutes, and occasionally jog short distances.

Phones- ROCK phones and Emergency Plans are located in the tack room and front office as well as every office at ROCK. Familiarize yourself with these locations and emergency procedures.

Photo and Video Policy- ROCK controls what is posted on the ROCK Facebook page and other ROCK social media outlets. Please do not take photos of participants without the approval of the instructors, who will obtain permission from family members. It is best practice to monitor ROCK social media sites and share ROCK's posting in lieu of taking your own photos and posting.

Pregnancy Policy - Employees and Volunteers who know or believe they may be pregnant should report this to their supervisor immediately. A staff member or volunteer who is 18 or more weeks pregnant will not be allowed to mount and dismount participants, Side walk, Horse Handle, get horses from the pastures or stalls, groom horses, or ride ROCK horses.

Instructors and therapists may continue to teach and ROCK will provide the needed support (ex: extra Side Walkers).

It is recommended that staff/volunteers who are less than 18 weeks pregnant discuss their job duties with their physician.

Orientation & Tour: Anyone wishing to volunteer at ROCK must complete a 90-minute orientation and tour and agree to adhere to all ROCK policies, rules and safety guidelines. Volunteers will learn the history of ROCK, its mission, safety procedures, rules and regulations as well as an overview of volunteer opportunities at ROCK. (See [Volunteer Training](#)).

Resolutions for Conflict and Concerns: The purpose of this policy is to provide individuals with an orderly process for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints. ROCK leadership encourages people to discuss their concerns and complaints with the appropriate staff member or volunteer. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution. The Volunteer Team is available to discuss concerns they might have that prevent them from having a memorable experience while serving at ROCK.

ROCK Building: ROCK is a handicapped-accessible facility. The facility was built and is maintained to continue compliance.

- **Patti Colbert Learning Center:** This is a large room used for trainings and meetings. It has a large screen TV capable of video calls and meetings.
- **HEB Serving Kitchen:** Our kitchen is equipped with an ice maker, fridge, microwave, coffee maker, and warming oven.
- **Cecile Autrey Ham Family Room:** This room is a place for participants, families, and visitors to enjoy when at ROCK. The family room has a kitchen and bathroom for visitors and participants to use as well.
- **Welcome Center:** This is a large office area in the northeast corner of ROCK. It contains the front desk and many staff offices.
- **Offices:** Throughout the facility, there are staff offices. The Volunteer Team is located in the ROCKateer Office located on the east side of the building, by the ROCKateer Lounge (next to the restroom).
- **Lynne C. Christianson Therapy Gym:** This space contains therapy equipment for use during sessions. Helmets for riders are located here.

- **ROCKateer Lounge:** This room is for YOU, our volunteers. It gives you a space to warm up or cool down based on the weather. The ROCKateer Lounge has a refrigerator, microwave, filtered water, and a Keurig coffee maker. This is a place for volunteers to relax and enjoy the fellowship of other volunteers. The computer for clocking in for your shift is located in the ROCKateer Lounge.
- **Tack Room:** The tack room stores equipment and tack for the horses, and in the event of severe weather, the tack room is a category IV storm shelter.
- **Bathrooms:** Several public restrooms are located throughout the facility: two in the north breezeway (on either side of the picnic tables), one on the east side, next to the ROCKateer Lounge, one in the Ham Family Room, and one in the kitchen area. Each bathroom is an all-gender restroom.
- **Horse Stalls:** The stalls are located on the south side of the building. Please read and respect all signage. This area is for trained volunteers and staff only.
- **Hoppe's Work Room:** This room provides storage for equipment and cleaning supplies.
- **Merlin Hoppe Arena:** This is the main arena, Arena #1. Only Authorized staff, volunteers, and participants may enter the arena.
- **Sport Clips Heroes Arena:** Arena #2 is located south of Arena #1. Only Authorized staff, volunteers, and participants may enter the arena.

“(The) **ROCK Way**”- ROCK has many volunteers, participants and families that come through our gates each week. When working with our horses and our participants, we stress the importance of consistency. We ask that all our volunteers follow the procedures and techniques demonstrated in training when working with our horses and our participants. Following “The ROCK Way” helps guarantee a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone.

Safety Procedures: Following safety rules and procedures is required to protect the people, horses, and equipment at ROCK. Training is provided for volunteers and staff. Follow all signs that are posted throughout ROCK stating safety rules. Violators of safety procedures will be talked to and asked to leave the property if the behavior continues.

Solicitation of Goods and Services: The solicitation of goods and services is allowed at ROCK only on a case-by-case basis. Approval must be given in advance by the CEO, COO or the Chief Program Officer.

Staying informed: With over 300 volunteers a week, the majority of our volunteer communication is done by email. Please keep us informed with changes to your email address, and please check your email on a regular basis. Look for our email that comes out each Thursday at 5:00PM titled “Weekly Needs and Announcements”. All schedule changes and any questions can be sent to rockateers@rockride.org.

Suggestion Box: The goal is to help you. A suggestion box is located near the Welcome Center and is checked by staff regularly. Suggestions or comments can be placed in the box at any time.

Technology: Please follow ROCK on Facebook, and Instagram to see all that goes on at ROCK. You can also go to the website to keep up with ROCK or find answers to your questions.

Use of Facilities – ROCK has an open and welcoming environment. If you are new to ROCK and visiting before you become a registered volunteer, please check in at the Welcome Center. Please help us take care of the facilities for everyone by leaving areas the same or better than you found them.

Remember to be quiet while sessions are going on. Noise and lots of movement are disruptive and distracting to the horses and riders. ROCK has indoor and outdoor space available for participants, parents, staff, volunteers, and visitors to congregate away from the arena.

Weather Policy

ROCK instructors and therapists make every attempt to provide services, even in inclement weather. Sometimes, if riding is not possible, un-mounted horsemanship sessions may be given inside or goals will be worked on in the therapy room.

