

USERL Adoption FAQ

What does a facility check involve?

A USERL volunteer will schedule a time to meet you at your barn. They will be looking for safety (for example, no barbed wire and no junk in the pastures), a clean and healthy environment, and the condition and temperament of your other horses, if any.

Why do some horses have a required donation and others do not?

Horses over 25 years old and those that are companion-only do not have a required donation. Horses that are rideable or otherwise in demand will have a required donation that is still well below a reasonable selling price.

Why does USERL not give the adopter ownership of the equine?

USERL's commitment is to the equine, and retaining ownership protects the future of that animal. Adopters may die, get laid off, or become ill, but USERL will always be there to make certain that the horse has food, shelter, and love. Most adopters feel secure knowing that if anything happens to them, USERL will be there to provide for their beloved friend. USERL's intention is for the adopter to have the equine for the rest of its life. Retaining ownership also prevents a small number of unscrupulous people from adopting a horse and then selling it for profit—possibly to a killer buyer, to someone unsuitable for that horse, or to someone with a history of animal abuse.

How long does the adoption process take?

The timeline depends on how quickly you can meet the equine and how quickly a volunteer can complete your barn check. Typically, the adoption process takes anywhere from one week to one month.

Why does USERL prefer not to adopt to homes that have no other grazing animals?

Horses are herd animals and are not at ease unless they are with others of their kind—or at the very least another grazing animal such as a goat or cow. Being alone causes stress and can make a horse more susceptible to illness. If you do not have another horse, you can get a small goat or adopt two horses.

Why does USERL require a minimum of a three-sided, roofed shelter?

Wild horses are free to find natural shelter and run in large groups that can huddle together for warmth and protection from the elements. Domestic horses, however, are typically confined to relatively small areas that may lack adequate natural shelter and are often pastured in small herds that cannot provide enough protection from severe weather conditions.

Why does USERL not allow barbed wire?

In a word: safety. Barbed wire is extremely dangerous for horses. Horses panic easily, even in familiar environments. A frightened horse can overlook wire strands, and severe injury can result when it runs into or through barbed wire. Wire has a memory of being coiled and, once released from fence posts, can quickly wrap around a horse's legs, body, and neck. Injuries can be catastrophic, including deep tissue damage, exposed bone, permanent disability, and even death. USERL takes great pride in protecting its rescued horses and will not allow them to be exposed to fencing that has repeatedly proven to cause injury, disability, and death.