

Large Animal Rescue

Standard Operating Procedures Jim Green, Animal Rescue (AR) Specialist, UK

1 HAZARDS

Approaching the rescue site

- a) Difficult access / remote terrain / ditches / holes / cattle grids / overhead branches
- b) Underground hazards (cesspits, drains, wells, tanks, mines, tunnels, power lines, pipelines)
- c) Darkness
- d) Unstable ground (recognition of slurry lagoon, bog, mire, ice, grain, linseed etc)
- e) Water (static, tidal, running, frozen)
- f) Electric fences / overhead power lines / High voltage electricity
- g) Presence of other animals
- h) Manual handling of equipment
- i) Cuts and abrasions from thorns / barbs / overhead obstructions

Entrapped animals

- a) Kicked / bitten / trodden on / rolled on / impaled / butted / scratched / gored / crushed
- b) Trapped by rolling animal

Other animals in vicinity

- a) Crowding from the remaining herd
- b) Animals with enhanced emotion, size and weight
- c) Male species, i.e. bulls, boars, rams, stags, stallions
- d) Females protecting young
- e) Trampled / gored / crushed / butted

At the animal rescue scene

- a) Bio hazards- zoonotic infections, conditions and diseases contracted from the animal or its environment (**WARNING - PREGNANT FEMALE FF's ARE AT SPECIFIC RISK – see SOP Part B 2.4.1**)
- b) Emotionally charged and potentially aggressive owners and members of the public
- c) Untrained farm / equine workers / Vets / Firefighters
- d) Any person unfamiliar with the Incident Command System
- e) Unstable structures (buildings, pits, shafts, mines, banks etc)
- f) Confined spaces
- g) Water / unstable surfaces

- h) Mechanical lifting equipment, especially when provided and operated by external source
- i) Unpredictable animal behaviour
- j) Veterinary medicines / needles
- k) Hazardous materials- poisons, chemicals, asbestos, gases, asthmagens (substances that cause sensitisation of the airways)
- l) Released animal behaviour (flight / fight / herd mentality)

2 Actions on Arrival

First Attendance

- a) Liaise with owner or caller
- b) Ensure appropriate large animal Veterinarian has been mobilised
- c) Initiate the Incident Command System
- d) Carry out an initial Risk Assessment
- e) Remove endangered public / owners
- f) Enforce inner cordon. (FRS [Fire & Rescue Service] have duty of care for all persons within the inner cordon)
- g) Appoint a safety observer
- h) Ensure sufficient level of PPE (personal protection equipment) for anyone in the inner cordon
- i) Determine safe access route for all response personnel to the incident site
- j) Determine whether to affect rescue or await additional advice from either an AR2 (Advanced - Animal rescue trained) or an AR3 (Specialist - Animal rescue trained) fire service responder
- k) If rescue within scope of AR1 level crew (Basic - Animal Rescue Awareness Trained) i.e. simple and safe, consider whether the animal can be safely secured post rescue without causing further safety issues.

AR1 crews awaiting the arrival of AR2 Team or AR3 Specialist may undertake:

- a) Identify and provide safe access and egress to and from the scene of operations
- b) If necessary clear away vegetation, wire, fences etc to improve access to the animal provided they do not unnecessarily cause further distress or trauma or enter risk areas
- c) If an incident occurs on the road networks consider traffic management, road closures and if safe stabilise vehicles
- d) Identify locally available lifting equipment and operators
- e) Discern whether this will be a protracted incident which may require the setting up of lighting
- f) Appoint a guide to marshal oncoming appliances and place direction signs/lights
- g) Assess the environment for danger to crews, or hazards that may require particular care or control measures, e.g. overhead power lines, unstable ground, slurry lagoons/pits, other animals, machinery, high voltage electricity etc
- h) If herd animals are involved, locate the rest of the herd and a direct route to them

Actions, on arrival of AR2/ AR3 fire service trained members

- a) Ascertain the following points:
- b) Species, breed, age, sex
- c) Normal demeanour
- d) Medical history and any current conditions
- e) What human contact the animal is accustomed to
- f) Special dislikes such as an aversion to men, inability to twitch, blindfold etc
- g) Identify what has caused the situation and where the animal has come from
- h) Determine the final safe and secure destination for the animal prior to rescue.
Consider any public safety issues surrounding the release of the animal and ensure these are controlled or removed before commencement of rescue.
- i) Be especially cautious if it is an entire male of any species, a female nursing young or of a particularly dangerous breed such as Arab or Thoroughbred horses or native cattle.
- j) Consider viability of the animal with the Vet and owner before committing to a rescue
- k) Discuss with the Vet and IC the preferred method of extrication and determine a strategy.

