

Rule Change Type	Effective Date	Draft Received	Board Action
Extraordinary	4/1/2025	1/28/2025	Approved 1/25/2025

Extraordinary Change Reason

rider safety

Rule Change Intent

The intent of this rule is twofold:

1. As currently written, the protective headgear rule contained in GR801 has been found to be confusing. The re-organization and clean up of the protective headgear language does not substantiively change the rule, except that the exception to remove the protective headgear during prize giving is removed.
2. As modern equestrian apparel includes more stretchy fabrics, which are more likely to result in the possibility of getting caught and hang on hooks or other protrusions, this rule change introduces a prohibition on hooks or other upward projections/attachments on saddles, including stirrups with hook or open bar designs that could cause a rider's apparel to get stuck or cause injury to the rider.

Proponent Details Contact Information

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Linked Rules Comments

## SUBCHAPTER 8-A ATTIRE AND EQUIPMENT

### **GR801 Dress Exhibitor Safety Equipment**

#### **1. Protective Headgear.**

- a. ~~It is the tradition of the competition ring that riders and drivers be correctly attired for the class in question, that attendants be neatly dressed, and horses be properly presented.~~
- b. ~~It is compulsory for all persons at Federation licensed hunter, jumper, or hunter/jumper competitions when mounted anywhere on the competition grounds, to wear properly fastened protective headgear in compliance with the accepted testing standards published on the Federation's website, **unless stated otherwise in the relevant division rules.** Protective headgear must carry the applicable quality testing tag and/or label. It must be properly fitted with harness secured. Exception: In Hunter or Jumper classes, adults **Adults** may be allowed to remove their headgear while accepting prizes and during the playing of the National Anthem only; they must refasten their headgear prior to the lap of honor. It is compulsory for riders in Paso Fino classes, both open and breed restricted including Hunter Hack, where jumping is required and when jumping anywhere on the competition grounds to wear properly fastened protective headgear. It must be properly fitted with harness secured. A Show Committee, Competition Management, and Licensed Officials must bar riders without protective headgear from entering the ring for classes in which protective headgear is required and may bar any entry or person from entering the ring if not suitably presented to appear before an audience.~~
- c. ~~Except as may otherwise be mandated by local law, all sub-junior exhibitors in the Paso Fino division, while riding or driving or while in the driving cart anywhere on the competition grounds, must wear properly fitting protective headgear. Harness must be secured and properly fitted. Any rider violating this rule at any time must immediately be prohibited from further riding until such headgear is properly in place. For all exhibitors competing in the hunter, jumper, or hunter/jumping seat equitation section, if a rider's chin strap becomes unfastened, the rider may stop, re-fasten the chin strap and continue their round without penalty or elimination. A judge may, but is not required to stop a rider and ask them to refasten a chin strap which has become unfastened, again without penalty to the rider. Members of the Armed Services or the Police may wear the Service Dress Uniform.~~
- d. ***The Federation makes no representation or warranty, express or implied, about any protective headgear, and cautions riders that death or serious injury may result despite wearing such headgear as all equestrian sports involve inherent dangerous risk and as no helmet can protect against all foreseeable injuries.***
- e. ***It is the responsibility of the rider or the parent or guardian of the junior exhibitor to see to it that the headgear worn complies with appropriate safety standards for protective headgear intended for equestrian use and is properly fitted and in good condition. The Federation, Show Committee, Competition Management, and Licensed Officials are not responsible for checking headgear worn for such compliance.***

2. ***Body Protecting Vest.*** Any exhibitor may wear protective headgear and/or a protective vest either body protecting or inflatable, specifically designed for use in equestrian sport in any division or class without penalty from the judge. The Federation recommends that the vest pass or surpass the current ASTM standard F1937 or be certified by the Safety Equipment Institute.

3. ~~See DC928 for protective headgear requirement in Combined Driving.~~

4. ~~See DR120 for protective headgear requirement in Dressage.~~

5. ~~See EN102 for protective headgear requirement in Endurance.~~

6. ~~Except as may otherwise be mandated by local law, the Federation strongly encourages all riders, while riding anywhere on the competition grounds, to wear protective headgear with harness secured. (Exception hunter, jumper, or hunter/jumper competitions refer to GR801.2) It is the responsibility of the rider, or the parent or guardian or trainer of the junior exhibitor to see to it that the headgear worn complies with appropriate safety standards for protective headgear intended for equestrian use, and is properly fitted and in good condition, and the Federation, Show Committee, Competition Management, and Licensed Officials are not responsible for checking headgear worn for such~~

compliance.

