



## Site Accreditation Welcome Letter

Dear Equestrian Facility Owner/Operator,

Thank you for your interest in CHA Site Accreditation. As a program member of CHA, any type of equestrian operation may apply for CHA Site Accreditation. We applaud you for your willingness to adhere to the standards of our industry. There is an increasing awareness of safety and liability issues, both on the part of equestrian establishments and the consumer. Consumer expectations are more demanding and government regulations are increasing. The CHA Site Accreditation Program addresses these issues. In an industry as unique as the equine industry, it is undesirable to have regulations mandated by government.

The primary purpose of the CHA Site Accreditation Program is to educate facility owners and program operators in the administration of key aspects of riding and other equestrian program operation, particularly those related to safety. The *CHA Standards for Equestrian Programs* establishes guidelines for needed policies, procedures, and practices. Once CHA verifies compliance with those standards, the facility is then responsible for their on-going compliance. Site Accreditation also assists the public in selecting riding establishments that meet industry-accepted standards.

While the focus of accreditation is on safe practices at the facility, the operation of the program, and the management of the equestrian establishment, this is no guarantee that participants will be free of the inherent risk associated with the sport. However, CHA Site Accreditation does indicate to the public that the equestrian program has voluntarily invited comparison of its procedures and practices to standards established by professionals in the horse industry. Accreditation focuses on education and evaluation of the operation, using standards that go well beyond the minimum requirements of licensing. Unlike licensing by a governing authority, CHA does not have the authority to close or otherwise penalize an entity not meeting its accreditation criteria, except by with-holding the accreditation status. Licensing focuses on the enforcement of minimum standards.

Enclosed is information to help you prepare for accreditation along with an application form. To be eligible for Site Accreditation, you must be a current program member. If not, this can be included with your Site Accreditation Application. Please review the enclosed documents carefully. "Site Accreditation Process" gives a detailed description of site accreditation with step-by-step explanations for preparing for, scheduling, and conducting your site visit. Once you are familiar with these materials, please complete the application form and forward it with your fee(s) to the CHA Office at the address below. If your facility conducts programs in any of the specialty equestrian areas—driving, riders with disabilities, trail, or vaulting—please so note on the Site Accreditation Application.

When your application is accepted with all fees paid, you will receive additional information and instructions, including a complimentary copy of the CHA manual, *Standards for Equestrian Programs*. It contains the standards by which your facility will be evaluated for Site Accreditation. In order to achieve CHA Site Accreditation, you must demonstrate compliance with 100% of the mandatory standards and at least 80% compliance with the recommended standards. If you have any questions concerning the standards, please contact the CHA Office at the number below.

We look forward to receiving your completed application and thank you again for your interest in this important program.

Yours truly,  
The CHA Office



## Site Accreditation Process

### INTRODUCTION

The intent of this document is to familiarize you with CHA's Site Accreditation process and help you prepare for your CHA Accreditation site visit. If you have questions on this program, please contact the CHA Office at the number below.

### ELIGIBILITY FOR SITE ACCREDITATION

Equestrian establishments, including programs at camps, colleges, schools, private or public boarding or training operations, therapeutic or recreational riding programs, or riding clubs, may seek accreditation by CHA. To become a CHA Accredited facility, a site must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Confirm CHA Program Membership is current with Program Membership fee paid.
2. Apply to CHA for Site Accreditation, including Accreditation fee.
3. Conduct a self-assessment of the operation based on CHA's *Standards for Equestrian Programs*.
4. Address concerns from the self-assessment. Assure all written documentation and materials are in place.

### SITE ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

1. Once the application has been accepted, CHA sends the following to the site:  
the Application Acceptance Letter with information on finding site visitors,  
the CHA Standards manual, *Standards for Equestrian Programs*,  
Site Visit Date & Site Visitor Information form,  
two blank Site Visitor Agreement forms.
2. Site contracts two Site Visitors (SVs) and schedules visit preferably while the establishment's programs are being conducted. (Agreement form available for visitors to initiate online and email to site.)
3. Site sends completed copy of Site Visit Date & Site Visitor Information to the CHA Office.
4. CHA Office sends letter of verification and accreditation paperwork to Lead Site Visitor.
5. Site prepares facility and documentation for site visit. Lead Site Visitor works with site to help assure preparedness.
6. Site visit occurs. Site Visitors tour the facility then verify compliance with each standard in *Standards for Equestrian Programs*. All core standards must be evaluated. These are Site, Program, and Management of Equines. Specialty standards for Driving, Riders with Disabilities, Trail, and Vaulting activities that are conducted by the Program Member must also be evaluated. Such activities done by a different, outside organization that merely makes use of the Program Member's facility need not be evaluated. For protection, however, the Program Member should expect a level of professionalism commensurate with their own procedures.

