



RIVER VALLEY RIDERS
EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES & THERAPIES



River Valley Riders COVID-19 Re-Opening Plan

April 2021

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Reference Sources: PATH Intl., Inspire Therapeutic Riding, SuMMiT Centre for Therapeutic Riding, Joy Ride Therapeutic Riding, Hearts & Horses Therapeutic Riding Center, US Equestrian Federation and CDC for information and examples.

Re-Open Plan – Phased Entry

Client services will be offered using a strict phased entry approach. The phases and their descriptions will be detailed in this document. First, and foremost, policies and procedures outlined in this plan are subject to change, at any time, based on local and federal mandates that are issued, or suggested, during this pandemic.

Our focus is on the SAFETY of our participants, staff, volunteers, and equines in an organized fashion with strong communication among the team.

Re-Opening Strategies

- **General Considerations for All**

- No one is allowed to be at the RVR lesson site for 14 days after the date that they or someone in their household returned from international travel, as designated by the CDC and MN Department of Health recommendations.
- If anyone has been at the RVR lesson site in the past 14 days and tests positive for COVID-19, they must inform RVR and the program maybe shut down immediately for up to 14 days to allow staff to self-quarantine. Anyone who was on site at the time of possible exposure will be contacted immediately.
- If anyone has been at the RVR lesson site and is exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, they must inform RVR. Depending upon the situation, the program maybe shut down immediately for up to 14 days to allow staff to self-quarantine. Anyone who was on site at the time of possible indirect exposure will be contacted immediately.
- Everyone will receive a health screening questionnaire that they must refer to **every time** before coming to the RVR lesson site. One part of this screening requires that **everyone** (participant, family member, volunteers and staff) coming to the lesson site must have a body temperature less than 99.5°F. **No one with any of the health screening questionnaire's signs or symptoms should come to the lesson site.**
- RVR designated instructor/volunteer will do a verbal health check with participants and volunteers when they arrive on site asking about: signs and symptoms, travel, and exposure. Any positive responses will require this person/family to leave for that day. They can either self-quarantine and not return to RVR for 14 days after symptoms are absent, or retain a negative COVID-19 test. Test results should be provided to RVR Instructor upon return.
- Upon arrival and when leaving RVR, everyone will wash their hands at a hand washing station following CDC guidelines.
- Everyone is required to wear a face mask while at the RVR lesson site and maintain 6 feet social distancing as much as possible. Instructors at times will be closer than 6 feet for mounting, dismounting and other required physical contact. Instructors may remove their mask when in the center of arena or more than 6 feet away from participants and volunteers. This allows instructors to be heard and understood more easily.
- The number of people at the RVR lesson site will be limited. No visitors are allowed without prior approval from the instructor.

- **CDC Higher Risks for Severe Illness**

- During the 2021 season, RVR considers these risks serious. We strongly urge people with these risk factors to stay at home and follow the provisions of the MN Executive Orders.
 - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - People who have serious heart conditions
 - People who are immunocompromised
 - People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
 - People with diabetes
 - People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
 - People with liver disease

- **Facility and Staff**

- Vulnerable individuals (those with “CDC Higher Risks for Severe Illness” as stated previously) should stay home as recommended by the CDC and MN Executive Orders.
- Follow cleaning procedures for common areas, ramp, tack, etc. included in this document until further notice.
- RVR will clean with soap and water after each lesson: gate latches, hose valves, doorknobs/handles, light switches, ramp rail.
- Signs will be posted to remind people about handwashing following CDC guidelines, social distancing, and no access areas.
- Instructors must wear face masks when they are within 6 feet of others.
- Instructors are encouraged to bring their own face mask, but RVR will have some masks on site if needed. If anyone uses an RVR mask, deposit the dirty mask in the white mesh laundry bag designated for used/dirty masks. Masks will be washed and reused.
- Instructors will provide assistance to participants from the side or back as much as possible. Avoiding standing directly in front of them as much as possible.
- Instructors are trained on these new procedures.
- RVR will follow CDC recommendations for cleaning porous and non-porous surfaces, including tack, equipment, and common areas.
- A signed RVR COVID-19 waiver is required.

