



**Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.**

# **RIDER MANUAL**

Please read this 8 page Rider Manual and then sign and return the Receipt of Rider Manual form with your Rider Application Packet.



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[www.horsethatheal.org](http://www.horsethatheal.org)



## Receipt of Rider Manual

Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc. operates under guidelines established by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl). These guidelines allow us to provide quality riding experiences while ensuring safety for all participants. Please read this manual thoroughly and sign and return this page, acknowledging your receipt. Please contact us at 410.923.6800 if you have any questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

Rider's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

I have read, understand and agree to comply to the rules and policies in Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.'s Rider Manual. I acknowledge that failure to comply with MTR's policies may result in dismissal from the program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Rider, Parent, Guardian, or Caregiver

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Program Descriptions**

The MTR programs are outlined below:

### **Therapeutic Riding**

The Therapeutic Riding program is designed to teach individuals with physical, cognitive or emotional challenges the skills necessary to ride a horse, as well as the skills necessary to appropriately groom and tack a horse in preparation for riding. Skills taught will vary depending on the rider. Therapeutic Riding lessons are offered during all sessions and are taught by PATH Intl. Certified therapeutic riding instructors.

Maryland Therapeutic Riding considers the characteristics, age, riding level, and goals of all participants and will determine whether participants will be in a group or private lesson when scheduling. The maximum class size is three riders. Private lessons are 45 minutes in length and group lessons are 55 minutes in length.

### **Equine Learning**

Maryland Therapeutic Riding offers unmounted horsemanship lessons to any individual interested in learning skills related to horse health and care, horse handling, barn maintenance and equine body language. This program allows participants to form a unique bond with the horse by learning how to communicate and work with the horse on the ground.

### **Hippotherapy**

The Hippotherapy Program offers private occupational, physical, and speech therapy sessions with trained and licensed therapists. In this unique form of rehabilitation, therapists utilize the horse and the horse's movement in conjunction with traditional therapy techniques to improve functional outcomes. The horse is a wonderful motivator, and clients are usually very responsive in this type of treatment setting.

Occupational Therapy is designed for:

- Individuals who wish to improve motor control, balance, and attention to task, problem solving skills, cognition, and sensory processing.

Physical Therapy is designed for:

- Individuals who wish to increase their balance, strength, endurance, and flexibility, and improve their gross motor and mobility skills.

Speech Therapy is designed for:

- Individuals who wish to improve speech and language communication through augmentative communication, sign language and verbal modalities.

## **Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy**

While benefits of Equine Assisted Activities overlap the physical, mental and emotional realms, the Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy program formats specifically target people with mental and emotional health issues. Horses provide reflective opportunities that can be utilized to meet individual, couple, or families' treatment goals.

Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy is defined as a form of experiential psychotherapy that includes equine(s). EFP is defined as an interactive process in which a licensed mental health professional working with an appropriately credentialed equine professional partners with suitable equine(s) to address psychotherapy goals set forth by the mental health professional and the client.

EFP may include, but is not limited to, a number of mutually beneficial equine activities such as handling, grooming, longeing, and/or riding. Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy is a treatment approach within the classification of Equine Assisted Therapy that provides the client with opportunities to enhance self-awareness and re-pattern maladaptive behaviors, feelings and attitudes.

Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy both promotes personal exploration of feelings and behaviors, and allows for clinical interpretation of feelings and behaviors. EFP denotes an ongoing therapeutic relationship with clearly established treatment goals and objectives developed by the therapist in conjunction with the client. The therapist must be an appropriately credentialed mental health professional to legally practice psychotherapy. In addition to the therapist, a certified PATH Intl. Equine Specialist in Mental Health in Learning

Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy may be used for people with psycho-social issues and mental health needs that result in any significant variation in cognition, mood, judgment, insight, anxiety level, perception, social skills, communication, behavior, or learning. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Anxiety Disorders
- Psychotic Disorders
- Mood Disorders
- Behavioral Difficulties

Other Mental Illness, such as Schizophrenia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism, Receptive or Expressive Language Disorders, Personality Disorders, Depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, etc. Major Life Changes such as environmental trauma, divorce, grief and loss, etc. may also benefit from these services.