- Extreme Head & Cold

If temperature + humidity is over 115°, or if the RealFeel temperature drops below 32°, or if there is any inclement weather, alternative sessions will be held in the therapy room or other rooms to work toward the participant’s goals and objectives. For

consistency, the AccuWeather app on smartphones will be used to determine the weather. If Georgetown ISD cancels school, then ROCK will cancel sessions and no sessions will be held at ROCK inside or outside. If Georgetown ISD has a 2 hour delay, ROCK will have a 2 hour delay.

- Hailstorms

In the event of an impending significant hailstorm, classes will be stopped and all horses, participants, and volunteers will be removed from the arena. Horse Handlers will put horses in their stalls. All vehicles will be moved into the arena for their protection until the storm passes.

- Thunderstorms & Lightning

If lightning is 8 miles or less away, all mounted Equine Assisted Services will become unmounted for the hour. At least one member of staff will be designated to monitor the radar. Alternative lessons will be conducted indoors during this time. Horses will be untacked and stay in their stalls.

The decision to continue mounted activities during inclement weather or pending inclement weather when lightning is not present is made by instructors and therapists who are teaching that hour with the input from the Equine Team. Ground lessons will be offered at the discretion of the instructor or therapist.

- Tornado

If severe weather happens while you are at ROCK, the tack room is a category IV storm shelter. When the Emergency Broadcasting System indicates a severe storm warning, all people will be evacuated to the tack room for safety.

The Volunteer Team will call or text volunteers to inform you of sessions cancelled. You may also call the office or email the Volunteer Team at rockateers@rockride.org if you have questions. Keep in mind, cancellations may be at the last minute, and you may already be on campus or on your way – you will be notified as soon as decisions are made.

Part III - Volunteer Training

Numerous volunteer training courses are offered at ROCK. These courses cover ROCK procedures, reinforce safety practices, and promote volunteer involvement. At a minimum, all volunteers MUST complete New Volunteer Orientation & Tour. Depending on the role a volunteer wishes to fulfill, additional training courses may be required.

Training Requirements- All volunteer training is conducted by the Volunteer Team and Instructors. Prior to performing any volunteer service opportunity, volunteers must complete and pass all required training.

- **Orientation & Tour** - Anyone wishing to volunteer at ROCK must complete a 90-minute orientation and tour and agree to adhere to all ROCK policies, rules and safety guidelines. Volunteers will learn the history of ROCK, its mission, safety procedures, rules and regulations as well as an overview of volunteer opportunities at ROCK.
- **Hands on Training** - Volunteers wishing to serve 'in the dirt' must complete a 2.5-hour training conducted by our instructors. This training teaches you how to be a Side Walker and do emergency pull-offs. Successful completion of this course is required for anyone wishing to be a Side Walker.
 - Side Walkers must demonstrate they can keep a participant safely on a horse during sessions and successfully dismount the participant in the event of an emergency.
 - Side Walkers must be able to lift 20 pounds, walk at a steady pace for 45 to 50 minutes in uneven dirt (similar to deep sand on a beach) and occasionally jog a short distance.
- **Horse Handler Mentorship** - Volunteers apply for and must be accepted into the Horse Handler Mentorship program before becoming a Horse Handler.
 - Volunteers must demonstrate they can groom and tack a horse according to ROCK standards.
 - Volunteers will learn basic horse safety and procedures in leading a horse during classes.
 - Volunteers must have completed a total of 5 Arena Assistant and/or Side Walker sessions before they can start Horse Handler Mentorship training.

- Volunteers must remain active as a Side Walker and/or Arena Assistant while on the waitlist for Horse Handler Mentorship.
- Volunteers must be 16 years old to attend Horse Handler Mentorship training.

Volunteer Forms- Volunteers will be required to sign a variety of forms prior to any participation in ROCK activities. These forms include, but are not limited to:

- Online application
- Rules and Regulations
- Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment
- Volunteer/Staff Information Form and Health History
- Photo Release
- Liability Release
- Confidentiality Statement

Part IV - Volunteer Job Descriptions

Arena Assistant

Purpose:

To provide support to the instructors in the arena to ensure a smooth-running class, by assisting in opening / closing gates in the arena and gates leaving the arena towards the hero's trail, sensory trail, and trail riding. Assist the instructor in obtaining items as needed from the tack room or around the arena, and scoop poop after class. The arena assistant working the last shift will assist in putting away the pattern and support staff in closing. The Arena Assistant may be pulled to work as a Side Walker if there is a last-minute need for Side Walkers.

Pre-requisites:

Completion of Volunteer Orientation & Tour, Hands on Training, and successful completion of a background check.

Time commitment:

Commit to serving as an Arena Assistant (AA) no less than 1-hour per week or 4 shifts per month during the regular program year (September – May).

Responsibilities:

- Arrive 15 minutes before shift starts.
- Responsible for opening and closing all gates during the lesson.
- Obtain items from the tack room or other areas as requested by the instructor.
- Assist instructors as needed during class, such as helping hand out water during breaks.
- Scoop poop after class.
- Arena assistant working the last shift of the day will assist in clearing the pattern from the arena.
- Provide last-minute support as a Side Walker as needed.

Physical Requirements

Must be able to stand in the dirt for up to 45-minutes.

Must be able to open / close gates.

Preferred ability to scoop poop.

Side Walker

Purpose

Side Walkers aid the instructors to support the participant. These sessions tend to be very “hands on”. Side Walkers walk alongside the horse providing various levels of physical support to the participant.

Pre-requisites

Completion of Volunteer Orientation & Tour, Hands on Training, and successful completion of a background check.

Time-commitment

Commit to serving as a Side Walker (SW) no less than 1-hour per week or 4 shifts per month during the regular program year (September – May). When Side Walker shifts are not available on a regular basis, we ask that Side Walkers monitor the weekly needs and sub whenever possible.

