

RISK AWARENESS FOR EQUESTRIANS HANDBOOK



The
British
Horse
Society



Professional Coach

INTRODUCTION

The British Horse Society takes the welfare, health and safety of coaches, horses, riders, and all involved with horses very seriously. When carrying out duties as an Accredited Professional, you have a duty of care to safeguard the health and safety of your clients, the horses and anyone else that may be involved. Being able to see potential risk or hazards is continuous throughout your day, whether you are working or going about your everyday activities. You will consider risk, and the health and safety of all you work with as soon as you step onto a yard, whether it is assessing the weather conditions, the facilities available to you or the behaviour of the horse(s) you are working with. Being risk aware shouldn't be a limiting factor when planning or carrying out activities, but a necessary part of ensuring that everyone involved can enjoy the activity in a fun, safe environment.

This document and accompanying workshop will help you understand your responsibilities with regards to:

- Risk awareness
- Risk assessments
- Managing risk
- Health and safety
- Accidents and incidents
- GDPR and Biosecurity



LEGISLATION

Health and safety laws apply to coaching, grooming and other activities you may carry out as an Accredited Professional; whether you are freelance or employed.

Health and Safety legislation

In England, Scotland and Wales, health and safety legislation is determined by The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 is the primary piece of legislation covering work-related health and safety in Northern Ireland. In Ireland, the Safety, Health and Welfare Act 2005 should be referred to.

The BHS Risk Awareness course highlights good practice and relevant UK law. If you are outside of the UK, ensure you are familiar with the law relevant to you.

Self-Employed

For health and safety legal purposes, 'self-employed' means that you do not work under a contract of employment and work only for yourself. If your work activity poses a risk to the health and safety of others then the law applies to you (HSE, 2021).

Due to the nature of horse riding, coaching riding activities has the potential to pose a risk to others. 'Others' doesn't just mean the rider, it could also apply to other riders (if a group lesson or shared arena), volunteers, parents or anyone else that could be in the arena or surrounding area, and therefore be at risk of harm, during your coaching session.

If you carry out grooming activities, you have a duty to protect yourself and others from the risks your work creates, even if this is only for a small part of your overall work activity. For example, if you have been asked to clip a horse, you need to consider if other people can be affected by the service you are providing. Trailing wires, noise, dust and hair clippings, the clippers and the horse itself, could pose a risk to another person. Remember, if there is potential to cause harm to another person; health and safety law applies to you.

Self-employed and employing others

If you are self-employed and employ others the law will apply to you. You must protect your workers and others from getting injured or ill at work.

Employed

If you work under a contract of employment, your employer will have responsibility for implementing health and safety law in the workplace. You have the responsibility to follow their guidance and any health and safety duties appointed to you.

This resource and accompanying workshop focus on the law and good practice for self-employed professionals. If you employ others, you must follow the relevant health and safety law for your Nation or you are at risk of action against you under criminal and/or civil law.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

For further advice on UK law and Health and Safety guidance visit:
www.hse.gov.uk





DEFINITIONS

Described in this section are various terms you will need to understand in your day-to-day practice.

Health

A state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Safety

A state in which, or a place where, you are safe and not in danger or at risk.

Health and Safety

Regulations and procedures intended to prevent accident, injury, or ill health in workplaces and/or public environments.

It is important that the 'health' element isn't forgotten when looking at health and safety. Too often the 'safety' element is considered and not health.

- ✓ Health and safety when done properly can be your friend,
- ✓ Health and safety is actually really useful when you systematically look at what you do,
- ✓ Health and safety is a legal requirement and needs to be considered.

If you are an Accredited Professional, you should be aware of the BHS Accredited Professional Code of Conduct. Health and safety is not expressly mentioned in the code, but with the code comes an acceptance of operating at a standard that ensures the reputation of the British Horse Society and its Accredited Professionals is upheld.



RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The BHS Accredited Professional Code of Conduct is built on the principles of integrity, honesty, fair play and respect. These principles are integral, not optional, and apply to all levels of ability and commitment.

