

2019

GEAR CHECKING MANUAL

Section 1: Rules

Section 2: Guidelines

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PONY CLUB
WESTERN AUSTRALIA 1

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FOREWORD

Any Equestrian organisation that aims to produce a comprehensive instructional manual or handbook that offers its sport a template for improvement and development, must inevitably draw on all its resources and energy reserves. Manuals like these are essential tools in the training of officials in sports and meet the mandatory requirements of good sport governance and risk management.

There are many difficulties faced in conducting such a project and these stem from several areas.

The successful integration of acquired wisdom, horsemanship and history with the elements of newer technologies/equipment, advances in equitation, more progressive coaching practices and better horse management is no easy task. The distillation of long practiced procedures and commonly held belief systems into a formalized and substantiated document presents a unique challenge.

The presentation of such complex sporting technical matters into readable material that is also an applicable educational resource for equestrian people of all types, both young and inexperienced through to those that are older and wiser is also a difficult goal to achieve.

The areas of safety, risk, injury, welfare and insurance all directly influence the governance and management of sports in these times, now more so than ever. The Risk Management plans of all sporting organisations are often addressed by the development of written resource materials. These are successfully used to reduce the risk profile in sports that by their inherent nature are risky for the participants. The riding of horses today can best be regarded as a high-risk activity by anybody's measure. Within the Pony Club movement, the modern focus upon Pony Club activities that are more "competitively based" in addition to the traditional "pleasure" and coaching activities has also increased the pressure in this area.

This manual is meant to be read by both the Pony Club equestrian novice and the Pony Club equestrian "master". Both will benefit from its readability, its accuracy in detail, and the comprehensive approach that has been taken. It is a fantastic reference for the casual rider and those that compete with somewhat more passion and vigor. As such this manual must, in my opinion, be viewed as the standard reference that is still very much a work in constant progress and evolution.

It is my belief that a manual like this is long overdue and has immense value for the PCA movement across Australia. I can say, that it is my experience and opinion that this manual, is not only a cut above what is currently on offer, but it can also now define itself as a manual that will set a standard for equestrian sports development, training and management in the future for any equestrian group in the world.

I personally see the timely implementation of this manual as a core responsibility of the management team of the PONY CLUB WA and I congratulate them and the sport technical volunteers that have written this manual for their initiative and Herculean effort.

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INTRODUCTION

HISTORY OF GEAR CHECKING IN PONY CLUB WA

The British Horse Society is the parent body of Pony Club Australia and Pony Clubs worldwide; the syllabus is based on the English/European style of riding.

WHY DO WE HAVE RULES FOR GEAR CHECKING IN PONY CLUB WA?

To provide uniformity of gear so every rider is assessed under the same conditions
&

To cater for the different assessment (judging) needs of a competition relative to its intended outcomes.

All sports have their dress and equipment code and participants must abide by that code if they wish to participate – Pony Club is the same.

For example:

Dressage requires snaffle bits and no martingales so the progressive training of the horse can be judged.

Games and Novelties require a snaffle bit. While there is often a speed element, assessment is of skill and training.

Jumping and Cross Country - various bits are permitted, provided they do not injure the horse. This allows the rider to maintain control of the horse in the open and between jumps.

OBJECTIVES FOR GEAR CHECKING IN PONY CLUB WA

Safety is the first and paramount consideration. If any gear is unsafe, it MUST be corrected before a rider can continue to take part.

BASIC PRINCIPLES	SAFETY OF THE RIDER
	COMFORT OF THE HORSE
	TO INSTILL A SENSE OF PRIDE IN WEARING THE PONY CLUB UNIFORM AND PRESENTATION AT ALL PONY CLUB ACTIVITIES
	TO ENSURE FAIRNESS IN THE SPORT

WHO ADMINISTERS GEAR CHECKING IN PONY CLUB WA?

