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.

Mud Rescue

- Mud can have great suction forces that can be overcome with the injection of air or water into the space around the trapped animal's legs and belly.
- Injection of air or water at the same time as a vertical lift or sideways drag is being employed will safely and effectively free the trapped animal.

Photo Credit: Rebecca Gimenez-Husted

Equipment

- Halter (use an emergency rope halter if a halter is not available)
- Eye protection for the animal
- 2 – 3 webbing straps (15m x 12-15 cm webbing with sewn loop ends. Centre of the webbing is clearly marked.)
- Becker Sling (if available)
- Becker Beam (or comparable equipment to spread out the animal's weight and prevent the webbing/straps from coming together in a vertical lift)
- Plywood (for creating a safe working area)
- Water and/or Air lances (set of 4 each)
- Water and/or air manifolds
- Air compressor
- Nikopolous Needle
- Safety harnesses and lines for rescuers
- Reach tools
- Strop Guide
- Carabiner(s)
- Reach tool(s)

Operation

- Review "Action at Scene"
- An animal handler is appointed and places a halter on the animal and establishes head control
- Establish scene safety for rescuers (safety harnesses and lines, shoring around the trapped animal)
- Depending on the consistency of the mud, you may need to liquefy the mud by injecting water through the water lances around the legs and abdomen. This will help with the placement of webbing.
- The Nikopolous Needle is used to guide webbing around the animal in the appropriate configuration for extrication.
    - Air or water is injected into the Nikopolous Needle to break the suction forces of the mud as the needle is pushed down and around the animal's abdomen
    - The webbing is attached to the free end of the Nikopolous Needle. The Nikopolous Needle is then pulled back around the animal following its original path.
    - This is repeated for the second piece of webbing.
- If the animal is trapped near the surface of the mud, a strop guide may be sufficient for guiding the webbing around the animal
- The Vertical Lift, Forward Assist and Sideways Drag are potential rescue configurations depending on the type of extrication method to be employed.
- An air lance or water lance is worked into the mud by each leg of the animal. This requires one rescuer at each leg.
- Water or air is injected into the lances as the lift is initiated. The lances are manipulated in the area around the leg to break the suction forces. Care must be taken not to injure the animal's legs.

Safety

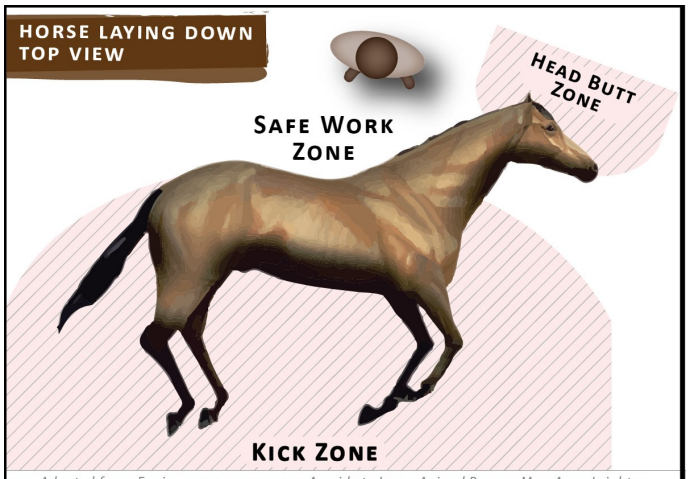
- Ensure eye protection for the animal
- Use edge protection/shoring to create a secure working area for rescuers.
- If the animal is being pulled for any distance it should be pulled onto a tarp or glide to prevent abrasions and cuts.
- If a glide is being used, guide ropes should be attached with additional rescuers prepared to "haul" at the same time rescuers are pulling/hauling the animal.
- The Vertical Lift requires personnel trained in the technical aspects of performing these types of lifts. It is beyond the scope of this reference sheet.

Photo Credits - Toni MacPherson

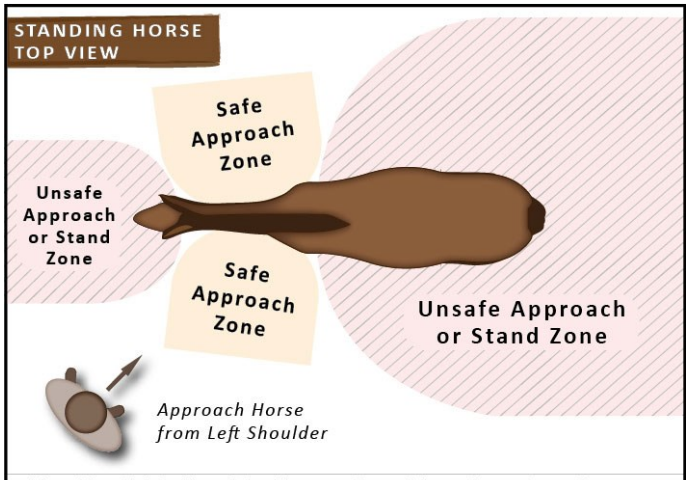
Reminders:

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



Adapted from: Equine emergency rescue, A guide to Large Animal Rescue, MaryAnne Leighton and Michelle Staples (pg 9)



Adapted from: Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue, Rebecca Gimenez, Tomas Gimenez and Kimberly A. May (pg 58, figure 4.10)

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)

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):_____

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