Responsibilities

- Arrive 15 minutes before class starts.
- Based on instructor’s direction, provide support to the rider during their 45-minute sessions.

Physical Requirements

Must be able to walk/jog in the area for up to 45-minutes.

Must be able to hear and clearly understand the instructor with your back to them.

Equine Assistance Team (E.A.T)

Purpose

- The Equine Assistance Team provides vital support to our equine program by ensuring a clean and organized environment for our horses. This allows the ROCK Equine Team to focus on providing top-notch care and equine services.

Pre-requisites

- Completion of Orientation & Tour
- Completed Background Check

Time-commitment

- Two – four hours a month.
- Must be able to serve Monday – Friday between 9:00am – 3:00pm.

Responsibilities

- Mucking stalls.
- Cleaning and organizing the feed room and equipment.
- Maintaining a clean and sanitary wash rack area.
- Ensuring waterers are clean and functioning properly.
- Cleaning and maintaining pasture troughs.
- Cleaning and upkeep of the gator.
- Other cleaning/organizing tasks as needed.

Physical Requirements

- Must be able to lift ~25 lbs.
- Must be able to walk in uneven dirt.
- Must be able to stand without assistance for up to two hours.
- Must be comfortable around horses.
- Willingness to work hard and get dirty!

Horse Handler

Purpose

To get the horse from the pasture, prepare tack, groom the horse and lead the horse during class.

Pre-requisites

- Must be over 16 years old.
- Five (5) sessions in the dirt as an Arena Assistant and/or Side Walker.
- Must be an active Side Walker and / or Arena Assistant ('active' defined as volunteering no less than once a month in the last 2 months).
- Acceptance into the Horse Handler mentorship program.
- Successful completion of the Horse Handler mentorship program.

Time-commitment

Commit to serving as a Horse Handler (HH) no less than 1-hour per week or 4 shifts per month during the regular program year (September – May).

Responsibilities

- Arrive at least 30 minutes before class starts.
- Get the horse from the pasture.
- Groom and tack the horse.
- Do warm-ups before class.
- Take directions from the instructor to lead the horse during class.

Physical Requirements

Must be able to lift ~25 lbs.

Must be able to walk to and from the pasture.

Must be able to walk in the area for up to 45-minutes.

Must be able to jog for short amounts of time.

Must be able to hear and clearly understand the instructor with your back to them.

Pit Crew Level 1 (Lead)

Purpose:

- Assist Horse Handlers that are in back-to-back classes. Pit Crew Level 1 members will retrieve, groom and tack horses before class and return horses to their stalls or pasture.

Pre-requisites:

- Must be Horse Handler Trained.
- Must have completed Pit Crew Level 2 and Level 3

Time-commitment

- Commit to serving as a Pit Crew (PC) no less than 2-hours a week during the regular program year (September – May).

Responsibilities:

- Put tack out for Horse Handlers.
- Retrieve horses from stalls or pastures when needed.
- Groom and tack horse when needed.
- Turn horse out to pasture or lead to stall when needed.
- Put tack away from previous class.

Pit Crew Level 2 (Assistant)

Purpose:

- Assist Pit Crew Level 1, and Horse Handlers that are in back-to-back classes, the Pit Crew will prep horses for class and return horses to their stalls.

Pre-requisites:

- Must be Pit Crew trained.

Time-commitment

- Commit to serving as Pit Crew (PC) no less than 1-hour a week during the regular program year (September – May).

Responsibilities:

- Put tack out for Horse Handlers.
- Retrieve horse from stall when needed.
- Groom and tack horse when needed.
- Lead the horse back to the stall, when needed.
- Put tack away from previous class.

Pit Crew Level 3 (Basic)

Purpose:

- Assist Pit Crew Level 1 & 2, and Horse Handlers that are in back-to-back classes.
Pulling and putting away tack

Pre-requisites:

- Attend Orientation & Tour and successfully complete a background check.

Time-commitment

- Commit to serving as a Pit Crew (PC) no less than 1-hour a week during the regular program year (September – May).

Responsibilities:

- Following the oversight of the Pit Crew lead:
 - Put out tack for Horse Handlers.
 - Put tack away from previous class.

Grooming Team

Purpose

- The Grooming Team provides our horses with the extra love and attention they deserve, fostering their well-being and happiness and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Pre-requisites

- Must be a current horse handler, active in the last six months
Or
- Trained and active on the feed team at least once a month.
- Must Horse Handle at least one shift a month.
- Must have a strong understanding of safe and responsible horse handling practices.

Time-commitment

- Two – four hours a month
- Shifts available Monday – Friday, during regular business hours.
- Teams must always work in pairs.

Responsibilities

- Provide regular grooming sessions for the horses in the retirement retreat or quarantine (as approved) and all other horses at ROCK.
- Shower horses with love and attention, promoting their physical and mental well-being.
- When trained:
 - Assist with bathing, ensuring a clean and healthy coat for all horses.
 - Contribute to overall herd health by monitoring skin and coat conditioning.

Physical Requirements

- Must be able to lift ~25 lbs.
- Must be able to stand without assistance for up to two hours.
- Willingness to get wet, work hard, and get dirty!

Team Lead

Purpose:

- To provide leadership and oversight to volunteers in the stalls and tack room area.

Pre-requisites:

- Must be a Horse Handler (HH).

Time-commitment

- Commit to serving as a Team Lead (TL) no less than 4-hours a week during the regular program year (September – May).

Responsibilities

- Ensure successful organization and horse preparation for each scheduled class while serving as TL.
- Read the assignment board to learn which classes the TL is responsible for.
- Pull tack as needed.
- Groom horse as needed.
- Assist HH in grooming and tacking.
- Serve as a HH if needed for last minute cancellations.
- Warm up horse as needed.
- Provide support to volunteers with any questions.
- Report any concerns or scheduling discrepancies to the Volunteer Department promptly.
- Commitment to follow processes and the “ROCK Way” in working with horses, volunteers, and instructors.
- Ability to provide constructive guidance and support to volunteers respectfully.
- Willingness to accept feedback from staff when provided.

