

Trailerling Horses

Transportation wrecks are probably the most common disasters that horse owners will encounter. Excellent materials on equine transport safety include *Hawkins Guide on Equine Emergencies* and *Horse Trailerling on the Road*. Also, the videotape *Equine Trailer Rescue* is available from the Horse Park of New Jersey. This video is designed to familiarize both horse owners and emergency management personnel with transportation safety for horses and how to rescue horses from wrecked trailers.

Some horses can be difficult to load. These horses and their handlers should be taught how to load quickly and safely so that in a disaster they do not impede human or animal safety. One way to increase evacuation of horses is to train horses to trailer. A horse's being familiar with its trailer allows things to happen quickly and without the added stress of a new experience. Trailer "drills" can help horses become accustomed to riding in a trailer.

When loading animals, if lead ropes are needed, it is best to use braided ropes rather than plastic ones because they are less likely to injure the handler if the animal moves away. Workers must determine a safe escape route before entering a trailer, and only safety quick-release knots should be used for tying animals.

Horses should be transported using leather halters. Leather halters break sooner than plastic or rope, causing less injury if the horse gets caught. Also, if a fire starts, leather halters will not melt onto the horse's face. These principles also apply to show cattle and other animals. All tack (saddle, bridle, and harnesses) should be removed before horses and other animals are transported.