

# Welcome to the GEAR CHECK SCHOOL



*This document presented with kind  
permission from*

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## **TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PCASA CURRENT RULE BOOK:**

### **WHY HAVE A “GEAR CHECK”**

Gear check is to keep our Safety Standards high.  
Comfort of the horse.  
To keep all members aware of the rules.  
Allow the competition to run smoothly.  
Screen inappropriate or illegal equipment.

### **THE “GEAR CHECK”**

Is done by Committee appointed Gear Checker’s at a competition, (before each phase) Instructors or other knowledgeable appointed persons at Pony Club rallies.

### **RESPONSIBILITY OF THE “GEAR CHECKER”**

To uphold the rules and conditions governing use of correct gear in the Pony Club movement and the comfort of the horse.  
A Gear checker **cannot** eliminate a rider but can prevent a rider from continuing until correction is made and represented.

### **QUALITIES OF A “GEAR CHECKER”**

Know the rules and have possession of a current rule book on the day.  
Be punctual, decisive and suitably dressed for the job (don’t wear thongs on a hot day).  
Take the job seriously (don’t encourage your friends to hang around for a gossip and jokes).  
Be polite, friendly and helpful to riders and their mount.  
Have a sense of humour (you will need it)  
Know where you fit in the running of the event  
Be aware and be brave.  
If in doubt **ASK!**

### **CHECK LIST FOR A “GEAR CHECKER”**

Rule books Pony club (current) EFA. Adult dress  
Depending on the weather, dress appropriately.  
Thermos, tea coffee etc.  
Biros and note pad (the shortest pencil is better than the longest memory)  
A person to help if needed  
Tape measure for whips/spurs.  
Scissors and electrical tape for people to use for small adjustments.

### **WHAT THE ORGANISERS PROVIDE FOR AN EVENT**

Draw, complete with scratchings and HC on a clip board with a biro.  
Start times of all classes.  
Morning tea, afternoon tea, lunch.  
Marked area with sign for gear checking.  
Stickers for identifying those who have passed the gear check.  
Pony Club Stewards.

**WHEN DOES A  
“GEAR CHECKER”  
COMPROMISE**

Never on the comfort of the horse .  
Never on the safety of a rider.

**WHO DOES THE  
“GEAR CHECKER”  
ANSWER TO?**

The organising body/committee.  
The Pony Club Steward on day of comp.

**WHAT TO DO WITH  
AWKWARD/UNHAPPY  
RIDERS**

Quote the rules  
Direct them to the Pony Club Steward if at an event  
At a rally direct them to the Chief Instructor/Club President  
Don't get into an argument.

**IT'S THE RIDERS  
RESPONSIBILITY TO**

Know the Rules.  
Be punctual  
Have correct gear and uniform  
Make sure gear fits correctly and is comfortable for the horse.  
When given the chance by a gear checker to re-present with the correct gear, be grateful, not argumentative.  
Wear correct body number when competing.  
Carry own spare tack in case of breakages.  
Treat gear checker with respect.

**FROM A RIDERS  
SIDE (THE HITLER  
“GEAR CHECKER”)**

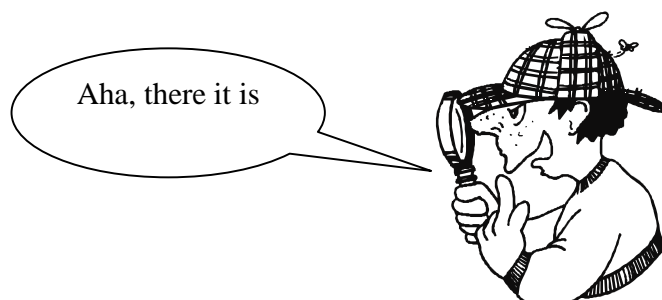
Loud comments about wealth (or lack of it) of a rider.  
Making delaying conversations about nothing.  
Being dead wrong at the cost of the rider.  
Treating riders as though they are 2<sup>nd</sup>. Class citizens.  
Ignoring riders when your friends come to have a chat.

**INSURANCE WISE**

**BE CAREFUL**  
**NEVER ADJUST ANY EQUIPMENT YOURSELF.**  
**NEVER INSIST THAT A RIDER CHANGE THEIR**  
**GEAR UNLESS IT IS FOR COMPLIANCE OR COMFORT.**

**ADULT RIDERS**

Adult level riders run under Pony Club rules except for dress.  
Adult level riders **must** have a gear check as per Pony Club rules prior to each phase. This is now compulsory.



## GEAR INSPECTION: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

### **FIRSTLY :**

Gearchecking is a tiring, thankless job. But, just think how many accidents you may have prevented because of your dedication, thoughtfulness and consideration to both riders and ponies.

