

Management of a Serious Incident

Introduction

A serious incident can happen at any time and at any type of event, not just during large competitions. Therefore, it's essential to have a plan in place, no matter the size of the event.

No one ever wants to have to deal with a serious incident, it is statistically very unlikely, but should the worst happen, it is important that you are prepared and that the incident is dealt with in an organised and professional way. This means some prior thought and planning is needed. For smaller events, this can be done during the risk assessment, but for bigger, more complex events, a separate Serious Incident Management (SIM) plan should be made. This should be distributed to all officials, organisers and volunteers so everyone knows the plan and understands their role and responsibilities.

Although this guidance is designed with Branches in mind, it can also support Centres. Centres should notify The Pony Club Office of any serious incidents so that appropriate support can be provided with any resulting publicity and investigations.

Serious Incident Management

Before the event takes place, the person who will take charge should be identified. At a competition, this is usually the chief steward and at a rally it can be the Organiser, an Official, or a Coach. It doesn't matter who it is as long as they are happy to take control, if needed. Both should be prepared to delegate as they see fit. For the purposes of this advice, the term **Incident Lead** will be used for both roles.

It is important to have key information quickly to hand, so using a SIM Sheet keeps all the information in one place.

Serious Incident Management Sheet*

Role	Name	Contact information
Appointed Incident Lead		
Event Organiser		
Official Steward		
District Commissioner		
Event Secretary		
Control		
Lead First Aider		
Doctor		
Vet		
Farrier		
TA (Technical Advisor)		
Fence Repair		
XC Course Designer		
Landowner		
H&S Officer		
Pony Club CEO	Marcus Capel	02476 698300
Pony Club Area Rep.		
The Pony Club Office	Tel: 02476 698300, Press 9 for Emergency Number Please do not hang up when contacting the emergency number. We will ensure the phone is answered by a senior member of the team.	
WHAT3WORDS:	Event Entrance	
	XC Start	
	Secretaries Office	
Grid Reference		

Completed by:		Signed:		Date:	
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***This form should be amended as necessary**

What can be included in the SIM plan:

It is for the Organisers to decide what information is included in the event SIM plan, it is recommended that the following is included for larger events:

- Names and contact details of Key Personnel
- Roles
- Responsibilities
- How you will communicate on site – WhatsApp, Tannoy etc.
- In the event of an emergency, who will do what.
- Location of First Aiders, Equipment, screens, if no screens what can you use.
- Agreed access routes for emergency vehicles.
- Any agreed code words or channels to be used on the radios
- Fire Procedure, if applicable evacuation procedures, muster points.

Pre-Event Briefing

It's recommended for all events, especially competitions, to hold a pre-event briefing with key personnel. This ensures that everyone is aware of the day's schedule, knows who's in charge, understands their responsibilities, and what's expected of them. The meeting doesn't need to be lengthy, just a quick conversation to confirm everyone is prepared, share any last-minute changes, and ensure the event runs smoothly.

For larger events, before the event takes place, it is advised to have a 'SIM' meeting with all parties involved in the plan to talk through all scenarios, who will do what, what radio channels will be used, what key words over the radio will be used etc. It gives everyone the chance to meet everyone involved and ask any questions they may have. It is sensible to do it the day before so if there are any issues, or concerns, there is time to resolve them.

Responding to an Accident:

It is challenging to fully plan for a serious incident due to the many ways it can occur. However, the response to such incidents should follow a similar approach:

Procedure for human casualties (including serious injury or fatality)

1. Attend to the casualty:

First Aid Provider and Incident Lead should be called to the scene immediately and casualty's condition assessed by First Aid Provider. Once it's established that they need to go to hospital, 999 should be called. The Incident Lead should agree with first aid provider who should do this.

2. Evacuation to Hospital:

Once on the phone to 999, arrangements to evacuate the casualty should be agreed.

Once they know how the casualty will be evacuated, plans can be put in place to facilitate this.

2.1 Types of Evacuation:

Evacuation by land ambulance – Someone should be assigned to wait to escort the land ambulance onto the property. Make sure nothing is obstructing the route.

Evacuation by air ambulance – If the 999 call handler has arranged for an air ambulance to land, this information should be communicated to everyone on site, in a timely manner and without creating undue alarm. In most cases, the air ambulance will indicate where they want to land. See later for more advice.

3. Incident Lead duties:

While the casualty is being treated, the Incident Lead should ensure that the following is done:

- a. Ensure that the first aid provider has space to treat the casualty. This may be best achieved by using screens or by putting a ring of vehicles round the area, see later.
- b. Support Officials and Volunteers - they may suffer some level of shock having witnessed the accident at close quarters and having to deal with the immediate situation.
- c. Assist the First Aid Provider with the evacuation of the casualty by making arrangements to meet land ambulance and/or clearing an area for an air ambulance to land.
- d. Ensure that next of kin are aware of the situation and kept regularly updated.
- e. Ensure that the horse/pony is correctly cared for:
 - ✓ Liaise with veterinary surgeon as necessary.
 - ✓ Check that arrangements are in hand for the horse/pony to be taken home or to the vets and looked after.

