



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.

Securing Animal to an Animal Rescue Glide

Equipment

- Halter (use an emergency rope halter if a halter is not available)
- Head/Eye protection for the animal
- 2 – 4 ratchet straps
- 1 webbing strap (2 m x 5 cm) with heavy duty Velcro fasteners (head strap)
- 4 hobbles (fleece lined or padded) or 2 – 4, 3-foot round slings)
- 2 Prusik loops
- 2 carabiners
- Rope (5m) with a simple pulley and carabiner (hobble/anchor rope)
- Padding for placement between the animal's body and the ropes/ratchet straps/webbing (fleece, harness pads, blankets, saddle pads etc.)
- Reach tools



Photo Credit: Wendy McIsaac-Swackhamer

Operation

- Animals being secured to the glide for transport should be heavily sedated. This is performed only under the supervision of a veterinarian.
- With the animal on the glide, place head protection on the animal's head and a pad underneath
- The animal handler maintains control of the animal's head at all times
- The animal handler can place a knee on the animal's neck and tip the nose up slightly – this will decrease the chance of the animal trying to get up (even under sedation)
- Rescuers work from the back side of the animal
- The Buddy system should be implemented for personnel working on securing the animal to the glide – the “buddy” should be watching the scene and able to pull the rescuer backwards to safety if need be
- Place one ratchet strap over the animal's rib cage at the withers and just behind the animal's front leg
 - ◊ Secure both ends of the ratchet strap to the glide by curling the anchor around the outer edge of the glide and fitting it to the anchor point/opening from the underside of the glide (this will prevent loss of the anchor as the ratchet straps are tightened)
 - ◊ Place padding under the ratchet straps to protect the animal
 - ◊ Tighten the ratchet strap until the edges of the glide start to curl/lift
- Place the second ratchet strap over the animal's abdomen at a point just ahead of the hind legs
 - ◊ Secure to the glide as described for the first strap
- Ensure that the ratchet straps are lying flat and that the padding is sufficient to protect the animal
- Continue to tighten the ratchet straps to the point where the glide is slightly curling around the animal
- Care must be taken to ensure the security of the animal without compromising the animal's ability to breathe

Securing the legs

- ◊ Hobbles:
 - ◆ The hobbles are placed on each leg in the pastern region. The rescuer doing so will be lying across the animal. This person should be tied off to a buddy who can quickly pull the rescuer back to safety should the animal react.
 - ◆ Reach tools can be used by another rescuer to assist in positioning and/or lifting the legs for placement of the hobbles
 - ◆ Connect the bottom front leg to the bottom back leg using a carabiner attached to the Prusik loop
 - ◆ Connect the top front leg to the top back leg using a carabiner attached to the Prusik loop
 - ◆ If a limb is injured, do not connect the hobbles to that limb. A rope can be attached to the Prusik loop so that a rescuer can control the injured limb when the animal is being moved
 - ◆ Secure the hobble rope to the glide in the middle between the front and rear ratchet straps
 - ◆ Install the pulley and a carabiner onto the secured hobble rope
 - ◆ Connect the carabiner to the Prusik loops on the hobbles

(Securing the Legs continued):

- ◆ Thread the free end of the hobble rope through the same opening where the other end is tied to the glide
- ◆ Place padding between the hobble rope and the animal's body
- ◆ Pull the free end of the hobble rope through the pulley thus bringing the animal's legs up into a fetal position – draw the legs as close to the body as possible
- ◆ Secure the free end of the hobble rope to the glide
- ◇ Round Slings:
 - ◆ A round sling is placed on each leg in the pastern region using a Girth Hitch to secure them OR one sling can be placed on the two front legs using a Girth Hitch and one sling can be placed on the two back legs using a Girth Hitch
 - ◆ Reach tools can be used by another rescuer to assist in positioning and/or lifting the legs for placement of the Round slings
 - ◆ Thread the free end of a Prusik loop through each of the round slings and connect to the carabiner on the hobble rope
 - ◆ Thread the free end of the hobble rope through the same opening where the other end is tied to the glide
 - ◆ Place padding between the hobble rope and the animal's body
 - ◆ Pull the free end of the hobble rope through the pulley thus bringing the animal's legs up into a fetal position – draw the legs as close to the body as possible
 - ◆ Secure the free end of the hobble rope to the glide
- Secure the head to the glide by threading the head strap from the underside of the glide through the front openings
- Place the animal's tail on the glide so it doesn't drag
- If transporting over hilly terrain:
 - ◇ Place 2 additional ratchet straps in an X pattern to prevent the animal from sliding back and forth. Remember to protect the animal with additional padding between it and the straps
 - ◇ Tighten the straps sufficiently to secure the animal. Care must be taken not to compress the ribs thus impeding the animal's ability to breathe
- Care must be taken to monitor the tension in the straps while the animal is being secured and transported to ensure the animal's security on the glide
- The animal should be constantly monitored as it is being moved and in transport

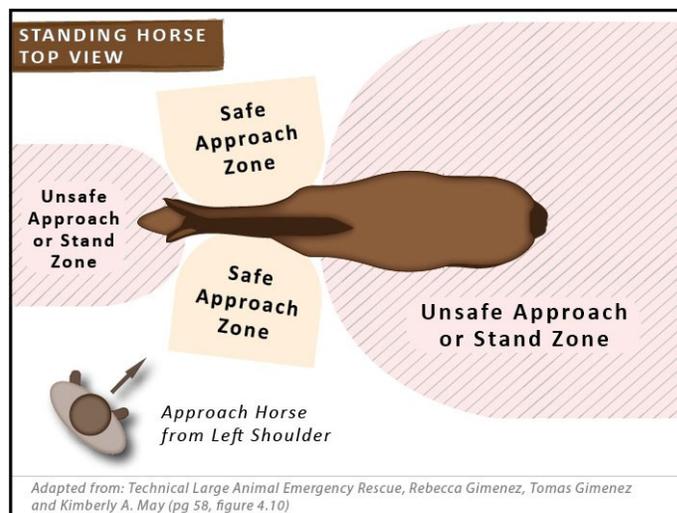
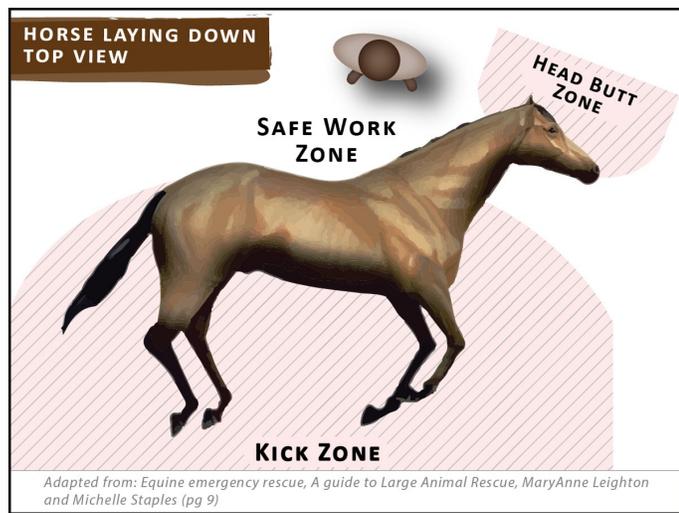
Safety

- Ensure eye and head protection for the animal
- Establish and maintain head control at all times
- Work from the back of the animal
- Ensure that the rescuer(s) securing the animal to the glide is/are tied off to a buddy
- Attach additional ratchet straps in an X pattern for transporting over hilly terrain

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.*