- ~~7. The Federation makes no representation or warranty, express or implied, about any protective headgear, and cautions riders that death or serious injury may result despite wearing such headgear as all equestrian sports involve inherent dangerous risk and as no helmet can protect against all foreseeable injuries.~~
- ~~8. Refer to EQ106 and HU107.~~
9. **Boots.** Boots/shoes worn while riding anywhere on the competition grounds must have a distinguishable heel. (Exception: Arabian, Hackney Pony, Morgan, National Show Horse, Parade, Roadster, American Saddlebred, and Saddle Seat Equitation).
10. **Assigned Numbers.** Competitors must display the correct number which must be clearly visible while performing in any class unless otherwise stated in the prize list. Competitors may be penalized at the discretion of the judge. Numbers to be supplied by management in compliance with GR1213.11. Refer to DR121.11 (Dressage) and DR207.8 (Dressage Sport Horse Breeding).
11. **Saddle Attachments. Beginning December 1, 2025, no piece of equipment shall be attached to a saddle that has a rigid upward pointing projection, hook, or similar object capable of catching a rider's clothing or person when dismounting, including stirrups.**

#### AL101 Eligibility to Compete

[...]

13. **Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Andalusian/Lusitano Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.** Junior Exhibitors are required to wear protective headgear in all Hunter, Jumper and Hunter Equitation classes in conformity with GR801.

#### AR111 Protective Headgear

1. It is the tradition of the competition ring that riders and drivers be correctly attired for the class in question, that attendants be neatly dressed and horses be properly presented. **Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Arabian Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### CO103 Showing

1. Entries must be serviceably sound. Emphasis is placed on manners and an appropriate way of going.
2. Entries may be shown as native ponies or as appropriate to their performance section. Braiding and shoeing are optional. No Connemara may be shown with excessively long toes. Connemaras are not to stand in a stretched position.
3. If a class states it is for purebred Connemaras only, no entry registered in the halfbred division of the Registry or Stud Book may enter such class. In hand classes must be held separately for purebred and halfbred Connemaras and classes may not be combined. Performance classes must be divided into purebred and halfbred Connemara if there are four or more purebred entries and four or more halfbred entries. Performance classes for purebred and halfbred must be combined if there are three or less entries in either section.

[...]

6. **Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Connemara Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### CP105 Responsibilities of Drivers and Officials

12. **Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Carriage Pleasure Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.** All competitors are encouraged to use protective headgear for all competitions. Whenever the rules stipulate that "hat" or "cap" or "headgear" is required, protective headgear may be worn without penalty.

#### DC913 Dress, Safety, and Whips

[...]

6. **Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Driving Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### EP102 Appointments

**1. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the English Pleasure Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

[renumber accordingly]

#### EQ116 Appointments

1. PERSONAL. Exhibitors and judges should bear in mind that at all times entries are being judged on ability. However, neatness is the first requisite regarding a rider's attire and the following requirements are based on tradition and general present-day customs. Judges must penalize and may eliminate those competitors who do not conform.

a. INFORMAL: Riding habit will consist of jacket with collars and lapels of the same conservative color with matching jodhpurs, a collared shirt, tie, vest, and complimentary gloves, jodhpur boots, and derby or soft hat (protective headgear may be worn without penalty per GR801.4). Conservative colors for informal riding habits include black, blue, grey, burgundy, green, beige, or brown and may contain herringbone, pin stripes, and other combinations of colors that appear solid. Colors not included in this list are not acceptable and must be penalized and may be cause for elimination. Only informal dress is permitted in American Saddlebred Pleasure Equitation classes and Morgan Classic Saddle Seat Equitation classes, day or night.

b. FORMAL: Even more conservative attire is required for evening classes. Riding habit will consist of tuxedo-type jacket with collars and lapels of the same color with matching jodhpurs, formal shirt, bow tie, vest or cummerbund, and matching top hat (women), homburg or other soft hat (men). Solid colors for formal riding habits include dark grey, dark brown, dark blue, or black. Formal shirt must be white or offwhite with the bow tie and vest or cummerbund to match shirt or riding habit in color. Colors not included in this list are not acceptable and must be penalized and may be cause for elimination. Formal riding habits are not to be worn before 6:00 p.m. and are not mandatory after 6:00 p.m.; exhibitors competing on Pleasure horses have the option to wear formal attire in Open equitation classes as specified by the rule.

c. OPTIONAL: Blunt end (unrowelled only) spurs and/or riding crops.