## **Program Policies and Procedures**

### **Weather Cancellation Policy**

#### **Winter Weather:**

On the day of lessons, please check the forecasted high for the day for Crownsville, Maryland. If the high temperature or wind chill for the day is 25 degrees or lower, lessons will be cancelled. **A member of staff will call either the day before or the morning of lessons IF LESSONS ARE CANCELLED.**

## **Summer Weather:**

On the day of lessons, please check the forecasted high for the day for Crownsville, Maryland. If the high temperature or heat index for the day is 95 degrees or higher, lessons will be cancelled. **A member of staff will call either the day before or the morning of lessons IF LESSONS ARE CANCELLED.**

**Cancellations due to weather will also be made if MTR staff determines that the following conditions exist one hour prior to class:**

- ~ Winds exceeding 25 MPH.
- ~ Tornado warnings, severe rain, hail, snow or thunderstorms.
- ~ Hazardous driving conditions - Anne Arundel County Schools are closed

MTR reserves the right to cancel lessons based on the availability of instructors, volunteers, and/or horses. Further, any factor or situation considered by MTR staff to be a threat to the safety of students, volunteers, staff, or horses is reason for cancellation.

## **Age and Weight Requirements**

Individuals must be at least 2 years old before they can participate in Hippotherapy, five years old for Therapeutic Riding, and 13 years old for Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy. There is no maximum age limit. Participants involved in mounted activities may not exceed 200 lbs. as we do not currently have horses that can safely carry more than that.

## **Maryland Therapeutic Riding Statement of Participant Eligibility or Dismissal**

Maryland Therapeutic Riding offers services to individuals with special needs. Eligibility for participation in MTR's programs is based solely upon an individual's ability to participate meaningfully and safely, provided the necessary resources are available including: an instructor, horse, volunteers and class availability which meets individuals' needs.

As a fully accredited PATH Intl. operating center, MTR fully ascribes to the Precautions and Contraindications as recommended by the Medical Committee of PATH Intl. as well as Professional Standards. Therefore, our professional staff provides initial and ongoing evaluations for all prospective and active participants.

Due to the nature of therapeutic riding and other equine related activities, there are individuals for whom MTR's programs are deemed inappropriate during the evaluation process and are not accepted for enrollment or not eligible to continue in MTR's programs. This determination is made on the basis of physical, behavioral and other limitations including PATH Intl. premier accreditation and safety guidelines.

Individuals accepted into MTR's programs are required to take part in periodic progress reviews and follow MTR's rules and procedures. During these reviews, or as a result of unusual occurrences during a program session, the MTR professional staff may find that continuance in the program for a given individual is inappropriate or contraindicated. For this reason, MTR reserved the right to discontinue the participation of an individual in its programs when it is deemed that discontinuance is in the best interests of MTR and/or the individual concerned.

**Maryland Therapeutic Riding reserves the right to decide we are unable to serve an applicant due to unavailable resource(s) and/or safety concerns including PATH Intl. guidelines relating to contraindications for participation.**

### **Riding Participation Criteria**

- Physically able to sit symmetrically with torso upright and legs astride the horse during dynamic movement
- Physically able to maintain head and neck position independently in proper alignment with dynamic movement
- Weigh less than 200 pounds
- Does not exhibit physical or behavioral conditions that are contraindicated by PATH Intl. (see Medical History Form)
- Have current signed and dated paperwork – including Registration and Release Form, Medical History Form, and Annual Update Form
- Benefit physically, emotionally, socially and/or cognitively from services provided at Maryland Therapeutic Riding, Inc.
- Complete an intake assessment where trained staff evaluate eligibility
- Able to tolerate a riding safety helmet
- Ability to accommodate the movement of the horse without pain
- Adequate range of motion in hip(s) to sit astride
- Safety awareness around animals
- Ability to express pain or discomfort
- Behave in a manner that is safe for self, horses and others

### **Annual Update of Paperwork**

It is a requirement of both PATH Intl. and MTR that ALL riders submit an Annual Rider Application Update January 1 (or stated deadline) of each new calendar year (or the first session of the New Year). This standard is regardless of how often an individual has ridden at MTR during the previous year.

**It is the rider's responsibility to be sure paperwork is current.** Failure to comply will result in a temporary riding suspension until paperwork is made current. All of the rider paperwork is available at MTR's website: [www.horsethatheal.org](http://www.horsethatheal.org).

Submission of other paperwork such as IEPs and therapy evaluations is encouraged, as these assessments are a beneficial part of lesson planning. Riders with outdated forms will not be allowed to participate.

### **Scholarships**

MTR, Inc. is a non-profit organization. Rider fees are necessary to help defray the expenses of equine assisted activities and cover only a small portion of the actual cost.

It is the policy of Maryland Therapeutic Riding (MTR) to provide financial assistance to MTR students in an objective, fair and responsible manner. MTR is committed to providing this type of financial assistance to students who **would not be able to participate** without this financial support. Prospective students and their families are expected to exhaust all other options of financial support prior to filing a scholarship application. (Please see list of outside funding sources) Scholarship applications received after the scholarship application

deadline will not be considered. Students may not receive more than one semester of scholarship assistance per calendar year if a student receiving a scholarship misses more than 30% of their lessons, and they will not be eligible to re-apply for another scholarship during that calendar year. We ask that you contribute a share of the rider fee so that there will be enough scholarship funds available for all who need them. **Riders who receive funds from outside funding organizations do not qualify for an MTR scholarship.**

Please see our website [www.horsesthatheal.org](http://www.horsesthatheal.org) to download the scholarship policy and application.