Rescue

- a) Brief all crews and external agencies thoroughly
- b) Do not take unnecessary risks to save an animal
- c) Determine secure route and place of safety for entrapped animal prior to rescue
- d) Ensure head control (webbing or cotton halter) prior to rescue
- e) Ensure safe egress for personnel at all times
- f) Ensure sufficient control measures are in place prior to rescue, ie chemical restraint (sedation/anaesthesia)
- g) Consider the task and choose the simplest, lowest tech method, appropriate in conjunction with Veterinary advice and diagnosis

3 FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations as incident develops

- a) Regularly check suitability and integrity of PPE
- b) Consider welfare of crews at protracted incidents (ambient temperature, inclement weather, strenuous activity, personal hygiene, feeding etc)
- c) Be aware that relief AR2 and water responder crews may have considerable distances to travel.
- d) Consider lighting well in advance of darkness allowing for potential lengthy recovery time for animal particularly after field anaesthesia procedures.
- e) Ensure the provision of sharps boxes if available for Veterinary needles / syringes
- f) Management of tools, returning to equipment dump when not in use
- g) Always prepare a secondary plan as an animal may manoeuvre itself which renders the initial plan unachievable
- h) Monitor and review DRA regularly

Conclusion of Incident

- a) Formally handover the incident to the owner or Vet when you deem the fire and rescue service responsibility for H&S has ceased. Control should be informed.
- b) Provide for decontamination of equipment and personal kit prior to leaving site (particularly in disease control zones)
- c) Debrief crews
- d) Ensure correct personal hygiene before eating, drinking etc
- e) If appropriate offer advice to prevent reoccurrence of incident
- f) Gather relevant information for IRS

Part B. Standard Operating Procedure

DOCUMENT OVERVIEW: - Animals suffering physical entrapment, beyond the lifting capabilities of one person or requiring specialist equipment

CONTENTS

Part A. Aide Memoir

Part B. Full Standard Operating Procedure

Section	Page
1. <u>Introduction</u>	4
2. <u>Significant Hazards</u>	5
3. <u>Control Measures and Actions</u>	9
4. <u>Relevant References</u>	16
5. <u>Supporting Information</u>	17

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Large animals, for the benefit of this animal rescue SOP, are defined as 'Animals suffering physical entrapment, beyond the lifting capabilities of one person (HSE guidance Male 20kg - Female 15kg) or requiring specialist equipment'.
- 1.2 Large animal rescues present a wide range of hazards from not only the distressed animal itself but possibly also from other animals in the locality, people (well meaning or not) and the working environment itself. Awareness of both animal and human behaviour supported by suitable animal rescue equipment and PPE will play an important part in the safe operations of everyone at the incident scene. Full use should be made by incident commanders of fire service specialist animal rescue personnel

1.3 Terminology (Fire Service Animal Rescue Team Typing):

AR1 – Basic - Animal rescue aware (all FRS personnel will have received safety 'awareness' training)

AR2 – Advanced - Animal rescue trained (Personnel trained in a variety of standard animal behaviour, handling and rescue methods)

AR3 – Specialist/ Instructor - Animal rescue trained (Specialists with advanced knowledge of animal behaviour and handling, rescue techniques, welfare contacts, Veterinary techniques and incident tactical advice)

1.4 Large animal PDA Categories L1, L2 or L3 (category determined from call handling):

Category L1 – Control operator's discretion. No physical FRS response.

Advice sought from AR3 Specialist ICS level 1, AR2 ICS level 1, advice to owner/caller or referral to other agency only

Category L2 – Veterinary or animal welfare agency assistance request.

AR3 Specialist ICS level 1 or AR2 ICS level 1 to evaluate and request resources as appropriate

Category L3 – Large animal trapped, full PDA.

