

Rule Change Type	Effective Date	Draft Received	Board Action
Extraordinary	4/1/2025	12/19/2024	

  

Extraordinary Change Reason
rider safety

  

Rule Change Intent
<p>The intent of this rule is twofold:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As currently written, the protective headgear rule contained in GR801 has been found to be confusing. The re-organization and clean up of the protective headgear language does not substantiively change the rule, except that the exception to remove the protective headgear during prize giving is removed.</li> <li>2. As modern equestrian apparel includes more stretchy fabrics, which are more likely to result in the possibility of getting caught and hang on hooks or other protrusions, this rule change introduces a prohibition on hooks or other upward projections/attachments on saddles, including stirrups with hook or open bar designs that could cause a rider's apparel to get stuck or cause injury to the rider.</li> </ol>

  

Proponent Details	Contact Information
USEF Officers	Leslie Mangan
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Linked Rules	Comments
American Saddlebred	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 10/18/2024	
Andalusian/Lusitano	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/04/2024	Draft 1: The committee has strong concerns in regards to headgear: the verbiage "approved" headgear needs to be added back in this rule with full definition of what approved headgear would entail; the rule does not address what a judge is to do if an exhibitor comes in a class with headgear that they personally feel is in compliance, but the judge deems not in compliance. The committee feels that the rule does not fully define nor help educate those on what is acceptable, simply shifts the liability from USEF to the competitor.
Arabian	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/26/2024	Draft 1: The committee feels that the portion of the rule regarding stirrups would require heavy education of exhibitors, especially those at entry level, to be in compliance with this rule. With this rule change being extraordinary, on an expedited timeline, the committee feels that the timeframe for educating exhibitors is not feasible. The committee also would like to point out that we can not mandate how stirrups are made and the options that are available on the market.
Carriage Pleasure Driving	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 12/05/2024	
Connemara	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 11/26/2024	
Council - Member Services	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 12/17/2024 Draft 2: Recommends Approval 12/19/2024	Draft 1: The Council agrees with and fully supports recommending approval of this rule change proposal, however, it also recommends maintaining the portion of the existing rule that allows removal of headgear during the playing of the National Anthem and for prize giving ceremonies in the hunter and jumper divisions only. Striking that section creates a conflict with FEI rules for the jumper division which does allow the removal of headgear during national anthems and prize giving ceremonies. Additionally, the Council feels strongly that the effective date for the saddle attachment restriction (GR801.11) should be extended to allow stirrup manufacturers with enough notice and lead time to modify stirrup designs that would not be permitted under the new rule. The Council encourages the Federation to continue its efforts to encourage the use of protective headgear in all breeds and disciplines for the safety of all equestrians and the protection and sustainability of the sport.
Council - Natl Breed & Discipline	

