

Introduction to Horse Showing

Most regions have a Regional 4-H Horse Show and there are many horse shows throughout the province that 4-H members may want to participate in.

This document will provide you with some basic information about what is generally expected at horse shows and for some of the more common classes. Please be aware that each region has their own rules regarding the specifics of their shows and it is important that you become familiar with them before you attend the show.

If you are planning to enter an open horse show or a breed show, you should check with that show for the rules that they use.

Not all regions offer all of the classes described here and some regions may offer classes that are not described in this document.

1. General Rules

- Check your regional rules for specifics regarding expectations for each class, as rules are likely to differ from region to region. It is YOUR responsibility to be familiar with the rules in your region.
- Check the rules for Level 1 – 3 riders. Regions may not require Level 1 – 3 riders to do all the gaits described in the classes.
- It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to ensure that they are ready for any class they are entered in when it is called.
- Animals must be treated humanely and with respect at all times.
- You must treat show officials and other exhibitors with respect at all times.
- The judge and/or show committee's decision is final.

2. Arena Etiquette

- Enter the ring and travel counter-clockwise unless otherwise directed.
- Always reverse direction by turning to the inside of the arena, not the rail.
- Keep as close to the rail as possible, except to pass.
- Always pass to the inside of the arena.
- Don't try to squeeze between the rail and another rider. When passing allow enough room in front and back of the horse you are passing. Do NOT cut sharply in front of another horse or travel too close behind. Proper passing reduces the chance of anyone being kicked.
- A red ribbon in a horse's tail means that the horse kicks. A red ribbon in the horse's tail must be displayed at all times for all horses that are known to kick.
- Always be aware of other riders in the arena and try to maintain proper spacing.
- All gates should be kept closed for safety reasons.
- Only judges, ringmasters, and tack stewards are allowed to call someone from the show ring unless an extreme safety concern arises.
- Any rider that does not have complete control of their horse may be excused from the ring by the judge.
- Please advise the hitching ring of any possible scratches or the need for a gate hold. This is the member's responsibility. Gate holds will be permitted, when advised, due to a conflict of classes. Priority is given to group riding classes over individual pattern classes.