



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

HORSES

SUMMARY

Horseback riding along trails in the wilderness, our national or state parks, or at your council camp can be a welcome highlight for any outdoor activity. When planning such an event, here are a few resources and guidelines to consider.

GENERAL INFORMATION

As per the *Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities*, No. 680-685, Wolf and Bear Scouts are the minimum age for this activity. Generally, Wolf and Bear Scouts, Webelos Scouts, and Scouts may go horseback riding as a day event. Older Scouts, Venturers, and Sea Scouts may complete longer horseback rides, such as during a trek camp or high adventure camp.

The proper clothing and gear are important for your health and your comfort on a horseback ride. Here's what to wear and carry along:

- Proper clothing, such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and properly fitted boots and leather gloves.
- Properly fitted helmets that are ASTM/SEI-rated for horseback riding. Ski or bike helmets are not effective for horseback riding.
- Rain gear, water bottle or canteen (stay hydrated), and sunscreen.

If renting horses or taking a horseback riding tour, do some advance planning. Items to consider are:

- Does the vendor have experience with horses and trail riding and provide an orientation prior to the ride?
- Are the horses ridden often, and do they get proper care and feeding?
- Are the horses regularly checked by a licensed or registered veterinarian?
- Is the vendor certified for horsemanship from an organization such as the Certified Horsemanship Association? See the Resources section below.
- Does the vendor have licenses or permits for trail riding in a national or state park or forest?
- Does the vendor have suitable liability coverage for accidents and injuries involving their horsemanship activity? The levels of insurance coverage may vary, so check with your local council on what might be appropriate liability insurance coverage amounts.
- Parents should sign any required consents, releases, risk acknowledgments, or waivers of liability on behalf of their children. This is not a unit leader's responsibility.

RESOURCES

- Safety First for Your Horse Program: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/alerts/safety-first-horse-program/
- Certified Horsemanship Association: <http://www.cha-ahse.org/>
- Equisearch—Trail Riding Tips: www.equisearch.com/articles/trail-riding/tips
- Horsemanship merit badge requirements: https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/Merit_Badge_ReqandRes/Horsemanship.pdf

