



FRESH START SPORT HORSES

MANUAL FOR FRESH START VOLUNTEERS

A WARM WELCOME TO FRESH START SPORT HORSES!

On behalf of our riders, horses, staff, and current volunteers, we extend our heartfelt thanks for choosing to dedicate your valuable time to Fresh Start Sport Horses. We are so excited to have you join our team! Volunteers are absolutely vital to our mission of retraining and rehoming retired racehorses, giving them a wonderful second chance.

This manual will introduce you to our organization, its mission and vision, and what we expect from volunteers. We sincerely hope your contributions are fulfilling and that your experience is positive and rewarding. If you have any questions as you read through these pages, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Welcome aboard, and thank you again for your invaluable support!

Cassandra Anderson

Founder and Head Trainer
Fresh Start Sport Horses

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. ABOUT FRESH START SPORT HORSES	3
1.1 MISSION AND HISTORY	3
1.2 FUNDING	3
1.2 KEY STAFF	3
1.3 OUR HOST FACILITIES	3
2. VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES	4
2.1 ORIENTATION	4
2.2 VOLUNTEER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	5
2.3 SAFETY ATTIRE POLICY	6
2.4 CONFIDENTIALITY	6
2.5 SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES	6
2.6 EMERGENCY GUIDELINES	7
3. BARN RULES AND SAFETY GUIDELINES	11
3.1 BARN RULES	11
3.2 SAFETY GUIDELINES	11
4. VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT	12
6. VOLUNTEER MANUAL VERIFICATION	13

1. ABOUT FRESH START SPORT HORSES

1.1 MISSION AND HISTORY

Fresh Start Sport Horses (FSSH) is a Southern California 501(c)(3) nonprofit focused on providing exceptional care and specialized training to off the track thoroughbreds as they embark on their next chapter. Our unique program offers an individualized approach, catering to each horse's specific needs and potential to find them an optimal and thriving new home and career. Our horses are entrusted to well-rounded professional trainers who prioritize the horses' best interests in every aspect of their training.

Since its founding in 2015 and attainment of non-profit status in 2018, Fresh Start Sport Horses has successfully retrained and rehomed over 170 thoroughbreds. Our program typically provides care and training for 15-20 horses at a time. A cornerstone of our success is the thorough evaluation and training each horse receives from our team of professional upper-level riders. This expertise ensures that every horse is well-suited for their next home. We actively collaborate with a diverse range of breeders, training farms, and other organizations dedicated to supporting former racehorses in their transition to new careers.

1.2 FUNDING

Fresh Start Sport Horses operates without federal or state funding. Our program relies entirely on the generosity of private donations, grants, proceeds from special events, and adoption fees. Donations can be conveniently made via the donation button on our website:

<https://www.freshstartsporthorses.org/>.

1.2 KEY STAFF

Fresh Start Sport Horses is supported by two staff members: Head Trainer Cassandra Andersson and Assistant Trainer Vavara Hlazunova. Cassandra's responsibilities encompass the day-to-day operations of Fresh Start Sport Horses, including evaluating and accepting new horses, managing their intake and training program, coordinating veterinary and farrier care, assessing prospective buyers and training horses, in addition to overseeing and coaching riders. Varvara focuses on training a large portion of the horses in the program and is responsible for daily barn management and the supervision of our volunteers. Both Cassandra and Varvara provide the morning, lunch and dinner feedings for the horses as well as stall cleaning when volunteers aren't available.

1.3 OUR HOST FACILITIES

Fresh Start Sport Horses is hosted at the beautiful Rancho Temescal, a 6,000 acre thoroughbred farm in North East Ventura County.

The farm address is 3700 Piru Canyon Rd, Piru, California 93040. To find Fresh Start's barn, enter Rancho Temescal's main entrance and turn left. Follow the road until you see the first entrance. Turn right towards the main office but do not enter the parking lot, instead, turn right at the hayshed and proceed until you reach Fresh Start's riding arena. Our parking lot is in front of the arena.



2. VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

2.1 ORIENTATION

**Note: All new volunteers must attend a Volunteer Orientation Session prior to working with or around the horses. Returning volunteers need not attend an additional orientation session.*

**Performance at Orientation will determine the best use of each volunteer's skills.
Determinations are made by the Head or Assistant Trainer.**

Volunteer orientation will include:

1. Orientation to the facility, horses, and our program
2. Safety rules and regulations
3. Emergency Procedures

4. Evaluation of skills
5. Signing of a release of Liability*

After orientation, one of our trainers will determine where the volunteer is best suited to work.

*Must be signed by parent or guardian if the volunteer is under 18.

2.2 VOLUNTEER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteer Role: Rider

Responsible to: Assistant Trainer

Responsibilities: Grooming and tacking up, riding green horses, cleaning tack, and mucking stalls

Qualifications: Must be an advanced rider with experience riding green or untrained horses. Riders must be confident and not reactive. Riders should have experience riding multiple horses a day and understand how to adjust to different horses' temperaments. Ideally riders should be familiar with upper level movements and be familiar with the training scale.

Skills: Must have soft hands and an independent seat. Knowledge of how to teach a green horse to move forward and accept even contact on both reins and bend through the body is key. Dressage training is highly desirable. Ability to adjust and show clear aids and rewarding horses for any correct response.

Volunteer Role: Helper

Responsible to: Assistant Trainer

Responsibilities: Mucking stalls, feeding horses, cleaning tack, cleaning water bowls, raking barn aisles and grooming area, taking horses to/from pasture, bathing horses for photos, holding horses for pictures, grooming horses, etc

Qualifications: Experience with horses is desired but not a must

Skills: No prior experience required

2.3 SAFETY ATTIRE POLICY

For your safety and the safety of others, all volunteers are required to follow these attire guidelines:

- **Foot Protection:** Closed-toe shoes are mandatory for everyone on the premises, sneakers are great for helpers. Riders must wear tall boots or half chaps with paddock boots when riding.
- **Head Protection:** When mounted, riders must wear a helmet that meets ASTM/SEI or an equivalent international safety standard to protect against head injuries.*
- **Minimize Hazards:** To prevent loss or entanglement, please avoid wearing jewelry, especially dangling pieces. Secure long hair by tying it back or up. Long sleeves and hats are recommended due to sun exposure. Bring water bottles to keep hydrated in hot weather. No riding during heavy rain.
- **Hand Protection:** Volunteer riders must wear gloves while riding and lunging to improve grip and prevent chafing.*

*We do not provide gloves or helmets so please bring your own.

2.4 CONFIDENTIALITY

Fresh Start Sport Horses respects the privacy of all individuals within our program (volunteers, riders, and staff). As a volunteer, you are entrusted with maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive information, regardless of how you come to know it. This includes, but is not limited to, medical, social, referral, personal, and financial details regarding any person and their family. Upholding this trust is crucial, and any violation of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action, including the potential loss of your volunteer position or staff employment.

2.5 SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

These guidelines are designed to protect Fresh Start's reputation, effectively promote our mission, foster responsible community engagement, and ensure legal and ethical compliance in all our social media activities.

Guiding Principles:

- **Comply with Laws and Industry Standards:** Always adhere to relevant laws and social media platform guidelines.

- **Be Authentic:** Show Fresh Start's personality and values through your social media content.
- **Avoid negativity:** Refrain from posting anything that could be construed as defamatory, harmful, or could damage the organization's reputation, even if "funny".
- **Don't speak on behalf of the organization from personal accounts:** Unless authorized, volunteers should not represent the organization on their personal accounts.
- **Respect Privacy:** Adhere to privacy laws and regulations regarding the collection and use of personal data. Obtain consent before sharing other individuals' stories or images.
- **Uphold Copyright and Fair Use:** Respect intellectual property rights. Properly attribute content created by others and understand fair use guidelines.
- **Respond to Violations of Standards:** Report and respond appropriately to any violations of social media standards.

