

## American Endurance Ride Conference

### **Guidance for Conducting AERC Sanctioned Events During COVID -19**

AERC has developed the following guidelines to mitigate potential impacts from COVID-19. AERC remains committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of horses and people at sanctioned rides. These guidelines are provided to Ride Managers, veterinarians and participants to help control exposure to and transmission of infectious disease during the pandemic. These guidelines are intended to supplement and NOT contradict or replace local, state, and federal orders. They are based on currently advised best practices and do not replace the recommendations made by health authorities. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the individual to determine if participating at an AERC event is in the best interest of their personal health.

### Guidelines

The following guidelines are not meant to be all-inclusive. Ride managers, in partnership with their veterinarians, must ensure they are meeting the intent of the guidelines as they apply to the ride manager's specific event. In the event of a discrepancy between these guidelines and local, state or federal policies, the ride manager must first and foremost follow local, state and federal guidance.

- **Maximize use of pre-registration and electronic payment**
- **All areas where lines could form will be marked off to ensure 12 feet distancing**
- **Do not attend events if you are showing signs of illness to include, but not limited to, fever, cough, chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or loss of sense of smell or taste**
- **Appropriate hand sanitizer or hand washing will be available in all common areas**
- **All participants will adhere to social distancing standards of not less than 6 feet at all times**
- **Group gatherings will be avoided (i.e. ride meeting, awards, meals, mass check-in)**



## ATTACHMENT 1

### Responsibilities of Ride Managers

In addition to following AERC Rules, it is the responsibility of every Ride Manager to ensure they adhere to all local, state and federal laws/policies/guidelines applicable to the jurisdictional area of their ride(s). Failure to abide by any of the rules, policies or guidelines could invalidate AERC provided ride insurance and result in the forfeiture of ride sanctioning.

These guidelines are not meant to be all-inclusive. Ride Managers at a minimum shall take into consideration the number of riders and other people involved, camp layout and the current rate of infection in their specific area as well as surrounding areas. Minimize the number of volunteers. The measures taken to minimize exposure should be commensurate with the variable hazards and conditions at each ride.

Signage listing ride precaution guidelines will be posted in all common areas and will be provided in rider packets.

Ride Managers will have a designated person who will stay updated on all current changes to the COVID-19 county, state and federal policies and will alert the Ride Manager immediately to any changes. The designated person for remote/non cell service rides would be offsite and come to the ride to apprise the Ride Manager.

If Ride Managers are not able to meet the minimum expectations of these guidelines, then it would be in the best interest of the sport to postpone the ride until the minimum standards can be met.

**Hygiene/Sanitation** – Ride Management will ensure there is hand washing/sanitizer available to all participants and volunteers in all common areas.

Proper hand washing is the number one way to stop the spread of disease. This is a challenge in any ride camp, but it does not need to be. Providing adequate hand washing/sanitation stations at the entrance/exit to common areas, bathroom facilities and eating areas is a minimum requirement. These can be as fancy as self-contained portable hand washing stations or as simple as buckets with spigots - as long as there is soap available, individual hand drying and proper disposal of paper waste. Liquid dispensing soap is preferable to bar soap.

Use of hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol at all areas where people may pass each other or touch common items. In/out timers, pulse areas, and Vet checks are appropriate areas for use of hand sanitizer.

**Distancing/Gathering** – All persons attending AERC sanctioned endurance events will maintain minimum distancing of at least 6 feet from other individuals.

If the risk of transmission is high, then elimination of all group gatherings is recommended. This means ride meeting, awards, meals, check-in lines etc.

**Check-in:** Management will ensure that check in procedures follow recommendations for distancing, hygiene and sanitation. To the greatest extent possible use pre-registration and electronic payment systems. Avoid cash transactions in camp.

**Suggested Interventions:** Position the ride secretary at the entrance gate with rider packets. As riders arrive, they are given a complete ride packet and any additional information regarding camp expectations (i.e. remain in your camp area, hand washing etc). Or have ride packets set out so riders simply pick up their packets and leave. Riders who are not pre-registered or who need to make changes can provide the information to the secretary at that time and then pick up their changes at a designated time later in the day in main camp or have them delivered to their camp site.

**Ride Meeting:** Ride meeting format will take into consideration requirements for social distancing. Write out your ride meeting ahead of time and provide to all participants in rider packets, via email, social media, video, etc.

**Suggested interventions:** Have a pre-written ride meeting included in the rider packets. All ride info can be provided to each rider. If they have questions, then they would have to come into main camp and follow entrance/exit procedures for hygiene. Consider having a pre-recorded meeting posted on the internet to be watched prior to arrival at camp

**Awards:** Managers must comply with all AERC rules regarding awards. Management will ensure that gatherings are restricted to meet local, state and federal requirements. Mass ride award gatherings are to be avoided.

**Suggested interventions:** Completion awards can be handed out at the final vet area directly to each rider as they pass. Placings can be posted on boards at the entrance/exit to main camp as they are tabulated. Riders receiving special awards would then be the only ones coming to a pre-designated area to pick up their awards.