7. Lead Site Visitor checks-off standards on the Score Sheet and writes comments where needed. The Site Representative may add or initial comments as desired. For Accreditation, site demonstrates 100% compliance with mandatory standards and at least 80% compliance with recommended standards.
8. Lead Site Visitor sends completed forms to CHA Office within one week of site visit. Site visitors do not award or deny accreditation. They simply verify whether or not site is in compliance with each standard on the day of the visit.
9. CHA Office reviews score sheet, checks comments and calculations, and verifies membership status to award or deny accreditation.
10. CHA Office notifies site of results of accreditation visit within six weeks of site visit.
11. Site Accreditation is valid for an indefinite period of time. Site must maintain Program Membership in CHA and submit any requested compliance documentation to maintain Accreditation. If substantial changes have occurred (i.e., change of management or ownership; change in operations), follow-up by the CHA Office or another site visit may be required for Site Accreditation renewal.

## **SITE ACCREDITATION DETAILS**

### Site Representative

The facility must designate one senior staff person to be the Site Representative during both the preparation phase and the actual visit. Preferably, this person is the program manager or facility owner and is completely familiar with all operations and administration of the program. This person will work with the Site Visitors throughout the day of the site visit. This is an important role and the person must have the authority to speak for the facility.

### Site Visitors (SV)

Your facility is responsible for scheduling two Site Visitors. A current list of visitors can be found on the CHA website or you may contact the CHA Office or your Regional Director. One visitor will function as the "lead" SV; this person is very experienced with CHA Accreditation, is in charge of the site visit, and is responsible for submitting the paperwork to CHA. All site visitors are competent to evaluate standards in any category. The site should contact a SV and discuss when and how the site visit may occur and get a verbal commitment from the SV, followed by completing a SV Agreement form. The Lead SV may prefer to contact a second SV to work with him/her.

### Site Visitor's Financial Arrangements

The site is responsible for all visitor travel expenses, including meals. You are also responsible for a visitor stipend if one is charged. Each visitor sets his or her stipend based on their own requirements and how long they will be away. Other than the stipend, site visitors are strictly forbidden from accepting any gifts, tips, gratuities, or other remuneration. Please confirm travel arrangements and stipends with the visitors prior to their arrival. Some visitors may try to donate as much as they can to support this important program.

### Scheduling the Visit

The site visit should be scheduled on a day when the majority of programs are being offered. The visitors would like to see your program in action with as many staff, clients, and other activities as possible. When you contact the visitors be sure and give them several dates from which to choose. If you are conducting a certification clinic, your certifiers may also be site visitors. Doing the site visit before or after a certification clinic will save on transportation expenses.

## Site Visitor Agreement

The relationship between the site and the site visitors is direct. CHA and the CHA Office are not involved in any way. Once visit arrangements have been made verbally, get it in writing by executing a Site Visitor Agreement with each of the visitors. Blank copies of this form are provided.

## Self-Assessment

The site should conduct a self-assessment of the facility and operation according to *Standards for Equestrian Programs*. Many of the standards require written documentation, policies, or records; that SVs need to review. Personnel records or copies of government-issued IDs are required for age verification. An affidavit that such IDs or records have been checked is acceptable.

Read *Standards for Equestrian Programs* carefully. Go through each Mandatory Standard and make sure you will score a "Yes" on every one. Review the Recommended Standards. To be accredited you must score at least 80% overall on these items. Your facility may decide for your own reasons to remain out-of-compliance on a few Recommended standards and still achieve CHA Site Accreditation.

In many cases, required documentation may be developed in order to satisfy the standards for accreditation. New documentation, records, and policies are acceptable but the site should demonstrate their incorporation into daily operations. All facility maintenance and upgrades should be completed prior to the day of the visit. It is expected the facility and operation will be at their best on the day of the site visit. You are scored on what the visitors see on the day of the visit. What you are going to do next week does not count. Be ready to show off all your hard work and dedication.

The Lead Site Visitor is a resource during this preparation time. The Site Representative and Lead Site Visitor should have ongoing conversations while preparations for the visit are underway. On visit day, there should be no surprises.

## Organizing Documentation

Creating a 3-ring binder with a tab for each standard is highly recommended. Include all required written documentation such as policies, procedures, samples of completed forms, and other documentation. For standards that do not require written documentation, it is helpful to include notes on how the standard is implemented. Consolidating all materials or appropriate copies in one place will save much time and stress on the day of your visit and becomes a helpful resource.