Welcome Wrangler

Purpose:

ROCK Welcome Wranglers are responsible for handling front office reception and administrative duties, including greeting guests, participants, and volunteers, answering phones, handling inquiries, and assisting staff with administrative and miscellaneous tasks.

Pre-requisites:

Completion of Volunteer Orientation & Tour and successful completion of a background check.

Be mentored for no less than one shift by a current Welcome Wrangler

Time-commitment:

Commit to serving no less than 2 hours a week per week year-round.

Responsibilities:

- Answer phones, efficiently log and route calls, take and relay messages.
- Openers will unlock black cabinets upon arrival, if not already done.
- Answer inquiries about ROCK for general information.
- Greet visitors warmly and make sure their needs are met.
- Assist participants and volunteers who may be calling in sick, inquiring about the schedule, training, etc.
- Ensure the reception area is tidy.
- Restock paper towels, toilet paper in all restrooms, volunteer lounge, Ham Family Room, and the kitchen.
- Always cover the desk. Notify a Business Office staff member if taking a break.
- Take credit card payments and file receipts.
- Help staff with miscellaneous projects.

Physical Requirements:

Must be able to sit for extended periods of time.

Facilities Assistance Team

Purpose

- The Facilities Assistance Team assists our facilities team by performing standard maintenance to our buildings and grounds.

Pre-requisites

- Completion of ROCK Safety Tour
- Completed Background Check

Time-commitment

- Two – four hours a month.
- Must be able to serve Monday – Friday between 9:00am – 3:00pm.

Responsibilities

- Mowing, weed eating
- Assist with cleaning stalls
- Operate gators
- Clear brush
- General cleaning, repairs of facility structures and outside plumbing
- Assist with fence building and repair
- Unloading, stacking of hay

Physical Requirements

- Must be able to lift ~25 lbs.
- Must be able to hear and understand directions from supervisor.
- Must be able to walk, stand, and work without the assistance of another adult.
- Must be comfortable around horses.
- Willingness to work hard and get dirty!

Part V – Safety Procedures for Working Around Horses

ROCK Horses are Working Horses

Working Around Horses

1. **Talking to a Horse:** Always speak to a horse in a calm, soothing and/or assertive voice.
2. **Approaching a Horse:** Speak to the horse before approaching to avoid startling him/her. Approach the horse from the side, never from the rear, so that the horse can see you approaching. Never run up to or after a horse.
3. **Walking Around a Horse:** Always walk around the front of the horse so they can see you clearly. Never walk under or over the tied lead rope. When walking around the back of a horse, walk close to its rear with your hand on its rump, and talk to the horse in a soothing voice, or walk at least one-horse length from the rear of the horse.
4. **Petting a Horse:** Pet a horse by placing a hand on its should or neck, not on the nose or face. The horse's nose is a sensitive spot, and some can be head shy.
5. **Watch your feet!** While a horse is very sure-footed by nature, it may accidentally step on a human's foot when balancing itself or turning around. Always be aware of where your feet are when working up close beside a horse. If a horse steps on your foot, DO NOT try to pull your foot out from under the horse's foot. Rather, reposition the horse so that it removes its own foot from yours.
6. **Miniature Horses:** Miniature horses are still horses. Follow the same procedures when working with our miniature horses as you would other horses.

Loose Horse: When a horse gets loose – either from the pasture or the stall area – loudly announce “Loose Horse!”

A volunteer from the grooming area needs to immediately close the front gate by the windmill.

The horse may be caught by a Horse Handler with a lead rope and halter. Do NOT chase a loose horse, follow the guidance of a staff person in catching the horse.

Approaching a Horse: Speak to the horse in a low, calm voice before approaching to avoid startling him. Approach a horse from the side, never the rear, so that the horse can see you. Keep a hand on the horse's body when walking around him. Always walk around a tied horse. Never walk under or over a lead rope.

Petting Horse: Pet a horse by placing a hand on his shoulder or neck, not on the nose. The horse's nose is a very sensitive spot.

Understanding Horse Behavior

Equine Senses

When developing relationships and working with horses, communication is key. It is critical to provide a safe environment in a therapeutic riding setting. Beginning a process of understanding the horse senses, instincts and implications is a step in predicting behaviors, managing risks and increasing positive relationships.

Smell: The horse's sense of smell is thought to be very acute and it allows him to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to evaluate situations.

Implications:

- Allow horses the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling.
- Do not have treats in your pocket since horses may desire to go after them.
- Please do not eat around horses or have food around horses. Volunteers are welcome to bring snacks and food if they volunteer multiple shifts, we ask that you keep these in the volunteer lounge.

Hearing: The horse's sense of hearing is also thought to be very acute. The horse may also combine their sense of hearing and sight to become more familiar with new or alerting sounds. "Hearing and not seeing" is often the cause of the fright / flight response. Note the positions of the horse's ears:

- Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest.
- Ears that are laid back often communicate they are upset and/or showing aggression towards another horse or person.

Implications:

- Horses are wary when they hear something but do not see it. If your horse is acting nervous, talk to him in a quiet and calm voice for reassurance.
- Avoid shouting or using a loud voice. This can be frightening to a horse.

- Watch your horse's ears for increased communication. Stiffly pricked ears indicate interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, inattentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion or illness. Flattened ears indicate anger, threat or fear. Ears flicking back and forth indicate attentiveness or interest.

Sight: The horse's eyes are set on either side of the head; there is good peripheral (lateral) vision, but poor frontal vision. A horse focuses on objects by raising and lowering its head. The horse's visual memory is very accurate. Horses are thought to see quite well in the dark, due to the large size of their eyes. There is still controversy as to whether or not horses see in color.