**Please Note:** If you are applying for an MTR Scholarship, your completed Financial Resource Packet must accompany your registration form. If you are awarded an MTR Scholarship, a letter will be mailed to you notifying you of the award given. For additional information on scholarships, please go to the RIDERS link on our website.

## **Outside Funding Requests and Policies**

To request an invoice from MTR for outside funding, download the [Outside Funding Invoice Request Form \(OFIR\)](#). **The billing department cannot make invoices without your OFIR form.**

**Please note the following applies when receiving outside funding for services at MTR:**

1. Outside funding does not guarantee a spot in a specific session. Opening are on a first come, first-serve basis, with current riders getting first choice at registration. If we are not able to get you into a session, you will be put on a wait list until an opening becomes available, or you will need to register for the following session.
2. Outside funding must be used within one year of Maryland Therapeutic Riding receiving the funds.
3. Extensions are available only in situations where a riding slot is not available within the one year time-frame.
4. Riders must complete MTR enrollment process (Rider Application and Site Visit) BEFORE outside funding requests can be made. Invoices or paperwork needed for the funding will not be provided if the individual has not completed their enrollment process.
5. Please allow the MTR Billing Department at least a one week (7 day) return on any outside funding requests.

## **Scheduling Policy and Fees**

Registration and session dates are available on the annual session calendar posted under the RIDERS link on our website. The current fee schedule is also attached. Pre-registration for upcoming sessions will be available for all active riders and will be available at the farm one week prior to the opening of General registration. Registration forms for each session will be sent via email when it is made available. If you have any difficulty downloading the forms, please contact the Program Department at 410-923-6800. Registration will not be considered if the annual paperwork and annual fee have not been received. Any rider with an outstanding balance from a previous session will also not be placed on the schedule until their balance is made current. Riders who receive payment for lessons through a community agency or outside funding must secure that payment as part of the registration process. **A letter or email must be sent to the billing department acknowledging intent to pay.** Riding days and times will be confirmed by phone and/or e-mail. If paperwork is received after the stated deadline you will be placed on a waiting list.

## Attire

All riders must wear ASTM-SEI approved headgear while mounted. Helmets are available at the arena. Long pants are preferred; shorts are permitted, but not recommended, in warm weather. Nylon pants (such as warm-up pants or ski pants) are not permitted because they are too slippery against the saddle or pad. Hard soled shoes or boots with a heel are ideal for riding, but sneakers are acceptable. Sandals or open toed shoes are not permitted. Jewelry should be kept to a minimum.

Riders should dress appropriately for the weather conditions so they can be comfortable during lessons. Remember to layer clothing during cold weather and to wear warm coats, heavy socks, long underwear or tights, gloves, and ear protection that will fit under the riding helmet.

In warm weather, please remember to wear light-colored clothing and apply sunscreen before riding. Riders may also want to bring their own water bottles.

## Cancellation Policy and Make-ups

**Every attempt will be made to avoid cancellations. However, there are situations that are unavoidable at times, such as, equine health related issues, dangerous weather, and staffing. We appreciate your understanding and support regarding our cancellation policy.**

1. **Cancellations by Therapeutic Riders:** Once enrolled in a session, Therapeutic Riding clients are responsible for attending all weekly lessons in that session. Refunds or guaranteed make-ups will not be provided when riders cancel, due to the complicated nature of rescheduling rider, horse usage and volunteers. Individual arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis, primarily for extended illnesses and/or surgery with doctor documentation.
2. **Cancellations by MTR:** You will be notified by phone/text at the number(s) provided on your registration form if lessons are cancelled. If you cannot attend your make-up class, the lesson will be forfeited. Credits will be given to riders for any lesson cancelled by MTR that is unable to be made up. Please note that MTR cancellation credits must be used in the current or next riding session, or will be forfeited. MTR maintains daily attendance of riders and will keep track of any credits for the current session. Prior to each session, a notice will be sent to riders with credits, reminding them when they are to be used or giving them a choice to donate the credits to MTR and receive a tax receipt. This can only be done for self-pay riders.
3. **Make-Up Weeks:** MTR will provide two make-up weeks at the end of the winter and summer sessions, and one make-up week will be provided for all other sessions. Make-up weeks are utilized for cancellations that are made by MTR. If MTR does not cancel any lessons during the session, riders will have the opportunity to make-up one lesson they missed during the makeup week at their regularly scheduled day/time slot.
4. **Cancellations by Hippotherapy or Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy Clients:** For morning sessions, a cancellation call must be made by 7:00 AM, for the afternoon and evening sessions, a call must be made by 12:00 noon. Any cancellation that is made without 24 hour notice will incur a **\$75.00 cancellation fee**. In addition, cancellations of 2 or more weeks in succession **will** result in the loss of your appointment time and your slot will be offered to someone on our wait list.