Dressage	
	<b>Draft 1:</b> This rule, specifically the point regarding protective headgear, raises questions as to officials responsibility and authority. Approve with the following recommendation: Protective Headgear point e. "It is the responsibility of the rider, or the parent, guardian, or trainer of the junior exhibitor to see to it that the headgear worn complies with appropriate safety standards for protective headgear intended for equestrian use and is properly fitted and in good condition... ADD - 'including comments from officials regarding helmet adjustments'. It is felt that Licensed Officials who observe possible non-compliance may/should inform competitors. It was also noted that several safety stirrups fall into the description of attachments to the saddle.
Driving	
<b>Draft 1:</b> Recommends Approval 10/15/2024 <b>Draft 2:</b> Recommends Approval 01/02/2025	
Endurance	
<b>Draft 1:</b> Recommends Approval 11/19/2024	
Eventing	
<b>Draft 1:</b> Recommends Disapproval 11/19/2024	<b>Draft 1:</b> The Committee believes that safety stirrups should be allowed. The Committee recommends the requirements regarding head gear during prizing giving not be removed, as it would be difficult to enforce and would differ from the FEI Rules, which could cause confusion with FEI athletes competing in national divisions. The Committee also recommends 2.b be amended to align with the language in the Eventing chapter: "A body protecting vest must be worn during the warm-up for and the Cross-Country phase. Inflatable vests are permitted to be worn without a body protecting vest during the Dressage and Show Jumping phases".
Friesian	
<b>Draft 1:</b> Recommends Disapproval 12/18/2024	<b>Draft 1:</b> The committee does not agree with this rule change no longer allowing for most safety stirrups and peacock style stirrups. They feel that these stirrup options were created for safety of an exhibitor being less likely to have their foot caught in the stirrup and dragged. Also, the committee has concern for those riders that might require these modified type stirrups to ride due to a disability, etc.
Hackney	
<b>Draft 1:</b> Recommends Approval 11/20/2024	
Human and Equine, Safety & Welfare	
<b>Draft 1:</b> Recommends Disapproval 12/16/2024	<b>Draft 1:</b> The Committee recommends disapproval of this rule change as the data available does not support prohibiting the use of peacock stirrups in competition. A review conducted of approximately 21,000 accident reports submitted since 2001 referenced approximately 280 injuries related to stirrups. One of these injuries was from a rider dismounting and catching the upper thigh on a safety stirrup latch which resulted in bruising. The other reports in the 280+/- that referenced stirrups, referenced injuries caused by dragging or getting caught in the stirrups during a fall, coming down too hard into the stirrups after a jump causing injury and losing stirrups leading to fall. The committee feels that eliminating access to the less expensive safety stirrups, may inadvertently create a rise in dragging accidents. With regards to the change in language surrounding helmet use, the group did not feel trainers should be responsible for the proper use of headgear for minors as that should be the responsibility of the parent or guardian.
Jumper	
<b>Draft 1:</b> Recommends Disapproval 11/18/2024	<b>Draft 1:</b> The JSC disapproves because of pushback athletes will receive for not removing their helmet during the National Anthem and suggests using the same exception the FEI uses in Jumping Art. 256.1.4 which states, "As an exception to this rule Senior Athletes may remove their Headgear while accepting prizes, during the playing of the National anthem and any other ceremonial protocol." Additionally, further explanation of which stirrups are to be prohibited needs to be provided along with reasons why prohibiting these safety stirrups would be safer.
Licensed Officials	
<b>Draft 1:</b> Recommends Disapproval 12/09/2024	<b>Draft 1:</b> The requirements around safety stirrups should be clarified, as there is concern that they will not be permitted in the future. Additionally, the language should be clear about excluding particular breeds/disciplines that are not covered by this.
Morgan	
<b>Draft 1:</b> Recommends Disapproval 12/04/2024	<b>Draft 1:</b> The committee agrees with the intent and rule changes, but MUST see within this rule change what additions or revisions will be made to the MO chapter specifically to allow for the current MO breed's headgear practices and standards to remain unchanged.
National Hunter Committee	
<b>Draft 1:</b> Recommends Disapproval 12/03/2024	<b>Draft 1:</b> The committee feels the trainer(s) should not be held liable for non-compliance with safety standards. Further, the committee noted that education on safety stirrups would be beneficial if approved.
National Show Horse	
<b>Draft 1:</b> Recommends Approval 11/27/2024	
ParaEquestrian	
<b>Draft 1:</b> Recommends Approval 10/15/2024	

Paso Fino	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/19/2024	Draft 1: The committee would like consideration of adding a medical exception to the rule regarding stirrups as some handicapped or disabled competitors require stirrups that would appear to be not permitted by this rule. The committee feels that the rule needs to outline which type of stirrups would be permitted and not permitted via this rule. The committee is in agreeance with the prohibition of hooks or upward projections on the saddle itself, but not for the stirrups.
Roadster	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 10/21/2024	
Saddle Seat Eq	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/21/2024	Draft 1: The committee agrees with the intent but questioned since the Saddle Seat EQ chapter is silent on whether protective headgear is required, should an exception be added to this proposal. They suggested reviewing all chapters that are silent on protective headgear and adding exceptions to this rule.
Shetland	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 11/27/2024	
USDF	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 01/01/2025	Draft 1: While we support the concept of this proposal, USDF cannot approve it as written. This proposal should be revised to make it clear that judges possess the authority to address helmet fit as appropriate. We recommend that language be added to the first sentence of paragraph e, following “and is properly fitted” to the effect “including as directed by an official”. USDF does support the new paragraph 11 in this Proposal. Draft 2: While we support the concept of this proposal, USDF cannot approve it as written. This proposal should be revised to make it clear that judges possess the authority to address helmet fit as appropriate. We recommend that language be added to the first sentence of paragraph e, following “and is properly fitted” to the effect “including as directed by an official”. USDF does support the new paragraph 11 in this Proposal.
Draft 2: Recommends Disapproval 01/01/2025	
USHJA	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/12/2024	Draft 1: We would like an exception for safety stirrups (stirrups) and also an issue with 1.e that the trainer reference should not be responsible over parent. Also issue with 2.a feel it should define protective vest and not air vest since air vests are not ASTM tested.
Vaulting	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/12/2024	Draft 1: GR801.1, tracking 63-24: Disapproval with the following comment: With the removal of the language that specified this rule for Hunter/Jumper, this would require vaulters to wear helmets when vaulting. It is not possible for helmets to be worn when vaulting.
Welsh	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/05/2024	Draft 1: The Committee has concerns about the cost effectiveness of the new safety stirrups and feel that they will not be easily attainable to all competitors.
Western Committee	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/17/2024	Draft 1: The committee wants specific verbiage protecting the use of western hats within their division.
Western Dressage	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 12/16/2024	

Heather Sullivan

Draft #1

This rule would make many safety stirrups illegal, including the very common peacock stirrup. If that is the intent, it should be emphasized that peacock stirrups are illegal for all competition.

