



CANADIAN PONY CLUB

VOLUNTEER GUIDES

TACK CHECK

Loyalty

Character

Sportsmanship

Thank you for volunteering to help Canadian Pony Club fulfill its mission to build confident, competent and knowledgeable individuals in a safe, friendly environment, through their passion for horses.

Tack Check

The purpose of tack checking in the Canadian Pony Club (CPC) is to ensure rider safety, horse comfort and welfare, compliance with CPC rules, and consistent standards across Pony Club activities. Tack checking is an essential component of CPC risk management and member education.

ROLE OF THE TACK CHECKER

A Tack Checker is a Pony Club member or volunteer/ official responsible for inspecting tack, rider safety equipment, and turnout related to safety. The role is educational and preventative, not punitive. If an infraction occurs, give the competitor the opportunity to correct and return for reinspection

A tack check is done on two different settings:

Level one is for non-competition settings. A less formal inspection should be done prior to every mounted session, such as lessons and clinics. Focus is on safety and welfare.

Level two focus is the competition setting. The Tack Checker, sometimes referred to as Tack check Steward, is responsible for verifying that all competitors comply with equipment and attire rules before or after their rides, depending on discipline regulations.

- Inspect horses and riders for legal tack and equipment in accordance with competition rules.
- Check bit types, nosebands, martingales, spurs, whips, boots/bandages, and other allowed or prohibited gear.
- Ensure rider attire meets discipline standards.

RULES & REFERENCES

Tack Checkers must refer to the Canadian Pony Club National General Rules, discipline-specific rulebooks, and Equestrian Canada rules when adopted by CPC. When in doubt, consult the current rulebooks or a senior official.

Level one – Tack checker will have support from or is the pony club instructor. Be familiar with the Canadian Pony Club National General Rules, discipline-specific rulebooks

Level two - Tack Checkers have experience at level one (checking tack for safety and welfare) and have more in-depth knowledge of the Canadian Pony Club National General Rules, discipline-specific rulebooks, and Equestrian Canada rules specific to the competition they are assigned.



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TACK CHECKING PRINCIPLES

- Riders present unmounted with their stirrups run up and (if used) spurs in hand, reins taken over the horse's head.
- Adjustments are made with the rider off the horse.
- Final checks may be completed mounted.
- Always approach horses calmly and safely.
- Use a systematic order to avoid missing items.
- A second check may be required, if equipment is changed

ADJUSTING OR REJECTING TACK

If tack is unsafe or non-compliant, explain the issue calmly, request adjustment or replacement, assist if competent, and refer to a senior official if needed. Riding cannot continue until resolved, in particular when tack is deemed unsafe. When a minor is involved, the matter should be discussed with the responsible adult on site.

SCORING

In some competitions a tack and turn out score will be awarded to the competitors. A scoring sheet should be provided when tack and turnout is part of the competitor score.

EQUIPMENT

The tack steward should have a list of competitors and a clip board which allows them to note any infractions and re-inspections. If available a check off sheet could be provided (see below).

KEY MESSAGE

Tack checking protects riders and horses, teaches correct horsemanship, and ensures fairness. When unsure, stop and consult the rules or a senior official.

**BRIDLE & BIT**

- Leather clean, supple, no cracks.
- Stitching sound.
- Straps correctly placed in keepers and runners.
- Browband resting comfortably on the forehead, not pulling ears.
- Throatlash not too tight
Able to fit a fist between cheek and throatlash
- Noseband fitted correctly, not too tight.
Sits 2-3 fingers below cheek bone, can fit two fingers between face and noseband at the front.
- Bit permitted, clean, smooth, correct size.
Bit makes one or two wrinkles in the corners of the mouth. A little wider than the mouth.
- Curb chain (if applicable) lays flat and not too tight
Can fit two fingers between chain and chin

REINS

- Securely attached.
- Stitching intact.
- Appropriate length.
Rein too long - rider foot can get caught
- Hook and stud buckles point to the inside, regular buckle to the outside

SADDLE & GIRTH

- Saddle fits horse and clears spine and wither.
- No pressure points or slipping.
- Stirrup bar set to open
- Stitching on billets and girth sound
- Girth elastic in good shape
- Girth secure but not overtight.
- Girth attached to two billets with separate webbing
normally first and third, sometimes first and second billet

STIRRUPS & LEATHERS

- Leathers sound and even.
- Stirrups correctly sized.
Allow about 1 cm on each side of the foot.
- Foot cannot slip through iron.

HORSE CONDITION

- No open wounds or blood.
- No signs of discomfort or distress.
- Feet show good maintenance
- Shoes secure if shod.
- Feet picked out.
- Horse clean and tidy

HELMET & RIDER EQUIPMENT

- Helmet meets current safety standards and fits correctly.
- Boots have defined heel
- No unsafe jewellery
Must be removed or taped if there is a possibility to get caught
- Hair pulled back out of face.
- Safety vest (XC only) meets current safety standards and fits correctly
Air vest allowed over safety vest

ADDITIONAL TACK

- Appropriate to the discipline
- Saddle pad secured and well fitted
- Martingales well fitted
*When horse stands relaxed:
Running: rings touch the horse's throat
Standing: can push leather up to the horse's throat*
- Martingales attached to a neck strap or breast plate
- Rein stops with running martingales
- Standing martingales only to be used with a cavesson noseband
- Boots snug and correct size

Typically, we like to see at least one hole left above and below any strap on bridle, stirrup or girth

Peacock stirrups are no longer allowed in Pony Club activities