



Healing through Horses

Volunteer Manual

www.chastainhorsepark.org

4371 Powers Ferry Road, NW

Atlanta, Georgia 30327

404-252-4244



*Ensuring excellence and changing lives
through equine-assisted activities and therapies*

Who We Are

We are an inclusive community of trainers, volunteers, and instructors serving children, teens and adults that come from all walks of life, all ages, all abilities and all geographies surrounding the greater Atlanta area. Through our Therapeutic Program, we serve individuals with a broad range of physical, cognitive and emotional abilities and all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Mission

Our mission is to empower individuals of all abilities through life-changing relationships with horses.

Vision

Our vision is to become the model recognized by professional equestrian organizations throughout the U.S. for bringing participants of all abilities together into a single inclusive community.

Who We Serve

Our Therapeutic Program, serves individuals with a broad range of physical, cognitive and emotional abilities and all socioeconomic backgrounds. Through our School and Border Programs, we provide opportunities for beginner, intermediate and advanced participants to excel in the sport of horsemanship.

Find Us On Social Media: @chastainhorsepark



THERAPEUTIC PROGRAM AT CHASTAIN HORSE PARK

Welcome to Chastain Horse Park! Thank you for your interest in joining our passionate and vibrant volunteer community. Volunteers, alongside our horses, are the heart of our Therapeutic Program and Equine-Assisted Services. Your time and dedication help us serve a diverse community of participants, enriching their lives in meaningful ways.

Our program could not exist without volunteers—your assistance with our participants and care for our horses is essential. If you have any questions or concerns about your role, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator:

 Email: volunteer@chastainhorsepark.org

 Phone (Call or Text): 256-749-3983

Equine-Assisted Services at Chastain Horse Park

Chastain Horse Park (CHP) is a PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center, dedicated to providing safe, high-quality equine-assisted services. We strictly adhere to PATH Intl. standards, ensuring:

- Safety and well-being of participants
- Excellence in facility and program management
- Humane treatment of equines

All therapeutic program instructors are certified by PATH Intl., the leading authority in equine-assisted services. Our goal is to maximize each participant's abilities through customized private or group sessions. We serve individuals with cognitive, emotional, and physical disabilities, tailoring programs to their unique needs. Learn more at www.pathintl.org

The Therapeutic Benefits of Equine Movement

For over 40 years, medical professionals have utilized equine movement as a therapeutic tool.

The rhythmic motion of a horse can enhance:

- ✓ Motor skills and coordination
- ✓ Cognitive development and focus
- ✓ Emotional regulation and self-esteem

Mental health professionals increasingly use equine-assisted activities to support emotional and psychological well-being, with studies showing improvements in:

- Self-concept and confidence
- School performance and social skills
- Emotional regulation and reduced aggression

Equine-assisted services provide a unique environment for learning cooperation, self-control, and personal growth through the power of the horse-human connection.

Understanding Equine-Assisted Services at Chastain Horse Park

Equine-assisted services encompass multiple disciplines where professionals incorporate horses to support human development and well-being. These services fall into three distinct categories:

1. Therapeutic/Adaptive Horsemanship

This non-therapy service focuses on riding and horsemanship for individuals with diverse needs.

Qualified professionals design lesson plans that may include:

- ✓ Mounted and unmounted activities
- ✓ Creative games to develop horsemanship skills
- ✓ Physical, social, and emotional benefits

Benefits include:

- Physical: Improved fitness, balance, coordination, and posture
- Social: A sense of community through interaction with horses, instructors, and peers
- Emotional: Increased self-confidence and well-being through human-horse connections

Session Details:

- Taught by a certified instructor with a volunteer team (that's you!)
- Includes grooming, tacking, and horse care skills
- Participants are placed in private or group lessons (max 6 riders) based on skill level, goals, and age
- Minimum age: 4 years old

2. Therapy Services

CHP partners with My Heroes Therapy and K-Equine to provide licensed therapy services, where equine movement is incorporated into treatment plans by medical professionals. These services may include:

- ✓ Occupational Therapy
- ✓ Physical Therapy
- ✓ Speech-Language Pathology
- ✓ Psychotherapy & Behavioral Health Counseling

Therapists use evidence-based practices to improve:

- Sensorimotor and neuromotor function
- Cognitive and behavioral health
- Emotional and psychological well-being

Session Details:

- Led by a licensed therapist within their scope of practice
- Supported by a certified equine specialist and trained volunteers
- Minimum age: 2 years old

3. Community Outreach: Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL)

Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL) is a non-therapy service designed to support personal growth, leadership, and education through hands-on equine experiences. These programs serve:

- Education: Schools integrating life skills, leadership, and academic learning
- Organizations: Team-building and leadership development for corporate and community groups
- Personal Development: Coaching for decision-making, communication, and problem-solving

CHP's Outreach Program includes:

- ✓ Mounted and unmounted sessions
- ✓ Field trips for school and community groups
- ✓ Scout programs to earn badges

These experiences build self-confidence, communication skills, and social interaction, providing a non-judgmental environment for growth.

For more information, email: therapeutic.lessons@chastainhorsepark.org

VOLUNTEERING AT CHASTAIN HORSE PARK

Make a Difference in Someone's Life

Why Volunteers Matter

Each week, CHP serves approximately 100 participants, filling almost 1300 spots a month. Maintaining consistent volunteer support is essential for both our participants and horses. Volunteers are an integral part of our daily operations, and many find the experience just as rewarding and therapeutic as our participants do.

Who Volunteers at CHP?