- f. Ensure that all attendees are informed about any delays, continuation plans, or changes to the event schedule.
- g. Nominate an official to liaise with the rest of the event, it is inevitable the people will have questions and concerns. This means they will all be given the same information and advice. An event WhatsApp groups are a useful tool for situations like this.
- h. If it is decided that the event will continue, it may be necessary to replace Judges or Volunteers who have been affected by the accident.
- i. Notify the DC, who may need to notify Area Rep depending on the seriousness of the accident, see later.

4. Investigating the Accident:

It is important that there is an investigation into the accident. It should be started as soon as possible after the accident. This should be done by the health & safety officer, if present:

- ✓ Identify witnesses
- ✓ Take statements
- ✓ Take photographs –Take photographs of the scene of accident, the ground conditions and anything else that might be relevant. Under no circumstances should photographs of the injuries or the casualty be taken.

The initial aim of the investigation will be to determine if the event should continue and, if a fence was involved, should the fence continue to be used. The Incident Lead will make this decision in consultation with the Organisers.

The injured person may wish to claim for damages, so it important to gather information thoroughly and The Pony Club Head Office will help to support with this and liaise with insurers and loss adjusters.

In the Event of a Rider Fatality:

In the event of a rider fatality, please follow the guidance below:

1. Resuscitation:

Resuscitation efforts should continue until paramedics or doctors arrive, or until the rescuer(s) are too exhausted to continue. CPR is physically demanding, so it is advisable to regularly switch the person performing it to ensure consistent effort. Determining if someone has passed away after an accident can be difficult; in most cases, a doctor or paramedic will confirm death after prolonged resuscitation attempts, particularly when a child is involved.

2. Call the Police:

If there is a rider fatality, normally the ambulance service will notify and liaise with the police. It is normal that the police will take control of the situation and the scene, and co-ordinate what happens. The Incident Lead should be on hand to assist them with whatever they need.

3. Notify Head Office:

As soon as possible, notify The Pony Club Head Office. If an AR or senior volunteer is present, delegate this role to them, the Incident Lead doesn't need to do everything. Head Office will provide support and guidance to the accident site, offering advice and walk them through the necessary steps and actions to take.

4. Investigating and gathering evidence:

The police will conduct their investigations, and it is normal that they will interview witnesses under caution. This may be everyone involved in organising the event, and anyone who witnessed the accident. The Incident Lead should, if asked, produce a list of everyone they might want to talk to. The Incident Lead should also ensure that all key witnesses remain at the site and are available to make statements to the Police. Only the police can tell them when to leave.

It is important that all evidence is kept for inspection, this may include tack, riding hat and other safety equipment, and anything relevant to the incident. The Incident Lead should help the police make sure all evidence is collected and handed over to them.

5. Informing the next of Kin:

The police are likely to deal with speaking to the next of kin, but may ask the Incident Lead to be present, if the next of kin are at the event. In some instances, they may ask an onsite doctor or paramedic, or someone trained in bereavement, to be present. Arrangements must be made by the Police, but under no circumstances should the next of kin be informed on the telephone.

6. Communication at the Event:

Liaising with family, friends, and other riders/competitors will be an important role during initial stages and it may be wise to appoint someone to liaise with them and keep them updated. The police should provide a family liaison officer, but it might be necessary to appoint someone until they arrive.

7. Cancelling the Event:

In in event of a rider fatality, the event should be stopped, unless permission is given by Senior Management team at The Pony Club Head Office.

8. Communications Regarding the Accident:

It is crucial that communications about the accident are managed by individuals with experience in handling such situations. The Pony Club Head Office will take responsibility for all communications, issuing statements to the public and those present at the event.

No information should be shared on social media or given in interviews with the press without explicit approval from the Senior Leadership Team at Head Office.

Anyone at the event site with access to phones must be instructed NOT to make any statements, post on social media, or speak with friends or family, regardless of any pressure they may face. All enquiries should be directed to a single phone number, to be answered by the spokesperson appointed by Head Office.

While some onlookers may post videos, pictures, or comments on social media, which cannot be fully prevented, it is important to request that they refrain from doing so as part of your event's ongoing communications.

The rider's name and personal details must not be released. Reporters may obtain this information from other sources, but no one associated with the event should provide it.

9. On-going Investigations:

After the event, the ongoing investigations and liaison with other parties will be coordinated by an individual appointed by The Pony Club Head Office. There will inevitably be much to process, investigate, and learn from, and this will be thoroughly addressed. The coroner may call some officials from the event to act as witnesses during the inquest, and the Local Authority's Environmental Health Department may also conduct its own investigation. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) might become involved as well. It is essential that everyone involved fully cooperates.

The Multiagency Safeguarding Children Partnership may also conduct a review into the unexpected death of child to confirm whether procedures need to be changed to prevent future deaths. This can be distressing to all involved.