**Meals:** Communal meals and potlucks should be avoided. Individual meals prepared for “take out” are appropriate. Managers will ensure that if meals are provided for participants it is done in compliance with local, state and federal guidelines regarding food preparation, distancing and group size.

**Suggested Interventions:** This one can run the gamut from fully catered to potluck. Sadly, the days of potluck may be fading away. For rides that provide meals perhaps using the “take away” method with pre-prepared plates is best. Riders should have their meals at their own camp. However it is done, hand washing stations prior to entering food areas is mandatory. Food prep volunteers must wear gloves and masks if indicated.

**Warm up/Start line:** Ride Managers, volunteers and vets will monitor spacing and remind riders of spacing requirements.

Suggested interventions: Another challenge, particularly in larger rides, is that riders tend to congregate a bit close in at the start or in warm up areas. Constant reminders to spread out will be needed. One option might be staggered starts of no more than 10 riders at a time. This could pose many challenges but may be an option for some ride managers.

**Pulse checks:** Ride Managers will ensure that the pulse check is conducted allowing for minimum spacing requirements and have no more than one rider per pulse team at one time. Riders will stand on the opposite side of the horse from the pulse taker. Pulse takers will use hand sanitizer after every interaction.

Suggested interventions: Mark off individual pulse boxes approximately 12x12 with single pulse check team (pulse taker and scribe) per box. Have enough pulse boxes to eliminate or decrease the opportunity for lines to form. Entrance to each pulse box may require the rider to use hand sanitizer. This can be a space challenge for some areas. Mark off spacing for riders who may end up in a line at 12-foot intervals.

Many rides do not have pulse teams. Riders will arrive and present to the vet when they are recovered. Vet will perform the pulse and record the pulse time.

**Vetting:** Ride managers will work with vet staff to ensure adequate staff and to ensure proper spacing. Control Judges and Treatment Veterinarians shall make every effort to comply with all current local, state and national safety guidelines concerning COVID 19. Due to the necessary direct and intimate contact required between the veterinarians and the competing horses, the following recommendations are made:

- Each competing horse shall be accompanied throughout the Vet Check by only ONE person, handler, or rider. The handler will wear a mask.
- Social distancing standards shall be observed between all persons within the Vet Check area, as much as is practicable;
- Veterinarians and their scribes will wear masks;
- Ride management will ensure hand sanitizer is available to all vets and scribes to be used between every horse/rider team.
- Riders will stand on the opposite side of the horse from the vet.

Suggested interventions: Have enough vets available to reduce or eliminate wait lines. Mark off areas for each vet team, 12 foot minimum. Hand sanitizer should be used by all riders prior to entering the vet box. Vets and scribes use hand sanitizer between riders.

Vet card management options to decrease handling could include maintaining vet cards at the vet stop (only if there is just one vet check location). When Riders present their horse, the vet scribe will locate the vet card and annotate vet assessment.

**In/out timing:** Ride Managers will provide adequate spacing between in and out timers to prevent rider congestion. Management will ensure hand sanitizer is available to timers for use after every horse/rider team interaction.

Suggested interventions: Try to avoid having a single in/out table. Spread these two out at least 20 feet if possible, to diminish congestion. It will be incumbent on riders not to cluster themselves and to come into and out of camp in an orderly fashion. Provide hand sanitizer upon entrance/exit for all riders and gloves/sanitizer for any volunteers touching common items such as vet cards or timecards.

An alternative to cards are control sheets where every rider is tracked in and out on master sheets so that only vet information is on the vet card and it is only handled by the vet scribe and rider. This proposal could pose many challenges but is definitely doable for some rides. For those that are tech-savvy, there are several computer tracker systems available.

**Emergencies:** Ride management will ensure extra masks and gloves are available in all camp and vet check first aid kits.

**Rescue Trailer:** Management will ensure the driver of the trailer has masks and gloves as well as sanitizing equipment available in the vehicle as appropriate.

## ATTACHMENT 2

### Responsibilities of Riders and Participants

It is the responsibility of every rider, attendee, crew person and volunteer to be aware of local situations where they are going to ride. Many of us cross state lines or at the very least county lines to compete. It is important to research your route of travel to and from the ride as there may be mandates that might cause issues with your trip. Be aware of what is happening where you are going...not just where you have been. It is the responsibility of the rider is to ensure they are healthy before attending any endurance event. This includes taking your temperature before you leave home. Riders need to stay apprised of Ride Management guidelines provided prior to events (i.e email, text, social media, phone calls) and read all written documentation provided in rider packets to ensure they are complying with all policies.

Riders, their crew and any participants attending on the riders' behalf must comply with Ride Management's posted guidelines at all times. Failure to do so could put management, volunteers, vets and other riders at risk. Riders who fail to comply with written or verbal guidance may be removed from the event under Rule 12.