Volunteers come from all walks of life, including:

- ✓ High school students fulfilling graduation requirements
- ✓ College students gaining hands-on vocational experience
- ✓ Job seekers building resumes and maintaining a schedule
- ✓ Retirees staying active and engaged
- ✓ Parents and children looking for a meaningful activity together
- ✓ Individuals completing mandatory community service
- ✓ Corporate and community groups seeking team-building opportunities
- ✓ Anyone looking to give back and be part of a vibrant, horse-centered community

Working alongside our staff and equine partners, volunteers directly impact lives by ensuring the success of our Equine-Assisted Services. Without you, we cannot serve our community!

The CHP Way – Consistency is Key

To serve our community best, one of our main priorities is to fill lesson slots with volunteers to support our mission. The two primary volunteer roles are:

- Sidewalker – Walks beside the participant during the lesson, ensuring their safety and providing support as needed.
- Horse Leader – Manages the horse during the lesson, ensuring its safety and proper handling.

Detailed descriptions of these roles, including emergency procedures, are provided in the following sections.

Volunteers may also have opportunities to assist with special events, fundraisers, and facility-related tasks.

Regardless of your prior experience with horses, disabilities, or nonprofit work, we ask all volunteers to follow “The CHP Way.”

Why? With hundreds of volunteers, consistency is essential to maintaining quality programming and positive experiences for both horses and participants. We follow standardized procedures and best practices to ensure a smooth, effective operation.

If you have any questions about why we do things a certain way, please ask a staff member—we are happy to explain!

CRITERIA & GUIDELINES TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY AS A VOLUNTEER:

To volunteer at Chastain Horse Park, you must meet the following requirements:

- Volunteers must be at least 14 years old.
- Volunteers must complete our volunteer form, which includes a signed and dated waiver of liability. This form must be reviewed and updated annually.
- All volunteers must attend a New Volunteer Orientation and complete training with Chastain Horse Park staff.
- Volunteers are expected to follow all Chastain Horse Park policies, including safety rules and procedures.
- Volunteers must be able to respond appropriately to staff instructions.
- Volunteers must remain attentive to both the horse and the participant during sessions.
- Volunteers should be able to follow emergency procedures if needed.
- Only perform tasks you have been trained for.
- We value reliability. While flexibility is possible, we prefer volunteers who can commit to a regular schedule.
- Session volunteers must be physically able to walk on arena footing for 30–60 minutes and jog short distances as needed.
- Volunteers must not have any convictions for sexual offenses or violent crimes. We work with vulnerable individuals—children, older adults, people with disabilities—and with animals, so a safe environment is critical.

Reasonable accommodations can be discussed and set for interested volunteers requiring possible adaptations. We are happy to discuss alternative options for individuals when safety is a concern.

SCHEDULING & CLOSURES

Chastain Horse Park operates year-round, thanks to Georgia's mild climate and our covered arenas. To provide consistent support for our participants and equine partners, we ask volunteers to commit to at least one (1) hour per week at the same day and time for the duration of a semester.

We understand that emergencies may arise. If you cannot attend your scheduled session, please notify us as soon as possible.

Volunteer Scheduling

- CHP offers therapeutic services five (5) days a week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday.
- We operate year-round on a semester-based schedule: Fall, Spring, and Summer sessions.
- Sessions typically run from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM.
- Volunteers should commit to a specific day and time each session.
- Those unable to commit to a recurring schedule may join our substitute list or help with special tasks.

Consistent volunteers provide the most positive experience for everyone involved—especially our participants. If you sign up as a recurring volunteer, please review your calendar in advance and inform us of any planned absences so we can arrange a substitute.

Commitment & Scheduling:

- Sign up only for shifts you can reliably commit to
- Notify us as early as possible if you need to cancel or reschedule
- Sign up to be a substitute!

Your consistency helps us provide the best possible experience for everyone involved.

HOLIDAYS & CLOSURES

Chastain Horse Park will be closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve

CANCELLATIONS

CHP has a strict cancellation policy to ensure consistency for our participants and equine partners. We expect all clients, volunteers, and staff to honor their commitments. However, we understand that emergencies occur.

- If you need to cancel more than 24 hours in advance, please text, call, or email volunteer@chastainhorsepark.org
- If you must cancel within 24 hours of your scheduled shift, please call AND text the volunteer line at 256-749-3983

If a participant cancels last-minute or does not show up, volunteers are encouraged to refer to the barn chores list in the visitor lounge for alternative tasks.

Last Minute Cancellations

Volunteer absences directly impact our ability to serve participants safely. Without volunteers, lessons may be canceled.

We understand that life happens and volunteers may need to cancel at the last minute. If a volunteer cancels at the last minute consistently (3 times or more) they will be removed from the schedule and no longer allowed to volunteer.

No Shows

A "No Show" is when a volunteer does not attend their scheduled shift and fails to notify CHP staff. If a volunteer no-shows three (3) times, they will be removed from the schedule and no longer allowed to volunteer.

VOLUNTEERING ROADMAP

STEP 1 → ORIENTATION & SIDEWALKER TRAINING

Your first step at Chastain Horse Park (CHP) is attending Orientation & Sidewalker Training—an introduction to our mission, programs, and the vital role volunteers play in our community.

Orientation is Mandatory for All New Volunteers & CHP Personnel

Attending Orientation & Sidewalker Training is required for all new volunteers and staff members before getting involved in sessions. This structured introduction ensures a safe, consistent, and rewarding experience for both volunteers and participants.

