

Willow Creek Ranch, Inc. Operational Statement Regarding COVID-19 (2021)

References to “participant” includes any parent, caregiver, family member or visitor that comes to WCR with the participant.

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1. Participant/Volunteer Operations responsibilities

Operations at Willow Creek Ranch, Inc. (WCR) must adhere to strict guidelines. As a PATH, Intl Center, we must follow all laws, including state and local laws, and the Standards developed by PATH, Intl. (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship, Intl).

The current situation is fluid and our strategic plans for COVID-19 may be amended.

WCR is providing health and human services that are essential to the health and wellness of our community. We are working hard to ensure that the mandated protocols, sanitation, and social distancing procedures are in place at WCR for all of our programs. The risk of illness from respiratory viruses, including the flu and COVID-19, makes it more important to take proactive steps to prevent the spread of respiratory illness. In addition, there is a general risk of contracting any contagious diseases when interacting with other humans or animals.

The health and safety of our participants and horses remains our top priority during this period of uncertainty. As an organization, we are deeply committed to following CDC guidelines for the health and safety of anyone entering WCR. You can help us keep everyone safe, while enjoying the benefits of your time at WCR.

The following information is very important:

PLEASE BE RESPECTFUL and CONSIDERATE of your impact on WCR. If you are not well and come to the Ranch, you can cause severe problems for the health of our clients, volunteers and the business.

Please call your mental health provider or instructor to cancel/reschedule your session/lesson if you are feeling unwell.

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported, from mild to severe. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms or combinations of symptoms may have COVID-19. If any you have any of the following symptoms, please DO NOT VISIT Willow Creek Ranch:

- Recent exposure to a known COVID-19 or other respiratory disease person
- Fever
- Cough; Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell

Or at least two of these symptoms: chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat

Children may or may not have similar symptoms to adults.

This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you. ([cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus))

If you have ANY of the above listed symptoms or any symptoms of any contagious disease, please refrain from visiting WCR and possibly infecting others at WCR including volunteers and vulnerable participants.

2. WCR COVID-19 Response Plan Includes but Is Not Limited to:

- WCR's instructors, volunteers, and participants will follow the CDC's recommendations on social distancing and basic hygiene.
- Instructors, volunteers, and participants will sign a Release of Liability for COVID-19 in addition to the regular waiver form.
- Instructors, volunteers, and participants may be required to use face masks during lessons.
- During a participant lesson or encounter, the 'social distance' of a minimum of 6' will be followed as much as practical. Horse leaders, instructors, volunteers, and immediate family members/caregivers will be aware of distancing needed to remain safe, but also to provide direct interaction or emergency care.
- Parents and caregivers may be trained to assist a participant in mounting and dismounting. Parents and caregivers will go through orientation if needed to provide a safe lesson.
- Lessons will be scheduled to minimize the amount of people traffic in the parking lot, outdoor arena, and indoor arena.

2.a. Bathroom/PATS Portable bathroom:

Staggered use of all shared spaces, including the community room and PATS portable toilet, is to be maintained.

Anyone using either bathroom facility must be responsible for using disinfectant spray on all items touched, including handles, and wash or sanitize hands after bathroom use. Each individual using either bathroom facility will be responsible for sanitizing the bathroom and their hands after use. If the individual is a minor, the caregiver is responsible for this action. Disinfectant spray will need to be applied to all items touched including handles, doorknobs, seat, etc. We appreciate your compliance in this matter.

Unless in the case of an emergency, the Community Room bathroom is reserved for the exclusive use of WCR instructors, volunteers, and participants/participants family.

2.b. Facility Entry and Exit Procedures:

When arriving or leaving a lesson/session participants should practice social distancing.

Participants may be directed to wait in their vehicle until an instructor or designated volunteer directs them to approach the outdoor arena. If lessons/sessions are held in the indoor arena due to weather, all persons are directed to enter through the open overhead (garage-type) door at the southeast corner of the arena and go to the marked waiting area. An alternative entry would be the arena south side access door. The south access is across from the sensory trails.

Yellow caution tape, rope or signage will clearly mark the route to be taken to the arenas. Other areas not open to participants or others will be marked.

