

## Attachment 2<sup>1</sup>

### Exceptions to using helicopters for wild horse gathers during peak foaling season, March 1 – June 30:

Authorized Officers may request an exception for the use of helicopters to gather wild horses during peak foaling period (March 1 – June 30) to address emergencies or escalating problems. Helicopters may be used year-round in the capture of wild burros as they do not exhibit a specific foaling season.

Emergency and Escalating Problems are defined in the WH&B 4700 Handbook as follows: Emergencies [1]: “unexpected events that threaten the health and welfare of a WH&B population and/or their habitat.” Escalating problems: “conditions that deteriorate over time. The key indicators are a decline in the amount of forage or water available for WH&B use, with negative impacts to rangeland health and, ultimately, animal conditions.”

The BLM Administrative District or Field Office will need to provide a briefing paper to HQ-260 for approval of the use of helicopters during the foaling period. This briefing paper should include the following:

- Name of affected herd management area (HMA).
- Nature of the emergency or escalating problem. (i.e., drought, fire, lack of forage).
- Approximate number of animals that are in jeopardy.
- A brief description of actions already taken to attempt to mitigate the situation.
- Whether mortality is expected without action and why.
- Appropriate management level of the HMA and the current estimated population.
- Anticipated timeline for action.

Upon approval from HQ-260, the gathering of wild horses with a helicopter may commence.

*[1] The term ‘emergency’ as used in this document does not necessarily imply an emergency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and so appropriate NEPA analysis may be required before action is taken. Refer to BLM NEPA Handbook 1790-1 Chapter 2.3 for additional information.*

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<sup>1</sup> IM 2015-152 is carried forward and restated.