During this session, you'll:

- ✓ Get an overview of CHP and the impact of equine-assisted services
- ✓ Learn about various volunteer roles, including:
 - Sidewalking (assisting riders)
 - Horse handling and leading
 - Barn chores
 - Special events and fundraising
 - Administrative support
- ✓ Take a guided tour of the facility
- ✓ Review safety procedures and emergency protocols
- ✓ Participate in hands-on sidewalker training

NEXT STEPS AFTER TRAINING

Once you've completed this session, you'll be eligible to sign up as a sidewalker right away. If you'd like additional support, we can pair you with a mentor for extra practice. Below is the job description for a sidewalker.

SIDEWALKER JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: Sidewalker

REPORTS TO: Volunteer Coordinator, Instructor

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS: New Volunteer Orientation & Sidewalker training

POSITION SUMMARY: Take responsibility for the participant before, during and after a class. Sidewalkers will greet their participant before class and ensure safety of participant before, during, and after session by following instructor's guidance.

JOB DUTIES

- Greet participants
- Ensure safety of participants before, during, and after session
- Remain quiet during session speaking only to reiterate instruction to participant after allowing ample time for processing or giving kudos to participant
- Aid in mounting by holding offside stirrup or assisting according to instructor guidance.
- Follow all instructor and staff directions

- Ensures compliance with all Chastain Horse Park policies
- Work as a team with staff and volunteers

QUALIFICATIONS

- Volunteers must be at least 14 years of age
- All volunteers must have attended New Volunteer Orientation
- Able to frequently sit, stand, walk, bend and lift up to 50 pounds
- Able to walk or jog on uneven surfaces
- Able to physically react quickly and swiftly to maximize safety of the rider

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed and are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and/or skills that may be required. Chastain Horse Park holds the right to terminate volunteers if not meeting requirements and responsibilities set forth in this job description, or if a volunteer violates the volunteer policies or code of ethics.

STEP 2 → HORSES 101: BEHAVIOR, GROOMING, TACKING & TAKING THE LEAD TRAINING

Prerequisite: Orientation & Sidewalker Training

This training is required for any volunteer who wishes to interact with Chastain Horse Park horses. Whether you're new to horses, looking to refresh your skills, or working toward becoming an official horse handler/leader, this training provides the essential knowledge and hands-on experience needed to safely and effectively engage with our equines.

Volunteers need to retake this training every 5 years to keep skills and knowledge fresh.

What You'll Learn:

- ✓ Horse Behavior & Psychology – Understanding herd dynamics, body language, senses, and communication
- ✓ Grooming Basics – Proper brushing, hoof care, and the importance of routine maintenance
- ✓ Tack Training – Identifying and correctly using the various tack and equipment used at CHP
- ✓ Taking the Lead Method – A structured, positive reinforcement approach to leading horses, improving trust and horse cooperation

Taking the Lead teaches horses to walk beside the handler—similar to a well-trained dog heeling—rather than being pulled from the end of a lead rope. This method:

- ✓ Encourages clear communication and trust between horse and handler
- ✓ Promotes better movement and posture for the horse
- ✓ Creates a calmer, safer environment for all participants
- ✓ Helps handlers confidently navigate challenging situations with horses

BECOMING A HORSE LEADER:

To officially lead and work with horses at CHP, volunteers must:

- ❶ Complete the Grooming, Tacking & Taking the Lead training
- ❷ Practice with a mentor- we recommend at least 3 hours of practice with a mentor. Some need more than three hours, some need less.
- ❸ Pass a skills test assessed by a CHP-approved team member

Consistency is key—following CHP's methods ensures a structured experience for both horses and volunteers.

Mentor hours with experienced volunteers are available to help you gain hands-on experience and build confidence. If there's a specific skill or section of training you'd like to review, practice, or refine, we can arrange one-on-one or small group sessions to support your development. Mentor hours are offered at various times throughout the week, depending on mentor availability.

We recommend completing at least 3 hours of practice before taking your skills test to ensure you feel confident and prepared.

Horse Leader Skills Test: Once you feel confident in your horse handling and leading abilities, you can schedule a skills test with a CHP staff member. This test assesses your proficiency in grooming, tacking, and leading, as well as your ability to ensure the safety of horses, volunteers, and participants. Passing the skills test is required before you can sign up as a horse leader in lessons or join horse specific teams at Chastain Horse Park.

HORSE LEADER JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: Horse Leader

REPORTS TO: Volunteer Coordinator, Instructor

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS: New Volunteer Orientation & Sidewalker Training, Grooming, Tacking, Taking the Lead, passed Horse Leader Skills Assessment

POSITION SUMMARY: Take responsibility for the equine before, during and after a class. Horse Leaders will ready the equine for class, lead the equine during class, put the equine away after class and correctly put away tack and equipment.

JOB DUTIES

- Groom and tack equine as directed by instructor
- Aid in mounting by leading the equine to the appropriate site
- Lead the equine for the rider as specified by the instructor
- Maintain safety in the arena by keeping equine at a safe distance from other equines, people, fences and other objects
- Take the equine back to the appropriate stall or pasture
- Follow all instructor and staff directions
- Ensures compliance with all Chastain Horse Park policies
- Work as a team with staff and volunteers

QUALIFICATIONS

- Volunteers must be at least 14 years of age

- All volunteers must have attended New Volunteer Orientation, Grooming, Tacking, and Taking the Lead training
- Must pass their skills assessment prior to volunteering as a Horse Leader
- Able to frequently sit, stand, walk, bend and lift up to 50 pounds
- Able to walk or jog on uneven surfaces
- Able to physically react quickly and swiftly to maximize safety of the rider

The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed and are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and/or skills that may be required. Chastain Horse Park holds the right to terminate volunteers if not meeting requirements and responsibilities set forth in this job description, or if a volunteer violates the volunteer policies or code of ethics.