2.c. Sanitation Procedures:

- You will sanitize your hands at the entrance to the outdoor and indoor arena. This will be done before and after a lesson/session.
- Sanitary processes implemented throughout WCR include: soap, hand sanitizer, single-use gloves, doors propped open, motion sensitive lights, hands-free capabilities, no shared food.
- Surfaces that receive frequent human contact will be disinfected as soon as possible after and between uses by either the user (in case of bathroom use) or designated volunteer or caregiver.

- Instructors, volunteers, and participants must immediately report any COVID-19 symptoms or exposure to a COVID-19 individual to a Willow Creek Ranch instructor or staff member.
- Instructors, volunteers, and participants must report to WCR staff contact with any person who tests positive for COVID-19; subsequently self-quarantine for 14 days is required and person must be symptom-free for 14 days before returning to WCR premises.
- No one will be allowed on property for 14 days since the date that they returned from travelling as designated by the CDC policies. Or if they live with someone who has travelled to associated areas.
- If any person has experienced any cold or flu symptoms, or has been in contact with anyone experiencing any cold or flu symptoms, this person must refrain from coming to WCR's premises for a period of 14 days after symptoms subside. WCR staff may require a physician's statement before returning to the ranch.
- If WCR discovers that someone with COVID-19 was onsite, anyone who was on site at the time of possible exposure will be contacted.

2.d. Facility

- The Community Room off the indoor arena is still under construction and will have limited use.
- Please do not touch anything unless you need to use it. Regularly used fixed items (e.g. gate latches, door knobs, light switches) will be disinfected.
- Only designated instructors or volunteers are to move and set up arena props, including ground poles, cones, upright poles, etc.
- Motion sensor lights have been installed in the community room, bathroom, and tack room.
- There will signs for multiple hand sanitizing stations.
- Disinfectants used will follow the CDC recommendations.

2.e. Who can ride during COVID-19 activities?

- Less medically vulnerable; able to remain centered and stable on the horse with no, or very minimal, support. A parent or family member may go through volunteer training to provide minimal sidewalker support.
- A rider requiring a full time "active arm hold" will not be able to participate in a riding lesson due to close proximity of riders to volunteers for an extended period.
- A rider requiring an ankle hold and/or a spotter position may be acceptable. If a rider who does not normally require an active arm hold is having a bad day and is needing a prolonged active arm hold then the rider may be dismounted safely and immediately removed from the arena, unless the family member is a trained side walker and with instructor approval wishes to safely continue the lesson.
- Group lessons: Small group of riders requiring minimal or no assistance from instructor and side walker; side walker will be a trained parent, or consenting volunteer.
- A risk/benefit assessment that the participant would be at greater potential of exposing others, albeit inadvertently, will be performed. For instance, a person with mouth or nasal discharge, who drools and/or sneezes a lot – the participant would be required to wear a mask.
- If a risk/benefit assessment is performed, and a significant greater risk is determined, particularly with participants with respiratory or immune issues, families may be asked to get an additional doctor release, or an alternate option to riding may be explored.

2.f. Lesson safety precautions

- Grooming and saddling activity by participants will be restricted to participants who have those activities as part of his/her learning plan.
- Participants will meet at the designated waiting areas at the outdoor or indoor arena.

- The outdoor and indoor area may be divided in half and to give 2 private lessons at the same time at opposite ends of arenas, when necessary.
- Lessons will be scheduled so volunteers and families are not coming and going at the same time.
- There will be a limit of (2) family members that come and watch.
- If there are family members that take lessons, they will be offered a group lesson with the other family member.
- Tack will only be used by one participant before going through a cleaning process for another participant.
- Adult or pre-approved teenaged family member may be trained as a volunteer to assist in mounting/dismounting of their rider, sidewalking, or for emergency situations.
- Parents may be trained by an instructor to assist the rider at the mounting block with verbal cues from the instructor. As the mounting block may be used by more than one participant for a group lesson, please be aware of the difficulty in sanitizing that area. Caution will be taken to minimize physical contact with the mounting block.
- Riders will be dismounted close to the gate so riders can go straight to their families. Riders will be dismounted and exited one at a time.
- Riders will not be allowed to give their horse a treat to reduce the risk of coming in contact with each other and multiple hands on a treat pan.
- Families will be asked to leave promptly after class to allow for disinfecting and to limit the number of people on site.
- **No participants or family members will be allowed to roam the property and must remain at the arena area in designated places.**

