# A screen shot of a computer Description automatically generatedhorse behavior and riding safety

Horses are strong and naturally have great power. They also have a mind of their own and can act independently of what the rider wants.

*It should be respected that serious injuries from riding horses can occur including:*

* Damage to the head or spine
* Fractures
* and even death

These can occur purposely from the animal or by accident including being thrown, crushed or kicked.

*Precautions to take when riding:*

* Visually inspect all riding areas prior to start of work and look for any uneven surfaces or debris
* If someone is not completely comfortable riding, they should not by working on one in the yard
* Each rider should be evaluated prior to working horseback
* All horse and rider equipment should be kept in good condition
* As much as possible leave room around the horse to move and not be surrounded by other horses or livestock
* If a horse becomes agitated dismount and remove them from the area to regain control and calm before riding
* Avoid riding near vehicles when possible
* Keep proper position when riding with hands on reins
* Ride as slowly and calmly as possible avoiding running

*Horse handling practices:*

* Remain calm and quiet when working around horses as much as possible
* Approach a horse from the front and gain attention as you move towards them
* Never stand directly behind a horse and when possible, stand beside their shoulder
* When working around a horse on foot, bend instead of kneeling or squatting, to be able to move away quickly if needed

