

Laying Out Your Ground Rules

A respective responsibilities list sets guidelines

By Esco Buff, CF, PhD

A Respective Responsibilities List documents the general operating procedures for your farrier business, as well as your responsibilities to your client and their horses. The list provides clear and concise rules, procedures, expectations and responsibilities that you have established for yourself and your clients.

To establish the best working relationship, your Respective Responsibilities List should include any information you want every client to know about scheduling, work conditions, horse misbehavior policy, missed appointments, billing procedures, etc.

Every client should receive a new copy of your list every year. This

provides them with clear expectations of how you operate and what you expect from them and their horses. Keep the list posted in your truck or trailer, as well.

The importance of defining respective responsibilities cannot be overstated. Make sure all your clients read the document and urge them to discuss any questions or concerns they have with you. The list also tells your clients that you are concerned about providing a quality and professional farrier service.

How To Compose Your List

Write down all the things you want every client to know. Draw on communication problems and issues that you've had with clients in the past. Write an expectation for that problem so it will be less likely to occur again.

When completed, put each item under one of several broad topics in



Esco Buff

order to make locating them easier for your client. Some good broad topics would be:

- ✗ Scheduling.
- ✗ Farrier Work Conditions.
- ✗ Horse Behavior.
- ✗ Fees and Billing Procedures.

Include a brief biographical sketch about you, your schooling, training, etc.

Here's a look at my own list.

Respective Responsibilities For Esco Buff, PhD, CF

To get the best shoeing results, the farrier and client have to work together in a cooperative effort. The following is a list of Respective Responsibilities that will help enhance our working relationship.

Scheduling

1. Everyone benefits from developing a consistent shoeing and trimming maintenance schedule. It allows for accuracy in planning, record keeping and provides the optimum results.
2. Before leaving the barn, I will schedule your next appointment at an appropriate interval.
3. I do not normally work on weekends.
4. When working out my schedule, I try to allow enough time to deal with unforeseen circumstances for all of my clients.
5. I ask for your cooperation with scheduling.
6. You will be notified if I'm going to be more than 15 minutes late for our appointment.
7. You must notify me if you will be late for our appointment or unable to make our appointment. Any missed appointment will result in your standard service call fee charge.

8. Please show up early for your appointment in order to have your horse ready and available by the scheduled appointment time.

Farrier Work Conditions And Horse Evaluation Procedures

1. The scope of farrier work is vast. In order for me to work comprehensively, it's important for you to recognize your ownership responsibilities. As the horse owner, you are the primary care provider. Your frequent cleaning and inspection of the horse's feet and legs, and following the farrier's recommendations will help make the trimming and shoeing process effective.
2. An appropriate place must be provided to trim and shoe your horse. It must be inside, be free of manure and mud, well lit, flat and safe. Safety for the horse and the farrier is a joint responsibility.
3. The horse is my primary client and the needs of the horse are my first concern.
4. Have your horse ready, available, reasonably clean, dry and well mannered by the scheduled appointment time.
5. If our appointment is during feeding times, please do not

(Continued on Page 109)