Amber Asbell-Jackson

Draft #1

Peacock safety stirrps are very widely used among children and there needs to be more available options for safety stirrups before banning them. In my opinion the risk of hanging on the small hook the rubber band is secured to is much smaller than the safety measure they offer of allowing a child's foot to break free.

Annette Longenecker

Draft #1

so you want to eliminate the use of children's safety stirrups with the rubber bands? Seems counter productive.

## SUBCHAPTER 8-A ATTIRE AND EQUIPMENT

### **GR801 Dress Exhibitor Safety Equipment**

#### **1. Protective Headgear.**

- ~~a. It is the tradition of the competition ring that riders and drivers be correctly attired for the class in question, that attendants be neatly dressed, and horses be properly presented.~~
- ~~b. It is compulsory for all persons at Federation licensed hunter, jumper, or hunter/jumper competitions when mounted anywhere on the competition grounds, to wear properly fastened protective headgear in compliance with the accepted testing standards published on the Federation's website, **unless stated otherwise in the relevant division rules**. Protective headgear must carry the applicable quality testing tag and/or label. It must be properly fitted with harness secured. Exception: In Hunter or Jumper classes, adults may be allowed to remove their headgear while accepting prizes and during the playing of the National Anthem only; they must refasten their headgear prior to the lap of honor. It is compulsory for riders in Paso Fino classes, both open and breed restricted including Hunter Hack, where jumping is required and when jumping anywhere on the competition grounds to wear properly fastened protective headgear. It must be properly fitted with harness secured. A Show Committee, Competition Management, and Licensed Officials must bar riders without protective headgear from entering the ring for classes in which protective headgear is required and may bar any entry or person from entering the ring if not suitably presented to appear before an audience.~~
- ~~c. Except as may otherwise be mandated by local law, all sub-junior exhibitors in the Paso Fino division, while riding or driving or while in the driving cart anywhere on the competition grounds, must wear properly fitting protective headgear. Harness must be secured and properly fitted. Any rider violating this rule at any time must immediately be prohibited from further riding until such headgear is properly in place. For all exhibitors competing in the hunter, jumper, or hunter/jumping seat equitation section, if a rider's chin strap becomes unfastened, the rider may stop, re-fasten the chin strap and continue their round without penalty or elimination. A judge may, but is not required to stop a rider and ask them to refasten a chin strap which has become unfastened, again without penalty to the rider. Members of the Armed Services or the Police may wear the Service Dress Uniform.~~
- ~~d. The Federation makes no representation or warranty, express or implied, about any protective headgear, and cautions riders that death or serious injury may result despite wearing such headgear as all equestrian sports involve inherent dangerous risk and as no helmet can protect against all foreseeable injuries.~~
- ~~e. It is the responsibility of the rider, or the parent, guardian, or trainer of the junior exhibitor to see to it that the headgear worn complies with appropriate safety standards for protective headgear intended for equestrian use and is properly fitted and in good condition. The Federation, Show Committee, Competition Management, and Licensed Officials are not responsible for checking headgear worn for such compliance.~~

#### **2. Body Protecting Vest.**

- ~~a. Any exhibitor may wear protective headgear and/or a protective vest either body protecting or inflatable, specifically designed for use in equestrian sport in any division or class without penalty from the judge. The Federation recommends that the vest pass or surpass the current ASTM standard F1937 or be certified by the Safety Equipment Institute.~~
- ~~b. For Eventing, inflatable vests are permitted only when worn over a body protecting vest. Protective headgear must be in compliance with the accepted testing standards published on the Federation's website. Protective headgear must carry the applicable quality testing tag and/or label.~~

~~3. See DC928 for protective headgear requirement in Combined Driving.~~

~~4. See DR120 for protective headgear requirement in Dressage.~~

~~5. See EN102 for protective headgear requirement in Endurance.~~

~~6. Except as may otherwise be mandated by local law, the Federation strongly encourages all riders, while riding anywhere on the competition grounds, to wear protective headgear with harness secured.~~