## The Day of the Visit - Getting Started

Typically, a site visit will start with a tour of the facility by the Site Representative. If program activities will be underway during the day, times should be set for the visitors to observe. The Visitors will verify any specialty standards that will be evaluated. Then, visitors would like a location away from other activities to sit at a table and review written documentation and score the standards with the Site Representative. The amount of time it takes to do a site visit depends on how organized and prepared the site is. It may take from a few hours to all day. Schedule a lunch break as needed.

## The Day of the Visit - Facility Tour

The Site Representative should greet the SVs and take them on a thorough tour of the facility. This will be the opportunity for the SVs to get oriented to the facility and get a feel for the scope of operations. The SVs will not specifically be checking for compliance with standards during this initial tour, but later will be able to check off some standards based on what they have seen on the orientation tour.

## The Day of the Visit - Checking Documentation

After touring the facility, the SVs, with the assistance of the Site Representative, will then begin verification of compliance with each standard. The SVs may go through the standards in any order, depending upon the layout and

operations of the facility, as long as all standards are considered. For each and every standard, the SVs will enter an "X" or "DNA" in the appropriate box. For every "No" mark, the SVs will provide commentary on why the site is not in compliance with the standard. The Site Representative may also add comments. The SVs will observe written documentation where required and review each document that substantiates specific standards regarding policies and records.

### The Day of the Visit - Minor Situations

A minor situation may arise where a piece of documentation is misplaced or a small repair is needed. In this case, the Lead Site Visitor may recheck the standard at the end of the day to determine the score. This consideration is for minor hiccups in existing procedures and not for the purpose of rectifying long-standing non-compliance.

### The Day of the Visit - Emergency Situations

Occasionally a storm or other emergency may result in a broken fence or unforeseeable problem. In this case, the site has two weeks to fix the problem and send photographs to the CHA Office documenting the correction. The applicable standard would be scored 'No' with a comment that your documentation of repair will be forthcoming. The purpose of this grace period is for situations that have arisen suddenly. The grace period is not for the purpose of rectifying long-standing non-compliance. Since the site knows well in advance the standards against which it will be evaluated, it is assumed that such non-compliance would have been previously addressed.

### The Day of the Visit - Site Visitor Evaluation

At the end of the site visit, the Lead SV will give Site Visitor Evaluation forms to the Site Representative to complete and return to the CHA Office. The Site Visitors are charged with being friendly and supportive of the site. Their purpose is to help educate and improve safety and effectiveness for equine facilities. They should not have an adversarial attitude, but instead enjoy being able to contribute to your program and give deserved recognition to quality operations.

### **Awarding Site Accreditation**

The site has a chance to make comments on the scoring of any standards and receives a copy of the completed score sheet. The Lead Site Visitor will send all original forms to the CHA Office. The Site Visitors cannot comment on whether your Site has passed or failed.

The CHA Office will review all documents, including the score sheet, check that all requirements are met and notify the site of its status. This may take up to six weeks. If the site has attained 100% compliance with mandatory standards and at least 80% compliance with recommended standards and membership status, etc., are current, the site will be accredited. Upon accreditation, the site will receive its Certificate of Accreditation, a wooden "CHA Accredited Site" sign, and information on the use of the CHA logo. You may then proudly display your Site Accreditation sign and use the CHA logo in all your printed material. The cost of your first sign is included in the application fee. Additional signs and annual compliance placards are available for purchase from CHA.

If accreditation is denied, the site may re-apply for accreditation after six months. Sites may appeal to the CHA Grievance Committee regarding denial of accreditation.

### **Maintaining Site Accreditation Status**

To maintain CHA Site Accreditation, your CHA Program Membership must be current. Additional information will come with Program Membership renewal. For more information on CHA Site Accreditation, contact the CHA Office.



### Site Accreditation Application

CHA Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Is Program Membership Current?  Yes  No *If no, membership fee must be included with this application.*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Site To Be Accredited: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

Site Representative Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Representative Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

What Types of Programs Do You Operate? (Check all that apply.)

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arena Lessons              | <input type="checkbox"/> Programs for People with Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption/Rescue/Sanctuary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boarding/Training          | <input type="checkbox"/> Day Ride Trail                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camp                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Overnight Trail/Packing               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Institution    | <input type="checkbox"/> Vaulting                              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driving/Carriage Operation |  |  |

When Does Your Program Operate?

- Year Round       Seasonally from: \_\_\_\_\_ to: \_\_\_\_\_
- Academic Year       Other \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Information:

Fee: \_\_\_\_\_ \$150       Check payable to CHA       Credit Card      Type of Credit card: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Membership, \$200 if due: \_\_\_\_\_      Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_      Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_      Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Total due: \_\_\_\_\_      Billing Address (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_