

Encounters with Other Trail Users

Bicycles will be traveling in your direction, and on a road or highway the bicycle should be between you and the vehicular traffic. Be alert, as bicyclists may be traveling rapidly and quietly enough to startle your horse. Talk to bicyclists if they halt, and thank them for their care and caution.

Pedestrians should be traveling towards you. Be predictable, give pedestrians plenty of space and speak to them if possible.

Loose dogs often ignore the commands of their owners when confronted with a horse. Halt, face the dog, and use a commanding voice to order it away. Some riders carry small rocks to toss if necessary.

On multi-use trails, you will be sharing with other users and the trail may be narrow. Courtesy is the best safety on the trail. Ask others to speak when approaching horses.



For More Information

New Mexico Horse Council

[Affiliated with American Horse Council]
P.O. Box 10206
Albuquerque, NM 87184
(505) 345-8959
www.nmhorsecouncil.org

Back Country Horsemen of New Mexico

[Affiliated with Back Country Horsemen of America]
P.O. Box 37005
Albuquerque, NM 87176
www.bchnm.org

Seven chapters:

Gila (gila@bchnm.org);
Lower Rio Grande (lowerriogrande@bchnm.org);
Middle Rio Grande (middleriogrande@bchnm.org);
Pecos (pecos@bchnm.org);
Northwest (northwest@bchnm.org);
Santa Fe (santafe@bchnm.org);
Three Rivers (threerivers@bchnm.org)

Helmets The current standard is ASTM/SEI **F1163-04a**. Visit any tack shop to obtain a proper fit, or go to www.seinet.org, select "Certified Products", scroll to "Recreational Helmet Models", select "Horse Sports" for more information. Do not store equestrian helmets in a hot car.

No equestrian helmet should be used again after an impact has occurred, even if the damage is undetectable. A top quality helmet is less expensive than any head injury.

Reflective gear for horse and rider Local tack shops may stock reflective leg bands, bridle strips, vests and tail lights. www.horses.breflective.com.

Safety Articles and Information

American Association for Horsemanship Safety

P.O. Box 39
Fentriss, TX 78622
www.horsemanshipssafety.com

Equine Laws Across the US

University of Vermont
asci.uvm.edu/equine/law

Equestrian Awareness



Bicycle, Pedestrian & Equestrian Advisory Committee

New Mexico Dept. of Transportation, Bicycle, Pedestrian & Equestrian Advisory Committee

NMDOT BPE Coordinator
P.O. Box 1149
Santa Fe NM 87504-1149

Phone: (505) 827-0050
Or: (505) 827-5672
Fax: (505) 827-3229

Ride Your Horse Safely

Riding is a team sport. You are a participant with your teammate, the horse. Be aware of your horse and what you are doing. Your horse has a mind, and it will use it. Learn to guide it safely.

A ride on a good horse is one of life's most pleasant experiences. You are out in the open air, frequently with wonderful scenery, moving at a pleasant pace, and seated high enough above the ground for a good view. The horse is watching the ground while the rider is selecting the route. A horse, with its superior sight and hearing, will notice things a rider might not ordinarily see, and the horse/rider combination rarely frightens wildlife if the rider is quiet. On a smooth trail or riding across country, the motion stretches and soothes the rider's body, and is often beneficial for lower back pain. The rider can enter another, quieter time, and most horses clearly enjoy the trails as much as their riders do.



Photo by Cristy Cumberworth

Trail Riding

- If possible, ride with a companion. Your ID, keys and possibly a cellular telephone should be carried on your person (not on the saddle).
- Your horse should have ID as well.

- Leave your route and expected return time with a friend, family member, or your boarding stable.
- Suitable clothing includes boots or shoes with heels, long pants and a long sleeve shirt, a properly fitted certified helmet, gloves and possibly a protective vest.
- Check the condition and fit of saddle, girth, blanket and bridle. A saddlebag could hold: vetwrap, elastic bandage, halter and rope, hoof pick, folding knife in sheath, extra rein, insect repellent, wound cleansing solution, and an Easyboot for hoof protection in case a shod horse loses a shoe.
- Prepare at home for the conditions you are likely to encounter on the trail or road. Your horse should be accustomed to log walkovers, debris along the road, vehicles (with loud engines, air brakes, sirens or horns) bicycles, pedestrians, baby strollers, skaters, roller-bladers, dogs and strange horses. A "green" or inexperienced horse will do better with a steady horse companion than alone.

Riding Along a Highway

As you ride on or alongside roads, realize that the public sees your horse as an unusual form of transportation. You must ride defensively, ready to cope with the unexpected. In New Mexico, a horse being ridden or driven is not technically a vehicle, but must follow all applicable vehicular laws. Anticipate traffic hazards that might impede your progress.

- Ride with, not facing, traffic.
- Keep to the right, as far away from traffic as possible.
- Obey all regulatory signs and signals. Ignoring laws endangers you and your horse, and you are not exempt from receiving a citation.
- If riding near dusk, wear light colors and use reflective equipment and/or a light mounted on the saddle.

- Do not allow your horse to stop and graze along the highway right-of-way. Harmful sprays may have been used to control weeds or insects.
- At a controlled intersection, ride carefully and follow rules for pedestrians.

Group Trail Riding

- Designate an experienced leader and a drag (last) rider, and follow their instructions.
- Stay to the right unless passing. Move at the same pace as the rest of the group, and maintain a horse's length (10') between animals.
- Stay on the designated path. Leave gates as you find them. Get owner permission to ride on private land. In New Mexico, a landowner who allows you to ride on private property is not responsible for your injuries.
- Keep your horse under control. If another rider's horse is acting up, halt. If a rider falls, halt. Do not chase a loose horse.
- To cross highways, halt the group in a single file and turn to face the road. When traffic permits, cross all at once, at a walk.

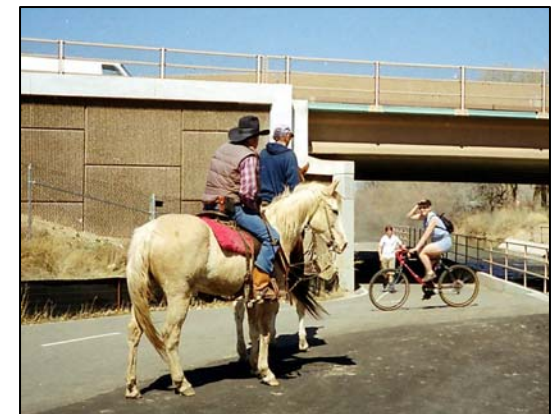


Photo by Val Cole, NM Horse Council