ADDITIONAL TRAININGS

At Chastain Horse Park, we offer ongoing training opportunities throughout the year for volunteers who are interested in expanding their skills and joining specialized teams—such as horse leading, grooming and tacking, or wellness checks. These trainings are announced as they are scheduled, so be sure to keep an eye out for updates.

If you're eager to join a team but no upcoming training has been posted, don't hesitate to reach out to Volunteer Services. We're happy to work with you to get you the training you need and support your growth as a CHP volunteer!

OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to lesson support, there are many ways to contribute at Chastain Horse Park:

- **Facility Maintenance:** Periodically, we need volunteers for tasks such as landscaping, trash pickup, office work, and other essential duties. When these opportunities arise, we will send out an email.
- **Office Support:** Occasionally, CHP needs help with administrative tasks, such as data entry, organizing classroom materials, etc. We will reach out to volunteers with specific requests.
- **Fundraising:** As a nonprofit, fundraising is a key part of our operations. You will receive notifications about fundraising events and may be invited to volunteer at these activities.
- **Camps & Special Field Trips:** Volunteers are needed to assist with camps and field trips, similar to their role in therapeutic lessons.
- **Horsemanship Showcase & Participant Recognition:** This special event requires many volunteers to ensure its success. Keep an eye out for emails with details!
- **Volunteer Training:** If you have experience with horses and enjoy teaching others, we are always looking for volunteers to help train new team members.
- **Service Group Liaison:** Sharing our mission helps sustain our programs! By spreading the word about CHP, you play an important role in reminding people that we rely on community support and donations.

There are many ways to get involved beyond lesson support—your time and dedication help keep our programs running strong!

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

We appreciate our volunteers every day, but we also host special celebrations throughout the year to recognize their dedication and hard work.

One of our key events is the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, where we honor our incredible volunteers, present the Volunteer of the Year award, and recognize other outstanding contributions.

The dates for appreciation events vary and will be communicated once scheduled. Stay tuned for updates—we look forward to celebrating with you!

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

RULES & RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEER ATTIRE

As representatives of Chastain Horse Park (CHP), volunteers should wear appropriate, tidy, and safe attire. Your appearance reflects the park's image and ensures a safe environment for participants, horses, and staff.

Required Attire:

- **Footwear:** Closed-toe shoes are mandatory. Boots offering foot protection are ideal, but athletic shoes are acceptable for lesson assistance (you may walk up to a mile per hour). Sandals, open-toe, or backless shoes are not allowed. Crocs are not considered closed toed shoes.
- **Clothing:**
 - Wear CHP-branded apparel if possible (e.g., t-shirts).
 - No revealing attire (halter tops, crop tops, visible sports bras, etc.).
 - Shorts must be at least fingertip-length when standing with arms at your sides.
- **Accessories & Grooming:**
 - No dangling jewelry or loose clothing/hats—these can be hazardous around horses.
 - Sunglasses are permitted but may need to be removed when assisting participants who could be working on eye contact.
 - Avoid perfumes or strong scents, which can attract insects or bother horses and participants.
- **Weather Considerations:**
 - Winter: Wear layers, including a jacket, gloves, and a secure hat.
 - Summer: Use sunscreen and wear breathable, activewear.
 - Hydration: Bring a water bottle to stay hydrated. There is a water fountain in the volunteer lounge for everyone to use.
- **Additional Notes:**
 - Store valuables out of sight in your vehicle or use lockers in the volunteer lounge.
 - Silence cell phones during lessons.

ARRIVAL & SESSION EXPECTATIONS

- Arrive at least 20 minutes before the session start time.
- If a participant arrives early, they should not interact with the horse until the lesson begins.
- If a participant is 15+ minutes late, they may forfeit their lesson, and volunteers will be instructed to return the horse to the barn.
- Volunteers must clean up after themselves and the horse if the participant is unable to do so. If your horse poops in the arena, aisle, grooming bay, or wash stall it is the horse leader's responsibility to clean up after their horse.
- If fewer participants attend a group lesson, the session may be shortened accordingly (e.g., a private lesson may be adjusted to 30 minutes).

CHECKING IN

When you arrive, please:

1. Clock in using the tablet in the volunteer lounge.
2. Check the daily schedule, posted on clipboards at the board in the barn, to find your assignment.
3. Wear a name badge, available in the volunteer lounge.
4. After completing your assignment, return your name badge and clock out.

Your time and dedication are essential to our success—thank you for being part of the Chastain Horse Park community!

CELL PHONE POLICY

Cell phones must be silenced during sessions. No phone calls or texting while working with participants or horses.

OTHER CONDUCT & SAFETY POLICIES

- Only approved staff, participants, and volunteers are allowed in the stalls, paddocks, and arenas.
- No dogs allowed on CHP property.

HORSE SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT

Horses are prey animals with a natural fight-or-flight response. To ensure a safe environment:

- Umbrellas are not allowed on the property. Dress accordingly for rain.
- No running, yelling, or rough behavior around the horses.
- If a horse misbehaves, a professional will attempt to correct the behavior. If the issue persists, the volunteer may be asked to switch the horse, or the participant may complete the lesson in an alternative, safe activity off the horse.
- Mounted participants must stay inside the arena unless a trained volunteer or staff member is leading the horse.