Implications:

- The horse may notice if something in the arena or out on the trail is different. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects. Introduce new props that the horse may be unfamiliar with.
- The horse has better peripheral vision; consider a slightly looser rein, enabling him to move his head when taking a look at objects.
- Although the horse has good peripheral vision, consider two blind spots: directly in front and directly behind. The best way to approach a horse is to his shoulder. It may startle him if you approach him from behind or directly in front. The horse may be unable to see around the mouth area, which is a safety concern when hand feeding (we do not hand feed at ROCK!).

Touch: Touch is used as a communication tool between horses and between horses and people. Horses are sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hand or legs.

Implications:

- Handlers should greet horses gently but firmly.
- Each horse has sensitive areas, and it is important to be familiar with them (i.e., flank and belly areas).
- Watch rider leg position. Riders may need appropriate assistance to reduce a "clothes pin" effect with their legs. Ask the instructor what the best handling technique is.
- Horses will often touch or paw at unfamiliar objects. For example, a horse may paw at a bridge or ground pole before crossing it.

Taste: Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects.

Implications:

- Taste is closely linked with smell and touch; therefore, a horse may lick or nibble while becoming familiar with objects and people. Be careful, as this could lead to possible biting.

Intuition: Horses do have a 'sixth sense' when evaluating the disposition of those around them. Horses can be hypertensive in detecting the moods of their handler and riders. A good therapy horse is chosen for their sensitive response to the rider. At times there may exist a personality conflict between handlers and horses. It is important to let the instructor know if you're having a difficult time relating to or getting along with a particular horse.

Flight or Fight as a Natural Instinct: Horses would rather turn and run away from danger than face it and fight it.

Implications:

- At a sudden movement or noise, the horse might try to flee. Speak to the horse calmly.
- A frightened horse that is tied up or being held tightly might try to escape by pulling back. Relax your hold or untie him quickly and usually he will relax. Be sure not to stand directly behind the horse.
- If flight is not possible, the horse could either turn to kick out or face the problem and rear, especially in a tight area like the stall. A halter with a lead rope may assist with maintaining control while working the horse in a stall.
- If a horse appears to be frightened or fearful (note the position of the horse's ears), it may be helpful to allow a more experienced horse handler to lead the horse.

Herd Animal:

Horses like to stay together in a herd or group with one or two horses dominant, with a pecking order amongst the rest.

Implications:

- Be aware that a horse may not like being alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving the arena or a horse loses sight of others while on a trail ride.
- Be aware that if the horse in front of a line is trotting or cantering, the horse that is following may also attempt to trot or canter.
- If one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected.
- For safety, it is recommended to keep at least one elephant's length between horses when riding withing a group to respect the horse's space and pecking order.

Part VI. Supporting Materials

Glossary of Physical and Cognitive Disabilities

The following are brief, non-medical descriptions of some disabilities and conditions of participants one might encounter in a therapeutic riding setting. This is not a complete list of disabilities one may encounter, nor is it intended as a comprehensive explanation of a specific disability. Rather, it is a general overview with an explanation of how therapeutic riding can be beneficial.

Some of our students may have more than one condition, such as cerebral palsy paired with cognitive delays. If you have questions or concerns about a particular student, please ask the instructor.

Amputations

- **Definition:** a limb or part of a limb may be surgically removed or not present, congenitally, or traumatically.
- **Types:** congenital, traumatic
- **Characteristics:** may experience phantom pain, balance, skin breakdown; prosthetics may be used.
- **Benefits:** balance, self-concept, fine motor skills, self-esteem, strength and coordination.

Arthritis

- **Definition:** Inflammatory disease of the joints
- **Types:** Osteo, rheumatoid and juvenile rheumatoid.
- **Characteristics:** Pain, inflammation, stiffness, joint degeneration, and loss of movement.
- **Benefits:** Gentle rhythmic movement to promote joint mobility, strengthen muscles, and relieve pain. Improved self-esteem and independence.

Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)

- **Definition:** A persistent state of inattention and/or hyperactivity and impulsiveness.
- **Characteristics:** Easily distracted, lack of focus, high energy levels, easily excitable, poor self-awareness and self-regulation.
- **Benefits:** The horse is a strong motivator to stay on task and practice self-control. Movement of the horse helps stimulate postural control and focus.

Autism Spectrum Disorders / Pervasive Developmental Disorders

- **Definition:** Impairment of social and communicative skills, behavioral dysfunctions, inattention, hyperactivity and/or impulsivity, and cognitive dysfunction. Accompanying conditions may include speech impairment, sensory integration dysfunction, learning disabilities, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and seizures.
- **Characteristics:** Poor social skills, behavioral challenges, odd patterns of behavior or speech, resistance to change/transitions, anxiety, and depression. See [AD/HD](#), Sensory Integration Dysfunction.

Cerebral Palsy (CP)

- **Definition:** Brain damage occurring before, at, or shortly after birth. It is a non-progressive motor disorder.
- **Types and Characteristics:**
- Spastic – hypertonicity with hyperactive stretch reflexes, muscle imbalances and imbalanced equilibrium. Increased startle reflex and other pathological reflexes.
- Athetoid – extensor muscle tension, worm-like movements, abnormal posturing and slow deliberate speech.
- Ataxic – poor balance, difficulty with quick, fine movements and are often described as having a ‘rag doll’ appearance. Common associated conditions; cognitive dysfunction; seizures; hearing defects; visual defects; general sensory impairment; perceptual problems; communication problems; emotional disturbance; learning disabilities.
- **Benefits:** Normalization of tone. Stimulation of postural and balance mechanisms, muscle strengthening and perceptual motor coordination. Improved self-esteem and independence.

