4th of July Horse Safety Tips

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

simple ways for horse-safe 4th of July celebrations

Most horse owners relish the holidays. This is especially true for July 4th celebrations. After all, the extra time off of work and exceptional summer weather allows you to spend more time with your favorite mount.

Even better, horses and ponies are staples at events surrounding community picnics, local parades, and holiday celebrations. However, the increased activity and unfamiliar people - not to mention all the fireworks, strange foods, and more - may startle, stress, or injure your horse. But there are simple ways to help keep her safe.

parade participants

Most 4th of July celebrations include a community parade. Oftentimes, horses and ponies are a part of these festivities. Take care, however, if your horse is asked to participate. Obviously, only ride your best trained and most well behaved horse in any public area. Many horses easily spook and parade participation may exacerbate these tendencies. Help reduce your horse's stress and prevent injury with:

- **Calming Supplements** - use prior to the start of the parade to help calm your horse.
- **Equine Harnesses** - help control your mount throughout the entire parade.
- **Emergency Hoof Boots** - temporarily protect hooves from injury should your horse throw a shoe.
- **Horse Treats** - reward good behavior and help steer your horse's attention away from any forgotten candy along the parade route.

firework fun

Many 4th of July festivities would not be complete without fireworks. However, fireworks and horses do not mix. In fact, the use of just a few lit smoke bombs or firecrackers near your horse's stall, barn, or pasture can be enough to cause panic. Once frightened, your horse could charge through a stall door or fence and cause injury to herself or an unsuspecting guest. As such, remind all visitors that fireworks are not permitted on your property.

Unfortunately, however, sometimes you cannot control where firework celebrations take place. Many communities head for more rural settings - possibly in the proximity of your horse barn - to watch professional firework displays. While beautiful, the loud booms and constant light flashes of these extravaganzas can be your horse's worst nightmare. Use the following tips to help keep your horse calm and safe:

- **Install a Pasture Fence** - use an electric horse fence to secure pastures and paddocks.
- **Use a Cross Tie** - secure your horse in her stall or keep her safe in your horse trailer if you decide to move her to an alternate location with an appropriate cross tie.

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- **Use an Equine Lead** - guide movement between pastures and stalls with a lead, especially if crowds have gathered near your property or fireworks are being ignited.
- **Calm Your Horse** - use calming supplements to help reduce your horse's anxiety.
- **Prepare for Injury** - keep an appropriate first aid kit on hand to treat any wounds should your horse spook and hurt herself.

The 4th of July is a great homage to America's past, present, and future. With a little common sense and preparation, you can easily keep your horse or pony safe and poised to celebrate many more holidays to come.

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