Please see our Accredited Professional Code of Conduct at www.bhs.org.uk/howcanijoin

Duty of care

A moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety or wellbeing of others.

When individuals are involved in organised activities and are to any extent under the care and/or control of one or more adults, the adult(s) have a duty to take reasonable care to ensure their safety and welfare. You have both a legal and moral duty of care.

Duty of care is an important legal term and it is one you will already understand. Spend some time looking at this as it has a big impact on the work you do. It extends not just to those you are coaching but also to those who may be assisting you, those whose facility you are using, and so on.

Hazard

Something with the potential to do harm. For example, a horse, a tractor, manual handling. A hazard is often safe when it is by itself, it's the addition of 'someone' that then creates the hazard.

Risk

The likelihood and consequences of something happening that can cause harm to health and safety. For example, heavy lifting causing back strain, a novice rider trying to jump 80cm and falling off getting concussion.

Risk Assessment

A careful evaluation of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, horses or facilities and the likelihood of it happening.

Accident

An unexpected event which results in injury or illness of a person/horse and/or property damage.

Incident

An unexpected event that doesn't involve injury or illness to a person or horse. Includes near miss.



HEALTH AND SAFETY IN PRACTICE

As horses are unpredictable animals, it is important that as a coach, you understand that a knowledge of health and safety is not only a legal requirement but will make your life easier in the event of an incident

or accident. Preparing documentation, risk assessments and even lesson plans can really spare you from some difficult situations if there is an incident or accident.

As a coach you will prepare every time you go about your activities. You will plan what you are doing, with the clients you have at the venues you will be working at.

Firstly, let's look at the health aspect. You need to consider what information you may need from your client to understand if they have any health issues that could impact on the lesson in any way. This could be a short-term injury or long-term condition. With children this information may be given to you by a parent or guardian and is particularly important if the child is going to be left in your care.

FURTHER TRAINING

Ensure your safeguarding training is current to help safeguard children and adults at risk that you work with and yourself. Find Safeguarding for Equestrians training at: www.bhs.org.uk/cpdsafeguarding

Health concerns may not be something an adult may necessarily wish to discuss, particularly in a group situation. This is where the 'BHS Rider Development form' can help, as this requests any medical information and allows it to be shared more discretely with you.



RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Download our 'Rider Development form' from the Accredited Professional Hub.

Part of your initial risk assessment before you begin any training should include a conversation with your rider when you first meet for that lesson. Find out how they are feeling, are they recovering from an injury, how has their week been? External stresses or distractions, whether physical or mental, could influence a rider and their ability or concentration during your session. Here you may also find out any additional information. A rider may struggle to try new things in front of others, or they may have particular horse issues, all points which are useful to know before the lesson, but also for you to be aware of once you begin.

It should be noted that there is no requirement for any person to disclose any health issue, another reason why risk awareness is an essential tool for coaches. Your ability to interpret a situation unfolding before you, will ensure that you then act in a way to reduce that risk.

Safety within your sessions not only applies to you, but also your client(s) when you are coaching them, the exercises that you set up, the venue, and every aspect of your session. It must reflect what you are doing and what you are going to do.

Your experience gained over years of coaching will mean you have an inbuilt instinct to identify when things are not as they should be and recognise situations that can quickly become unsafe unless handled correctly. This may range from a horse starting to behave in an unpredictable way, to a rider demonstrating extreme nervousness, to a child behaving with little thought of others in the lesson. All will need intervention if they are not to become quickly unsafe – not only for those riders but others in the lesson. With horses you can never predict anything, but as coaches you need to have a good awareness of what is going on around you and be able to address situations as they develop.



RISK ASSESSMENTS

Planning is an essential part of the work you do and is critical to ensure the health and safety of yourself, the health and safety of those

you are coaching, helpers, horses and staff at the venue. Risk awareness is a very important part of the planning process.

Initial planning can begin at home, before you have seen your clients or horses, in the form of risk assessments.

