

Preventing falls while working with horses

Falls from horses are a leading cause of serious injury in ranching and farm work. Most falls are preventable with proper preparation, equipment and awareness.

Before you ride

- **Match the Rider to the Horse**
 - Use experienced horses for new or seasonal workers
 - Avoid pairing inexperienced riders with green or reactive horses
- **Check Tack Every Time**
 - Inspect cinch, billets, stir up leathers and reins
 - Ensure saddle fits both horse and rider
 - Replace worn leather immediately
- **Wear Proper Gear**
 - ASTM/SEI-certified riding helmet
 - Boots with heel (prevents foot from sliding through stirrup)
 - Gloves for better rein control
 - Jeans or long pants

During the ride

- **Stay alert**
 - Watch terrain: holes, ice, mud, gopher mounds
 - Be cautious around livestock pressure situations
- **Keep proper position**
 - Heels down, shoulders back
 - Maintain a balanced seat
 - Avoid wrapping reins around your hand
- **Communicate!**
 - Call out intentions when working around others
 - Maintain safe spacing between horses

Ways to reduce severity if someone falls

- Encourage, or require, helmet use - even for experienced riders
- Train workers annually
- Safe mounting /dismounting
- Emergency dismount procedures
- Recognizing horse behavior warning signs
- Have an emergency plan
- Two-way communication in remote areas
- Clear check-in procedures
- First aid kits accessible