The Gear Checking Advisory Panel (GCAP) perform research on rider attire, horse/pony turnout and saddlery. They prepare documentation for the Pony Club WA Gear Checking Manual. The State Coaching Panel then reviews and approves this documentation, in particular the Pony Club WA Gear Checking Manual

If you have feedback, please contact the State Coaching Panel (coaching@ponyclubwa.asn.au) or Gear Checking Advisory Panel (gearchecking@ponyclubwa.asn.au).

RISK MANAGEMENT AND GEAR CHECKING

The aim of any Risk Management System is to identify and reduce risk and provide a reasonably safe environment for members, other participants and the general public.

Gear checking is the process where a gear checker checks a rider, their horse / pony and saddlery for risks.

The gear checker must check, report and intervene to reduce the chance of harm that may come to a member in riding in PONY CLUB WA. With regards to rider dress, horse/pony turnout and saddlery.

This allows the member to reasonably participate safely and safely amongst others at Pony Club WA. Risks identified during gear check must be documented at every Pony Club WA activity.

Risk management and gear checking also ensures that the appropriate rules and regulations (including gear checking requirements) are adhered to, so as to comply with all safety and risk management requirements in Pony Club WA.

The gear check process, at no time, negates the obligation of a Pony Club WA member (rider, parent/guardian) to know and abide by the PONY CLUB WA Gear Checking Rules. This remains their primary obligation, whether they are gear checked or not.

DUTY OF CARE AND GEAR CHECKING

Coaches, Riders, Open Riders, Gear Checkers, Team Managers, Organisers, Officials
ALL have a "Duty of Care"

"Duty of Care"

is a Duty imposed on one person to take care of another
(Australian Sports Commission).

INSURANCE OF GEAR CHECKERS IN PONY CLUB WA

Under the current Insurance Policy held by Pony Club Australia that covers the Pony Club WA, Pony Club appointed Officials such as Gear Checkers are covered while undertaking the appointment, and are covered for any directions or decisions they make regarding riders, if such directions or decisions fully uphold the relevant Pony Club WA or PCA rulings.

INSURANCE OF EVENT ORGANISERS AND RIDERS IN PONY CLUB WA

There is no such thing as an 'UNOFFICIAL' Pony Club Activity

RIDERS AND THEIR MOUNTS MUST BE GEAR CHECKED AT **ALL** PONY CLUB ACTIVITIES.

AN ACCREDITED GEAR CHECKER MUST BE PRESENT FOR ANY COMPETITION, INVITED AND APPOINTED BY EVENT ORGANISERS.

WRITTEN IN THE EVENT ENTRY FORM OR EVENT SCHEDULE AND ON EVENT NOTICEBOARD.

TO HOST A COMPETITION, A CLUB MUST FIRST HAVE AN AGC LISTED ON ITS MEMBERSHIP STRENGTH RETURNS.

e.g. Rallies, Efficiency Certificates, ODE's, Training Days, Trail Rides, Jumping,
Demonstrations, Presentations, Competition Days etc.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS REGULATION IS A **BREACH OF THEIR MEMBERSHIP WITH PONY CLUB WA.**

Such breaches of Pony Club WA /PCA regulations may compromise the position of the Gear Checker, Event Organiser or Rider in the event of a claim, and underwriters may have the right to deny indemnity.

MEDICAL POLICY FOR ALL ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN PONY CLUB WA

All active participants (Riders, Competitors, Officials, etc.) at Pony Club WA activities are strongly advised to carry on them, or have with their Team Manager or accompanying adult, up to date information regarding current or previous medical

conditions which could require treatment in the future (e.g. Epilepsy, Asthma, Diabetes) or affect the emergency treatment of serious accidents (e.g. allergies or previous head trauma).

Any rider who has, or recently had, a medical or physical problem that could impair safe participation in an Activity, must provide an up to date Doctor's Certificate confirming his/her fitness to take part. This Certificate must be produced at the Gear Check prior to the commencement of each activity.

RIDERS AND HEAT STRESS IN PONY CLUB WA

It is up to the Judge/Examiner/Coach to give permission for a rider to remove their jumper (if hot). These parties must review weather forecasts, make a decision and communicate to all competitors as early as possible.