NO TREATS FOR HORSES

Our horses are on carefully managed diets, and some require special dietary restrictions for their health. Do not feed the horses treats, as this can lead to nipping behavior, posing a safety risk to participants, volunteers, and staff.

Treats could include:

- Carrots
- Apples
- Peppermints
- Handfuls of grass or hay

Only authorized staff may administer food to the horses. If you have any questions about what qualifies as a "treat," please ask a staff member.

RESTRICTED AREAS & PROHIBITED ITEMS

- “Authorized Personnel Only” areas must be respected—only staff, approved volunteers, and supervised participants may enter stalls.
- No smoking on the property—barns contain highly flammable materials.
- No illegal substances or firearms are allowed on the premises.

VOLUNTEER EARNED T-SHIRT POLICY

Volunteers may earn a Chastain Horse Park volunteer t-shirt after serving as a volunteer for 15 hours. These hours do not include time spent in training or in mentor hours. Please reach out to the volunteer services department once you have reached your 15 hours and we will verify that you have served 15 hours on the timesheet and administer a t-shirt. (Make sure you are clocking in and out on the iPad so that we can count your hours!)

CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR

Volunteers are expected to act in a respectful, cooperative, and professional manner at all times. Inappropriate behavior—including harassment, aggression, or abuse toward people or animals—will not be tolerated.

If you witness inappropriate behavior, do not intervene. Notify CHP staff immediately. If necessary, emergency services (911) may be called. Any volunteer engaging in inappropriate behavior may be immediately dismissed.

REASSIGNMENT & DISMISSAL POLICY

CHP enforces strict policies to ensure a safe, respectful, and professional environment. Volunteers who do not follow policies may be subject to disciplinary action or dismissal.

Disciplinary Actions:

1. Verbal Warning – Minor infractions may be addressed via conversation, email, or phone.
2. Formal Meeting – Repeated infractions may result in a meeting with CHP personnel to discuss the issue and possible consequences.
3. Dismissal – If issues persist, volunteers may be permanently removed from the organization.

Immediate Dismissal

A volunteer may be dismissed immediately for:

- Endangering the safety of others.
- Abusing, neglecting, or mishandling horses.
- Disruptive or inappropriate behavior toward participants, staff, or other volunteers.
- Repeated failure to follow CHP policies.
- Possession of a weapon on the premises.
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Chronic no-showing for lessons.

If a staff member dismisses a volunteer, the incident will be documented and reported to CHP leadership.

ANNUAL UPDATE

All volunteers must update their waiver and contact information each year, regardless of their level of involvement in the previous year. While it is the volunteer's responsibility to ensure their paperwork is up to date, Volunteer Services will send reminders and a link to update paperwork. Failure to do so will result in a temporary suspension until all documents are current.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information regarding clients of CHP is strictly confidential. This includes medical, social, personal, and financial details. Volunteers must respect participants' right to privacy and never share sensitive information.

Confidentiality applies to all staff, volunteers, and board members, both during and after their time with CHP. Violating this policy may result in disciplinary action, dismissal, or legal consequences.

Key Guidelines:

- Medical records are stored securely and accessed only by authorized personnel.
- Discussions about participants must take place privately and only with those directly involved in their care.
- Client information must never be discussed outside the premises or on social media.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

CHP provides equal opportunities to all individuals. We prohibit discrimination based on age, disability, race, color, creed, religion, gender, national origin, or veteran status. This policy applies to all participants, volunteers, and employees.

HELMET POLICY

For safety, all participants must wear ASTM-SEI approved helmets while mounted or working with horses from the ground. Community helmets are available for use. If a volunteer is asked to mount a horse at CHP, they are required to wear an ASTM-SEI approved helmet.

MOUNTING & DISMOUNTING

To ensure participant safety, only trained personnel may mount and dismount riders.

- Instructors will typically handle all mounting/dismounting.
- If assistance is needed, the instructor will provide training and supervision before allowing any volunteer to assist.

PHOTOGRAPHY, SOCIAL MEDIA, & PUBLICITY

CHP values privacy while also recognizing the importance of using real images for marketing, education, and reporting purposes.

- Volunteers must not take or share photos/videos of participants without permission.
- All individuals are given the option to opt-in or opt-out of being photographed for promotional materials.
- Always respect others' privacy before posting on social media.

WEATHER

Lessons continue in all weather conditions—rain or shine, hot or cold—thanks to our three covered arenas.

- In cases of extreme weather that could startle the horses, mounted lessons may be canceled for safety reasons. Instead, unmounted lessons will be conducted, focusing on groundwork and horsemanship skills.
- If a session must be altered or rescheduled, you will be notified as soon as possible.

OCCURRENCE REPORTS

All incidents—whether they result in injury or almost cause harm—must be documented promptly and in detail.

When to file an occurrence report:

- Injuries to participants, volunteers, staff, or horses
- Near-miss situations that could have caused injury
- Equine-related incidents (e.g., horse steps on a foot, bites, or spooks)
- Emergencies such as fires, natural disasters, or behavioral crisis

How to file a report:

- Fill out an Occurrence Report immediately after the incident.
- Blank copies are available in the “Occurrence Reports and Concussion Protocol” binder in the lounge.
- Submit the completed form to the office.

Timely reporting helps us maintain a safe environment and improve our protocols. Thank you for your cooperation!

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In most cases, a professional will direct emergency procedures. Stay calm and follow instructions.