AR2 team leader and or AR3 Animal Rescue Specialist ICS level 1

AR2 Animal Rescue Team (minimum crew of 5)

AR1 local crew (minimum crew of 4)

AR1 trained, Level 2 ICS Manager

2. SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS

2 Hazards at large animal incidents are grouped into four areas:

2.1 Hazards - Approaching the rescue site

2.1.1 Many rescues occur in rural areas which can be remote and present access difficulties.

2.1.2. Particular issues facing vehicular access to the site may be the presence of ditches, heavy vegetation, locked gates, pedestrian only gates, weak cattle grids, low branches, inaccessible and unstable ground.

2.1.3 Recognising unstable ground will be enhanced by knowledge of vegetation indicator species. Lowland heathland terrain may include hazards such as:

- Valley mire or bog – (deep watery peat of varying depth covered with a layer of matted vegetation such as sphagnum moss, undriveable all year round.)
- Wet heath – (Heather vegetation often sloping down to valley mire. Drivability will vary according to the time of year)

- Riverine woodland – (Woodland growing at stream sides which remains wet all year. Ground is formed of deep silt and organic matter mixed with tree roots and can be extremely hazardous to walk on)
- Clay holes – (Usually found on slopes where water leaches out from the clay subsoil and forms a highly treacherous trap for vehicles or personnel)

2.1.4 Farmland is often drained and perfectly traversable in summer but fields may be inaccessible to most vehicles during the winter.

2.1.5 Heath and farmland may conceal the following hazards: Pot holes, animal holes, mine shafts, bomb craters and disused quarries

2.1.6 Rescues from mud in estuarial waters present a significant hazard this may be increased by tidal movement (see call type - Rescues from unstable surfaces [hyperlink?](#))

2.1.7 Darkness not only hampers a rescue but hides dangers commonly associated with farms such as low overhead power lines, machinery, pits, holes and slurry lagoons.

2.1.8 Water sources such as streams, ponds and lakes may not be fenced as they are available for grazing animals to drink from. Water sources might be static, running, tidal or even frozen.

2.1.9 Underground hazards may have caused the entrapment following collapse or unsecured entrances. Examples include cesspits, drains, wells, tanks, mines or tunnels. Structural collapse may have weakened surrounding ground.

2.1.10 Beware of electric fences which will differ in strength depending on the livestock contained. Some will be attached to a vehicle battery and others connected to the mains supply.

2.1.11 Overhead power lines should be identified and risk assessed if considering lifting a trapped animal.

2.1.12 The presence of other animals or members of the herd should be established particularly when taking down fences or opening gates for access prior to rescue.

2.2 Hazards- Entrapped animals

2.2.1 Many large animal casualties are prey species and as such are motivated by fear. Their natural reaction to fear stimulation is to run away, however this may be impossible from an entrapment. The following outlines anticipated behaviour of herd animals in a fear state:

Butting-	Cattle
	Rams
	Goats

Biting-	Horses (particularly stallions) Pigs Goats
Kicking-	Horses Cattle Llamas
Crushing-	Cattle Pigs Horses
Impaling/goring- Spitting-	Bulls, deer Alpacas, Llamas

Other dangers include being trapped by a rolling animal or trodden on.

- 2.2.2. When working around trapped animals it is easy to be lulled into a false sense of security if they do not appear to be struggling. Horses for instance will give up easily, rest for a while and then explode momentarily before calming again. This unpredictable behavioural process will continue if not controlled. Animals may also struggle if stimulated by the rescue or rescuers and an important time to be aware is on release of the animal. Once sensing freedom herd animals may attempt to return to the herd with no regard for those around the scene of operations

2.2.3 Weights

The weight of an animal should be estimated, here are a few examples (dependant on breed)

- Sheep: 35-95 kg
- Pigs: 200-300kg
- Cattle: 400-800kg (Bulls may be 1000kg+)
- Horses: 150-700kg (Special heavy breeds like Percheron, Shire etc may be 1000kg+)

2.3 Hazards of other animals in vicinity

- 2.3.1 Other animals in the vicinity should be considered at a rescue as they may have direct bearing on the demeanour and behaviour of the trapped animal.
- 2.3.2 Herd behaviour may lead to crowding by other herd members which may hinder the operation. Removal of the herd must be weighed against the likely adverse stress reaction of the casualty but with overriding regard for the safety of all those present.
- 2.3.3 Entire males of any species should be regarded with immense caution as they can react with extreme speed and aggression.
- 2.3.4 Females protecting young may also react uncharacteristically to a perceived threat.