- **Volunteers**

- Vulnerable individuals (those with “CDC Higher Risks for Severe Illness” as stated previously) should stay home as recommended by the CDC and MN Executive Orders.
- Follow cleaning procedures for common areas, ramp, tack, etc. included in this document until further notice.
- Volunteers are trained on these new procedures.
- RVR will assess volunteers of their readiness and comfort to return through continued communication and outreach.
- A signed RVR COVID-19 waiver is required, as well as the normal volunteer documentation.
- Volunteers must wait in their cars until a designated volunteer or instructor comes to perform the health screening. Volunteers will then be directed to where to go.
- ⊖ RVR will be limiting the quantity of volunteers at the lesson site until further notice.
- RVR will provide training for new volunteers later in the season.
- ⊖ Volunteers must wear face masks when at the RVR lesson site. Masks may be removed when inside their own cars.
- Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own mask, but RVR will have some masks on site if needed. If anyone uses an RVR mask, deposit the dirty mask in the white mesh laundry bag designated for used/dirty masks. Masks will be washed and reused.
- Volunteers must wash their hands following CDC guidelines before entering and leaving RVR, as well as throughout their volunteer time.
- Only Horse Leaders and Cleaning Volunteers are needed for Spring Session.
- Horse Leaders are encouraged to bring their own lead rope. RVR will provide lead ropes for volunteers without their own lead rope to use during the lessons. The RVR lead ropes will need to be cleaned before reusing.
- Sidewalkers will not be needed until Summer sessions.
- An instructor or staff person will log your on-site volunteer hours. The sign in sheet will not be used.
- Email other volunteer hours that are not during lesson times to Cheryl Holt at cherylholt73@gmail.com

- **Participants**

- The RVR plan is for a staggered program re-opening beginning with independent riders who can maintain social distancing rules during lessons, wash hands following CDC guidelines, wear a mask while on the property, and require 0-1 volunteer (Horse Leaders only).
- A signed COVID-19 waiver is required, as well as the normal liability release and physician's clearance documents.
- Only one family member/caregiver may accompany the participant(s) to limit the number of people on site.
- ⊕ All participants and family members/caregivers must wear face masks while at the RVR lesson site. Masks may be removed when inside their own cars.
- Participants and family members/caregivers are encouraged to bring their own face masks, but RVR will have some masks on site if needed, both adult and child sizes. If anyone uses an RVR mask, deposit the dirty mask in the white mesh laundry bag designated for used/dirty masks. Masks will be washed and reused.
- All participants and family members/caregivers must wash their hands (per CDC recommendation) before entering and when leaving the property. Additional hand washing following CDC guidelines and limiting touching of surfaces is recommended.
- Participants and family member/caregiver must wait in their cars until a designated volunteer or instructor comes to perform the health screening. Participants and family member/caregiver will then be directed to where to go.
- Do not keep cars running in parking lot. The fumes and radio noise cause problems for our horses and sessions.
- For outdoor lessons at the Afton site: When directed following the health screening, participants and families/caregivers may go to the covered picnic shelter or patio area by the outdoor arena for seating. Everyone must maintain social distancing and wear their mask. The rest of the property will be off limits, including the carriage building, tack shed and indoor arena. This restriction is to limit contact points throughout the property.
- For indoor lessons at the Afton site: When directed following the health screening, participants and families/caregivers may go to the indoor arena and be seated in northwest corner. Everyone must maintain social distancing and wear their mask. The rest of the property will be off limits, including the carriage building, tack shed, picnic shelter, patio, and outdoor arena. This restriction is to limit contact points throughout the property.
- For lessons at May Township site: When directed following the health screening, participants and families/caregivers may go to the designated area. Everyone must maintain social distancing and wear their mask. The rest of the property will be off limits. This restriction is to limit contact points throughout the property.
- Riders will be dismounted and exited one at a time from the arena.
- Participants/families/caregivers will be asked to leave promptly after lessons to allow for disinfecting and to limit the number of people on site.
- RVR will follow ADA guidelines to ensure all individuals are treated equally.

Participant Screening

- The RVR Executive Director and Instructors will review participant medical forms to determine if any of the CDC higher risk factors are present. RVR considers these risks serious. We strongly urge people with these risk factors to stay at home and follow the provisions of the MN Executive Orders.
 - CDC Higher Risks for Severe Illness:
 - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - People who have serious heart conditions
 - People who are immunocompromised
 - People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
 - People with diabetes
 - People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
 - People with liver disease
- Parents/participants will be called for a discussion regarding risk factors and volunteer support required for participation. The risk factors include risks to the participant or risks of the participant's potential of exposing others, possibly inadvertently. For instance, a person who coughs/sneezes a lot, will not wear a mask, does not understand social distancing, etc.