Here are some things to look for:

### **ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY – WRITE IT DOWN!**

Don't gear check a rider too early before they are ready to ride. (it is best if they can go into a marshalling area after gearcheck.)  
If a rider has a gearcheck and then says they have to go back to the float for something, tell them to report back to you before they start that particular phase.

If you come across a horse that appears to be very difficult and or dangerous, ask the rider to dismount for your safety as well as theirs. If the horse still appears dangerous in your opinion, then advise the rider that you are going to call the Pony Club Steward if you are at an event. Make sure you make a note of this on your programme.  
At a rally call the Chief Instructor/Coordinator and or committee person.

Know the definition of a snaffle : ie – “A snaffle bit is a bit which has **one** common ring to which the cheek piece and the reins are attached.” Just because other bits may be called “a snaffle”, doesn't necessarily mean they are a snaffle. You may hear “but I wore it at the last event and got through gear check”. Bad luck, if it's not legal, then change it.

### **BRIDLE:**

Soundness of stitching, fitting of brow bands can fit a finger under.  
throat lash 4 fingers on the side of cheek.  
noseband 2 fingers from top of band to the bottom of cheek bone.

### **BIT:**

Right way up, correct size, curb chain & guard (if required), correctly fitting. Cheek guards are **not** allowed in dressage.

### **REINS:**

Correct length: As per rule book  
Stitching where the reins join to the bit.  
Grass reins may be fitted in accordance with general rules. They must be made of non-wearing material and are only permitted for riders under ten years of age when at a competition. Grass reins are permitted at rallies.

- WHIPS:** GENERAL PURPOSE whips of not more than 75cm overall length, Including flap may be used. Whips must have a leather flap at least 50mm long and 18mm wide. The loop Must be removed from the Handle of **any** whip. General Purpose whips may be used in Grade 4 and 5 dressage tests.
- GIRTH:** Check that girth is not too tight or loose. **Always** ask the rider if this is how tight/loose they have their girth before suggesting tightening or loosening it. Check girth at buckles for wear and broken stitching.
- BOOTS/BANDAGES:** If boots or bandages are used make sure they are correctly fitted. Bandages must be stitched with different colour. Boots/bandages are **not** allowed in Dressage.
- NECKSTRAP:** (optional) Fitting depends on what discipline you are doing.  
E.G. Flatwork fitted as for martingale or Jumping fitted approx half way up the neck.
- MARTINGALE:** Correct fitting. Rubber stoppers on reins and at the chest (if not fixed). Make sure the martingale is not too short. See rule book.
- SADDLE:** Fitting pony correctly: ie. 2 fingers between pommel and wither. No weight on any part of the spine. “Gear checker to advise the rider to find a pony club instructor or friend who can help with fixing this problem.” Check both flaps are not bent under.  
Check girth points for wear/stitching. **Check that holes have not run together.**  
Close Contact Saddles: If a Close Contact Saddle has been fitted correctly i.e. the  
saddle is not touching the spine/withers and can get at least one finger clearance whilst rider is standing in their stirrups then this is permissible.
- SADDLE BLANKET:** Must be Pony Club saddle cloth. Pushed up into front arch. No wrinkles under the weight of the saddle
- STIRRUP IRONS:** Correct type. If safety stirrups, make sure bands are in good order and not split or cracked. Stirrup bars must be down. You should be able to place a finger on either side of the riders boot at the widest part.. (which is approx. 1cm clearance small piece of wood of the correct measurement helps).
- STIRRUP LEATHERS:** Stitching OK at the top and leathers not worn thin where stirrup iron sits. **Never** rip the leathers apart to see if they are stitched properly.  
“Common sense should prevail if stitching is starting to come away – allow if safe for the day – and inform rider/parents that this must be fixed before next

rally/event or next ride.”

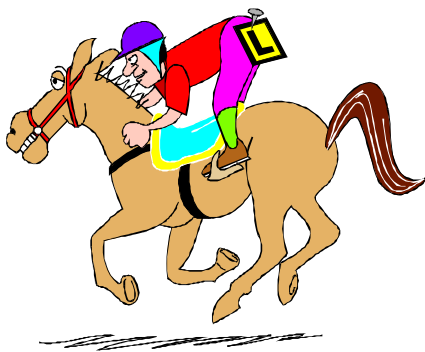
**RIDER:**

Must be in correct Pony Club Uniform/adult uniform when appropriate. Approved cross country tops for cross country. - No Jewellery at all. **Medical bracelets/necklaces accepted.** (only exception are watches on cross country.) If hair touches body number then it must be either in a plait or in a hair net.

Helmets must be of approved standards and worn at all times when mounted and secured. Numbers are in rule book.

Footwear must be of approved type, no sneakers, work boots etc.

Leggings (chappettes) are permitted for rallies and training, but not for competition. Only leather gaiters which are part of a boot system are Permitted provided they are the same colour as the boot



Come back here you  
little #&!@\*#  
  
Come and have your  
Gear check!!!!