2.3.5 Any animal with enhanced emotion, size and weight are likely to pose a significant risk.

2.4 Hazards at an animal rescue scene

2.4.1 Bio hazards and zoonotic infections are conditions and diseases contracted from an animal or its environment.

WARNING - PREGNANT FEMALE FF's ARE AT SPECIFIC RISK –

Pregnant women who come into close contact with sheep during lambing may risk their own health and that of their unborn child, from infections that can occur in some ewes. These include chlamydiosis (enzootic abortion of ewes - EAE), toxoplasmosis and listeriosis, which are common causes of abortion in ewes.

2.4.2 Companion animal owners (pet owners), particularly equine owners and assistants may exhibit the following behaviour at a rescue:

- High emotion, often irrational and sometimes aggressive
- Put themselves at great risk
- May try to direct Firefighters to perform practices that are dangerous
- Feelings of guilt fear and anger are common

2.4.3 The irrational behaviour of an owner if not controlled, can compromise a rescue and put Firefighters at risk.

Similarly any person at a rescue, untrained in animal rescue procedure and unfamiliar with the Incident Command System should be considered a hazard due to the known possible reactions of both human and animal at the rescue site. This includes farm/equine workers, Veterinarians, other rescue organisations e.g. Coastguard, RNLI and Non Government Organisations such as the RSPCA and other local welfare groups.

It must be stressed that the F&RS when accepting responsibility for a scene have a duty of care for all persons within the inner cordon area.

2.4.4 Buildings, pits, shafts and mines may not be structurally sound and therefore control measures out of the scope of the animal rescue team may have to be considered prior to rescue. Rescues from waterway bank sides may also be subject to rapid collapse.

2.4.5 Entering a confined space with a distressed animal should not be allowed under any circumstances until effective control measures are in place.

2.4.6 Water and ice rescue incidents significantly increase the danger at an animal rescue due to the lack of egress afforded to the firefighter committed. Large animals can swim to varying degrees but may become tired quickly. It may not be viable to rescue animals, particularly from swift water incidents.

2.4.7 Extreme caution should be exercised when utilising non FRS lifting equipment and outside assistance. The capability of the operator is more difficult to ascertain and therefore strict control measures must be applied.

- 2.4.8 Uncharacteristic animal behaviour is to be expected particularly when the animal is stimulated and on release. Flight, fight and herding responses may all be observed during a rescue.
- 2.4.9 Veterinary medicines should be treated with caution as they are designed to treat animals which could be 10 times the weight of a human and therefore could deliver a lethal dose if not strictly managed.
- 2.4.10 Unstable and fluid materials such as water, ice, slurry, grain and in particular linseed should be treated with extreme caution as they provide a risk of drowning.
- 2.4.11 Hazardous materials such as poisons, chemicals, asthmagens, asbestos and gases may all be present on agricultural establishments and require early identification.
- 2.4.12 Manual handling of equipment will be a significant hazard in the environments surrounding animal rescues, heightened by darkness.
- 2.4.13 Cuts and abrasions from thorns / barbs / overhead obstructions maybe encountered at animal incidents.

3. CONTROL MEASURES AND ACTIONS

3.1 Initial Actions - General

- 3.1.1 IC of the first appliance should liaise with an owner or caller to gather information regarding the incident and casualties. Carry out an immediate assessment to determine human life risk. If necessary, remove all persons from the risk area.
Once human life has been safeguarded carry out an assessment of the animal and the environment it is trapped in.
- 3.1.2 If first attending crews are not trained to AR2 level, their responsibilities will consist of safeguarding the scene, carrying out immediate measures to protect human life and assessing the animal's condition. Unless the animal can be released by carrying out simple measures without endangering the crew, personnel should await arrival of Fire Service specialist animal rescue teams.
- 3.1.3 If the owner or responsible person is not present, attempts should be made to contact them.
- 3.1.4 An appropriate Veterinarian should be requested. The majority of Veterinary practices treat small animals and will not be equipped to treat large animals. On the whole, large animal Vets will be able to treat both cattle and horses but

if possible a specialist equine or farm animal Vet should be requested determined by the species involved.

Veterinary Request - owner in attendance

3.1.5 Owner to contact their regular Vet.

3.1.6 If unavailable or arrival time is excessive:
Contact the nearest Equine or Farm animal Vet practice utilising the Emergency Services Veterinary Directory through Fire Control or locally from the incident

Veterinary Request - owner not in attendance

3.1.7 Contact the nearest Equine or Farm animal Vet practice utilising the Emergency Services Veterinary Directory through Fire Control or locally from the incident.

