

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Philosophy

Sharkey Farm is designed on a co-op horse boarding and training model. We are not full care and training and we are not self-care, but somewhere in the middle. We strive to develop riders into both good equestrians and good humans. We do a wide variety of activities with riders and their horses from horse shows, trail rides, beach trips, and camping trips. Riders participate in training, riding, and caring for their horses. The care spans the needs for horse care from routine cleaning paddocks, feeding grain, and caring for their horse when sick or injured. It is impractical for kids to be here every day taking care of their horse's daily care needs. By using the co-op model we try to have all the kids help with the care of other horses on the days they are here, and have others care for their horse on the days they are not.

This model is not the best for everyone. Some owners find that they prefer to have the trainer handle all of their horse's care and decisions, and for that a full training and full care board situation is a better fit. Others find that they want to manage every aspect of their horse's training and care themselves. In these instances self-care or buying horse property is a better fit. We want everyone to find a program which meets their needs and will recommend other barns and programs in the area if our model doesn't work for your needs.

## Lessons

Lessons are generally mounted, approximately 45-60 minutes in length including warm up and cool down, and in groups of 2-4. Typically, riders will have one flat (non-jumping) lesson per week and one jumping lesson per week. Sometimes lessons will be shorter than 60 minutes, particularly if they are 1:1 or if horse and rider are working on a specific goal. It is far better to end a lesson early on a particularly good note than push for the full time and over tire or overtax a horse or rider.

Sometimes lessons will be held unmounted, where riders are working on skills like bandaging, vet care, tack care, or horse management. This might occur due to weather, timing, injury to horse or rider, or safety.

Additionally, lessons might be held as ground lessons or trail rides. It is important for horsemen to learn how to handle horses from the ground including lunging, leading, and leadership. Similarly, good riders learn how to handle their horses in varied terrain and with unexpected obstacles as found on the trail.

It is up to the instructor's discretion to know what the best lesson is for the horse and rider pair at that moment in time. At every lesson each rider is expected to clean their horse's paddock, groom and tack up their own horse, groom and clean tack after riding, and sweep and tidy the barn aisle before leaving. Horsemanship is the process of taking care of the whole horse, not just riding.

## Missed Lessons

Monthly lesson packages (available only for horse owners and factored into monthly half lease packages) are designed and priced with up to three weeks of missed lessons built in over the course of a full year. This is to factor in timing for your trainer to take vacations, be sick, attend out of town events, and have emergencies come up. Your trainer will do her best to have an assistant trainer come in for extended absences, but occasionally emergencies will come up where she will not be available. If you would prefer to only pay for the exact lessons you take, you may do so at a rate of \$50 per lesson on your own horse or \$70 per lesson on a school horse. Monthly packages are not only easier to schedule and pay for but are a better deal: a twice-weekly lesson package (\$325/month) works out to \$37.50 per lesson and a three-times weekly package (\$425/month) works out to \$32.70 per lesson.

When a rider is unable to attend a lesson, the trainer MAY be able to replace this ride with a trainer ride with prior notice. Trainer rides may not occur on the same day as the missed lesson due to timing constraints.

Horses occasionally are sore or need time off. During these periods, your trainer will do her best to find another horse for the rider, but it is not always possible. You should view the opportunity to hop on and lesson on a schooling horse as a bonus, not the norm.

### **Weather**

We live in the PNW, which means inclement weather is something we must deal with seasonally. We will host lessons in nearly all conditions with the exception of high winds (typically gusting over 35mph), thunder/lightning, frozen ground, or unsafe air quality due to smoke. When it snows, horses can certainly still go on trail rides, be played with, and can come out for rides. When the footing is frozen, it isn't safe to ride and horses can get injured, so we will cancel lessons. On days where school is closed due to snow, the barn will be open and we encourage riders to come hang out with their horses, though there will not be formal lessons. After inclement weather closures, riders may add in any extra lessons they are able to make up missed days if they wish. There is no refund or credit for weather-related cancellations.

