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## Equine Environmental Safety

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I was once told that a horse will injure itself in a padded room. While this statement has a bit of sarcasm, it seems like horses can get hurt anywhere. I wanted to briefly discuss some very common ways horses can injure themselves and some easy solutions to the problems.

### Feed Storage

Just assume that you will forget to latch the gate or stall door at least once in awhile. Your horse is going to get out and get into something it shouldn't—especially concentrate feed (grain). Carbohydrate overload can be life threatening and should be aggressively treated if it occurs. If you store feed in a separate room, have a secure latch on the door and keep your feed in a spill proof container. If you are not keeping your feed in a separate location, consider doing so.



### Lacerations

Lacerations happen frequently. Pay close attention to edges of the barn or run in shed because horses like to rub and scratch on these locations. Remove any screws or nails that are sticking out. Perimeter fencing is another potential injury. Good choices for fences include wood, vinyl, pipe, and smooth wire. Barbed wire is not recommended.

### Turnout Dangers

If your horse is going to wear a halter while turned out in pasture, it needs to be a “break away” type. This will help your horse get free if the halter gets snagged on something.

### Stall Safety

If your stall is in a metal building, does it have wooden walls? By using wood on the inside of the stall at least 3 to 4 feet high, you will decrease the chance that your horse will be able to kick through the sheet metal. It sounds crazy but we see this injury far too frequently. The injury usually occurs when the horse attempts to pull its leg back through the sheet metal after it has kicked through. Lacerations involving joints or tendons are common and can be both career and life threatening.



Horses can be injured frequently. With a little time, physical labor and a small financial investment, the above recommendations can be used to help keep your horse as safe as possible.