*12. It is the duty of everyone participating in an endurance ride whether as a rider, crew member, ride official, ride volunteer, control judge or spectator to act in a manner which does not disrupt the ride or reflect poorly on the sport of endurance riding.*

*12.1 No one participating in an endurance ride shall engage in abusive behavior towards any other participant or member of the public at an endurance ride. Abusive behavior towards people includes but is not limited to:*

*Verbal abuse.*

*Physical assault.*

*Causing or threatening injury.*

*Unreasonably endangering the safety or life of others or their equines.*

*Damaging or trespassing on property.*

*Unsportsmanlike conduct.*

*Conduct prejudicial to the endurance ride or to the sport of endurance riding.*

Riders who consistently refuse to follow ride management, AERC, local, state or federal guidelines can be refused entry under Rule 4:

**Hygiene/Sanitation:** Riders/crew/attendees will ensure there is hand washing/sanitizer available in their respective campsites. They will follow all ride guidelines regarding use of sanitizer and hand washing.

Proper hand washing is the number one way to stop the spread of disease. This is a challenge in any ride camp, but it does not need to be. Providing adequate hand washing/sanitation stations

at the entrance/exit to common areas, bathroom facilities and eating areas is a minimum requirement. These can be as fancy as self-contained portable hand washing stations or as simple as buckets with spigots - as long as there is soap available, individual hand drying and proper disposal of paper waste. Liquid dispensing soap is preferable to bar soap.

Additionally, supply hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol at all areas where people may pass each other or touch common items. In/out timers, P/R, Vet checks are appropriate areas for use of hand sanitizer.

**Distancing/Gathering:** All persons attending AERC sanctioned endurance events will maintain minimum distancing of at least 6 feet from other individuals.

Persons who will be in close proximity to others for specific ride tasks (check-in, pulse check, vetting etc.) will wear masks.

If the risk of transmission is high, then elimination of all group gatherings is recommended. This means ride meeting, awards, meals, check-in lines etc.

**Check-in:** To the greatest extent possible riders will pre-register for rides and utilize electronic payment options.

**Ride Meeting:** Riders will read all written ride meeting information provided in rider packets or posted.

**Warm up/Start line:** Riders will ensure that they maintain minimum spacing requirements at all times.

**Pulse Stations:** Riders will follow ride guidelines for pulse stations. There will only be one handler per horse and they will stand on the opposite side of the horse at all times.

**Vetting:** At all times, riders will follow ride manager guidelines for vetting procedures.

- Each competing horse shall be accompanied throughout the Vet Check by only ONE person, handler, or rider. The handler will wear a mask while presenting the horse to the vet.
- Social distancing standards shall be observed between all persons within the Vet Check area, as much as is practicable;
- Riders will stand on the opposite side of the horse from the vet.

**In/out timing:** Riders will space themselves out at in/out timing areas and will follow ride guidelines for checking in/out at holds.

## ATTACHMENT 3

### Responsibilities of Veterinarians

Veterinarians are a critical asset to Ride Management and riders to ensure the safety and welfare of horses. Control Judges and Treatment Veterinarians shall make every effort to comply with all current local, state and national safety guidelines concerning COVID-19. Veterinarians shall be expected to assist Ride Management in promoting, modeling and enforcing adherence to safety protocols and appropriate hygiene by all participants. They shall also function as an information and PPE resource for Ride Management before and during the event.

Pursuant to Rule 12, riders who do not comply with safety measures put in place by Ride Management will be asked to leave the venue. As veterinarians play an important role in public health, and are the most at-risk individuals at a ride venue, it is appropriate for Ride Management to ask them for input and assistance should such a situation occur. The specific roles of Ride Management and veterinary staff in handling these situations should be mutually agreed upon prior to the start of the ride.

**Vetting:** Ride managers will work with vet staff to ensure adequate staff and to ensure proper spacing. Control Judges and Treatment Veterinarians shall make every effort to comply with all current local, state and national safety guidelines concerning COVID 19. Due to the necessary direct and intimate contact required between the veterinarians and the competing horses, the following recommendations are made:

- Each competing horse shall be accompanied throughout the Vet Check by only ONE person, handler, or rider. The handler will wear a mask while presenting the horse to the vet.
- Social distancing standards shall be observed between all persons within the Vet Check area, as much as is practicable;
- Veterinarians and their scribes will wear masks;
- Ride management will ensure hand sanitizer is available to all vets and scribes to be used between every horse/rider team.
- Riders will stand on the opposite side of the horse from the vet.

Suggested interventions: Have enough vets available to reduce or eliminate lines forming. Mark off areas for each vet team, 12 foot minimum. If possible, hand sanitizer should be used by all riders prior to entering the vet box. Vets and scribes will use hand sanitizer after every horse/rider team.

Vet card management options to decrease handling could include maintaining vet cards at the vet stop (only if there is just one vet check location). When riders present their horses, the vet scribe will locate vet card and annotate vet assessment.