2.6 EMERGENCY GUIDELINES

- **Loose Horse:** When a horse is loose, your immediate response should prioritize **safety** – both yours and the horse's. Here's a step-by-step guide on what you should do:
 1. **Stay Calm:** Don't approach the horse too quickly or aggressively, as this might make it run.
 2. **Notify People Nearby:** Let others on the property or in the vicinity know that a horse is loose. They can help block escape routes or assist in guiding the horse.
 3. **Bring Necessary Equipment:** If you have a lead rope and halter readily available, try to approach the horse slowly and calmly with them. Hold the halter open and allow the horse to come to you.
 4. **Guide, Don't Chase:** Gently try to guide the horse towards a safe and enclosed area (paddock, arena, stable). Avoid chasing it, as this will likely make it run faster and further.
 5. **Block Potential Escape Routes:** If the horse is heading towards a dangerous area (like a road), try to position yourself or other people (calmly) to gently guide it away.

6. **Form a Human Barrier (if safe):** If the horse is heading towards danger, a line of calm people gently spreading out can sometimes encourage it to turn away.
7. **Offer a Familiar Treat or Grain:** If you know the horse and have access to its usual treats, this can be a good way to lure it.

What NOT to Do:

- **Don't Run After the Horse:** This will likely scare it.
 - **Don't Make Loud Noises or Wave Your Arms:** This can further agitate the horse.
 - **Don't Corner the Horse Aggressively:** This can lead to the horse feeling trapped and potentially becoming dangerous.
 - **Don't Put Yourself in a Dangerous Position:** Be aware of your surroundings and don't risk getting kicked, stepped on, or running into traffic.
 - **Don't Assume You Know the Horse:** Even if you are familiar with most horses, a loose and potentially stressed horse can behave unpredictably.
 - **Do not punish the horse in any way once caught.** Praise it and calmly return it to where it should go.
-
- **If You Fall:** Falling from a horse can be a frightening experience. Such falls can result in injuries to the head, neck, back, and limbs. Immediately after a fall, take a moment to breathe deeply. Then, carefully assess your body to identify any pain and its severity. If you experience an inability to move without intense pain, notice significant bleeding, observe a twisted limb, or feel any numbness, remain still and allow a staff member to call 911. Do not allow anyone to move you until emergency medical services arrive. Exercising caution in such situations is always wise.
 - **Horse Misbehaving / Out of Control Under Saddle:** It can be concerning and potentially dangerous when another horse in the arena is out of control or misbehaving. Here's a breakdown of what you should do, prioritizing safety for yourself, your horse, and others:

Immediate Actions:

1. **Prioritize Your Safety:**

- **Stay Calm:** Your horse will likely react to your anxiety. Take a deep breath and try to remain as calm as possible.
- **Maintain Control of Your Horse:** Focus on keeping your horse under control. This might mean shortening your reins, ensuring they are listening to your aids, and being prepared for a sudden reaction.
- **Move Away:** If possible, and safely, steer your horse away from the misbehaving horse. Create distance to avoid a potential collision or your horse getting agitated.

2. Assess the Situation:

- **Observe the Behavior:** What exactly is the other horse doing? Is it bolting, bucking, rearing, kicking, or simply refusing to listen to its rider?
- **Assess the Rider:** Does the other rider appear to be in control or are they struggling? Are they actively trying to regain control?
- **Identify Potential Hazards:** Are there jumps, other riders, or the arena fence that could become a hazard?

How to Respond:

1. Give the Other Horse and Rider Space:

- **Avoid Direct Approaches:** Do not ride directly towards the out-of-control horse unless you are an experienced professional intervening to help. This could escalate the situation.
- **Widen Your Circles:** If you are on a circle, make it larger to stay clear of the other horse's path.
- **Change Your Gait or Direction:** If necessary, safely change your gait (e.g., from canter to trot or walk) or direction to avoid the area where the issue is occurring.
- **Move to the Inside or Outside Track:** Adjust your position on the track to create more distance.