Risk assessments are required in your area of work as there is a potential to cause harm to others, horses or even damage to facilities. If you are hiring a venue, the proprietor may require one to satisfy their insurers.

There are three types of risk assessment:

- ✓ Specific
- ✓ Generic
- ✓ Dynamic

The differences are explained in your workshop, but ultimately all follow the same 'six steps' to building a useful risk assessment.

Six Steps to...Writing a Risk Assessment

1. **HAZARDS** what has the potential to do harm in the activity you are coaching?
2. **THOSE AT RISK** who or what might be at risk and how?
3. **HOW TO PREVENT HARM** what you need to do to reduce the likelihood of harm?
4. **ADDITIONAL MEASURES** anything else that needs to be done. Often these measures need to be added when you assess the situation upon arrival.
5. **WHO AND WHEN** what needs to be done to implement the control measures?
6. **REVIEW** and update risk assessments at least annually, following an accident, or if there are any significant changes to the activity.



Risk Assessment Template

A working example.

ACTIVITY	DATE OF ASSESSMENT	VENUE IT APPLIES TO	TYPE OF VENUE	TYPE OF CLIENT
Grid work	11/03/2020	N/A	Outdoor arena	Jumping 80/90cm confidently
HAZARD	PEOPLE AT RISK/ POTENTIAL HARM	CONTROL MEASURES	FURTHER CONTROLS	IMPLEMENTED WHEN? BY WHOM
Grids	Riders/horses tripping - sprains/strains/ broken bones	Similar sized horses in lesson. Competent riders Extended warm up.	Coach first aider (renewed Oct 2020). Volunteer on ground to place poles	Every lesson
Poles/jump wings	Volunteer - back strain from lifting	Ask volunteer about any injuries/ conditions. Advise on manual handling	Coach and volunteer to share heavy loads	Every lesson

Initial assessment

Whether you are working with a single client or a group of adults or children, there should always be a period of assessment factored into the start of every lesson; it is your duty of care to ensure that what you have planned, or what your client wants to do, will be suitable for that session. This is your first risk analysis taking place. It may only take a few minutes whilst your rider is warming up but is essential to gauge the potential hazards and risk for your session.

Use the prompts below to jot down what your initial assessment should consider, as discussed in your workshop.

Facilities	Horse/s
Rider/s	External factors

At any point in your lesson you must stop and change your initial planned activity if you feel it is too dangerous to continue. Do not keep running the session. Your skill as a coach includes being able to think on your feet and amend the session you had planned in response to each situation.



MANAGING ACCIDENTS

You should always have a plan in place that in the event of an accident you know what to do.

Things to consider:

- ✓ Does the venue already have an emergency procedure in place?
- ✓ Do you know the full address of the venue to give to emergency services?
- ✓ Do you have a charged and working mobile phone?
- ✓ Is there phone signal at the venue?
Or a landline?

- ✓ If you're on a cross country course, does the venue have a two-way radio system that can be used (in case of lack of mobile phone signal)?
- ✓ Do you have emergency contact details for your client?
- ✓ Do you have access to a fully stocked first aid kit?
- ✓ Is your first aid training up to date?
- ✓ Do you have a notebook or 'accident report forms' to hand to record the accident?



TOP TIP

Download the 'What3Words' app to your smart phone. This has mapped every 3m square with a unique combination of three words and will help emergency services identify precise locations.



RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Download our 'accident report form' from the BHS Accredited Professional Hub.

All of the above should already be considered as part of your risk assessment. You could even create a generic risk assessment for handling emergencies and all the measures you will need in place.

FURTHER TRAINING

Equine Specific First Aid courses are available from the BHS.
www.bhs.org.uk/firstaid

If your client, or someone else under your supervision during the lesson, is involved in a near miss, it's advisable to log this. The accident report form can be used in the event of a no injury incident for your own records. Can anything be learned from this near miss? Review your risk assessment with the aim of preventing it happening again.

