

Procedures for Bit Checking

DR 121.9 Ring stewards appointed by competition management **MUST** check saddlery and inspect bits and spurs on both sides of the horse for at least one third of the horses in each class. Inspection of saddlery and bits **MUST** be done immediately as the horse leaves the arena.

ALL HEAD AND MOUTH INSPECTIONS MUST BE DONE BEFORE CHECKING SPURS OR SIDES OF HORSE.

1. Wear a clean plastic glove on each hand for each horse.
DR126.1i4 & DR121.9. Put gloves on as you approach the horse so the rider can see you putting on the gloves.
2. As soon as the ride is completed and the horse leaves the arena ask the rider “May I check your bit?”
3. Move the horse to an out of the way spot.
4. Approach the horse as if he is a strange dog. Pet the horse and talk to it. Watch for his eye to “soften”. No whites showing around the eye.
5. Using your gloved hand, put your finger into the mouth where the bit lays. Make sure that the bit is smooth...do this on both sides of the mouth. As you are looking at the bit, check to make sure there is no sores or blood on the mouth. If found call the TD. Get bridle number. Hold the horse until the TD arrives.
6. Put two fingers under the noseband and make sure that your fingers can go in easily. If you can't easily, tell the rider it is too tight and **MUST** be loosened, (DR121.6). Put one finger under the flash noseband.
7. **AFTER ALL HEAD WORK**, Check the spurs on both sides of the horse. If rowel spurs the rowel **MUST** turn. If they do not advise

- the rider they are dirty and need to be cleaned. DR120.10.
Maximum length of spur is 2" or 5.08 cm.
8. As you are checking the spurs you are also looking at the horse's sides for sores or blood. Use the back side of your gloved hand and run hand over area on both sides where the spurs touch the horse. If gloves comes away with blood...call TD. Get bridle number. Hold the horse until TD arrives.
 9. Check the length of the whip... should be no longer than 120cm or 47.2". This includes the top and the lash. If too long, call TD for verification. Get bridle number. Hold the horse until TD arrives.
 10. DR121.7...Ear bonnet (Fly Masks) If the horse has on a ear bonnet (fly mask), ask the rider or their assistant to take it off and hand it to you. You **MUST** inspect the ears of the bonnet to be sure there are no ear plugs inside. If ear plugs are found, call the TD. Get bridle number. Hold the horse until the TD arrives.
 11. Anything that does not look correct... call the TD.

Safety Procedures

1. Approach the horse from the side to check the bit. Do not stand in front of the horse.
2. Do not change sides of the horse by going behind the horse. Always go in front of the horse.
3. If the horse is not willing to allow you to check the bit...ask the rider to step down and assist you. This usually will settle the horse enough to see the bit. IF not, call the TD to help you. If still unable to see bit, TD will accompany horse to barn to take the bridle off. The bit **WILL** be checked.

4. When checking the noseband, be sure to insert your fingers from the bottom of noseband...NOT from the top.

Susan Moran USEF "R" Technical Delegate

317-371-5152

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