2.g. Helmets

- Riders will not be able to search for their own size helmets from the bin. Rider's personal helmets are preferred and need to be pre-approved by WCR before use. Helmets will be sprayed with a disinfectant, but it is not possible to get into each crevice of helmets. Helmets will only be used once per day to diminish exposure to multiple riders.
- By the nature of our equipment, it is not possible to thoroughly disinfect everything with which you may come into contact—for example, helmets. The straps on helmets are made of nylon and have plastic buckles; they will continue to be disinfected with disinfectant spray after each use.
- If you don't own your own helmet, you might consider purchasing one that is ASTM-SEI approved. If you decide to do this, please check with your instructor to know the size and brand of the helmet. Helmets used at WCR are in the \$40-50 range.
- **Please DO NOT buy a second-hand or used helmet.** (Brands that we recommend include: Troxel and Ovation.)
- There will be a limit to the number of helmets available to a rider; size will be determined prior so multiple helmets are not in contact with rider, volunteer or family.

**COVID-19 Acknowledgement of Risk and Acceptance of Services
Waiver**

As a “participant” (including caregivers, volunteers, visitors), I am aware of the risks of contracting a variety of contagious diseases, including COVID-19, while receiving services from Willow Creek Ranch, Inc. (WCR) during the Wisconsin government declaration of “Safer at Home” and the world-wide health issues. The current situation is fluid and our strategic plans for COVID-19 will likely be amended.

I am also aware that face-to-face services increase my risk of contracting and passing on any contagious diseases. I agree that receiving services or being at WCR is strictly my decision and is not in any way a required service or activity and agree to hold harmless WCR, its Board of Directors, instructors, equine specialists, therapists, and volunteers and all other individuals I may come in contact with during this interaction and receiving of services from all damages or liability for any injury to person or property arising as a result of the use of the facilities, horses, and/or equipment owned or leased to WCR, including any injury caused by their negligence.

I agree to and will follow all procedures for personal hygiene, personal safety and public safety as recommended by WCR, the state and CDC recommendations, and my individual provider/practitioner. This may include, but is not limited to, waiting in my vehicle until I am directed by an instructor or designated volunteer to enter the outdoor arena or indoor arena; washing and/or sanitizing my hands prior to and after each riding lesson; use of hand sanitizer upon request; wiping down surfaces with disinfecting wipes I touch and/or wearing a protective medical mask and/or gloves.

I agree to cancel my services should I have within the previous 24 hours to 2 weeks personally exhibited or have been in contact with someone who has presented with illness including; cough, sneezing, fever, chest congestion or additional signs of potential spread of any virus or bacteria/disease. In addition, I will follow the recommendations of my healthcare provider once I have notified healthcare provider of these risks in regards to my future services.

WCR will engage in regular cleaning and sanitizing of horse tack, grooming supplies, and office doors, and frequently touched areas in-between clients and on a daily basis as recommended by the CDC and our contracted Veterinarian for the safety of our instructors, participants, families, volunteers and horses.

I am signing under my own free will and choice and agree to follow these safety procedures and hold harmless all individuals associated with or through my services acquired from Willow Creek Ranch.

Waiver established 5/2020 in response to COVID-19 world-wide pandemic condition.

Participants*, Parents, Caregivers, Visitors, Volunteers
WCR-COVID Operational Statement and
COVID-19 Acknowledgement of Risk and Acceptance of Services Waiver

I have read, understand, and agree to follow the directives listed on the Willow Creek Ranch, Inc. Operational Statement Regarding COVID-19.

In addition, I have read, understand, and agree to follow the COVID-19 Acknowledgement of Risk and Acceptance of Services waiver.

Please print name: _____

Name(s) of participant(s): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____