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## Did you know?

*The horse is a prey animal that is programmed to react quickly when startled.*

*Noises, sudden movements, and unfamiliar shapes can startle a horse and unseat the rider.*

*The rider must react before the horse does to maintain control.*

*Horses generally do not kick but it's best to keep 6 feet away.*

*A horse has great hearing and peripheral vision which allows him to see things behind before the rider does.*

*Keep calm around the horse and speak to the rider so everyone stays safe.*

*Trail etiquette rules enhance safety for everyone.*

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*Preserving wild places,  
untrammelled by man, where  
man himself is a visitor who does  
not remain.*

## Contact Us

Eastern Divide Chapter  
Virginia Highlands Chapter  
Golden Horseshoe Chapter  
[www.BCHVA.org](http://www.BCHVA.org)

# Trail Etiquette

Know before  
you go

# Guidelines for bicyclists encountering horses on the trail

Pull to the downhill side of the trail far enough for horses to pass as soon as you see them.

Speak to the rider in a friendly relaxed tone.

When approaching horses from behind, stop, call ahead and make yourself known to the rider. Ask them if it is ok to pass.

Horsemen may pull to the side of the trail if they hear a bicycle coming but this does not necessarily mean it is safe to ride by. Stop and wait for instructions from the horseman.

If you ride by a horse, do so at a slow steady pace and avoid making any sudden movements or sounds that may startle the horse.

*Stop  
Speak  
Smile*

## COMMON COURTESY

Respect all trail restrictions and use only trails open to your mode of transportation.

When traveling on shared-use trails, continually watch for other types of recreationalists.

Slow down when sight lines are poor.

Keep your ears open- no earbuds. Listening to headphones or earbuds will make it difficult to hear other recreationalists.

Keep pets leashed and under control at all times.

## YIELDING

Yield the right of way to those passing you from behind or those traveling uphill.

Mountain bikes yield to runners, hikers, and horses.

Runners and hikers yield to horses.

## GUIDELINES FOR OTHER RECREATIONALISTS WHEN ENCOUNTERING HORSES ON THE TRAIL

Hikers and trail runners should always stop and step to the downhill side of the trail.

Speak to the rider in a relaxed tone, asking if it is ok to pass.

Keep dogs on a short leash and keep well away from the horse's hind legs.



## GUIDELINES FOR EQUESTRIANS ON SHARED TRAILS

- Be sure you can control your horse and it has been exposed to other trail users.
- Be alert and aware of other trail users. If possible pull to the side of the trail when you hear them.
- Less experienced horses and riders should ride between the more trail-wise horses.
- Be prepared to let other trail users know what needs to be done to keep everyone safe when you meet on the trail.
- At trailheads, secure horses safely and clean up all manure. Try to take it back home, if possible.