



# MINIATURE THERAPY HORSE QUALIFICATION

## Recommended Training Path & Standard Summary

**Purpose:** This document serves as a structured summary guide to prepare miniature horses and their handlers for the rigorous safety, temperament, and adaptability standards required for therapeutic public service under the Canadian Miniature Therapy Horse Association (CMTHA) frameworks.

### PHASE 1: FOUNDATION GROUNDWORK

#### Halting & Leading

Lead on loose line without crowding, lagging, or pulling ahead. Halt instantly on cue and back up smoothly.

#### Stationary Patience

Stand quietly while tied/held for 15+ minutes without pawing, vocalizing, or fidgeting.

#### Grooming & Handling

Desensitize to grooming in sensitive areas (ears, muzzle, tail, belly). Lift all four hooves without resistance.

#### Voice & Body Cues

Establish robust responses to commands like "whoa," "back," and "leave it."

### PHASE 2: SENSORY DESENSITIZATION

#### Visual Stimuli

Accept open/close umbrellas, balloons, plastic bags, waving flags, bubbles, and moving toys.

#### Auditory Stimuli

Acclimation to metal drops, clapping, loud high-pitched voices, sirens, and sudden loud thuds.

#### Tactile Stimuli

Tolerate sudden, clumsy, or heavy petting (e.g., patient leaning on the horse or pulling the mane).

### PHASE 3: MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

#### Mobility Devices

Walk calmly alongside manual/motorized wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, and canes.

#### Clinical Equipment

Condition to moving IV poles, oxygen tank hissing, and squeaky utility carts.

#### Intrusive Obstacles

Steer through confined spaces between hospital beds and furniture without panic.

### PHASE 4: ENVIRONMENTAL ADAPTABILITY

#### Slick Surfaces

Navigate linoleum, polished concrete, hardwood, deep carpets, and wet tiled entryways.

#### Elevators & Auto-Doors

Approach, enter, stand calmly inside, and exit elevators and heavy automatic sliding doors.

#### Stairs & Ramps

Safely manage low stairs, handicap ramps, and curb cuts.

#### Therapy Boot Acclimation

Become fully comfortable wearing rubber-soled therapy boots to prevent slips and floor damage.

### PHASE 5: PUBLIC SOCIALIZATION

#### High-Energy Settings

Tolerate school classrooms, crowds, running/shouting children, and direct attention.

#### Unexpected Contact

Calmly accept hugs around the neck and gentle physical tugging from multiple individuals.

#### Other Animals

Maintain neutral, non-reactive behavior when encountering dogs or other service animals.

### PHASE 6: HYGIENE & LOGISTICS

#### Sanitation & Potty Bags

Comfortably wear a manure collection bag (bun bag) and develop a "go-on-command" routine.

#### Travel Safety

Self-load calmly into trailers or transport vehicles, arriving clean and stress-free.

#### Handler-Equine Shielding

Handler acts as protector, reading stress markers (yawning, licking) and managing breaks.



## RECOMMENDED PRE-EVALUATION CHECKLIST

☐ **Ground Manners:** Walk on loose lead, back straight, and square halt.

☐ **Sensory:** Calm response to umbrellas, sudden loud sounds, and clapping.

☐ **Slick Floors:** Navigate polished hospital floors with boots fitted.

☐ **Medical Aids:** Sidestep wheelchairs and stand calmly next to walker.

☐ **Social Temperament:** Tolerate awkward hugs and child interactions.

☐ **Logistics:** Wear collection bag and load into transport without stress.