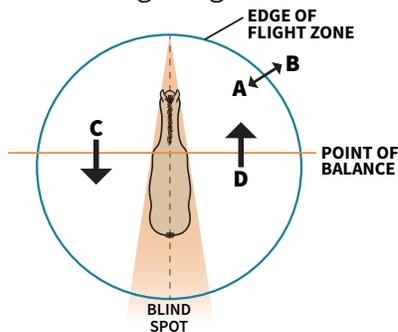


SAFE HANDLING IN EQUINE BARN FIRE EMERGENCIES

A Guide for First Responders

SAFE HANDLING

- Calmly approach the horse at their shoulder, or **point of balance**.
 - When leading or handling, stand in close contact with the horse to avoid kick and strike zones.
 - NEVER stand directly behind or in front of a horse.
- Remain calm and minimize any visual or auditory stimuli (sudden movements, loud voices/radios).
 - Fire rescue gear/personal protective equipment may frighten horses.
- To move a loose animal, enter their **flight zone**, or zone of personal space. Frightened or feral horses have larger flight zones than calm or well-handled horses.



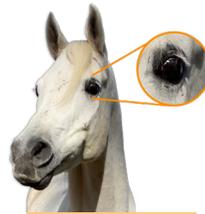
- A** = Position of the handler to start movement (enter flight zone)
- B** = Position of the handler to stop movement (exit flight zone)
- C** = Handler positioned in front of the point of balance to move the animal backward
- D** = Handler positioned behind the point of balance to move the animal forward

BODY LANGUAGE

- Understanding equine behaviors and expressions protects human and animal safety in emergencies.
- The following features indicate an increased fight-or-flight response:



AGGRESSIVE



HYPER-ALERT

EYES

Wide eyes often with whites showing

EARS

Stiffly pinned back ears

MOUTH/LIPS

Tensely pressed lips

TAIL

Tail high; wringing of the tail

FACE/HEAD

Facial muscle tension; head twirling

AFTERCARE

- Once the horse exits the structure, **remove coverings** or other fabric materials (blankets, sheets, fly masks) from the horse that may be flammable or retaining heat.
 - Leather halters are preferable to nylon halters in a fire situation.
- Thoroughly **hose down** the horse as quickly as possible to flush wounds and remove small embers trapped under the hair that can smolder even after leaving the scene of the fire.
- **Move the horse to a safe, secure location.** If grouping with other horses, consult a manager/owner to minimize the risk of horses hurting each other.
- **Consult a veterinarian** to evaluate equine health during recovery.

