

Members and Supporters' Guide - Tack, Dress and Equipment for Safety, Equine Welfare and Compliance with The Pony Club Rules



At The Pony Club, we are **committed to educating and supporting our Members**, helping them make informed choices for their horses and ponies. **The safety and comfort of both riders and horses/ponies are our top priorities**, and we want to ensure that tack and equipment used at both rallies and competitions is:

- Safe
- Well-fitting and clean
- Fit for the intended purpose
- Compliant with sport rules, for competition

Ultimately, it is **Parents'/Guardians' and Members' responsibility** (for those over 18) to check that tack and equipment are safe and suitable. **Rule 6.30** of the handbook states that:

"All tack must be clean, in a good state of repair, properly fitted and suitable for purpose. Tack inspections are routinely carried out at events, and the organisers may prohibit participation in the event if they consider the tack to be inadequate or unsuitable. Specific sport rules are detailed in respective Rulebooks."

If you are unsure, please seek advice from a professional fitter or your Branch or Centre. **Well-maintained, properly fitting tack is essential for the welfare and performance of both horse/pony and rider.**

Your tack and equipment may be checked at rallies and competitions. While tack checkers are not professional fitters and cannot advise on the precise fit, they **must intervene** if they consider something is unsafe or poses a welfare concern. **No horse, pony, or rider will be allowed to continue with unsafe tack or equipment.**

Whether at a rally or competition, the decision of The Pony Club's Coach, Volunteer, or Official is final. If they believe the safety or welfare of a Member or horse/pony has been or is at risk of being compromised in any way, they have the authority to stop and remove them. Failure to respect their decision is considered a breach of the Members'/Parents' Code of Conduct.

We appreciate your cooperation in prioritising the safety and wellbeing of all Members and their horses and ponies.

Remember, if you are competing, make sure you check The Pony Club Sports Rulebooks, as tack and equipment requirements may vary depending on the sport. You can find the latest rulebooks here: [**Activity Rulebooks | The Pony Club UK**](#)

Always seek advice from professionals and follow the manufacturer's instructions for correct fit and usage. If you are unsure about anything to do with dress or tack, ask your Branch or Centre in the first instance.

Please find below a **quick reference guide** to help you, but please note this list is not exhaustive, there may be things that aren't included, and things that aren't relevant to you.

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Dress	Comments
Hat	- To current standard - Tagged - Forehead covered - Straps fixed and tight - Correct type of hat for activity, e.g. Peak type - Type of hat, Silk/covering as per sports rules
Body Protector	- To current BETA 2018 standard (for XC, inc. Arena Eventing and Pony Racing only) - Not too small or too big, including too short or too long - Securely fastened - Air Jackets and 2009 body protectors are permitted in other sports - In XC, AE, PR, Air jackets can be used but only as secondary protection - The wearing of body protectors is recommended, particularly for SJ.
Gloves	- Riding gloves with grips are advised in wet conditions for XC - Colours/type as per sports rules, (gloves must be worn for Dressage Competition).
Clothing	- Clean, tidy, plain coloured - No Loose clothing (inc. hoods) - Suitable for the activity - Any religious headwear securely tucked in and secured. No pins around the face area
Footwear	- Jodhpur Boot or Long Riding Boot - Smooth sole, small heel - Interlocking boots and insoles for magnetic stirrups are not permitted
Hair	- Tied up and back, preferably in a hair net - No loose hair down the back inc. in a plait
Earrings/Jewellery	- No necklaces, bracelets or hanging jewellery - Stud earrings are permitted
Spurs	- Must have yellow hat tag (Spurs or C+ test) – IT IS MEMBERS'/PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE A TAG OR SHOW EVIDENCE ON PELHAM - Correctly fitted - Size and type as per sports rules
Jumping Baton or Dressage Whip	- Correct type for activity - Rider is able to hold and use correctly - Size and type as per sports rules

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Tack	Comments
General fit of bridle	• Billets inwards, buckles outwards • All keepers in place • Bridles with cheek piece clips are not permitted in many sports • Bridle type as per sports rules
Bit	• Correct width for the mouth • Correct height in mouth • Type of bit as per sports rules
Noseband	• Must be able to get at least two fingers under the noseband at bridge of the nose • Type of noseband as per sports rules
Flash strap	• Must never be tight
Throat Lash	• Four fingers hand width allowance
Reins	• No rips or tears to the leather, stitching sound • Length appropriate to size of the pony/horse so there is no danger of the foot being caught in the loop • Knotted/tied reins as per sports rules
Martingale/Breastplate	• Rein stops present • Correctly fitted, not too tight or too loose • Breastplate correctly attached to saddle • Check sports rules about whether they are permitted
Grass reins	• Not too tight, or too loose so pony can get a foot in • Must be attached from saddle to poll, see sports rules for approved type and whether they are permitted.
Rubber Bit Guards	• Must be correctly fitted • Smooth on both sides
Leather bridle blinkers	• Leather bridle blinkers are not permitted in many sports • Must be correctly fitted • Racing hood/blinders not permitted in any sports.
Titanium Hoods, Ear Bonnets, Eye Protection	• Hoods, Ear Bonnets and Eye Protection are not permitted in many sports • Must be correctly fitted

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Tack continued	Comments
General fit of saddle	• Not too long for pony/horse, avoiding loins • Suitable for size of rider • Not banging up and down on back • Saddle sitting level, seat of the saddle and stirrup bars are horizontal • At least two fingers clearance at the front • Enough clearance at back of saddle in the gullet • Not too far forward or far back • In the middle, not to one side
Girth the correct tightness	• Girth tight enough, but not too tight
Girth Type	• No Humane Girths (except Polo, see sports rules)
Girth straps	• In good state of repair, holes not stretched
Girth guards present	• Girth guards should be in situ on girth straps that are in use
Saddle cloth	• Attached to saddle, lifted up in gullet, so not pressing on withers • Colour, type as per competition rules, pay attention to sponsorship rules
Pads under saddle	• Appropriate for use, well fitting
Stirrup Bars	• In horizontal position, not flipped up
Stirrup Leathers	• Stitching sound (especially by buckle) • Leather sound (especially by stirrup irons)
Stirrup Irons	• Correct Size, 7mm either side clearance • No magnetic/interlocking Stirrups • No excessively spikey stirrups
Safety Peacock Stirrups	• Rubbers not perished • Stirrups irons not bent out of shape • Rider weight is 50kg or less
Boots	• Correct size • Correctly fitting and fit for purpose