You should log any accident that results in an injury to horse, rider, volunteer, observer, and so on, or damage to facilities using an accident report form, once any injury has been dealt with. Here are a few other steps you can take:

- ✓ Take a photo of the arena/work area. This helps to take a snapshot of how any exercises were laid out, the lighting or visibility on the day
- ✓ Take any witness statements if applicable
- ✓ File a copy of your risk assessment (specific or generic) for that session with your accident report form
- ✓ Was anybody videoing? Could you have a copy of the video? Remember to obtain permission to use this from participants.

It's important you do everything in your power to document, investigate, review and aim to prevent all incidents. It may seem paperwork heavy, but any documentation will be beneficial in the event of a claim against you, which could be years after the event, and trying to recall information then would be more difficult.

Having your records in order helps to demonstrate you are a competent, well organised, and safe coach.

How long to keep the information for?

- ✓ If a client is injured (or a volunteer assisting at a clinic you are running) you should keep this information for a minimum of three years if an adult
- ✓ If it is a child, you must keep this information until that child reaches their 21st birthday or for three years after the accident (whichever is longer).

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDOR)

RIDDOR is a set of legal regulations (in the UK) that require certain incidents to be reported.

If there is an accident to someone who is 'working for you' in any capacity, a groom, at a clinic picking poles, these accidents must be reported no more than 10 days after the incident:

1. Any fracture other than to the fingers, thumbs or toes
2. Any amputation
3. Dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine
4. Loss of sight (whether temporary or permanent)
5. A chemical or hot metal burn to the eye or any penetrating injury to the eye
6. Any injury resulting from an electric shock or electrical burn (including any electrical burn caused by arcing or arcing products) leading to unconsciousness or requiring resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours

7. Any other injury: (a) leading to hypothermia, heat-induced illness or to unconsciousness (b) requiring resuscitation (c) requiring admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours

If a person not at work (for example, a member of the **public/client**) suffers an injury in connection with your work and they are taken to hospital for treatment directly from the scene of the accident, it is reportable as a major injury. Examinations and diagnostic tests do not constitute 'treatment' in such circumstances.



