



## Horse Care Info Sheet

# Equine Welfare

## The Five Freedoms

The concept of the internationally recognized Five Freedoms, providing animals with good welfare, originated with the 1965 UK Brambell report. The Five Freedoms were later expanded upon by the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) of the UK and represents the welfare of an animal in both its physical and mental state. These codes have been formally recognized by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), including Canada.

1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst
2. Freedom from Discomfort
3. Freedom from Pain, Injury, or Disease
4. Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour
5. Freedom from Fear and Distress

## Top Five Goals for Equine Welfare



photo: BARBARA SHERIDAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Through the science of animal welfare combined with the Five Freedoms, great improvements have been made in recognizing the needs of a horse for a high quality of life, such as:

1. Provide access to fresh water, forage and feed to ensure proper health. It's a necessity in life.
2. Make available an appropriate environment, including access to shelter, to protect them from the elements throughout the year.
3. Provide a rapid diagnosis for sickness or injury and proper medical treatment. This would include an appropriate parasite program, inoculation against disease, and dental care.
4. Allow sufficient space, turnout, and companionship thus allowing the horse to express normal behaviour.
5. Ensure proper conditions and treatment that avoid mental suffering to protect from fear and distress. Highly stressed horses suffer an increased susceptibility to disease.

Be a responsible horse owner. Should you decide that you can no longer properly care for your horse, consider rehoming it to a knowledgeable horse enthusiast, a therapeutic riding center, horse rescue or sanctuary. Should your horse become incapacitated and cannot recover, ensure it a humane end through euthanasia by a licensed veterinarian.

**Explore controversial and sensitive issues surrounding the use of horses and gain awareness of welfare issues with the next online offering of [Equine Guelph's Equine Welfare course](#).**