EMERGENCY, INCIDENT, OR ACCIDENT IN THE ACTIVITY AREA:

- **Remain with your team.**
- **Leaders:**
 - Halt the horse and pivot slightly to the side to avoid being in front if the horse spooks forward.
 - Observe the emergency while keeping the horse under control.
 - If the emergency is happening nearby, face the horse toward the commotion.
 - If the emergency involves your team, follow emergency dismount protocol.
- **Sidewalkers:**
 - Stay with the participant.
 - Remain calm and follow the instructor's directions.

PARTICIPANT NEEDS TO DISMOUNT:

Stay in place or line up as directed by the professional.

- **Sidewalkers:**
 - Assist in removing the participant's feet from stirrups.
 - If near the rail, dismount the participant toward the inside of the arena (away from the rail).
 - Ensure feet are clear of stirrups, reins are removed from hands, and assist in dismounting.
 - Escort or carry the participant to a designated safe area.
- **Leaders:**
 - Move the horse's hindquarters away from the participant.
 - Face the horse toward the participant or the emergency.
 - Run up stirrups and tuck reins under the left stirrup.
 - Await further instructions from the professional.

EMERGENCY DISMOUNT PROCEDURE (IF IMMEDIATE DISMOUNT IS REQUIRED):

The instructor will signal an emergency dismount.

- **Leader:**
 - Halt the horse if possible, or remain with the moving horse.
- **Right Sidewalker:**
 - Remove the participant's foot from the stirrup and assist their leg over the horse.
 - Move around to help the left sidewalker if needed.
- **Left Sidewalker:**
 - Pull the participant off the horse, ensuring their back lands against your chest.
 - Drag the participant safely away from the horse.
 - Wait for further instructions.

Types of Emergency Dismounts:

- **Croup Dismount:**
 - The participant leans forward on the horse's neck, placing their head to the right side.
 - They bring their right leg over the horse's croup.
 - The sidewalker gently lowers them to their feet.

- Crest Dismount:
 - The participant leans back and swings their right leg over the front of the horse.
 - They roll onto their stomach before being gently lowered to their feet.

AFTER THE DISMOUNT:

Horse Leaders: Move the horse away by turning the horse's head toward the participant and pushing the hind end away. Take the horse to a neutral corner or remove it from the arena, per the instructor/therapist's direction.

Sidewalkers: Sidewalkers and instructors/therapists stay with the participant, providing emotional and physical support as needed.

Once advised, all participants and horses should exit the arena.

CALLING 911

The instructor may assign a volunteer to call 911 and provide the following details:

- Location: Chastain Horse Park, specify exact area if needed.
- Phone number of the device being used.
- Caller's name.
- Description of the emergency (what happened).
- Number of victims.
- Condition of the victims.
- Type of assistance provided.
- Request that emergency personnel approach without lights and sirens near the barn to avoid startling horses.
- Stay on the line for further instructions from 911.
- Notify the Barn Manager immediately.

A volunteer may be assigned to stand at the West Wieuca Road / Chastain Park Ave entrance to direct EMTs.

These instructions are also available in the mailboxes marked with the red cross.

REMEMBER:

1. **The safety of participants and personnel is the top priority.**
2. **The safety of horses is the next priority.**

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FOR LOOSE HORSES, AND FALLS

LOOSE HORSE WITH A MOUNTED PARTICIPANT

1. The instructor will stop the class immediately.
2. The instructor will give the participant simple, clear commands like “Sit up!” or “Pull up!”
3. The Horse Leader approaches the horse calmly and regains control.
 - a. Do not step in front of the horse, as it may swerve and unseat the participant.

LOOSE HORSE WITHOUT A PARTICIPANT

1. The instructor will stop the class immediately.
2. All leaders and sidewalkers remain with their participants.
 - Leaders should assume a halted position.
 - Sidewalkers should perform a thigh hold.
3. Instructor/Therapist or a designated volunteer catches the horse.

PARTICIPANT FALLS FROM THE HORSE

1. Stay calm and listen to the instructor/therapist.
2. Instructor/Therapist will:
 - Go directly to the participant.
 - Assess their condition and give clear instructions.
3. Horse Leader: Keep the horse under control.
4. Sidewalkers: Help keep the participant calm and follow the instructor/therapist's directions.

ADDITIONAL KEY ACTIONS

- ✓ If a horse is loose, the leader must capture and remove it from the arena.
- ✓ The participant's sidewalkers and instructor/therapist remain with the fallen participant.
- ✓ Other leaders and sidewalkers stay with their participants, using:
 - **Leader Halted Position:** Stand next to the horse, between ear and shoulder, and use the dressage whip to keep the horse halted.
 - **Sidewalkers:** keep a secure thigh hold on participants.
- ✓ If there are other participants in the arena:
 - Dismount them, reassure them, and take them to the waiting area.
 - Sidewalkers stay with their participants to keep them calm.
- ✓ Once participants are dismounted, leaders take horses to a neutral corner or remove them from the arena per instructor/therapist guidance.

SIGNS OF A SERIOUS INJURY (CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY):

- Loss of consciousness, even briefly.
- Bleeding or fluid draining from the mouth, nose, or ears.
- Severe bleeding (apply direct pressure).
- Limb at an unnatural angle or pain with movement (do not move the participant).
- Uneven pupil contraction.
- Signs of shock: paleness, mottled skin, sweating, nausea, fainting.
- If a head or spinal injury is suspected, keep the participant absolutely still.

IF MEDICAL ATTENTION IS NEEDED BUT 911 IS NOT REQUIRED

- The instructor will encourage medical evaluation at a doctor's office, urgent care, or hospital.
- Even if no visible injury is present, the instructor will recommend a doctor's visit as a precaution.