10. Equine Accidents

In addition to the advice provided above, the following guidance should be followed in the event of a serious accident or fatality involving a horse or pony:

Procedure for equine casualties (including injury or fatality)

1. Veterinary Surgeon called to the scene immediately

Depending on the type of event, the vet may not be on site. While waiting for the vet, it might be necessary to move the horse or use screens, see later.

2. Assess condition of horse

The vet will assess the horse/pony and the Incident Lead should be to hand to assist them as necessary. Ensure adequate space is available for the Veterinary Surgeon to treat the equine casualty.

3. Moving the Horse

Depending on the nature of the injury/fatality, the horse will need to be moved from the accident/treatment site. This may be done using an on-site horse ambulance, the owners' vehicle or a disposal company. The Incident Lead should liaise with the vet and the owners to arrange this.

4. Communication with Owners

The Incident Lead should ensure that the owner is informed as soon as possible at the event. If the owner is not at the event, other arrangements must be made - probably through the rider and/or their District Commissioner.

Notifications for Serious Accidents and Fatalities:

Depending on the type of accident, the following person(s) should be notified:

	Human Accident				Horse/ Pony				Property
	Minor Injury	Serious Injury*	Major Injury	Fatality	Minor Injury	Serious Injury	Major Injury	Fatality	Property & Vehicles
District Commissioner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Area Representative		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Head Office Emergency Number			✓	✓			✓	✓	
Police				✓					

Contacting the emergency Head Office Number:

Number 02476 698 300 Option 9 or 02476 698 349 (direct number)

Answered by: CEO
Vice Chair
Operations Manager
Chair
Support Services Manager

Note: When an accident form is filled in, Head office will be sent a copy, so will be notified about all accidents, however, for a fatality, the emergency number must be used.

If in doubt, Report it.

Paperwork

It is vital that all relevant paperwork is completed in line with The Pony Club accident reporting procedures and guidelines for managing a serious incident.

Paperwork Required	Rider Major Injury	Horse Major injury	Rider Fatality	Horse Fatality	Third Party/ Official Major Injury	Third Party Fatality
Online Accident Form	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tack Investigation report (where applicable)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Vet Report	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
Fall Report form – Fence Judge (where applicable)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Fence Description (where applicable)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Course Designer statement (where applicable)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Paramedic report	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Doctor Report	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Copy of Score sheet (where applicable)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Risk Assessments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Site Map	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Police incident reference number	✓		✓	✗	✗	✓
Photos	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
List of witnesses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Witness statements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SIM Sheet	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

General Advice:

Advice for clearing an area for an air ambulance to land.

Instructions should be taken from the event venue organisers, chief steward or first aid providers, but in the absence of any one to take control, the following advice should be followed:

All competitors, horses and ponies should be sent back to their lorries and trailers and loaded back on to them. Everyone is to stay in their vehicles until next instructions are given.

This may be to unload and carry on after the casualty is evacuated, or they may be asked to leave the show ground if the event is cancelled. No vehicles should leave site until the casualty has been evacuated.

It may be useful to clear a large area where the helicopter could land, however, the air ambulance pilot will make the decision where is safe to land.

If possible ensure there are no loose gazebos or tarpaulins etc that might become airborne in the helicopter's down wash.

Using Screens

If you need to screen off a casualty, whether human or horse from public view, ideally you will have suitable screens, but if you don't, you can improvise, use horse rugs, cars, tarpaulins and ask people to leave the area if necessary.

Radios

Both transmitting and receiving radios can easily be overheard. Therefore, in order to avoid sensitive messages being compromised, volume controls should be sensibly set, and crowded conditions avoided. It may be better to use mobile phones in some circumstances.

Incident Debriefing

Following a serious incident, it is important to conduct a debriefing as soon as possible afterwards. It provides an opportunity for volunteers and officials impacted by the event to come together, offer mutual support, and discuss key aspects of the incident. It allows for reflection on what went well, areas in need of improvement,

and ensures that lessons are learned.

As the immediate effects of adrenaline subside, it is essential to prioritise the well-being of all individuals involved—both mentally and physically. Take time to check in with one another, openly discuss the event, and process its impact. By fostering an environment of communication and care, everyone can move forward more resiliently and be better prepared for the future.

Seeking Support After a Serious Incident

Dealing with a serious incident can be extremely difficult and life-changing for many individuals. If you find yourself in need of additional support or someone to talk to, remember that you are not alone—help is always available. Consider reaching out to someone you trust, such as a Pony Club friend or fellow volunteer who experienced the incident alongside you. However, if you prefer to speak with someone independent of the situation, organisations like **Riders' Minds** or **Samaritans** offer confidential and compassionate support.

- **Riders' Minds:** Call **0800 088 2073** or text **07480 488 103**
- **Samaritans:** Call **116 123**

Taking the step to talk can make a significant difference in processing what happened, and moving forward.