Cerebral Vascular Accident – Stroke (CVA)

- **Definition:** Hemorrhage in the brain, which causes varying degrees of functional impairment.
- **Characteristics:** Flaccid or spastic paralysis of arm and leg on same side of body. May impair speech, sight, balance, coordination and strength.
- **Benefits:** Promotes symmetry, stimulates balance, posture, motor planning, speech and socialization.

Cognitive Disability (aka Developmental Disability, Intellectual Disability)

- **Definition:** Lack of cognitive ability to learn and/or perform at age-appropriate levels. Degree of disability is referred to as educable, trainable, severe or profound cognition.
- **Characteristics:** Developmentally delayed in all areas. Short attention span, easily frustrated.
- **Benefits:** Stimulates group activity skills, coordination, balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills, and eye-hand coordination. Provides a structured learning environment. Builds self-esteem, confidence, and independence.

Downs Syndrome (& other genetic disabilities)

- **Definition:** A genetic disability caused by a hereditary chromosomal abnormality or mutation.
- **Characteristics:** Developmental or cognitive disability, speech delays, poor muscle tone, altered physical appearance, heart and other health-related problems.
- **Benefits:** Stimulates group activity skills, coordination, balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills. Provides a structured learning environment. Builds self-esteem, confidence, and independence.

Emotional Disabilities:

- **Definition:** A congenital or acquired syndrome often compounded by learning and/or physical disabilities incorporating numerous other pathologies.
- **Characteristics:** Trouble coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relations. Behaviors such as short attention span, avoidance, aggression, autism, paranoia or schizophrenia may be exhibited.
- **Benefits:** Increase feelings of self-confidence and self-awareness and provide appropriate social outlet. Promotes human-animal bonding and develops sense of responsibility towards living creatures.

Epilepsy:

- **Definition:** Abnormal electrical activity of the brain marked by seizures with altered consciousness.
- **Types and Characteristics:**
 - Petit-mal: brief loss of consciousness with loss of postural tone. May have jerky movements, blank expression.

- **Benefits:** Stimulates self-confidence, balance, posture, and coordination. It also provides appropriate social outlets and interactions.

Hearing Impairment:

- **Definition:** Congenital or acquired hearing loss varying from mild to profound.
- **Characteristics:** Communication difficulties may use lip reading or sign language.
- **Benefits:** Stimulates self-confidence, balance, posture, and coordination. It also provides appropriate social outlets and interactions. Promotes sensory integration and human-animal bonding.

Learning Disabilities – (LD)

- **Definition:** Catch-all phrase for individuals who have problems processing, sequencing and problem solving but who appear to have otherwise normal intelligence skills.
- **Characteristics:** Short attention span, easily frustrated, immature sensory processing deficits.
- **Benefits:** Effects depend upon the particular disorder. Stimulates attention span, group skills, cooperation, and language skills. Improves posture, coordination, and sensory integration.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

- **Definition:** Progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts, resulting in scar formation, and eventual loss of function.
- **Characteristics:** Most commonly occurs in the 20- to 40-year-old range. It is progressive with periods of exacerbation and remissions. Fatigues easily. Symptoms include weakness, visual impairment, fatigue, loss of coordination and emotional sensitivity. Associated problems include impaired bowel and bladder function.
- **Benefits:** Maintains and strengthens weak muscles and provides opportunities for emotional therapy.

Muscular Dystrophy (MD)

- **Definition:** Deficiency in muscle nutrition with degeneration of skeletal muscle. Hereditary disease that mainly affects males.

- **Characteristics:** Progressive muscular weakness, fatigue easily, sensitive to temperature extremes. Common associated conditions: Lordosis, respiratory infections.
- **Benefits:** Provides opportunity for group activity, may slow progressive loss of strength, stimulates postural and trunk alignment, and allows movement free of assistive devices.

Polio:

- **Definition:** Infectious viral infection
- **Characteristics:** Flaccid paralysis, atrophy of skeletal muscle often with deformity.
- **Benefits:** Strengthens non-paralyzed muscles, stimulates postural symmetry.

Scoliosis

- **Definition:** Lateral curve of the spine with a “C” or “S” curve with rotary component.
- **Characteristics:** Postural asymmetry may wear scoliosis jacket or have had stabilization surgery. (Note: severe scoliosis is a contraindication for therapeutic riding.)

Seizure Disorder:

- **Definition:** Seizures are the result of, and the manifestation of, a disruption in the normal electrical activity of the brain. Seizures are often not the primary diagnosis, but an additional medical problem resulting from another condition such as autism, brain injury, cerebral palsy, infection, etc.
- **Characteristics:** They may appear as a momentary loss of consciousness, convulsive body movement, and/or sensory disturbances.
- **Benefits:** Offers team building and a sense of belonging. Provides the student with a feeling of empowerment and control over his/her body.

Sensory Integration Dysfunction

- **Definition:** Hypersensitivity (or hyposensitivity) to one or more senses (vision, touch, smell, hearing, taste, movement, and position).
- **Characteristics:** Aversion to loud, sudden noises; tactilely defensive or seeks deep pressure; poor motor control; sensitivity to light; easily over-stimulated by visual or

auditory stimuli; seeks oral stimulation; unable to block out 'white noise'; easily confused or overwhelmed; difficulty regulating behavior. See also [Autism](#).

- **Benefits:** Therapeutic riding provides input to all the sensory systems, particularly movement and position awareness. Movement of the horse helps regulate processing of stimuli, improves focus, and decreases sensitivity. Improves self-awareness, self-regulation, and independence.

Spina Bifida

- **Definition:** Congenital failure of vertebra arch closure with resultant damage to spinal cord.
- **Characteristics:** Varying degrees of paralysis of the lower limbs coupled with sensory loss. Common associated conditions; Infection, lordosis, scoliosis and hip dislocations, hydrocephalus, and incontinence.
- **Benefits:** Stimulates posture and balance, improves muscle strength and self-image.