IF NO MEDICAL ATTENTION IS NEEDED:

- A volunteer may be instructed to walk the participant to the waiting area and reassure them.
- The instructor/therapist will discuss the cause of the fall with the participant and the class.
- The instructor/therapist must complete an Occurrence Report with input from:
 - The volunteer team.
 - The participant.
 - The participant's parent, guardian, or caregiver.

PREPARING FOR A DISASTER

Disasters are first declared at the local level, following local laws and regulations.

The Atlanta-Fulton County Emergency Management Agency (AFCEMA) is the primary organization responsible for disaster management in Fulton County and the City of Atlanta. AFCEMA coordinates mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts in collaboration with city and county agencies, state and regional partners, nonprofits, schools, and the private sector.

Key Emergency Contacts:

Atlanta-Fulton County Emergency Management Agency (AFCEMA)

 130 Peachtree St. S.W., Suite G-157 P-Level, Atlanta, GA 30303

 (404) 612-5660

Power Outages, Downed Trees, and Power Lines:

 (888) 891-0938

Georgia Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency (GEMA)

 P.O. Box 18055, Atlanta, GA 30316

 (404) 635-7000 | (800) 879-4362

 public.affairs@gema.ga.gov

FEMA Region IV (Georgia's Regional Office)

 3003 Chamblee Tucker Road, Atlanta, GA 30341

 Main: (770) 220-5200 | Fax: (770) 220-5230

POTENTIAL HAZARDS & RESPONSE PROCEDURES

IN CASE OF FIRE

1. Evacuate Participants and Volunteers

- Remain calm and guide everyone quickly to the nearest exit. Guide all participants and volunteers to the red lot parking lot.
- Keep the group quiet and under control.

2. Call 911

- Provide your name and location (this information is posted by the office and in the arena first aid mail boxes)
- Stay on the line until the operator instructs you to hang up.

3. Evacuate Horses (Only if Safe & CHP Staff/Barn Manager Approves)

- Use a halter and lead rope to guide horses to the arena.
- Do NOT release horses outside; they may try to return to the barn.
- If a horse refuses to move, blindfold it using a damp towel, sack, or coat.

4. Ensure a Clear Driveway for Emergency Vehicles

5. Rescue Equipment Only if Safe

- Remove tack and other equipment only after all horses are out and if it does not put you in danger.

6. Use Fire Extinguishers if Safe

- Located in the tack room, office, and arena.

7. Check Horses for Injuries Once Help Arrives

- If any horses suffer burns or smoke inhalation, call CHP Staff/Barn Manager.

IN CASE OF SEVERE WEATHER (High Winds, Thunderstorms, or Tornadoes)

1. Participants, Volunteers and Staff Will Be Moved to a Safe Location

- For tornadoes, the designated shelter is the tackroom if you're in the barn. If you're in the Clubhouse, go to the basement.

2. Safety Position

- Participants, Volunteers, and Staff will be instructed to sit down, tuck their heads between their legs, and cover their heads.
- Participants should keep helmets on for added protection.

3. Secure the Horses

- If time allows, horse leaders will move horses to stalls.
- If there is no time, leave them in the arena with the gate closed.

4. Remain in the Safe Area Until "All Clear" is Given

- Only exit when the instructor/therapist announces it is safe.

5. After the Storm

- Return horses to stalls if they were left in the arena.
- Inspect the premises for downed power lines before allowing participants and volunteers to leave.

SEIZURES

1. Do Not Restrain the Person

- Focus on keeping the participant safe and comfortable until the seizure passes.

2. If a Seizure is Anticipated

- Notify the instructor/therapist immediately.
- Dismount the participant as quickly as possible.
- Have them sit or lie down in a safe, comfortable place.

3. If a Seizure Occurs While Mounted

- A volunteer should immediately notify the instructor/therapist.
- The participant should lean forward on the horse's neck, keeping their head to the side.

4. After the Seizure

- The instructor/therapist will evaluate the participant.
- Depending on the evaluation, the participant will either dismount or continue the lesson.

OTHER POTENTIAL THREATS

LIGHTNING

- Golf Course Warning Siren (Single Blast) : Lightning detected within 5 miles of Chastain Park.
- Instructors will evaluate conditions, dismount riders, and return to the barn.
- Golf Course Warning Siren (Three Blasts): "All Clear" signal.

WIND

- Instructors will assess the wind's effect on horses. If necessary, riders will be dismounted, and horses will be returned to the barn.

TORNADO

- Warning via Mobile Alerts or Golf Course Siren.
- Horses will be returned to the barn, and all personnel will take shelter in the tack room if you're in the barn. If you're at the Clubhouse, go to the basement.

MAN-MADE HAZARDS AT CHASTAIN HORSE PARK

- **Fall Risks & Construction Projects:** Signage and barriers indicate restricted areas. Cones are placed around active maintenance sites.
- **Pesticide Treatments:** Signage is posted when treatments occur.
- **Facility Equipment (Tractor, Loader, Hot Walker):** Only trained CHP personnel may operate this equipment. Keys are stored in a restricted area.
- **Facility Issues (Power Loss, Water Loss, Explosions, Structural Damage, Water Leaks):** Report immediately to the Program Director/Coordinator, Facility Manager, Barn Manager, and Executive Director.
- **Equine Emergencies:** Report immediately to the Program Director/Coordinator and Barn Manager.
- **Personnel, Participant, or Guest Issues:** Report immediately to the appropriate manager (Program Director, Volunteer Services Coordinator, Facilities Manager, Barn Manager, or Executive Director)

POISONOUS SNAKES IN ATLANTA, GA

1. Copperhead

- Common in the metro Atlanta area.
- Medium to large, heavy-bodied snake with a triangular head.
- Tan or brown with dark hourglass-shaped bands along its body.
- Found in a variety of habitats, including dry, rocky areas, forests, and wetlands.
- Responsible for most snakebites in the Southeast.

