



Large Animal Rescue Training Reference Sheet

Introduction

In today's society, first responders may be called to incidents involving large animals. Proper training of best practices and appropriate use of specialized rescue equipment can improve the chances of a successful rescue and minimize risk of injury to both animals and first responders. This reference sheet has been developed as a part of the workshop offered by Equine Guelph. The techniques reflected in the reference sheet should not be attempted without appropriate training. The improper use of the referenced technique(s) can potentially cause serious injury to both first responders and animals.

Forward Assist



[Simple Configuration Forward Assist \(Standing\)](#)



[Simple Configuration Forward Assist \(Recumbent\)](#)



[Swiss Seat Configuration Forward Assist \(Recumbent\)](#)



[Lark's Foot Configuration Forward Assist](#)

Forward Assist

- This technique can be used to assist an animal out of an entrapment.
- It can be used on an animal that is standing or is in sternal or lateral recumbency.
- There are three configuration methods: the simple , Swiss Seat and the lark's foot configuration.

Equipment

- Halter (use an emergency rope halter if a halter is not available)
- Webbing (15m x 12-15 cm webbing with sewn loop ends. Centre of the webbing is clearly marked.)
- Strop Guide or Lunge Whip (may not be required if the webbing can be "flossed" under the animal).
- Reach tool(s)

Operation

- Review "Action at Scene"
- An animal handler is appointed and places a halter on the animal and establishes head control
- Responders approach the animal keeping in mind the safety zones
- **Simple configuration** (on a recumbent and standing animal):
 - ◇ *On a recumbent animal* use the flossing method to slide the webbing under the animal towards its withers (point where the neck meets the back)
 - ◇ Ensure the webbing is centered on the animal's withers
 - ◇ Using reach tools, the webbing is "threaded" evenly between the front legs of the animal (a reach tool may be required to lift the upper leg of a recumbent animal to allow the webbing to pass between its front legs)
 - ◇ *On a standing animal* reach tools may be required to place the webbing over the animal's withers
 - ◇ Reach tools are then used to draw the webbing between the animal's front legs
- **Swiss Seat configuration:**
 - ◇ This configuration improves upon the simple configuration in that the animal is secure in the webbing and cannot fall out when lifted or pulled forward.
 - ◇ The webbing will not fall off the animal as in the basic configuration so you must be prepared to be close to the animal to remove it.

- **(Swiss Seat Continued):**

- ◇ The centre of the webbing is placed at the centre of the animal's chest.
- ◇ The webbing is crossed over the animal's withers and then brought behind each front leg. Using reach tools, the webbing is then threaded forward between the front legs
- ◇ The webbing is now pulled through the webbing going across the chest, effectively "locking" it in place around the withers, legs and chest



Photo Credit: Rebecca Gimenez-Husted

- **Lark's foot configuration:**

- ◇ Instead of both ends of the webbing being passed evenly between the animal's front legs, one end of the webbing is threaded through the loop of the other end and threaded between the front legs.
- ◇ This method places significant pressure on the animal's ribs and sternum and has the potential to cause serious injury. If used it should be performed as quickly as possible.
- ◇ This configuration is **not** a primary rescue method.
- The webbing is pulled taut in preparation for hauling.
- The animal handler calls the command "haul"
- When the animal is free of its entrapment drop the webbing (the webbing will need to be removed from the animal in the Swiss Seat configuration)
- The animal handler maintains control of the head but allows the animal to use its head and neck to right itself

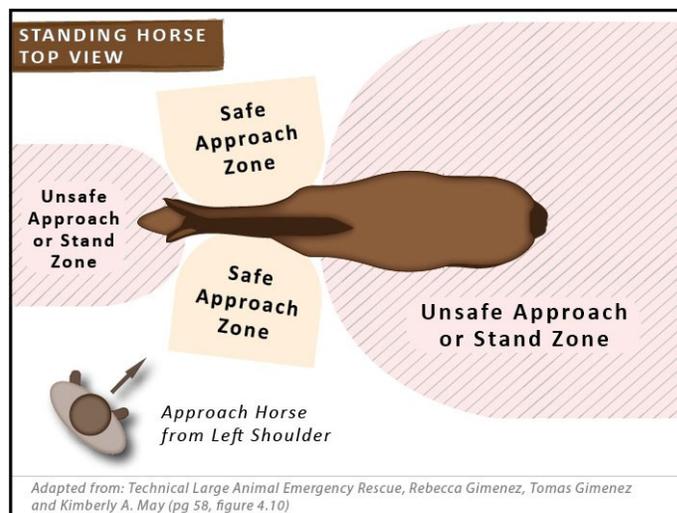
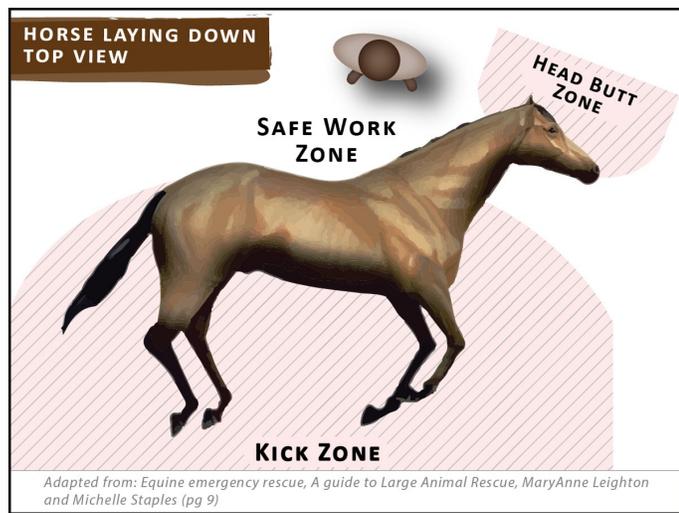
Safety

- When using the flossing technique be careful to avoid abrasion or burn injuries to the animal
- Ensure eye protection for a recumbent animal
- If a recumbent animal is being pulled for any distance it should be pulled onto a tarp or glide to prevent abrasions and cuts.

Reminders:

Action at Scene

- Establish scene safety
- Establish incident command and operate under the Incident Management System (IMS) framework
- Establish an Incident Action Plan
- Acquire rescue equipment and human resources (i.e. may need a veterinarian on scene or an individual with specific livestock expertise)
- Establish containment facilities



Animal Safety

- Heads, tails and limbs are not handles – DO NOT use them for pulling (serious injury and potentially life threatening injury can result)
- Always protect the animal's eyes
- Establish and maintain head control at all times.
- Allow a rescued animal the time it needs to stand if it has been rescued from a downed position. DO NOT force it to stand and move.
- Some animals may need sedation prior to performing the rescue to reduce the risk of injury to the animal and responders

Resources

- Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue Inc. (Training) (tlaer.org)
- British Animal Rescue and Trauma Care Association (bartacic.org)
- College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Florida ([Large Animal Rescue Training](http://LargeAnimalRescueTraining))

Local Resources:

Veterinarian: Equine: _____

Livestock: _____

Poultry: _____

Mutual Aid Department(s): _____

Livestock Hauler(s): _____

Heavy Tow Operator(s): _____

Heavy Machinery Operator(s): _____

Fencing Supply Company: _____

Livestock Specialist(s)(i.e., local producer): _____

*Equine Guelph thanks the large animal rescue training professionals
for providing and reviewing content.*