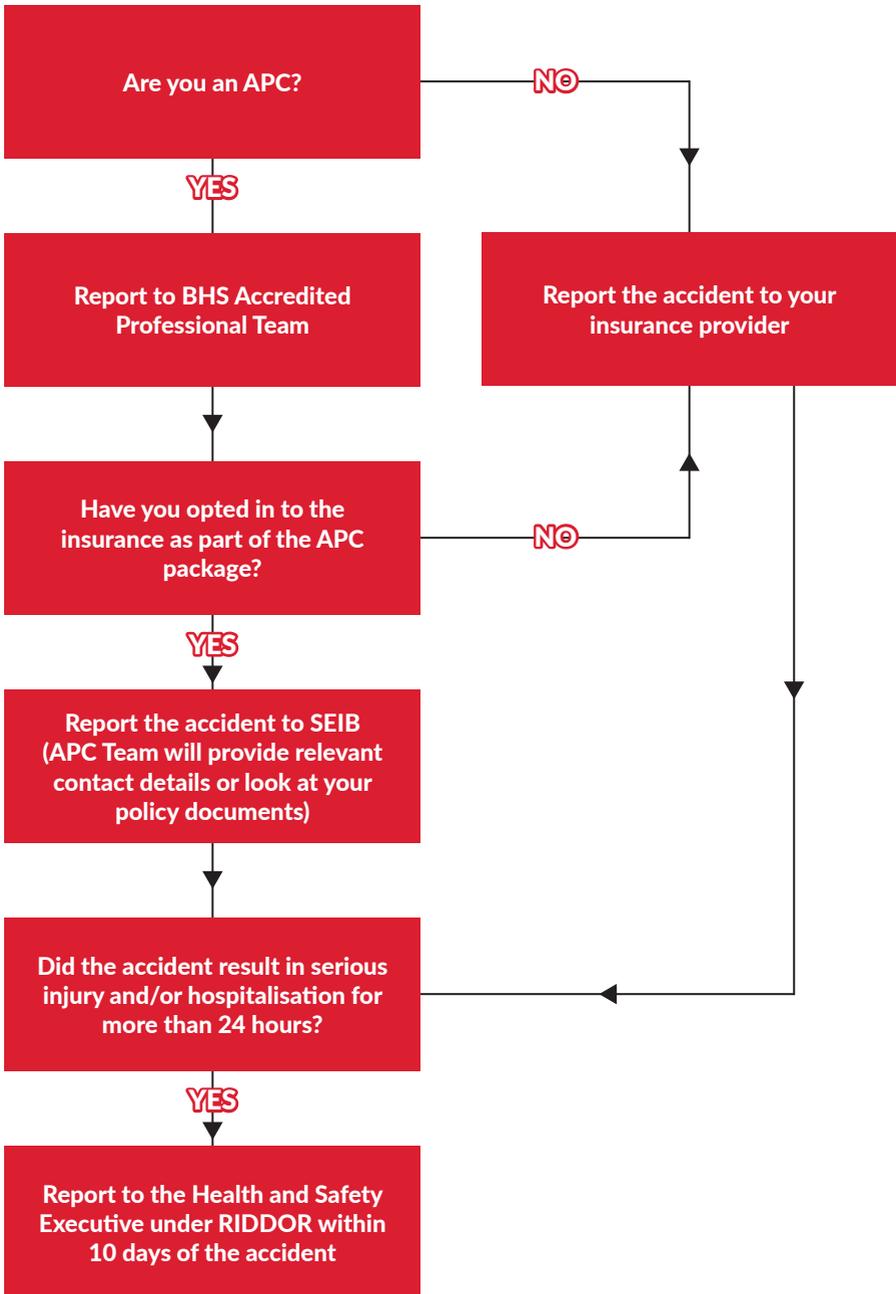
RESOURCES AVAILABLE

RIDDOR guidance in Scotland, England and Wales:
www.hse.gov.uk/riddor

RIDDOR guidance in Northern Ireland:
www.hseni.gov.uk/report-incident

Accident and Dangerous Occurrence reporting guidance in Ireland:
www.hsa.ie/eng/topics

Follow up reporting in the event of an accident





THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)

GDPR, whilst not relating directly to safety, does need to be considered when recording information about others. This applies whether it is just basic information about them (name, address, telephone

number) or more detailed information, for example, the 'rider development form' where there may be medical information. It is about keeping it safe and understanding what you can keep and how.

Important questions you need to ask yourself are:

- ✓ What information are you collecting?
- ✓ Why are you collecting it?

If there's not a work-related reason to collect certain data, don't keep it.

What do I need to do?

You must keep your client's information safe. Here are some suggestions on ways you can do that:

Paperwork

If you decide to keep paperwork records they must be kept locked away and not able to be read by anyone.

If you are keeping documents in your car, it is recommended that you keep them in a lockable container that is removed at night, every time you get home, and stored securely.

Online records

Whilst this may appear the safest way to store client's data, it will rely on you having secure passwords and ensuring you save all information in a format that cannot be accessed by anyone else.

How long do I keep information?

You only need to keep the information for as long as you are working with that client.

If you have a client that 'dips in and out' it is recommended that if they do not return to you within a year, you securely delete that data. If they do return, they will just need to submit that information again.



RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Further guidance and helpful templates are available from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO): www.ico.org.uk

Data Protection and GDPR information and templates from the BHS: www.bhs.org.uk/apcdp



Download Horse i, our new incident reporting app

The
British
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Have you had a scary incident whilst out riding? Horse i lets you quickly tell us about any incidents that happen to you either on or off the road.

Recording your incidents helps us to:

- Identify hotspots to offer support to equestrians in local safety campaigns
- Hold special equine safety events in your area to highlight what issues equestrians are facing
- Lobby and advise MPs, government, road safety partnerships, the police and other organisations

For more information visit
bhs.org.uk/reportanincident



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We welcome you to join our professional community.

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**Terms, conditions and territorial limits apply