3.1.8 Payment for emergency situations where no owner or responsible person is present can be arranged in the following ways:

a) Vets may claim from the British Equine Veterinary Association Emergency Fund associated with the Emergency Services Directory if they are unable to trace an owner.

b) The RSPCA can authorise payment for a Vet to carry out emergency treatment. The RSPCA will be automatically informed of an incident at mobilisation time and will make every effort to attend subject to incident type and their availability. The RSPCA Inspector or Collections Officer tasked with the incident will contact the IC by telephone. The IC can then discuss the need for attendance of a Vet through the RSPCA and if required this can be facilitated early on rather than wait for the Inspector to arrive at scene.

3.2 Rescue Scene Preparation

3.2.1 Do not subject personnel to undue risks in order to rescue an animal

3.2.2 The IC must ensure that training competences are not exceeded

3.2.3 Never release an animal unless you have a safe and secure place prepared for it.

3.2.4 First Attendance

a. Liaise with owner or caller

b. Ensure appropriate large animal Veterinarian has been mobilised

c. Initiate the Incident Command System

d. Carry out an initial Risk Assessment

e. Remove endangered public / owners

f. Enforce inner cordon. (FRS have duty of care for all persons within the inner cordon)

- g. Appoint a safety observer
- h. Ensure sufficient level of PPE for anyone in the inner cordon
- i. Determine safe access route for all response personnel to the incident site
- j. Determine whether to affect rescue or await additional advice from either an AR2 (Advanced - Animal rescue trained) or an AR3 (Specialist - Animal rescue trained) fire service responder
- k. If rescue within scope of AR1 level crew (Basic - Animal Rescue Awareness Trained) i.e. simple and safe, consider whether the animal can be safely secured post rescue without causing further safety issues.

3.2.5 AR1 crews awaiting the arrival of AR2 Team or AR3 Specialist may undertake:

- a. Identify and provide safe access and egress to and from the scene of operations for personnel and equipment.
- b. If necessary clear away vegetation, wire, fences etc to improve access to the animal provided they do not unnecessarily cause further distress or trauma or enter risk areas
- c. If an incident occurs on the road networks consider traffic management, road closures and if safe stabilise vehicles
- d. Identify locally available lifting equipment and operators
- e. Discern whether this will be a protracted incident which may require the setting up of lighting
- f. Appoint a guide to marshal oncoming appliances and place direction signs/lights
- g. Assess the environment for danger to crews, or hazards that may require particular care or control measures, e.g. overhead power lines, unstable ground, slurry lagoons/pits, other animals, machinery, high voltage electricity etc
- h. If herd animals are involved, locate the rest of the herd and a direct route to them

3.2.6 Actions, on arrival of AR2/ AR3 fire service trained members

- a. Ascertain the following points:
 - b. Species, breed, age, sex
 - c. Normal demeanour
 - d. Medical history and any current conditions
 - e. What human contact the animal is accustomed to
 - f. Special dislikes such as an aversion to men, inability to twitch, blindfold etc
 - g. Identify what has caused the situation and where the animal has come from
 - h. Determine the final safe and secure destination for the animal prior to rescue. Consider any public safety issues surrounding the release of the animal and ensure these are controlled or removed before commencement of rescue.

