

High Desert Riders

Trail Ride Leadership and Rider Guidelines

Safety: Safety is of the highest priority. Safety for all participants; rider and horse or mule. All participants on an HDR ride MUST sign in on the participant roster prior to the start of the ride. This can be done during the safety talk.

1. Leadership of rides:

- a. All trail rides organized by and for the High Desert Riders will have a minimum of two (2) Trail Leaders. The Trail Leaders are responsible for holding a safety meeting of all participants immediately prior to the start of the ride, at the trail head.
- b. One Leader will lead the group out and the second Leader will ride drag. Communication devices should be carried by the leaders when a group exceeds ten (10) participants not including the Leaders.
- c. When the ride group exceeds fifteen (15) riders a third Leader should be designated to ride approximately in the middle of the group line.
- d. The Drag Rider Leader (and any other support leader(s)) is/are responsible for notifying the trail ride Lead Rider of any problems that occur that may require a temporary halt to the ride. i.e., tack repair or adjustment, lamed horse, injured horse or rider, etc.
- e. The Ride Leader should, at the safety talk, attempt to determine if there should be two (2) ride groups. An advanced group and a less skilled group. Or, a fast riding group and a slower group. If it is determined that two (2) (or more) groups are needed, two (2) or more Ride Leaders need to be designated for each group.

2. Safety on the ride:

- a. All ride participants must sign in on the ride roster and note any medical or horse problems that may occur. E.g., asthma, inhaler in saddle bag. Or, heart condition, meds in right front pocket.
- b. Prior to the start of the ride, all potential problem horses/mules must be identified. (Those that tend to kick, bite, spook easily, etc.) Red ribbon on kickers.
- c. All riders should attempt to keep at least a one (1) full horse length space between themselves and the horse immediately in front of them.

- d. When one (1) rider (or more) needs to stop the entire group must stop and not begin again until everyone is mounted and fully prepare to ride on. The stop may be because of a potty break, loose saddle, broken equipment, loose shoe, etc.**
- e. The progress of the ride should not be any faster than the speed of the slowest horse/mule and rider.**
- f. At a break in the ride (lunch or a rest stop) all riders must be mounted and prepared to ride out before the Ride Leader leads out. On large group rides the support Leaders are responsible for advising the Leader when all are ready.**
- g. When riding up or down hill or at a water crossing avoid passing other horses and be sure to allow plenty of space between horses. Do not run your horse up hill.**
- h. At narrow water crossings wait until the horse in front of you has cleared the water before you enter the water. Don't forge ahead as you might spook the horse in front of you and footing could be dangerous.**
- i. Shortly after starting a ride the Ride Leader should stop the ride and remind all riders to check their cinch tightness and other equipment for any needed adjustments.**
- j. During a ride, if one rider is to pass another, the rider passing must announce his/her intent to pass by saying loudly enough to be heard, "passing on the right (or left)". The rider being passed should acknowledge he/she heard the passing rider and say "OK" or come ahead. Passing should not be done any faster than an easy controlled trot.**
- k. Ride Leaders should periodically take a head count to be sure no one is missing. This is especially important after a rest stop.**
- l. Any rider or riders separating from the group during the ride must report their intention to separate from the group to the Ride Leader.**

3. Following the ride:

- a. It is best if all participants are prepared to leave the trailhead at the same time.**
- b. Under no circumstances should a participant be left at the trailhead alone unless it is clear there are no animal or mechanical problems that might result in the participant being stranded.**
- c. It is the Trail Ride Leaders responsibility, assisted by his/her support leaders, to make note and report any problems that occurred, recommendations for changes to ride procedures and especially to log and report any accidents that occurred. These reports should be made at the next Trail Committee meeting and when appropriate to the next general membership meeting. An injury accident requiring medical attention other than basic first aid must be reported to the Board as soon as possible.**

Some general questions (Not part of the ride leadership guidelines)

- 1. Is a ride organizer the same as the Trail Ride Leader? Maybe not**
- 2. If there are forms to be used at rides, who is responsible to:**
 - a. Store the blanks**
 - b. Keep the completed forms**
 - c. See that the Trail Ride Leader has the forms for any specific ride.**
 - d. Where are first aid and communication devices to be stored and how are they to be gotten to each ride.**
- 3. Recommendation: HDR purchase at least two (2) cante bags and stock them with human and equine first aid supplies. At least one should be taken on every ride.**