2. Communicate (If Appropriate and Safe):

- **Verbal Warnings:** If the situation is becoming dangerous and the other rider doesn't seem aware of your proximity, you can calmly call out, "Coming inside," or "Moving to the rail," to make your intentions clear.
- **Offer Assistance (If Experienced and Asked):** If the other rider is clearly struggling and asks for help, and you are experienced in handling such situations, you may cautiously offer assistance. However, only do so if you feel confident in your ability to help without endangering yourself or your horse.
- **Inform Fresh Start Staff:** If there is Fresh Start staff present, alert them to the situation immediately. If not, inform them as soon as it is safe to do so. Fresh Start may have specific protocols for handling unruly horses and can provide assistance.

3. Stop Safely If Necessary:

- **If the situation is severely out of control and possesses an immediate danger, bring your horse to a safe and controlled halt in a clear area, away from the commotion.** Be prepared to move again if the loose horse comes near you.

3. BARN RULES AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

3.1 BARN RULES

- **No Smoking:** Smoking is strictly prohibited anywhere on the property.
- **Touch with Permission:** Always ask for permission before touching any horse.
- **Do Not Feed Without Approval:** Horses may be on specific diets; feeding them without permission can cause illness.
- **Quiet Voices and Calm Behavior:** Maintain a quiet and calm demeanor while on the property.
- **Restricted Areas:** All areas of the farm beyond Fresh Start's barn area and bathroom are off-limits.
- **Supervise Children:** Children must be closely supervised at all times.
- **No Dogs Allowed:** For safety and biosecurity, dogs are not permitted on the property or in parked vehicles.
- **Ask Questions:** If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask. We encourage you to seek clarification!

3.2 SAFETY GUIDELINES

- **Walk, Don't Run:** Always walk around horses and within the barn. Running is not permitted.
- **Approach with Caution:** Always speak to a horse as you approach and before touching it. Never approach a horse directly from behind.
- **Sensitive Touch:** Pet horses on their shoulder or neck, avoiding their face, nose, and mouth.
- **Maintain a Calm Environment:** Be quiet and move calmly around horses, as loud noises and sudden movements can startle them.
- **Gentle Handling:** Control your temper and never mistreat horses. Kindness and gentleness will yield the best results. Never tease a horse.

4. VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Your commitment to Fresh Start Sport Horses is invaluable. To ensure a positive and safe environment for everyone, we ask that you uphold the following standards of conduct:

- **Commitment to Confidentiality:** We are dedicated to maintaining the privacy of all individuals within our program. You are expected to honor this commitment by safeguarding all sensitive information.
- **Compliance with Policies:** You will consistently adhere to this Code of Conduct and the established Policies and Procedures for Volunteers.
- **Respectful Collaboration:** You will work cooperatively with your staff supervisor and be open to their guidance and direction.
- **Positive Public Image:** You will represent Fresh Start Sport Horses in a positive and professional manner to the broader community.
- **Responsible Conduct:** You will not act as a representative of Fresh Start Sport Horses while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- **Safe and Respectful Environment:** The use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or weapons is prohibited on Fresh Start Sport Horses property.
- **Zero Tolerance for Harassment:** You will not engage in any form of sexual harassment towards clients, employees, or other volunteers.
- **Respect for All:** You will treat all individuals and animals on Fresh Start Sport Horses property with respect and will not engage in any physical or verbal abuse.

6. VOLUNTEER MANUAL VERIFICATION

When you have read the manual completely, please sign and bring it on your first day.

I have read the Fresh Start Sport Horses Manual in its entirety. I agree to follow the policies and procedures set forth in this manual.

Signature

Date

Printed Name