

Finding a New Home for Your Horse

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It will take time, care and patience to find a new environment where your horse will not only be secure, but also prosper. Remember, your horse trusts you and relies on you to provide for his or her future.

1. First, Evaluate Your Horse

Consult with your veterinarian and farrier for an objective evaluation of your horse's soundness and use limitations. Once you are certain of your horse's condition, you will be in a much stronger position to make an informed choice, and the odds of matching him or her to the right environment will be greatly enhanced. Be aware that clubs, adoption and therapy programs, and Mounted Police or Rescue Units need sound horses who can do more than just walk or trot. Note: Before your committing your horse to a Mounted Police or Rescue Unit, please find out if they have a retirement program for their horses.

2. Next, Research the Facility

It is essential that you carefully evaluate the facility where the horse will be stabled. The level of care and outlook on how the horse is treated will depend greatly on the management of the stable, but also speak to people who participate in the club or program as well before making your final decision.

The following agencies will help you with your research:

- Internal Revenue Service keeps a current list of 501(c)3 non-profits.
- Guidestar provides a search function so you can look up horse welfare/rescue organizations. Financial information is also provided.
- State Bureau of Charities
- Better Business Bureau
- State Department, Division of Corporations

3. Then, Visit the Facility

You should be able to visit the facility, with or without an appointment. They should also let you view any of the public areas, and the show you exactly where the horses are boarded, fed, turned out and exercised.

Watch how the caregivers interact with the horses. Introduce yourself, and have a casual chat with them. Find out how long they have been there, and what they like about working or volunteering there.

Most importantly of all, look at the condition and disposition of the horses. Even if the surroundings are not glamorous, as long as the horses are clean, healthy and happy looking, you are most likely on to a winner. Sometimes the most beautifully appointed facilities can have the unhappiest horses.

4. Leasing Your Horse

You may consider leasing your horse to a riding or equestrian club. You will want to be just as careful in your choice, and visit your horse from time to time to see whether or not he or she is doing well in

their new environment.

We have listed some pointers below.

- A. *Be Creative.* Be creative with your lease, thereby giving the Lessor further incentive to take good care of your horse. As the owner you should be willing to pay for all or part of:
- Vet
 - Farrier
 - Dentist
 - Deworming
 - Set amount each month
 - Portion of board
- B. *Waiting List.* Depending on the age and fitness of your horse, while leasing him or her out, you can also put your horse on a sanctuary's or retirement farm's waiting list until an opening becomes available.
- C. *Insurance.* Mortality insurance is important when the horse has a high monetary value. Liability insurance is important because of the damage a horse may do. The owner of the horse must be in the same position in terms of potential lawsuits by other people as he would if he had sold the horse. The lessee should check with their homeowner's or umbrella policies to know if these policies would provide liability coverage.
- D. *Term of Lease Inspections.* The ideal method of checking on the horse's condition is to personally visit them. However, this is not always practical. One method is to require photographs of the horse that has a date stamp on the print. Or you can get a statement from the Lessee's vet, on the vet's letterhead, that the required vaccinations, de-worming, dental and hoof care have been performed and that the bills have been paid. A follow-up phone call to the vet is always good idea to ensure the validity of the statement. Letterheads have been known to be stolen.
- E. *Death of Your Leased Horse.* Specify that in the unfortunate event of your horse's death, the Lessee must contact you within 24 hours followed with a letter from the Lessee's vet certifying that the horse is dead, and the cause of death. It is recommended that the Lessor pay for the vet as the vet is now working for the owner of the horse. This can be negotiated. The reason it is important to have a vet's certification is to prevent the Lessee from telling the owner that the horse is dead, when in fact the horse has been sold.

For more in depth information on putting a favorable lease together, we highly recommend a visit to the [Equine Legal Solutions](#) website.

5. Donating Your Horse

Donor Beware!

Some unsuspecting owners give their horse to people or "organizations" that claim to provide a good home for the horse. The horse is then taken to an auction and sold, where they may be bought by killer buyers working for horse slaughter plants.

Also, please beware that there have been reports over the years of riding centers and stables accepting donations of horses and then re-selling the horse to purchase a younger or what they deem a more desirable one.

6. Giving Your Horse Away

Giver Beware!

“The horse is not ‘theirs’ anymore. They gave their beloved horse away. They gave the horse away even after being advised by a vet to put the horse down. They gave the horse away even after being educated as to what they needed to do to insure the horse’s safety. They gave the horse away after being educated about the realities about finding a home for a horse with soundness issues. A horse that they loved, yet did not want. They gave their beloved horse away.” –Author Unknown

The Int’l Fund for Horses does not recommend giving your horse away to anyone, under any circumstances, no matter how good the offer sounds, particularly in countries where horse slaughter plants are in operation. There are too many greedy and unscrupulous people to risk the welfare of your horse by doing so. The horror stories are gruesome, and many.

7. Euthanasia

Sometimes the kindest, albeit the hardest, thing to do is to have a horse euthanised by the vet.

The decision to put a horse down is never easy. The reality is there is not always a space available at a facility or shelter, so the risk of your horse falling into a bad situation and or being sold for slaughter is a very real possibility. Death by euthanasia is much more humane than sending your horse into a downward spiral that will either end in a slow, agonizing death or worse, a terrifying and gruesome end in a slaughterhouse.

If you, the owner cannot face having to make the decision to put your beloved horse down, can you really trust anyone else to make that decision for you?

End.