Spinal Cord Injury

- **Definition:** Trauma to the spinal cord resulting in a loss of neurological function.
- **Characteristics:** Paralysis of muscles below the level of injury – can be flaccid or spastic. Easily fatigued, sensory loss.
- **Benefits:** Stimulates posture and balance, strengthens trunk muscles, is an option for sports participation and recreation.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):

- **Definition:** Accidental injury to the head resulting in intracranial bleeding with death of brain cells.
- **Characteristics:** Gross and fine motor skills deficits. Often have impaired memory, speech, balance and/or vision. May have psychological effects.
- **Benefits:** Stimulates balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills, speech and perceptual skills.

Visual Impairment:

- **Definition:** Moderate to total loss of sight.
- **Characteristics:** Insecure posture, lack of visual memory, anterior center of gravity, fearfulness. May have light sensitivity if partially sighted.

- **Benefits:** Stimulates spatial awareness, proprioception, posture, and coordination. Provides social outlet, structured risk taking, and freedom movement.

Horseman's Talk

If you want to talk with horse people, you should know the words they use to describe horses and horse terms. Here are some of the most common terms:

Stallion:	A mature male horse that can be used for breeding.
Mare:	A mature female horse of over four years of age.
Foal:	A young horse of either sex still with its mother.
Colt:	A young male horse under four years of age.
Filly:	A young female horse under four years of age.
Weanling:	A young horse of either sex that has just been taken from its mother. It is usually between 6 months and 1 year of age.
Yearling:	A horse that is officially 1 year old.
Gelding:	A male horse that has been castrated or altered. Most male riding horses are geldings.
Pony:	A mature equine of either sex that is under 14.2 hands high (58 inches). Do not confuse ponies with foals that will grow larger than 14.2 hands when they mature.
Mule:	A cross between a horse and a donkey.
Tack:	Bridles, saddles, and other equipment worn by the horse.
Green:	An untrained or inexperienced horse.
Off-Side:	The right side of the horse.
On-Side:	The left side of the horse. Also called the 'near' side.
Hands:	The method of measurement. One hand equals four inches. The horse is measured from the ground to the withers, the highest part of his backbone just behind the neck.

When you meet a person with a disability

1. **Be yourself.** Relate to a person with a disability the same way you relate to other people. Use conversation and social behavior that you might use in any new situation.
2. **Allow the person with a disability to be himself/herself.** With or without disabilities, each of us is a unique individual.
3. **Appreciate what a person with a disability can do.** Once you get to know him/her, his/her interests and his/her ability may surprise you. Remember that the difficulties the person may be facing could stem from society's attitudes and barrier rather than from the disability itself. Disabled people generally do not view themselves to be as disabled as society perceives them to be.
4. **Explore mutual interest in a friendly way.** Talk about the disability if it comes up naturally, but don't try. Develop a friendship by showing an interest in the person, not his/her disability. Most people prefer to have someone ask them about their disability rather than receiving stares.
5. **Be patient.** Let the person with the disability set the pace for walking, talking, and other activities. Be considerate of the extra time it might take to accomplish something or respond to something.
6. **Do not separate a person with a disability from a wheelchair, crutches or other aids unless he/she asks.** These aids may need to be nearby.
7. **Offer encouragement but not pity.** The person with the disability wants to be treated as an equal in all things. Give him/her a chance to prove himself/herself.
8. **Respect a person's independence.** He/she may prefer to do things for himself/herself. Wait until help is needed or requested. Do not overwhelm the person with help or insist upon helping when he/she is managing alone.
9. **Enjoy yourself.** Do not be afraid to laugh and have fun. You will be developing a friendship with a person from whom you may learn a great deal about life and how to live it.

Beatitudes For Friends of the Disabled

Blessed are you, who take the time to listen to difficult speech, for you help me know that if I persevere I can be understood.

Blessed are you who never bid me to 'hurry up' or take my tasks and do them for me, for often I need time rather than help.

Blessed are you who stand beside me as I enter new and untried ventures because for me, failures will be outweighed by the times I surprised you and myself.

Blessed are you who understand that it is difficult for me to put my thoughts into words.

Blessed are you who, with a smile, encourage me to try once more.

Blessed are you who never remind me that today I ask the same question twice.

Blessed are you who respect me and love me as I am, just as I am.

Choosing Words With Dignity

When talking about a person with a disability, make reference to the person first, not the disability. For example, "people with intellectual disabilities", not the intellectually disabled.

The referred terms focus attention on the uniqueness and worth of the individual rather than emphasizing the disabling condition. Words such as defective, deformed, invalid, lame, maimed, spastic and crippled imply pity, infirmity and general lack of competence. People are neither invalid nor defective. People are not spastic, muscles are. By choosing words carefully, positive images can be conveyed about people with disabilities.

AVOID: *Cripples*

Use: Person with physical disabilities, person who is physically challenged.

AVOID: *Stricken with*

USE: Person who uses a wheelchair, crutches, etc.

AVOID: *Afflicted with blindness*

USE: Person who is blind or visually impaired.

Glossary of Equine Terminology

This glossary is intended to familiarize audiences with equine terms commonly used in a riding lesson when referring to equitation, training, gaits, and behavior. This document is not a complete representation of the many terms that are currently used.