It is also up to the rider, and when young riders are involved the parents/coach to observe and monitor for rider and heat stress. Speaking up about feeling uncomfortable is encouraged for riders and their parents. As rider's safety and comfort is priority.

Use of neck wraps soaked in cold water and placed at back of neck under shirt collar is a very effective way of cooling. Riders (for their own safety) should listen to their bodies and retire from participation or competition if affected by the heat. Clubs need to observe riders also for this problem and consider Risk Management practices of allowing them to ride in hot conditions.

MANDATORY NATURE OF GEAR CHECKING IN PONY CLUB WA

HORSES/PONIES MUST BE AMENABLE AND SAFE TO BE GEAR CHECKED	NO RIDER/MOUNT COMBINATION MAY TAKE PART IN ANY PONY CLUB ACTIVITY UNTIL THEY HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY GEAR CHECKED	INCOMPLETE or NO GEAR CHECK = NO START
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RIDERS AND THEIR MOUNTS MUST BE GEAR CHECKED AT **ALL** PONY CLUB ACTIVITIES

(e.g. Rallies, Efficiency Certificates, ODE's, Training Days, Trail Rides, Jumping, Demonstrations, Presentations, Competition Days etc.)

ANY ITEM OF GEAR OR EQUIPMENT, OR COMBINATION OF GEAR AND/OR EQUIPMENT, NOT SPECIFICALLY COVERED IN THIS MANUAL IS NOT PERMITTED.

NO ITEM OF GEAR MAY BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE, OR IN ANY OTHER WAY, THEN FOR WHICH IT WAS DESIGNED AND INTENDED

WHO MUST LEARN ABOUT GEAR CHECKING IN PONY CLUB WA?

Riders, Parents, Open Riders, Guardians, Coaches, Team Managers, Organisers and Gear Check Officials all need to know what is required.

If Coaches and Club Officials 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.

The Manual is to assist all Pony Club members, their Parents, their Coaches, Team Managers, and Gear Checkers - both experienced and in-experienced. A Dress/Gear/Horse requirement précis page is available for each Activity/Discipline at the back of this manual.

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

HOW DO I FIND WHAT IS / IS NOT PERMITTED?

Should you have any queries, may we suggest the following process:



How do Pony Club Members and Associates learn what is safe for them, and what is comfortable for the horse?

- Reading the Pony Club WA Gear Checking Guidelines as a first step.
- By asking their Club Coaches what is required in the way of dress and equipment for all activities,
- With thorough, systematic teaching at Pony Club Rallies, where instruction of permissible uniform and saddlery that may be worn at Rallies, or for Examinations, Demonstration Schools, Presentations, Competitions etc. will be given,
- Just because an item of gear is not permitted, does not mean that members should not learn about it. Coaches are encouraged to coach riders on a wide range of gear, with a specific emphasis on the correct gear suited to Pony Club.
- A thorough and regular programme of horsemastership lessons and demonstrations, teaching the care of the horse and its welfare, how to correctly fit, clean and care for all gear and the correct use of same.

If these requirements are learned consistently, then presentation to the Gear Checker (whether at Rallies, Examinations and Competitions etc.) will be faced with confidence because the Pony Clubber will:

- Be in a uniform which is acceptable,
- Know that their saddlery allows the horse to be comfortable in his/her work,
- Be in correct attire and saddlery for the activity in which they are participating.

WHAT IF, THE PIECE OF GEAR THAT I AM LOOKING FOR, CAN NOT BE FOUND IN THIS MANUAL?

ANY ITEM OF GEAR OR EQUIPMENT, OR COMBINATION OF GEAR AND/OR EQUIPMENT, NOT SPECIFICALLY COVERED IN THIS MANUAL IS NOT PERMITTED.

Be sure to have followed the member enquiry process as per above.

New products come onto the market all the time. GCAP welcomes you to email them at gearchecking@ponyclubwa.asn.au and share any new product observations that you have had. We will consider and review the item of gear for its suitability in Pony Club WA.