2. Water Moccasin (Cottonmouth)

- Semi-aquatic; found on both land and water.
- Heavy-bodied with a triangular head and large jowls.
- Coloration varies; often dark with a lighter underbelly.
- Common in freshwater habitats like swamps, river floodplains, and vegetated wetlands.
- Active day and night, typically feeding in the dark or when it's hot.

3. Canebrake/Timber Rattlesnake

- Large and heavy-bodied; can grow up to 6 feet.
- Color varies: Canebrakes are usually gray, sometimes with a pink or yellow stripe. Timber rattlers are brown, yellowish, or black.
- Features black chevrons along its back and solid black velvet-like tails.
- Found in forests, swamps, mountainous areas, and rural farmlands.
- Active from late spring to fall, hibernating in colder months.

4. Eastern Coral Snake

- Highly venomous; bite can be fatal.
- Slender with bright red, yellow, and black rings.
- Most commonly encountered in spring and fall.
- Found in both rural and suburban areas.

5. Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake

- Largest rattlesnake species, with heavy bodies and broad heads.
- Brown, tan, or yellow with distinctive diamond-shaped markings.
- Prefers dry sandy areas, palmetto or pinewoods, and coastal dunes.
- Usually avoids wet areas but can be found near swamp edges.
- Active during the day, especially in summer mornings and evenings.
- Hibernates in winter but is an accomplished swimmer.

6. Pigmy Rattlesnake

- Small with a tiny rattle and a mid-dorsal row of spots.
- Has an eye-to-mouth stripe that varies in color.
- Found in a variety of habitats, including swamps, forests, and sandhills.
- Often hides in leaf litter, making it difficult to spot.
- Active throughout the day.

Snakebite First Aid

Most North American snakes are not dangerous, but rattlesnakes, coral snakes, water moccasins, and copperheads can be life-threatening.

Symptoms of a venomous snakebite:

- Severe burning pain at the bite site within 15–30 minutes.

- Swelling and bruising that can spread up the limb.
- Nausea, weakness, and an odd taste in the mouth.
- Neurological symptoms (tingling, difficulty speaking, weakness) in coral snake bites.

If bitten by a venomous snake:

- Call 911 immediately, especially if the bite area swells, changes color, or becomes painful.
- Remain calm and move away from the snake.
- Remove jewelry and tight clothing before swelling occurs.
- Position the bite at or below heart level.
- Clean the wound with a dry dressing (do not flush with water).

What NOT to do:

- Do not use a tourniquet or apply ice.
- Do not cut the wound or attempt to remove the venom.
- Do not drink caffeine or alcohol.
- Do not attempt to capture the snake. Instead, try to remember its color and markings for medical identification.

POISONOUS SPIDERS IN ATLANTA, GA

1. Black Widow Spider

- Size: ~1.5 inches.
- Color: Glossy jet black with a bright red hourglass marking on the underside of its abdomen.
- Webs: Large and irregular, the biggest of all web-spinning spiders.

Symptoms of a Black Widow bite:

- Initial slight swelling and faint red marks.
- Intense pain and stiffness.
- Severe abdominal pain or cramping.
- Chills, fever, and nausea.

2. Brown Recluse Spider

- Size: Smaller than a quarter.
- Color: Ranges from cream to dark brown.
- How to identify: A violin-shaped marking on its neck and six eyes arranged in three pairs.

Symptoms of a Brown Recluse bite:

- Mild pain at first, followed by increasing redness and intense pain.
- A deep blue or purple area forming around the bite, sometimes developing a red ring.

SPIDER BITE FIRST AID

Seek emergency care immediately if:

- You were bitten by a black widow or brown recluse.
- You are unsure whether the bite was from a poisonous spider.
- You have severe pain, abdominal cramping, or a growing ulcer at the bite site.
- The person bitten is not breathing.

Steps to treat a spider bite:

1. Clean the wound with mild soap and water; apply antibiotic ointment.

2. Apply a cool compress to reduce pain and swelling. If on an arm or leg, elevate it.
3. Take over-the-counter pain medication if needed. If itchy, an antihistamine (e.g., Benadryl) may help.
4. Check your tetanus shot history; a booster may be recommended if it's been over five years.

Spider Bite Prevention Tips:

- Avoid reaching into dark crevices or areas you can't see.
- Shake out gloves, boots, and stored clothing before use.
- Wear gloves when handling wood, debris, or working outdoors.

Thank You for Being a Part of the CHP Community!

We are so grateful for your time, energy, and dedication to Chastain Horse Park. Volunteers like you are the heart of our program, helping us create a safe, supportive, and joyful experience for our riders, horses, and fellow team members.

If you ever have any questions, need clarification, or want to learn more, please don't hesitate to reach out to Volunteer Services or any CHP staff member. We're here to support you just as you support us.

Please Note:

This manual is meant to serve as a helpful guide, but it may not cover every possible situation or detail. Always follow the instructions and guidance given by CHP staff and instructors. Your safety and the safety of our participants and horses is our highest priority.

Thank you for being part of the mission—we truly couldn't do it without you.