Aids / Queues	Signals the rider gives to the horse to control speed and directions. a. Natural aids/queues: leg, seat, weight, hands, and voice. b. Artificial aids/queues: whip, spurs, martingale
Bareback Pad	A pad with a girth that can be used instead of a saddle to provide comfort for the horse and a closer feel for the rider.
Bend	In relation to the horse shaping his body slightly to the curve of a circle or turn; the response of the horse to bend his body around the rider's leg.
Billets	The strap on the saddle to which the girth is buckled.
Bit	The part of the bridle that goes into the horse's mouth, used to control the horse.
Bit Rings	The part on the ends of the bit to which the reins and bridle attach.
Bridle	A head harness for guiding a horse; it consists of a headstall, bit and reins.
Change of rein/ direction	To reverse direction.
Crest	The part of the neck that forms the arch.
Croup	Located on the top of the rump between the tail and the point of the hip.
Driving aids/ queues	The combination of seat and legs used to drive the horse forward.
Figure eight	Riding two connecting circles; a schooling figure.
Flexion	Bending of the horse's neck and body with relaxation of the jaw in response to direction aids/queues.
Forehand	The front section of the horse; forelegs, shoulder, neck and head.

Free Walk	A walk on a 'loose rein' (long rein) to allow the horse to stretch his neck.
Gait	The way of going places, walk, trot, lope, canter, gallop.
Girth	Usually made of leather, nylon, or cotton, the girth is a wide strap that goes around the horse and buckles to the saddle to hold it in position.
Grazing Muzzle	Made of nylon and rubber, this is fitted to the horse's head to prevent them from overeating.
Gullet	The open channel that runs the length of the saddle on the bottom. It keeps the saddle off the horse's spine.
Halter	A bitless headstall for tying or leading an animal.
Haunches	The hind quarters of a horse.
Horse Length	The suggested distance between horses (eight feet).
Impairment	A loss or abnormality of a specific body function.
Inside leg	The leg on the inside of the arena (or) the bend of the horse.
Jog	A slow trot in western riding.
Lame	A term used to describe an injury that prevents the horse from being ridden; also 'not sound'.
Lead Rope	A rope used to lead the horse.
Leg yielding	Moving the horse sideways and forward, usually with one's leg.
Lengthening of stride	Increasing the length of the stride within a set frame.
Muzzle	The nose and mouth area of the horse.
Near side	The left side of the horse.
Off side	The right side of the horse.
On the bit	The position of the horse's head; the face is close to vertical, neck slightly arched with light contact on the reins.
Outside leg	The rider's leg on the outside of the arena or turn (bend, circle).

Posting	“Rising trot” – the rising and descending of the rider with the horse at the trot.
Saddle	The padded leather seat used to provide comfort for the horse and security for the rider.
Schooling Figures	Movements performed to train the horse and rider.
Sidepull	The bitless bridle used in therapy lessons. Reins are clipped to rings on the sides of the noseband and a lead rope is attached to a ring on the underside of the noseband.
Sitting trot	The rider sits deep in the saddle and maintains contact with the saddle while trotting.
Serpentine	Series of circles and straight lines crossing from one side of the arena to the other, schooling exercise.
Shortening of Stride	Decreasing the length of the stride with a set frame.
Snaffle bit	Has two rings and a mouthpiece, which is usually jointed and made of smooth metal, nylon, or rubber. It works by direct pressure. A fairly mild bit.
Stride	One complete circuit of the stepping of all four feet.
Stirrup	The part of the saddle that the rider’s foot rests in.
Surcingle	A wide strap that buckles around the horse and holds the saddle blanket in place instead of the saddle. It may have one or two handles, or it may be flat.
Tack	(Noun) The term used for the equipment put on the horse for work, such as: bridle, saddle, saddle pad, bareback pad and surcingle. (Verb) to put on the horse’s equipment.
Track right	Riding with the right rein to the inside of the arena (right rein).
Track left	Riding with the left rein to the inside of the arena (left rein).

Transition	To change from one gait to another, changing the stride within the gait (i.e., lengthen, shorten, downward trot...walk).
Withers	Located at the base of the neck, a bony protrusion of the spine.

Part VII - What Do I Do Now?

After you have completed training, if you would like to move forward to becoming a ROCKateer, email the Volunteer Team at rockateers@rockride.org and ask that your background check be processed. This is done at no cost to the prospective volunteer, but you **MUST** ask for it to be processed. After your background check has been cleared, you will be contacted for scheduling. Once you have been placed on the schedule, it is your responsibility to remember your days and times.

Remember to arrive at least fifteen minutes before your scheduled session if you are a Side Walker and at least forty-five minutes before your scheduled session if you are a horse handler.

When you arrive:

- Sign in using the attendance sheet in the volunteer lounge.
 - You can also go online and register your hours (rockride.org/volunteer) if needed.
- Check the Assignment Board for your assignment (located by the volunteer office and in the tack room).
- Horse Handlers check the tack room door and whiteboard for the latest horse updates.
- Check with your instructor for any special instructions regarding the therapy goals for the participant you will be working with.
- Remember when you are in the arena to **ALWAYS take your directions from the instructor.**
- When the session is over, make sure you sign out in the Volunteer Lounge or record your total hours for the day from home.

Key Points to Remember

Check your email regularly!

Our main form of communication is through email. Always email the volunteer department at rockateers@rockride.org with any schedule changes. “Weekly Needs” comes out each Thursday at 5:00pm for you to select additional classes to volunteer for in the coming week.

For urgent communication

If urgent (24 hours or less) call the office at 512-930-7625 Ext. 325. Our offices open at 9:00am, Monday – Friday. (Emails ARE checked on weekends and after hours).

Schedule changes

Please acknowledge receipt of all schedule changes, this ensures we know you have received the information.

Scheduled absences

For scheduled days off, please email us **BEFORE NOON** the Thursday prior to your scheduled day off.

Doctor’s Note:

If you’re out due to injury or medical procedures, we do need a doctor's note before you return confirming your doctor releases you to volunteer duty. This can either be emailed to rockateers@rockride.org, or brought into the volunteer office.

Non-planned schedule changes

When emergencies occur, email us at rockateers@rockride.org ASAP.

****Failure to show up for class without communicating could result in suspension or termination (Our participants need you!) ****

Dress code

No ‘short shorts’, nothing more than 4” above your knees. No tight tank tops or crop tops. No open toe shoes, no steel toe boots.