



The Animal Welfare Branch

The functions, powers and responsibilities of the Animal Welfare Branch are defined and determined by the *Animal Welfare Act* the objectives of which are to:

- ensure animals are treated humanely
- prevent cruelty to animals
- promote community awareness about the welfare of animals.

The Animal Welfare Branch also provides advice to the minister responsible for animal welfare, issues licences for research and teaching involving animals, investigates animal welfare reports and prosecutes offenders.

Acts of cruelty or other offences defined in the *Animal Welfare Act* can mean severe penalties for offenders.

For more information visit
www.nt.gov.au/animalwelfare or call the
Animal Welfare Branch on 1300 720 386.

Fire

It is not recommended to leave horses in a stable during a fire. A fenced sand arena away from the buildings is the safest option. If not available, a well grazed small paddock with good fencing is an option. The horse should be doused with water and its gear removed. The brass buckles of leather halters may cause severe burns, whilst nylon rugs, fly veils and rubber boots may melt. The danger of panic and flight means the horse may be better off in a contained environment.

It is important to get the horse off hot burnt ground as quickly as possible. Heat can cause serious damage evident by anxiety, laboured breathing and elevated heart rate. In the event of these symptoms urgent veterinary treatment should be sought.

Flood

During flooding horses should be on high ground with access to adequate drinking water. An escape route should be planned in the event waters rise higher than expected. The tack shed and surrounding area should be well secured and any loose objects stored or tied down to reduce injury. Putting paddock boots and bell boots on the horse may offer some protection. Rugging them is not recommended as this may hinder a swim for higher ground.



care and protection for our animals

looking after
your horse

in a natural disaster

Natural disasters are frightening events not only for humans but for horses as well. A prepared action plan will help reduce the risks and ensure the safety of both the horse and its owner.

Stay or go

Horse owners must consider whether to leave the horse where it is or to relocate it to a safe environment. The risk of the impending disaster should be assessed to decide if the horse's present environment will be adequate to ensure its safety during, and for a minimum of three days after, the disaster.

The risks to be considered in the event of a disaster depend on the:

- location and accessibility of the property
- condition and placement of the stable, yards and fences
- amount of available resources to combat a cyclone, fire or flood.

A horse's training also needs to be considered well in advance of a disaster, particularly if the horse is hard to catch or difficult to load. Training the horse as the disaster is approaching could prove to be difficult or even fatal.

Evacuation kit

Horse owners should have a pre-prepared evacuation kit in a waterproof container which should contain:

- food and water for a minimum three days
- feed buckets
- blankets and towels
- extra lead rope and halter
- wire cutters
- torch, portable radio and fresh batteries
- equine first aid items.

The horse should have detailed identification and if the horse is branded, registered or micro-chipped, the information should be kept with the evacuation kit. Other methods of identification include painting the owner's name and phone number on the horse with livestock grease crayons or painting it on their hooves.

If you decide to leave your horse at its usual location, there are various things that can be done to minimise potential risk.

Care outside danger area

Horse owners must decide early if planning to evacuate as a late evacuation could increase the chance of injury or even be life threatening. Relocation arrangements must also be made well in advance. The announcement of a cyclone watch, total fire ban or flood warning should be the trigger for the horse owner's decision.

It is important that wherever the horse is relocated to, it can safely be contained. For example, temporary electric fencing may not be suitable.

Staying in usual location

Cyclone

If the stable is well constructed, the horse should be left and the tack shed and surrounding area well secured with loose objects stored or tied down. If the horse is being paddocked, the fences should be in good repair. Large areas with opening adjoining gates to paddocks can provide the horse with the opportunity to get into a fast gallop, where it could panic and go through or into a smaller fence. Horses are herding animals so it is recommended to contain them together rather than separating or isolating them. Putting a light rug, paddock boots and bell boots on the horse may offer some protection. Whether the horse is being stabled or paddocked it should be left with adequate drinking water.

