

Ohio 4-H Horse Program Protective Headgear Policy

Frequently Asked Questions*

1. Is protective headgear required to be worn at mounted meetings, trail rides, or other 4-H equestrian events?

Yes. Properly fitted ASTM/SEI approved protective headgear intended for equestrian use is required to be worn by all youth ages 19 and under while riding or driving an equine at any 4-H sponsored activity.

2. Many open horse shows that are NOT sponsored by 4-H have classes for 4-H members only. Are helmets required to be worn by 4-H members if they participate in such classes?

The Ohio 4-H Protective Headgear Rule is in effect for 4-H sponsored shows and activities only.

3. Does protective headgear have to be worn in showmanship classes?

No. Properly fitted ASTM/SEI approved protective headgear intended for equestrian use is required when a youth is riding or driving an equine during any 4-H activity, not when exhibiting an equine in-hand. However, the use of protective headgear intended for equestrian use is encouraged in all classes, and any exhibitor may wear protective headgear in any class without judging discrimination.

4. What style protective headgear should be used for western or driving classes?

Any style of ASTM/SEI approved protective headgear intended for equestrian use is allowed in western or driving classes, including western, english, or schooling helmets. It is the responsibility of the rider, or the parent or guardian of the youth participant, to make sure that the headgear worn complies with appropriate safety standards for protective headgear intended for equestrian use, is in good condition, and is properly fitted with the chin harness fastened at all times while riding or driving.

5. Are helmets required when riding outside the show ring?

All youth age 19 and under, participating in any 4-H equestrian activity, are required to wear properly fitted ASTM/SEI helmet intended for equestrian use with the chin harness securely fastened at all times while riding or driving an equine anywhere on the competition grounds. Any exhibitor found in violation of this rule at any time will be prohibited from participating until proper safety headgear is in place.

6. Are bicycle or other helmets with a harness allowed?

No, bicycle helmets or hunt caps with a single chin strap are NOT acceptable. Only ASTM/SEI approved protective headgear intended for equestrian use is allowed.

7. May protective headgear be modified in any manner?

No, other than to adjust the fit with pads supplied by the manufacturer.

8. May helmet covers be used?

Covers may be used provided they can be removed for inspection of the helmet if necessary.

9. How should show committees or officials enforce the rule?

The Ohio 4-H protective headgear policy should be included in the show/event program or in the event rules. The show committee or officials are not required to inspect protective headgear *unless* the appropriateness of such headgear is questioned. In such cases, the show committee or officials have the authority to inspect the headgear and enforce the rule as stated in the current Uniform Rules for 4-H Horse Shows (4-H 179). Any exhibitor found to be in violation of the rule will be prohibited from further participation until appropriate headgear is properly in place.

10. If it is determined during a show class that an exhibitor is using inappropriate headgear, how should the show committee or officials respond?

If the show committee or officials determine that the headgear is inappropriate and the exhibitor is in violation of the protective headgear rule, the exhibitor will be disqualified from that class. The exhibitor should be prohibited from further participation until appropriate headgear is properly in place.

11. How should a show committee or official respond if it is questioned that an exhibitor is riding with headgear that is not in compliance with current rules (i.e. currently riding in a class or riding on the show grounds)?

If it is brought to the show committee's or show official's attention that a youth's headgear is questionable, the show committee must immediately investigate and determine the accuracy of the report. If the headgear is not in compliance with the protective headgear rule, the show committee or official must prohibit the exhibitor from further riding/driving until properly fitted ASTM/SEI approved headgear is in place. The show committee or officials may investigate the appropriateness of headgear without a formal protest.

13. Should counties or 4-H clubs buy helmets for use by 4-H members at 4-H sponsored events?

No. Protective headgear should only be purchased or owned by the 4-H member or their parent(s) or guardian(s). It is the responsibility of the rider, or the parent or guardian of the youth participant, to make sure that the headgear worn complies with appropriate safety standards for protective headgear intended for equestrian use, and is properly fitted and in good condition.

For more information on ASTM/SEI approved headgear:

American Medical Equestrian Association

www.emsaonline.net/Equestrian_Safety_Program.html

Identification of ASTM/SEI approved headgear and proper headgear fit:

US Equestrian Federation website at: www.usef.org - Go to Rules or Safety

Suppliers of ASTM/SEI approved headgear

www.seinet.org

Helmet replacement program for damaged helmets

www.horsehelmets.com

University of Connecticut Helmet Safety Program

www.canr.uconn.edu/ansci/equine/helmet_safety

* This information was adapted from the Pennsylvania 4-H Horse Program Protective Headgear Policy – Questions and Answers