

Sandhaven Performance Horses

*Breeder of Quality Australian Stock Horses*

##  Tips for traveling with horses

* Practice loading your horses well before your trip so that they easily load during your travels.  No one wants to spend the time and energy trying to load a balking horse that would be better served traveling to your destination!
* Consult with your veterinarian to put together a comprehensive first aid kit. Pre-made equine first aid kits are available, but I prefer packing them with my veterinarian’s advice as she can advise and prescribe medications such as Banamine.
* Try to keep your daily driving times to less than 10 hours.  Remember, when you are figuring daily mileage, it takes longer to drive with a horse trailer than it takes to drive alone.
* Give your horses an occasional break every 3 hours or so.  Don’t take them out of the trailer, just allow them to rest their legs by not having to constantly balance their weight.
* Be sure you have a safe place to unload your horses for the night.  Never unload horses at a roadside or travel stop.
* Keep your horses hydrated.  Before you take your trip, you might like to get your horses used to a “splash of Coke” in their water bucket.  Then when you travel, Coke is readily available and will be easy to keep on hand.  A small amount in the water buckets will make strange tasting water more familiar and horses will be more likely to drink it. (Many horses won’t drink strange tasting water). A collapsible water bucket is invaluable since it will fit through almost any size trailer window and packs away nicely.
* When you tie a horse in the trailer, allow him to have enough rope to lower his head a bit, but not so much to get tangled in the rope.  Horses need to be able to lower their heads to clear their lungs and sinuses (to prevent respiratory illness). Elastic trailer ties may work better than solid ones to keep horses calm when tied in a trailer. Also, be sure to fit the horse with a strong halter.
* If you are trailering a stallion with other horses, it is a good idea to make sure he is physically separated. Smearing a little Vicks Vaporub in his nostrils can help to keep him from getting overly excited by smells.
* Trailering boots can be a great way of protecting the legs of horses when you have a “scrambler” (a horse that scrambles to keep his balance). Keep in mind that they can be very warm and may be very uncomfortable in hot weather. Speaking of which, if you have a normally calm horse that starts scrambling, be sure there is not a danger issue such as a failed floorboard. In some cases they are scrambling because a pesky horse fly is terrorizing them, so keep plenty of fly spray on hand!
* If you have a horse that throws his head up, you might consider a head bumper to protect his head while trailering.
* Make sure your trailer stays clean and is well-ventilated.  Ammonia buildup can play havoc with a horse’s respiratory system. Keep a stall fork on hand to clean out manure and dirty shavings whenever safely possible. If your trailer has windows at the horses’ heads, make sure there is a window screen to protect his eyes from debris and bugs. A fly mask can also do the trick.
* Bring enough hay for your trip — strange hay can cause colic in sensitive horses.  That said, if you travel in most western states, you will need to have certified weed-free hay. Hay bags tend to be a much safer option than hay nets which can entangle horses.
* Have all health paperwork in place.  You will need to have a health certificate for each horse as well as a valid Coggins test.  Though it can vary from state to state, these are generally good for 30 days.
* Check to see if any states you will be traveling through require a brand inspection.  For listings of state regulations do a Google search on *State Veterinarian* or *Department of Agriculture* for a specific state.
* Consider installing a surveillance system or video baby monitor so you can see your horses from the cab of your vehicle.
* Make sure your vision is unobstructed. Clip on mirrors can help eliminate blind spots when driving.
* Consider purchasing a GPS (Global Positioning System) if you do not have one. A GPS can save a ton of time and grief looking for your destination. It is also invaluable to help you find alternate routes in heavy traffic.
* BE SURE you get enough rest each night before you drive! Driving long miles can make anyone tired and prone to drowsiness. Listening to audio books can help keep you focused while you drive.
* Keep a basic automotive tool kit and electrical tape on hand. You never know when you’ll have to jump a battery or repair a trailer wire.
* Always secure your vehicle. A steering wheel anti-theft lock, ball mount lock and trailer coupling lock are great ideas to deter potential thieves.
* Consider equine insurancefor your trip.

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