



Trail Etiquette



Know Before You Go

Contact Us

Back Country Horsemen of
America

www.bcha.org

Did you know?

The horse is a prey animal that is programmed to react quickly when startled.

Noises, sudden movements, and unfamiliar shapes can startle a horse and unseat the rider.

To maintain control, the rider must react before the horse does.

Horses generally do not kick, but it's best to keep 6 feet away.

A horse has great hearing and peripheral vision, which allows him to see things behind before the rider does.

Keep calm around the horse and speak to the rider so everyone stays safe.

Trail etiquette rules enhance safety for everyone.

GUIDELINES FOR BICYCLISTS ENCOUNTERING HORSES ON THE TRAIL

Pull to the downhill side of the trail far enough for horses to pass as soon as you see them.

Speak to the rider in a friendly relaxed tone.

When approaching horses from behind, stop, call ahead and make yourself known to the rider. Ask them if it is okay to pass.

Horsemen may pull to the side of the trail if they hear a bicycle coming but this does not necessarily mean it is safe to ride by. Stop and wait for instructions from the horseman.

If you ride by a horse, do so at a slow, steady pace and avoid making any sudden movements or sounds that may startle the horse.



COMMON COURTESY

Respect all trail restrictions and use only trails open to your mode of transportation.

When traveling on shared-use trails, continually watch for other trail users.

Slow down when sight lines are poor.

Keep your ears open - no earbuds. Listening to headphones or earbuds will make it difficult to hear other trail users.

Keep pets always leashed and under control.



Hikers and trail runners should always stop and step to the downhill side of the trail.

Speak to the rider in a relaxed tone, asking if it is okay to pass.

Keep dogs on a short leash and keep well away from the horse's hind legs.



GUIDELINES FOR EQUESTRIANS ON SHARED TRAILS

Be alert and aware of other trail users.

If possible, pull to the side of the trail when you hear them.

Less experienced horses and riders should ride between the more trail-wise horses.

Be prepared to let other trail users know what needs to be done to keep everyone safe when you meet on the trail.

At trail heads, secure horses safely and clean up all manure. Take it back home, if possible.