### **Co-op Boarding**

Our boarding style is different than many other facilities. We believe in sharing in the work of caring for horses in order to keep costs down and to make better horsemen. We operate under the assumption that each owner comes to the barn approximately 4-5x per week, assisting in their horse's care those days. There are no additional charges when you are gone on vacation, are sick, or when you are unable to come to the barn, as other riders pitch in to help each other out. We do not formally track how much each person is working, but instead trust that each person does what they can and are doing their best to be part of the barn community. Riders who know they will be gone or unable to come to the farm as frequently are encouraged to find a friend who can help care for and exercise their horse.

### **Vet Scheduling/Visits**

The trainer will schedule with the vet any regular vet visits (yearly dentals, shots, health papers) and can advise on when/who to call for specific injuries as well. The decision to call and schedule a vet is the owner's unless the trainer feels there is a danger to the horse if a vet is not out immediately in which case, per the boarding contract, the trainer will contact the vet. Owners are expected to be present for vet visits and to use these as opportunities to learn more about horse care.

### **Medications/Bandaging/Layups**

Owners are responsible for their own horse's care. If a medication is able to be added to a feed, that will be done for the owner. Injections, oral pastes, wrapping, bandaging, hand walking, and specialized care is the responsibility of the owner. How an owner gets this done is their responsibility. Similarly, owners are responsible for purchasing any needed medications, bandages, etc. For a short layup of under a month, the rider may be able to ride a school horse for lessons if one is available. There is no discount on lessons/training for this time. For a layup of a month or more a horse may opt out of a lesson/training program until the vet clears them to go back to work. During a layup, the owner is expected to be the point person for horse care, although the trainer and vet will help teach a rider how to manage the injury.

### **Farrier Scheduling/Visits**

Farrier visits are scheduled at approximately 6 week increments. While owners do not typically need to be in attendance during farrier visits, it is recommended to learn more about your horse's care and required if your horse is not well mannered for the farrier. It is the owner's responsibility to provide a check for the farrier in advance of this visit (please pin to the cork board). Please attend farrier visits if you have questions or concerns with your billing, invoices, or horse's needs. Upcoming farrier dates are always on the whiteboard in the barn, check here to stay apprised of the schedule.

### **Insurance**

We have had good experiences with horse insurance and carry it on horses who are young, accident prone, or are particularly valuable. We recommend you do your own cost/benefit analysis on whether or not insurance is worth it to you. Injuries and diagnostics for a horse can range in the hundreds of dollars for something simple up to tens of thousands of dollars for surgical intervention. Horses are able to be insured for mortality and major medical. Unlike human insurance companies, horse insurance companies can deny coverage for pre-existing conditions and can even exclude entire parts of a horse from a policy. It is extremely important to talk about the ins and outs of insurance coverage with your agent, to know what is covered, and to understand how to make a claim.

### **Borrowing Gear**

Often when you start out riding or owning a horse you will borrow tack or riding gear. We ask that all riders have their own helmets, boots, and half chaps for riding. When you first purchase your horse, you may end up borrowing bits or tack from the trainer, but we ask that

once you have settled on the tack you will use that you purchase your own. Riders who lease or own are permitted to have a trunk in the barn and can use this to contain their riding gear.

### **Payments**

Board, lesson, and training fees are due in advance, either upon arrival of the horse or on the first of the month, whichever comes first. Fees must be paid directly to the trainer via check, cash, Venmo (@sharkey-farm) or PayPal (kjsharkey1@gmail.com). Checks and cash can be placed in the mailbox in the grain room. Partial months of training shall be billed at \$50 per lesson or training ride on your own horse or \$70 per lesson on a leased or school horse. Partial months of board will be prorated. A late fee of \$50 will be charged when the balance owed is outstanding for 10 days and may be charged again in 10 day increments while the balance remains outstanding. All farriers, vets, shows, clinics, and specialists will be paid directly by the owner.