**d. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Saddle Seat Equitation unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### FR101 Eligibility to Compete

17. ~~For protective headgear requirements and information please see GR801.2 through GR801.8.~~

**Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Friesian Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### HK113 Appointments

**5. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Hackney Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### MO106 Attire

1. Rider's attire must be suitable to the saddle being ridden. Protective headgear (See GR801) may be worn without penalty.

**2. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Morgan Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.** Protective headgear (See GR801) must be worn by riders in lead line classes at all times while mounted.

#### NS105 General

**8. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the National Show Horse Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### PF102 General Rules

**16. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Paso Fino Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### PH103 Appointments

1. Equipment and rider must be suitable to the size of the horse.
2. Entries shall be shown under stock saddle with silver, Mexican or other appropriate equipment.
3. Riders shall wear attire which is both colorful and typical of the Old West, of American, Mexican or Spanish origin, consisting of fancy cowboy suit, hat and boots. Spurs, guns, serapes, etc., are optional.
- 4. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Parade Horse Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### RN102 Equipment

- 7. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Reining Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### RD107 Appointments

- 4. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Roadster Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.** Except as may otherwise be mandated by local law, protective headgear is strongly recommended for everyone showing in any class in the Roadster Division as outlined in GR801.4 and .8. Except as may otherwise be mandated by local law, while riding or driving anywhere on the competition grounds, all juniors riding or driving in Roadster to Bike or Roadster Under Saddle classes must wear properly fitting protective headgear, as specified in GR801. Harness must be secured and properly fitted. A matching cover may be worn over the protective headgear or the protective headgear may be painted in matching Roadster Silks.

#### SB104 Appointments

- 14. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Saddlebred Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### SP106

1. Attire Unless otherwise specified the suggested attire for Performance classes is as follows:
  - a. Ladies—blouses/dresses with at least 3/4 length sleeves and slacks or dress below the knee. Lap robe, hats and gloves are optional.
  - b. Men—jacket, tie and hat. Lap robe and gloves optional. Protective headgear may be worn without penalty. ~~See GR801.~~
- 2. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Shetland Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### VA107 Equipment

[.]

#### 2. Optional:

- a. Bandages, protection boots.
  - b. Ear plugs and Earhoods.
  - c. Breast collar or breast plate.
3. No auxiliary equipment is allowed.
    - a. Standing reins or auxiliary reins are not permitted.
    - b. The use of any equipment other than described above will entail elimination.
  - 4. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Vaulting Division unless stated otherwise within these rules.**

#### WD123 Attire

[...]

#### 2. Optional apparel:

[...]

- e. **Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Western Dressage Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.** Protective headgear is acceptable; not required to be of Western style.

#### WL107 Attire (General)

In all classes, handlers, riders, and drivers should be appropriately attired. ("Short" shorts, bare midriffs and flimsy footwear are not acceptable). Those persons who, in the opinion of the judge, are inappropriately attired may be excused from the ring. ~~Protective headgear may be worn in all classes without penalty. See GR801.~~ **Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Welsh Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### WS104 Personal Appointments

1. Competitors must be penalized for incomplete appointments but not necessarily disqualified.
2. Riders must wear a Western hat; long-sleeved shirt any type of collar, (exhibitors in National Show Horse, and Saddlebred divisions must wear a necktie, kerchief or bolo tie) trousers or pants and boots; (a one-piece long-sleeved equitation suit is acceptable provided it includes any type of collar). Chaps, shotgun chaps and spurs are optional unless riders are showing in trail or pleasure class (riders showing at an Arabian, Half Arabian, Morgan or National Show Horse competition must wear chaps). A vest, jacket, coat and/or sweater may also be worn. Whips are not allowed except with side saddle. (See GR1310.2 Dispensations). Protective headgear may be worn without penalty; not required to be of Western style. Refer to GR801.
3. A side saddle rider must wear an apron of closed or button type with belt under loops. It is suggested that an apron with waist band cut the same as chaps and double thickness, be used in classes where chaps are required.
4. **Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Western Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**