I am an event organiser – how does the gear checking function work at Pony Club WA events?

Pony Club WA Event Organisers should appoint an Accredited Head Gear Checker for the day.

The Gear Checker/s appointed by the Organiser will check the rider's dress and saddlery before the start of every ridden activity whether it is for an Efficiency Certificate, Competition or Trail Ride. Gear Checkers must be included on the Annual Strength Return and Membership List of a Pony Club currently affiliated with the Pony Club WA.

The choice of an accredited/knowledgeable person with the ability to be reasonable in all situations is essential.

Any organiser, if unsure, is welcome to contact GCAP via gearchecking@ponyclubwa.asn.au for a list of current accredited gear checkers, and also members that may have attended a Gear Check Clinic and have skills in this area.

Activity Organisers should supply ALL Gear Checkers with the following:

- REMEMBER – Gear Checkers are volunteers – look after them
- Clip Board and paper
- Pen/Pencil
- Draw list of competitors with their start times or list of riders in Rally group
- **Gear Checking Report Form/s**
For ALL Pony Club WA EVENTS this form MUST be completed by event gear checkers and then sent to Pony Club WA by the Event Organiser
- Relevant 2018 Pony Club WA Précis Sheets
- Names of the Club Coach Coordinator / Chief Judge / Steward/ Technical Delegate or Ground Jury
- Tape Measure / Ruler
- Bucket of water and a towel
- Access to the Club Dilly Bag/tools
- Table and Chair
- If the duty is for several hours, appoint more than one Gear Checker.
- Provide a Penciller for the Gear Checker – very time saving.
- Team Events – it can be useful to have 2, 3 or 4 Gear Checkers so all team members can be checked at once.

At the conclusion of **ANY** event, Event Organisers are to have the Gear Check Report Forms forwarded to Pony Club WA

I am a rally organiser – how does the gear checking function work at Pony Club WA rallies?

The Gear Checker/s appointed by the Rally Organiser will check the rider's dress and saddlery before the start of every ridden session for a Rally.

The choice of an accredited/knowledgeable person with the ability to be reasonable in all situations is essential. Gear Checkers must be included on the Annual Strength Return and Membership List of a Pony Club currently affiliated with the Pony Club WA.

Any organiser, if unsure, is welcome to contact GCAP via gearchecking@ponyclubwa.asn.au for a list of current accredited gear checkers, and also members that may have attended a Gear Check Clinic and have skills in this area.

Rally Organisers should supply ALL Gear Checkers with the following:

- Clip Board and paper
- Pen/Pencil
- List of rally lesson riders
- **Gear Checking Report Form/s**
For ALL Pony Club WA RALLIES, it is strongly recommended that records are kept of riders presenting at rally. So that problems can be recorded and followed up for the future. These records are for the CLUB only and do not need to be sent into Pony Club WA
- Relevant 2018 Pony Club WA Précis Sheets
- Names of the Club Coach Coordinator
- Access to the Club Dilly Bag/tools

PONY CLUB WA GEAR CHECKING REPORT FORM

- The Report Form for Gear Checking at competitions and rallies can be found in the FORMS section of this manual.
- This form is **COMPULSORY** for event organisers to place in gear checkers folders, and to be carried by officials and gear checkers appointed at any pony club activity.
- 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 and how the problem was resolved. This information, when sent to Pony Club WA is entered to the Pony Club WA Offender Register. Members may enquire about repeat offenders on this register at any time by emailing gearchecking@ponyclubwa.asn.au
- In the event of an unresolved dispute (between Rider, Parent, Guardian, Coach, Team Manager and the Gear Checker), assistance should be sought from either the Technical Delegate / Chief Steward, Chief Judge or Ground Jury who, after inspecting the rider and their mount, must sign the form before either

Permitting the rider and horse/pony to compete
OR
Refusing to allow the rider and horse/pony to participate.
- The Report Forms help the Gear Checking Advisory Panel monitor any problem areas that may need to be addressed.