~~(Exception hunter, jumper, or hunter/jumper competitions refer to GR801.2) It is the responsibility of the rider, or the parent or guardian or trainer of the junior exhibitor to see to it that the headgear worn complies with appropriate safety standards for protective headgear intended for equestrian use, and is properly fitted and in good condition, and the Federation, Show Committee, Competition Management, and Licensed Officials are not responsible for checking headgear worn for such compliance.~~

- ~~7. The Federation makes no representation or warranty, express or implied, about any protective headgear, and cautions riders that death or serious injury may result despite wearing such headgear as all equestrian sports involve inherent dangerous risk and as no helmet can protect against all foreseeable injuries.~~
- ~~8. Refer to EQ106 and HU107.~~
9. **Boots.**
  - a. Boots/shoes worn while riding anywhere on the competition grounds must have a distinguishable heel. (Exception: Arabian, Hackney Pony, Morgan, National Show Horse, Parade, Roadster, American Saddlebred, and Saddle Seat Equitation).
10. **Assigned Numbers.** Competitors must display the correct number which must be clearly visible while performing in any class unless otherwise stated in the prize list. Competitors may be penalized at the discretion of the judge. Numbers to be supplied by management in compliance with GR1213.11. Refer to DR121.11 (Dressage) and DR207.8 (Dressage Sport Horse Breeding).
11. **Saddle Attachments.** ***Beginning December 1, 2025, no piece of equipment shall be attached to a saddle that has an upward pointing projection, hook, or similar rigid object capable of catching a rider's clothing or person when dismounting, including stirrups.***

#### AL101 Eligibility to Compete

[...]

***13. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Andalusian/Lusitano Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.*** Junior Exhibitors are required to wear protective headgear in all Hunter, Jumper and Hunter Equitation classes in conformity with GR801.

#### AR111 Protective Headgear

1. It is the tradition of the competition ring that riders and drivers be correctly attired for the class in question, that attendants be neatly dressed and horses be properly presented. ***Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Arabian Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.***

#### CO103 Showing

1. Entries must be serviceably sound. Emphasis is placed on manners and an appropriate way of going.  
2. Entries may be shown as native ponies or as appropriate to their performance section. Braiding and shoeing are optional. No Connemara may be shown with excessively long toes. Connemaras are not to stand in a stretched position.  
3. If a class states it is for purebred Connemaras only, no entry registered in the halfbred division of the Registry or Stud Book may enter such class. In hand classes must be held separately for purebred and halfbred Connemaras and classes may not be combined. Performance classes must be divided into purebred and halfbred Connemara if there are four or more purebred entries and four or more halfbred entries. Performance classes for purebred and halfbred must be combined if there are three or less entries in either section.

[...]

***6. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Connemara Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.***

#### CP105 Responsibilities of Drivers and Officials

***12. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Carriage Pleasure Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.*** All competitors are encouraged to use protective headgear for all competitions. Whenever the rules stipulate

that "hat" or "cap" or "headgear" is required, protective headgear may be worn without penalty.

#### DC913 Dress, Safety, and Whips

[...]

**6. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Driving Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### EP102 Appointments

**1. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the English Pleasure Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

[renumber accordingly]

#### EQ116 Appointments

1. PERSONAL. Exhibitors and judges should bear in mind that at all times entries are being judged on ability. However, neatness is the first requisite regarding a rider's attire and the following requirements are based on tradition and general present-day customs. Judges must penalize and may eliminate those competitors who do not conform.

a. INFORMAL: Riding habit will consist of jacket with collars and lapels of the same conservative color with matching jodhpurs, a collared shirt, tie, vest, and complimentary gloves, jodhpur boots, and derby or soft hat (protective headgear may be worn without penalty per GR801.4). Conservative colors for informal riding habits include black, blue, grey, burgundy, green, beige, or brown and may contain herringbone, pin stripes, and other combinations of colors that appear solid. Colors not included in this list are not acceptable and must be penalized and may be cause for elimination. Only informal dress is permitted in American Saddlebred Pleasure Equitation classes and Morgan Classic Saddle Seat Equitation classes, day or night.

b. FORMAL: Even more conservative attire is required for evening classes. Riding habit will consist of tuxedo-type jacket with collars and lapels of the same color with matching jodhpurs, formal shirt, bow tie, vest or cummerbund, and matching top hat (women), homburg or other soft hat (men). Solid colors for formal riding habits include dark grey, dark brown, dark blue, or black. Formal shirt must be white or offwhite with the bow tie and vest or cummerbund to match shirt or riding habit in color. Colors not included in this list are not acceptable and must be penalized and may be cause for elimination. Formal riding habits are not to be worn before 6:00 p.m. and are not mandatory after 6:00 p.m.; exhibitors competing on Pleasure horses have the option to wear formal attire in Open equitation classes as specified by the rule.

c. OPTIONAL: Blunt end (unrowelled only) spurs and/or riding crops.

