

PONY CLUB ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC

**GUIDELINES FOR THE
SAFETY & COMFORT OF THE RIDER AND HORSE
INCORPORATING THE
GEAR CHECKING MANUAL**

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Guidelines for the Safety and Comfort of the Rider and Horse incorporating the Gear Checking Manual.

The aim of this Manual is for the Safety of the Rider, the Comfort of the Horse and to instill a sense of pride in the rider's quality of presentation at all Pony Club activities (disciplines).

It is our duty of care – not forgetting Risk Management – to provide easy access to this information that is clear and precise.

The Report Form for a Gear Checking Appointment is included.

- Any incorrect, ill fitting or unsafe gear must be noted on this Gear Check Report Form. **Only names of riders (and their Club) with incorrect, ill fitting or unsafe gear should be recorded.** In the event of a dispute, assistance should be sought from either the Pony Club Steward, Chief Judge or Ground Jury who must sign the form after inspecting the rider and their mount and permitting them to compete.
- The Gear Check Report Form is to be filled in and forwarded to the PCASA after every Zone, Inter Zone and Championship activity.
- The Report Forms help the Rules Advisory Committee keep track of the standard and any problem areas that may need to be addressed.
- Clubs are encouraged to use these forms at other activities and so improve the standard within their Club and Zone.

Please take the time to study this Manual and implement the necessary changes where required. If Coaches help to improve the standard and knowledge at Club level, then the task for the Gear Checkers at Zone level will be minimal and at Championship level will be a mere formality.

Should you have any comments or queries please direct them, in writing, to the PCASA Rules Advisory Committee.

INSURANCE

Under the current Insurance Policy held by the Australian Pony Club Council that covers the PCASA, Pony Club appointed Officials such as Gear Checkers are covered while undertaking the appointment, and are covered for any directions or decisions they make in regard to riders, as long as such directions or decisions fully uphold the relevant PCASA or PCA rulings.

STIRRUP MEASURES

Clubs could include a wooden Measure block with this manual to assist Gear Checkers with the task of checking stirrup measurements. The Measure block to be 15mm in width x 3 cm in height x 20 cm in length.

To check the correct size of stirrup irons, the 15 mm side of the Measure block should fit between the widest part of the rider's boot (when up against one side of the stirrup iron) and the other side of the stirrup iron.

Maximum clearance to be approx 3cm otherwise the stirrup iron will be too big.

A GEAR CHECKER'S LAMENT

Once upon a time, there were some Gear Checkers.

Now these Gear Checkers had spent a lot of their valuable time learning the gear checking rules and attending schools to learn how to be a Gear Checker. They learnt simple rules such as the minimum width of stirrup irons, that stripped holes were unsafe, and that certain bits were not allowed – amongst other rules. They are also volunteers – unpaid!

Unfortunately, when they were asked to be Gear Checkers at various activities, it was found that not everyone knew or agreed with the Rules, and that there were some riders and parents who wanted them to ignore the rules, or overlook them, so that the riders would not miss out on participating.

What should the Gear Checker do?

- Follow the Guidelines and risk ridicule, *or*
- Overlook the Guidelines and risk a rider's safety and their own integrity?

Gear Checking is in a new era due to the new insurance climate. Where, in days gone by, a Gear Checker would overlook something if it meant that the rider would miss out on riding, nowadays that will not happen!

Parents should keep an eye on gear for stripped holes (where buckle holes stretch and begin to split), stitching coming undone, broken keepers, reins too long, stirrups too narrow (1.5cm to 3cm clearance between widest part of the rider's boot and the side of the stirrup iron), saddles sitting too low, etc.

If you are queried or picked up with a problem with your gear, please remember that the Gear Checker is not there to cause a problem, but to ENSURE FAIRNESS IN THE SPORT and, more importantly, SAFETY.

A gentle warning to Parents and Riders – please take care whenever you go out competing that you find out the Gear Checking Guidelines for the Activity/Discipline in which you are competing (they differ!) so that you have a trouble free gear check.