



IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE RE-HOMING OR SURRENDERING A HORSE:

Finding a new home for a horse is not always an easy job and various equine facilities play a role in providing care or finding new owners for horses. Whether an owner is searching for the perfect retirement farm, looking to find their horse a new job in therapeutic riding or in the mounted patrol, or if they are in need of placement with a rescue or sanctuary, there are questions every owner should ask before giving up care and control of their horse.

In order to ensure that your horse is placed within the best-suited organization, please consider asking the organization(s) the following:

1. Does the facility subscribe to accepted guidelines for operating such facilities, such as the "Care Guidelines for Rescue and Retirement Facilities" prepared by the American Association of Equine Practitioners?
2. Is it an entity exempt from federal tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code?
3. Does it file IRS Form 990 and forms required by the state? Will the facility provide copies?
4. Does it have a mission statement and a board of directors? Who are they?
5. How long has the facility been operating?
6. If it is a facility that will use the horse, how will it be used?
7. Does the facility have ample room for horses to graze and/or move about?
8. Will the horse stay at the facility or be placed into foster care? If the facility uses foster care, how are foster homes screened?
9. Does it have an agreement regarding the use, boarding or care of the horse?
10. If it is a facility that adopts horses out, what are the requirements for adoption? Does the facility follow up with the new owners to ensure the horse is being properly cared for?
11. Does the facility have a policy against breeding or restrict the horse's use in any way?
12. What is the facility's post-adoption policy on breeding and use?
13. If this is an adoption facility, are stallions gelded upon entry and before adoption?
14. What becomes of the horse when the adopter or the user no longer wants the horse?
15. Will the organization advise you before your horse is transferred to a new owner?
16. Can the original owner ask for the horse back?
17. Will the facility provide routine and emergency veterinary and dental care and farrier needs?
18. Does the facility provide training/re-training for the horse?
19. What are the physical characteristics of the facility, including barns, pastures and shelters?
20. Can owners visit if they wish?
21. Have any welfare charges been brought against the facility?
22. Does the facility euthanize horses that cannot be placed? If so, will the facility notify the owner beforehand?
23. Does the facility appear to have adequate feed (hay, pasture, grain) for the number of horses on the property? What is the overall appearance of the facility?



Rescue vs. Retirement

Many people are confused when it comes to the topic of rescue versus retirement regarding the subject of horse welfare. What is the difference between a rescue and a retirement facility?

I. Rescue

- Oftentimes neglected or abused horses
- Emergency care
- Horses removed from owners or abandoned
- Horses may be adopted out when recovered from trauma
- Programs funded by donations, non-profit
- "Owner Initiated Surrenders" are not generally accepted unless horse is at risk.

II. Retirement

- Older, pensioned horses
- Injuries that make them unsuitable for work
- Maintenance care needed
- Horses are privately owned
- Private boarding facilities, for-profit