

## SECTION VI—Appendices

### Chapter 19: Helmet Requirements

#### Article 148—Need for Protection

The activities with highest risk of head injury are: motorcycle racing, car racing and horseback riding. It has been proven that riding helmets save lives and prevent serious brain injury! That is why they are required.

While a fall from two feet can cause permanent brain damage,

- A mounted rider is elevated eight feet or more above the ground.
- When a rider falls and hits his/her head, the most impact tends to occur at the back of the head. Riding helmets are designed to protect that area, whereas bike helmets are not designed for this type of impact.

#### Article 149—The Rule

Every Pony Club member (even members over the age of 18) must wear a properly fitted, approved helmet with the chin harness secured at all times:

- when mounted
- when longeing
- at horse inspection (jog for soundness), and
- at pre-riding inspections (turnout inspection and safety checks).

#### Article 150—Helmet

A properly fitted equestrian helmet, securely fastened, containing certification that it meets or exceeds the criteria established by a national or international safety body is required to participate in any USPC activity (see USPC safety requirement for helmets policy). USPC recognizes the following safety bodies' criteria for acceptable helmets:

- ASTM F1163 (North America)
- PAS 015 (United Kingdom)
- AS/NZ 3838 (Australia and New Zealand)

#### Article 151—What to do if Your Helmet Comes Off

If a helmet comes off, or the harness becomes undone while riding or longeing, the helmet must be replaced and/or re-secured before you continue. Failure to comply is cause for elimination from competition.

Riders must dismount to replace and/or re-secure helmets. In competition, someone may hand your helmet to you—it is not unauthorized assistance.

#### Article 152—Put the Helmet on Correctly

Even the best safety helmet will not provide adequate protection if it does not fit properly or is not worn correctly. Follow the manufacturer's recommendation for fitting the helmet.

- Helmet manufacturers have stated that it doesn't really matter if the rider wears their hair under their helmet or outside the helmet, as long as the helmet is properly fit.
  - When trying on a new helmet, wear your hair in the same style you will wear it for riding (such as a braid or plait doubled up and tucked under in a hair net).
- Make sure the helmet is level—the visor should not tip up or down.
- Fasten the harness, making sure it's comfortably snug.



Incorrect Fit

Correct Fit

#### Article 153—Checks

##### Check the Fit

Make sure the helmet fits snugly all the way around.

- Wiggle it back and forth and side to side; when the helmet moves, your scalp and your eyebrows should move with it.
- If it slides freely, you need a smaller size.
- If it squeezes uncomfortably, you need a larger size.

##### Check the Shape

The helmet may not be the right shape for your head. A different style with a more or less oval shape may be needed.

- The helmet is too round if it squeezes the brow, but still rocks freely side to side.
- The helmet is too oval if it fits at the sides, but rocks back and forth.

Small fitting problems can be solved by following the manufacturer's instructions, usually by adding the foam padding provided with the helmet or by adjusting the internal harness if it has one. If the helmet needs more padding than is provided, a smaller size or a different model is needed.

- For example, if the helmet is too round, put a pad on each side or try a different style with a more oval shape.

##### Check the Brim

The brim should rest 1/2" to 1" inch above your eyebrows. Some helmets can be adjusted (with lacings or foam pads) to

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rest lower or higher or try a style with a deeper or more shallow crown.

- If it sits higher, you're not getting full protection; any lower, and it could obscure your vision.
- Check the fit of the retention harness & chin strap

Helmets are made to work with a snug harness. You should be able to fit one finger between your chin and the strap.

- Adjust the harness so the chin strap fits snugly under the chin.
- If there is an adjustable 'V' harness, the tip of the V should fit under the ear.

The helmet should stay on when harnessed, without rocking or moving around, regardless of activity. It should be comfortably snug and adjusted for firm contact with the jaw/chin.

\* Bend over at the waist and shake your head. With the harness secured, the helmet should move very little.



Correct Harness Fit

### Check it Before you Ride

All adjustments should be checked each time the helmet is worn, making sure it fits snugly and correctly at all times. A properly fitted, well adjusted, and correctly positioned helmet:

- Is more likely to remain in place during an accident, and
- give the most protection available for the design, and
- will be the most comfortable to wear.

With the helmet on and tightly fastened, try to remove it by moving it rolling it backwards and forwards as far as possible.

- The helmet should not be able to be removed or roll backwards or forwards to expose the forehead or obscure vision.
- Repeat fitting steps as necessary until you have the correct fit.

### Article 154—Improperly Fitting Helmet

USPC Chief HM judges, examiners and instructors may make a judgment on the fit of the helmet. They may NOT take a helmet that does not fit and make it do so by adding padding, etc.

### Article 155—Helmet Care and Storage

To preserve optimal function and lifespan of a helmet, avoid placing it in contact with hairspray, sunscreen or insect repellents. Clean the inside and outside of the helmet often with warm water and a mild detergent. DO NOT soak any part of the helmet, put it close to high heat, or use strong cleaners. Helmets should be stored in a room that does not get too hot or too cold and where it is away from direct sunlight. (Do not store an equestrian helmet in a car.)

### Article 156—Old or Damaged Helmets

- You can't tell if a helmet has been damaged by looking at or even from feeling a helmet. Not all helmet damage is easily seen or felt.
- The material inside a helmet that absorbs the concussion is expanded polystyrene, which is similar to the material used to protect heavy electronics during shipping. This material may be damaged if the helmet is dropped or worn in a fall. It will be unable to effectively absorb another impact in the same area.
- Helmets showing signs of aging or damage of any kind, should be replaced.
- The headliner (the soft material between the head and the hard, outer shell) may compress over time, making a helmet too loose.
- Any helmet worn in a fall, should be inspected for damage by the manufacturer before further use or replaced.
- Save the helmet box and receipt. If there is suspected damage after a fall, many manufacturers will replace the helmet for a nominal fee if you have documentation

## Chapter 20: Body Protector Vests

### Article 157—Need for Protection

Beginning in January of 2019, Section E of USPC Policy 0800—Safety Requirements for Body Protectors will go in to effect.

A study of incident report data was performed by the USPC safety committee, and there was a statistically significant reduction in risk of injury when body protection was worn during cross country activities. Because of the results of this study, wearing a properly fitted equestrian body protector is required when jumping cross country/solid obstacles during any USPC activity per USPC Policy 0800.E.

Equestrian body protectors can be certified for design and performance criteria, similar to helmets. While there are some body protectors on the market that carry no certification, in the United States, vests can be certified by SEI to meet ASTM standards (F1937-04), and vests made in Great Britain can be certified to BETA 2009 standards (Level 3 is the highest level of protection). While USPC does not require wearing a certified vest for cross country at this time, it is highly recommended.

### Article 158—Body Protector Fit

When purchasing a body protector, it is important to follow the manufactures guidelines for fit. These are generally located on the websites of each manufacturer. In addition to the use of sizing charts, the final step in determining proper fit should be sitting on a saddle to check the back length of the body protector. There should be approximately four fingers between the saddle and the base of the body protector, so that it will not interfere over a drop fence. At the front, the body protector should reach the breastbone at the top and cover the bottom rib but should not cover the belly button.