- i. Be especially cautious if it is an entire male of any species, a female nursing young or of a particularly dangerous breed such as Arab or Thoroughbred horses or native cattle.
 - j. Consider viability of the animal with the Vet and owner before committing to a rescue
 - k. Discuss with the Vet and IC the preferred method of extrication and determine a strategy.
- 3.2.7 Determine a safe route and final secure destination for the animal prior to rescue. Consider any public safety issues surrounding the release of the animal and ensure these are controlled or removed before commencement of rescue.
- 3.2.8 Discuss with the Vet and IC the preferred method of extrication and determine a strategy. Consider viability of the animal with the Vet and owner before committing to a rescue. If the risks outweigh the benefits or the animal is not of an age or condition that will ensure quality of life or usefulness after the rescue then the decision may be taken to euthanize the animal prior to extrication. Fire and Rescue involvement in extricating euthanized animals will be based on an assessment by the IC which may be determined by the potential public safety hazard.
- 3.2.9 Always rescue animals using the simplest, lowest tech method deemed appropriate and suitable as this will be the quickest and safest for both animal and rescuer.
- 3.2.10 The Incident Command System will be initiated at all animal rescues. Inner and outer cordons will normally be established using natural barriers such as fence lines, ditches and hedges rather than the use of barrier tape which may unnecessarily stimulate the animal. If physically defined barriers are not available clearly communicate to all at the scene the distances required and control the inner cordon appointing a safety officer who should wherever possible be AR2 trained.
- 3.2.11 The Fire and Rescue Service are responsible for the Health and Safety of those present within the inner cordon of an incident and only those with the suitable PPE should be allowed to enter. In the event that the Vet does not have a helmet, one should be provided by the FRS.
- 3.2.12 Equipment and personnel holding points should be set up within the outer cordon and an equipment manager appointed from the AR2 personnel (as shown in Fig1). They will be responsible for providing the appropriate equipment as requested and ensuring that all equipment not being used is returned to the equipment dump. Due to the nature of most animal rescue environments, equipment can become lost or present a significant safety hazard if put down in vegetation.

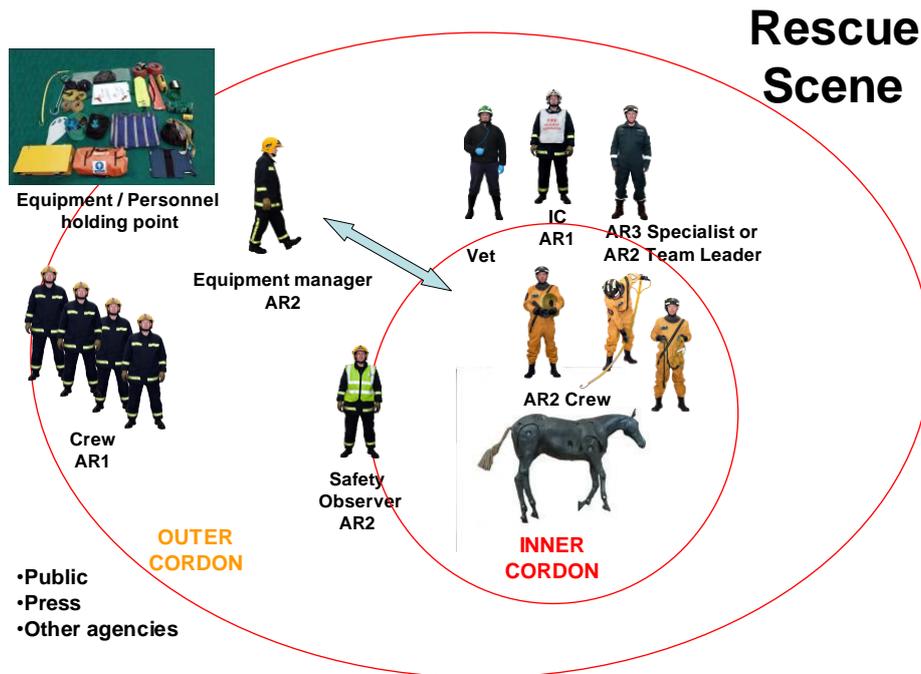


Fig 1

3.2.13 Minimum PPE for animal incidents should consist of helmet, steel toe capped boots, leggings and surgical gloves (to protect against Zoonotic infections and Bio hazards).

Consideration by the IC should be given to the following after risk assessment:

- a) Dry suit
- b) Thermal under layer
- c) Manual lifejacket or buoyancy aid with quick release
- d) Eye/Ear protection
- e) Dust masks
- f) Riggers gloves or gauntlets
- g) Working at height equipment
- h) Body protector
- i) Hi Viz coats

3.3 Rescue

3.3.1 Actions

- a) Ensure that once a plan has been established all personnel, external agencies and the owner have been briefed before commencement and at regular intervals during the incident.
- b) Ensure that personnel have safe egress at all times.**
- c) Ensure that appropriate PPE has been applied and safety officers briefed.
- d) ENSURE APPROPRIATE HEAD RESTRAINT IS APPLIED TO THE ANIMAL PRIOR TO RESCUE.** (Do not tie lines or ropes around the necks of animals except in extreme circumstances).
- e) An AR2 FF must remain in control of the animals head at all times.