## Late Arrivals

**Participants who arrive 15 minutes or later will have their lesson cancelled.** Hippotherapy clients who are late will still be charged from the scheduled start time of their session.

After the fifteen **(15) minute** waiting period has passed, the volunteers will be instructed to return the horse to the barn and the lesson will be forfeited. Hippotherapy clients will be assessed a \$75.00 cancellation fee.

## Parking

Dedicated rider parking is marked with signs and is available near the arenas and in the upper parking lot adjacent to the 2 small barns. **Please note that the speed limit on the farm is 10 mph.**

## Designated Waiting Area and Observation Area

Upon arrival for lessons, riders and family members/caregivers should gather outside their assigned mounting area. Instructors will meet riders at this location to select helmets and prepare for the lesson. Family members/caregivers and guests should use the observation areas outside the arenas for observation of lessons. Children must be under the supervision of a parent/adult at all times.

**The barn is a busy place during lesson times. For your safety and the safety of others, please do not congregate in the barn, in front of the barn, or in the pathway leading from the barn to the mounting area. This area needs to remain clear for the horses. Only staff and volunteers are permitted in the barn, paddocks, and arenas.**

## **General Barn and Farm Rules**

1. **Treats must not be offered to the horses by anyone at any time.** If you wish to donate carrots or apples, please bring them to the main office. No other types of treats will be accepted. It is important for the horse's health that these guidelines are followed. ***Volunteers, however, are allowed all forms of treats such as cookies, chips, etc. Donations of treats for our hardworking volunteers are always welcome and appreciated and may also be delivered to the main office.***
2. For safety reasons, several areas around the farm are posted "Authorized Personnel Only". Please observe these signs during your visits. **Only staff and volunteers are permitted in the barn.**
3. There is no smoking allowed on the property.
4. The speed limit on the farm is 10 mph. Please drive carefully.
5. Dogs are not permitted on the property, this includes your car.
6. Parents, guardians, or caregivers must remain on the premises during lessons if:
  - the participant is under the age of 16, or;
  - The participant is in the care of or under the supervision of a parent, guardian or caregiver.

7. **Please supervise children at all times to ensure that they do not enter any restricted areas.** No running or fence climbing is allowed. Please encourage quiet play in the designated waiting and observation areas. This is for the safety of the children and to ensure that no horses are startled during lessons.
8. Photography is permitted as long as it is not interfering with the lesson in any way or startling the horses.

## 2017 Fee Schedule

<u>Item</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u>Payment Schedule</u>
<b>Annual Registration Fee</b>	<b>\$50 per family</b>	<b>Due prior to first lessons/sessions in 2017</b>
<b>Therapeutic Riding and Equine Learning</b> (class length 45 minutes)	<b>\$70 per class; total fee varies based on number of weeks in the session</b>	<b>Total fee due with registration (registration will not be processed without receipt of total fee)</b>
<b>Hippotherapy: Individual Occupational, Physical, and Speech Therapy Sessions</b>	<b>As recommended by therapist: \$62.50 for 30 min. \$93.75 for 45 min. \$125 for 60 min.</b>	<b>Due at the completion of each treatment</b>
<b>Private EFP Session</b> (session length 60 minutes)	<b>150.00 per participant</b>	<b>Due at the completion of each treatment</b>
<b>Group EFP Session</b> (groups up to 8)	<b>Please inquire within</b>	<b>Due at the completion of each treatment session</b>

When you enroll in a session, you commit to attending ALL lessons.

Payment may be made via check or credit card. If you prefer not to pay the entire tuition by the first day of lessons, you may choose to pay half of your bill and the remainder will be due halfway through the session.

Scholarship applications are available for those participating in therapeutic riding. Scholarship applications must be updated on an annual basis. Please review our Scholarship Policy, as well as a list of funding resources found under the RIDERS link on our website. Many clients in our hippotherapy program are receiving reimbursement from their insurance companies for occupational, physical, and speech therapy sessions. Additionally, clients participating in Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy can also submit their receipts to insurance. The therapists will provide you with any paperwork necessary to facilitate the reimbursement process.