**d. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Saddle Seat Equitation unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### FR101 Eligibility to Compete

~~17. For protective headgear requirements and information please see GR801.2 through GR801.8.~~  
**Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Friesian Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### HK113 Appointments

**5. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Hackney Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### MO106 Attire

1. Rider's attire must be suitable to the saddle being ridden. Protective headgear (See GR801) may be worn without penalty.

**2. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Morgan Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.** Protective headgear (See GR801) must be worn by riders in lead line classes at all times while mounted.

#### NS105 General

**8. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the National Show Horse Division unless**



***stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.***

#### PF102 General Rules

***16. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Paso Fino Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.***

#### PH103 Appointments

1. Equipment and rider must be suitable to the size of the horse.
2. Entries shall be shown under stock saddle with silver, Mexican or other appropriate equipment.
3. Riders shall wear attire which is both colorful and typical of the Old West, of American, Mexican or Spanish origin, consisting of fancy cowboy suit, hat and boots. Spurs, guns, serapes, etc., are optional.
- 4. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Parade Horse Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.***

#### RN102 Equipment

***7. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Reining Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.***

#### RD107 Appointments

***4. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Roadster Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.*** Except as may otherwise be mandated by local law, protective headgear is strongly recommended for everyone showing in any class in the Roadster Division as outlined in GR801.4 and .8. Except as may otherwise be mandated by local law, while riding or driving anywhere on the competition grounds, all juniors riding or driving in Roadster to Bike or Roadster Under Saddle classes must wear properly fitting protective headgear, as specified in GR801. Harness must be secured and properly fitted. A matching cover may be worn over the protective headgear or the protective headgear may be painted in matching Roadster Silks.

#### SB104 Appointments

***14. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Saddlebred Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.***

#### SP106

1. Attire Unless otherwise specified the suggested attire for Performance classes is as follows:
  - a. Ladies—blouses/dresses with at least 3/4 length sleeves and slacks or dress below the knee. Lap robe, hats and gloves are optional.
  - b. Men—jacket, tie and hat. Lap robe and gloves optional. Protective headgear may be worn without penalty. ~~See GR801.~~
- 2. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Shetland Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.***

#### VA107 Equipment

[..]

##### 2. Optional:

- a. Bandages, protection boots.
  - b. Ear plugs and Earhoods.
  - c. Breast collar or breast plate.
3. No auxiliary equipment is allowed.
    - a. Standing reins or auxiliary reins are not permitted.
    - b. The use of any equipment other than described above will entail elimination.
  - 4. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Vaulting Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.***

#### WD123 Attire

[...]

2. Optional apparel:

[...]

**e. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Western Dressage Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.** Protective headgear is acceptable; not required to be of Western style.

#### WL107 Attire (General)

In all classes, handlers, riders, and drivers should be appropriately attired. ("Short" shorts, bare midriffs and flimsy footwear are not acceptable). Those persons who, in the opinion of the judge, are inappropriately attired may be excused from the ring. ~~Protective headgear may be worn in all classes without penalty. See GR801.~~ **Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Welsh Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**

#### WS104 Personal Appointments

1. Competitors must be penalized for incomplete appointments but not necessarily disqualified.
2. Riders must wear a Western hat; long-sleeved shirt any type of collar, (exhibitors in National Show Horse, and Saddlebred divisions must wear a necktie, kerchief or bolo tie) trousers or pants and boots; (a one-piece long-sleeved equitation suit is acceptable provided it includes any type of collar). Chaps, shotgun chaps and spurs are optional unless riders are showing in trail or pleasure class (riders showing at an Arabian, Half Arabian, Morgan or National Show Horse competition must wear chaps). A vest, jacket, coat and/or sweater may also be worn. Whips are not allowed except with side saddle. (See GR1310.2 Dispensations). Protective headgear may be worn without penalty; not required to be of Western style. Refer to GR801.
3. A side saddle rider must wear an apron of closed or button type with belt under loops. It is suggested that an apron with waist band cut the same as chaps and double thickness, be used in classes where chaps are required.
- 4. Protective headgear is not required in any class in the Western Division unless stated otherwise within these rules. Use of protective headgear cannot be penalized.**