- f) If the person in control of the head would be in danger next to the animal, lengthen the lead rein or rope in order that they can retain contact at a safe distance
- g) The risk area at an animal rescue moves with the animal. Always brief the person on the head as to their actions if the animal becomes difficult to control or attempts to escape. This pre determined plan should be communicated to all in the risk area and beyond as the handler may need space to control and calm an animal.

3.3.2 Always employ safe systems of work and follow these key rules:

- a) Ensure all personnel remain out of the kicking zones (Fig 2 and Fig 3)
- b) Utilise heavy limb crooks as extensions of the arm when manipulating an animal's limbs or placing strops around it
- c) Be aware of the head butt zone
- d) Avoid unnecessary stimulation of an animal by noise or action
- e) Minimum personnel to be in the risk area
- f) Consider the noise, actions and activities of crews, members of the public, owners, press etc outside the immediate risk area but within sight or in particular earshot of the trapped animal as this could cause distress or unwanted reactions.
- g) No action should be taken in the risk area without all personnel being fully briefed and updated to avoid being caught out by a reaction to stimulation.
- h) ENSURE ALL PERSONNEL MAINTAIN A SAFE EGRESS**
- i) Utilise working at height equipment to maintain contact with personnel who are down slopes, in shallow water or other positions where their immediate unaided withdrawal would be compromised.



Fig 2

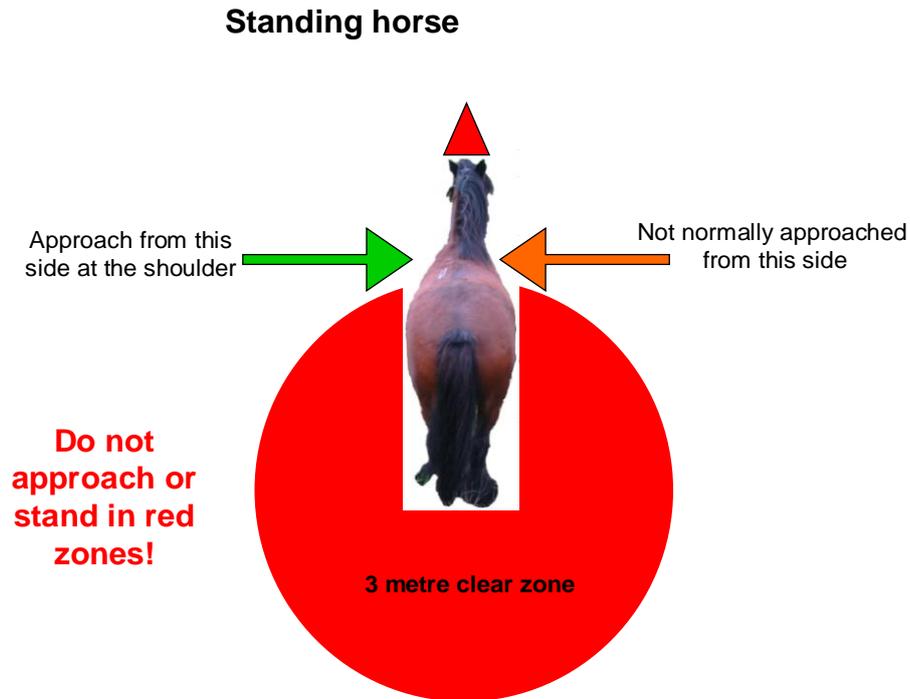


Fig 3

3.3.3 Natural Control Measures

- a) **Food.** The use of food such as hay or grass can be given to an animal in order to present an air of normality and comfort. Fetching feed also gives owners a role and a focus. The only time feed is contraindicated is if anaesthesia is likely to be applied.
- b) **Judas animal.** Herd animals are under more stress when alone. Providing an animal of the same or sometimes different but known species may instil confidence. Animals nearby must however be controlled and unable to hinder the rescue.
- c) **Twitching (horses) or nose pinch (cattle)** may be appropriate for a short term, simple control measure but only when carried out by someone competent and never when contraindicated by history of aggression of the animal to previous attempts. Owner/handler may advise
- d) **Owner.** An owner may have a limited calming effect on a horse if they are calm and rational themselves. Allowing an owner into the risk area should only follow careful consideration of the danger and with the appropriate PPE, instruction and supervision. Remember that owners who are emotionally attached may not respond to safety words of command with the same urgency as emergency personnel.

