



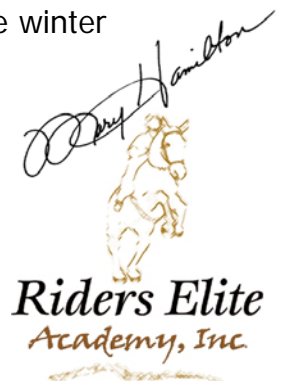
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“Are You Ready For Winter”

The change of seasons is a good opportunity to winterize your barn or stable area with safety in mind. No one wants to be repairing fences or fixing tank heaters in the frigid temperatures. Whatever your winter weather, preparing for it in advance will ensure your barn is safe and functional throughout the cold months.

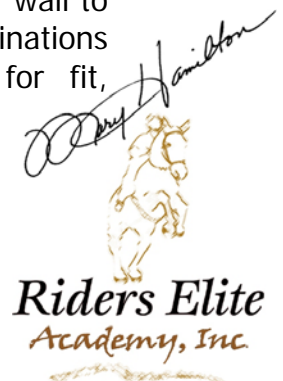
- **Checklist:** Begin by making a checklist of tasks to complete as you prepare for winter. This list will track your progress and can be updated and used year after year.
- **Check your Fences:** Walk your fence line and access and repair any problem you might find. Watch for protruding nails, loose wire or any safety hazards in your pasture that may injure your horse. Trim brush growing close to your fences. The brush catches snowdrifts and can short out the circuit. If you use white electric tape, consider putting colored plastic tie-ons every 15 feet on the top line to increase visibility for horse, snowmobilers or others who come near your fence line.
- **Test Your Gates:** Are they closing properly? Oil gate hinges and make sure gate posts haven't loosened over the summer. Tamp dirt firmly around the posts to ensure they won't destabilize with the freezing –thaw cycle of winter weather.
- **Rest Your Pasture:** Pastures over grazed in fall are vulnerable to winter damage. Turning out your horses during muddy (thaw – refreeze) conditions tears up the turf and causes further damage. One of the best winter pasture management plans you can have is to create a winter paddock or sacrifice area. This helps your pasture grass survive the winter and come back lush and healthy in the spring.





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- **Assess Your Water Supply:** Now is a good time to sanitize and inspect your water trough to ensure it is operating properly. If you use an automatic or float heater check the wiring. A short in the heater can send an electrical shock to the water. Insulate above ground piping and turn off the water supply to unused lines to prevent freeze damage.
- **Prepare Your Barn:** Clear rain gutters of leaves, repair roof leaks and any structural damage of your building. Have your electrical wiring and lighting checked by a professional. Rodents migrate inside during the fall and can damage your electrical system by chewing through wires. Putting electrical wire in conduit is a good option. A good barn cat or two is also good insurance. Evaluate your barn lighting. Are you safe in all areas in and around your barn during the dark winter months? Do you have an area with bright lights where you can safely inspect the wound of an injured horse? If not consider an upgrade of your lighting Good ventilation in your barn is crucial to prevent respiratory problems in your horse. Evaluate and clean your ventilation system, including roof vents and fans. Clean and store your summer use items. Move freezable items like shampoos and other liquids to a heated area to prevent damage
- **Organize Your Barn Tools and Equipment:** Nothing is more frustrating than not being able to find the right tool for the job in any weather let alone subzero temperatures and snow. A friend of mine keeps a barn tool kit supplied with a hammer, screw drivers, wrenches, a drill, drill bits, screws etc. readily available, so she can grab what she needs. Is your tractor in good repair or does it need an oil change? Do you need to put tire chains on for icy or slippery conditions? While you are at it, check your supply of snow shovels, plows and other snow removal tools.
- **Prepare Your Horse:** Clip the fetlock area of long hair. Mud and snow can accumulate on these long hairs and cause sore if not kept clean. If possible pull their shoes for the winter months. This helps the hoof wall to strengthen as the nail holes grow out. Update any needed vaccinations and parasite control program. Inspect your horse blankets for fit, cleanliness and tears.





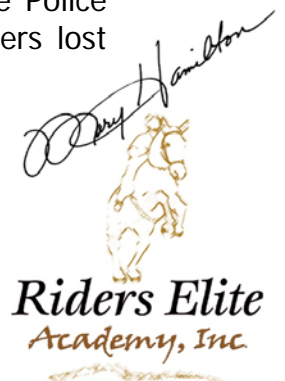
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- **Plan for Ice and Slippery Conditions:** If you have a walkway or area that thaws and refreezes causing ice, keep a bucket of sand, salt or kitty litter near by to toss on the icy spots.
- **Protection from the Winter Elements:** Sleet, cold rain combined with dropping temperatures and wind can quickly chill a horse. A three sided shelter or windbreak is necessary as shelter in these conditions. Clean out your run-in shelter by removing all the old bedding and manure. Then check the drainage of the area. Water should drain out of the shelter not in area where the horses will be standing. Make sure there are no loose boards or exposed nails that could injure your horse in the shed.
- **Tarp Your Manure Storage Areas:** Tarping prevents excess water from accumulating and running off into streams. It also promotes the composting process that kills parasites in the manure.
- **Fire Prevention:** Inspect your fire extinguishers and smoke alarms to make certain they are in good working order. Clean out any trash that may have accumulated in your stable area and store flammable fuel containers in a secure area away from the barn.

Preparing your horse and facility for winter won't make the temperatures any warmer but it can reduce the inconvenience of making repairs during a cold snap and will ensure you have cared for your horse in the best, safest manner possible.

Police Story

The third weekend in September is always an exciting time for Mounted Police units in the Midwest. These officers and their horses brave shrieking sirens and police lights, daunting obstacles to compete in the Three Rivers Mounted Patrol Competition. This year to support our sister city on the Mississippi River a benefit for the New Orleans Mounted Police was held in conjunction with the competition to raise money for the evacuated officers and horses. Not only was the Police stable flooded by damage from Hurricane Katrina but most of the officers lost their homes.





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During the obstacle course competition officers and their equine partners negotiated the "Big Easy" drive through Donut shop with a 21 "hand" maximum height bar, a bridge with ramp and stairs, burning flares on a barrel back through, water hazard, man hole covers and stuffed dummy walk through.

As people watched our Police Competition and met our police horses, they placed donations in ice cream buckets. In true New Orleans style, they bought strings of mardi gras beads for \$5. They stayed for the benefit dinner and generously bid on auction items. Volunteers cooked and served lasagna dinners, sold beads and organized auctions. RCMP Musical ride instructor Sergeant Ken Kaip flew down for the event as a special celebrity. When the evening was done, we raised \$14,000 dollars. We purchased items the New Orleans Mounted unit needed. We started with a 20 foot Keiffer utility trailer. This will be their temporary office during renovation of their stable and a place for them to sleep while caring for the horses at the shelter. Then we filled it with muck carts, power tools, refrigerator, heaters, manure forks, shovels and rakes, fly masks and spray, medical supplies to sustain the thirty mounted police horses at the shelter until their stable can be repaired.