Programming Plan

- **All Phases**
 - Tack
 - Tack will be set out on saddle racks.
 - RVR will have designated cleaning volunteers.
 - Changes of tack will be kept to the minimum.
 - Saddles, exposed areas of the saddle pads and reins will be cleaned with soap and water after each use.
 - When possible, riders will attach their reins and remove their reins after their lesson and place in designated area for cleaning.
 - Grooming tools will be cleaned with soap and water after use.
 - Use precautions when handling porous items (saddle pads, lead ropes, etc.) and wash your hands when able.
 - **The tack shed will be restricted access to instructors and designated volunteers only.**

- **Phase One**

- Vulnerable individuals are those with “CDC Higher Risks for Severe Illness” as stated previously. RVR considers these risks serious. We strongly urge people with these risk factors to stay at home and follow the provisions of the MN Executive Orders.
- Do not leave home if any participant, volunteer, staff or any family member is showing symptoms – fever, cough, etc. or if anyone was exposed to a person showing symptoms. The personal self-health assessment is required every week before leaving home.
- Lessons at the Afton site only.
- Private lesson riders.
- Group lessons for riders who can independently mount, will wear a mask, understand and follow social distancing rules, do not require any sidewalkers, only assistance from a horse leader.
- 1-2 riders per instructor.
- Planned length is six weeks. Dates are week of April 19th through week of May 24th, 2021.
- RVR will evaluate the situation before moving into next phase. One factor considered is the stable or downward trajectory of COVID-19 cases or positive tests reported in MN within a 14-day period. Another factor is evaluating the success of Spring Session.

- **Phase Two**

- Vulnerable individuals are those with “CDC Higher Risks for Severe Illness” as stated previously. RVR considers these risks serious. We strongly urge people with these risk factors to stay at home and follow the provisions of the MN Executive Orders.
- Do not leave home if any participant, volunteer, staff or any family member is showing symptoms – fever, cough, etc. or if anyone was exposed to a person showing symptoms. The personal self-health assessment is required every week before leaving home.
- Lessons at the Afton and May Township sites.
- Private lesson riders.
- Group lessons for riders who can independently mount or mount with minimal assistance, will wear a mask, understand and follow social distancing rules, require 0 to 1 sidewalker and a horse leader. Sidewalker support by **ankle hold only**.
- 2-3 riders per instructor for therapeutic riding lessons
- Plan to begin Carriage Driving lessons. Carriage drivers who will wear a mask, understand and follow social distancing rules, and require only minimal assistance.
- Plan to begin Hippotherapy services at the Afton site.
- Planned length is six weeks. Dates are week of June 7th through week of July 19th, 2021.
- RVR will evaluate the situation before moving into next phase. One factor considered is the stable or downward trajectory of COVID-19 cases or positive tests reported in MN within a 14-day period. Another factor is evaluating the success of Early Summer Session.

- **Phase Three**

- Vulnerable individuals are those with “CDC Higher Risks for Severe Illness” as stated previously. RVR considers these risks serious. We strongly urge people with these risk factors to stay at home and follow the provisions of the MN Executive Orders.
- Do not leave home if any participant, volunteer, staff or any family member is showing symptoms – fever, cough, etc. or if anyone was exposed to a person showing symptoms. The personal self-health assessment is required every week before leaving home.
- Lessons at the Afton and May Township sites.
- Private lesson riders.
- Group lessons for riders who have been participating in Phases 1-2. Additional riders may be added depending on the support they require and the status of the virus risk. All riders will still be required to wear a mask, understand and follow social distancing rules, require 0 to 2 sidewalkers and horse leader. Greater detail will be determined as we get closer to this phase.
- Continue Carriage Driving lessons. Additional drivers may be added depending on the assistance they require and the status of the virus risk. All carriage drivers will still be required to wear a mask and understand and follow social distancing rules. Greater detail will be determined as we get closer to this phase.
- 3-4 riders per instructor for therapeutic riding lessons.
- Planned length is six weeks. Dates are week of July 26th thru week of August 30th, 2021.
- RVR will continue to evaluate the situation to determine if safe to continue sessions through end of October.