3.3.4 Chemical Control Measures (Sedation/Anaesthesia)

- a) Inability to communicate with animals in distress, their sheer size, power and the unpredictable nature of their reactions will often lead to a decision by the IC in conjunction with the vet to control the risks by drugs. Veterinary drugs are a serious hazard in themselves and management of drugs and sharps should be monitored. If a Vet does not carry a sharps box one should be provided if available by the FRS.

- b) Varying degrees of chemical control ranging from a mild tranquilizer to full field anaesthesia can be achieved determined by the method of extrication chosen, risk to firefighters and condition of the animal. Close liaison with the Vet to ascertain levels of consciousness and timescales should be undertaken.
- c) **WARNING: A SEDATED HORSE CAN KICK SUDDENLY WITH KILLING FORCE AND ACCURACY**
- d) Horses can be stimulated out of a sedated state immediately with little or no warning signs. It is difficult to read an animal under sedation and anticipate actions of fright or aggression. Therefore in order to guarantee a safe environment for rescuers full anaesthesia must be requested. This should be routinely applied to situations where firefighters may have to work in the kicking zone or in areas with no egress for a prolonged period, for instance horses trapped in cattle grids.
- e) **DO NOT ENTER CONFINED SPACES WITH LARGE ANIMALS IN DISTRESS**
- f) Consider restraint and stopping techniques that can be applied at range or utilise full anaesthesia if there is a requirement to work in close proximity to an animal within a confined space.

3.3.5 Considerations as incident develops

- a) Monitor the suitability and integrity of PPE and replace if necessary
- b) Consider the welfare of crews at protracted incidents (ambient temperature, inclement weather, strenuous activity, personal hygiene, feeding etc)
- c) Change crew members round if they are becoming fatigued and consider the need for relief AR2/Water responder crews who may have some considerable attendance time
- d) Consider lighting well in advance of darkness allowing for potential lengthy recovery time for animals, particularly after anaesthesia
- e) Ensure a safe system of sharps management for Veterinary needles / syringes
- f) Always prepare a secondary plan as an animal may manoeuvre itself into a position which renders the initial plan unachievable

4 Conclusion of Incident

- a) On conclusion of the incident formally handover to the owner or Vet when you deem the Fire and Rescue Service responsibility for H&S has ceased. Inform Control.
- b) Be aware that the risk is particularly high in the recovery stages of an incident when personal guard has dropped.
- c) Provide for decontamination of equipment and personal kit prior to leaving site. For high levels of contamination use triene or equivalent disinfectants to remove bacterial or viral hazards
- d) Ensure correct personal hygiene before eating, drinking and smoking
- e) Debrief crews and external agencies prior to leaving the rescue site
- f) Advise all crews to contact their doctor and occupational health if they suffer diarrhoea, skin conditions or flu like symptoms following an animal incident as these may indicate a Zoonotic condition.

- g) Give advice to the owner/occupier if appropriate to avoid reoccurrence of the situation
- h) Gather the information required for IRS
- i) In the absence of an RSPCA representative, any concerns regarding the welfare of animals or conditions of animal housing post incident should be referred to the RSPCA Officer who was tasked with the initial call.

4. RELEVANT REFERENCES

- **Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue: Prof Tomas Gimenez, Rebecca Gimenez and Kimberly May**
- **Rescue and Emergency Medicine Training for Equine Vets: Jim Green (Animal Rescue Specialist) and Prof Josh Slater (Royal Veterinary College, Senior Vice President British Equine Veterinary Association)**
- **FiReControl Project - Fire and Rescue Service (England) FiReControl Ways of Working Incident Types (D3.14)**
- **Getting to grips with manual handling (HSE - a short guide) ISBN 0717628280**
- **Manual Handling Operations regulations 1992 (as amended)**
- **Common zoonoses in agriculture (HSE Information sheet - no 2 revised)**

Document Control					
Version	Date	Author	Role	Status	Changes
V0.01	31.05.09	M. Pinchin	GM		
V0.2	16.12.09	M. Pinchin	GM	Draft	Significant
V0.3	13.01.10	M. Pinchin	GM	Draft	Minor

5. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- **CFOA National Animal Rescue Practitioners Forum**
- **Anton Phillips (HFRS Animal Rescue Specialist)**
- **Animal Rescue in flood and swiftwater incidents: Slim Ray**
- **Save Your Horse, A Horse Owner's Guide to Large Animal Rescue: Michelle Staples**