

Cohutta Highlanders Pony Club
Safety Rules for Tacking Up

- Always have a horse-knowledgeable adult present when riding.
- Proper Apparel: Always remember Head to Toe – helmet first and foremost. Proper Boots that have ankle protection and no steel toes. Sleeves and long pants recommended with no loose clothing or jewelry. Pants with belt loops should include a belt. Long hair should be secured.
- Always check to be sure your horse is facing you and respecting you. Watch the ears and keep to the side. Do not stand directly in front or behind your pony. Ponies shake their heads up and out and do the same with knees and legs.
- Take all your tack to the area first, including a grooming box. Be sure to have saddle, girth, saddle pad, bridle, and martingale if needed. If no halter and lead line are on the stall hook, get one first before entering.
- Put on the halter and lead rope first. Safety halters and cotton lead lines are best. A round poly line can be used but will cause rope burn if your pony bolts and you are not wearing gloves. Be sure the lead line is either tied to a solid post or is draped safely over your pony's neck so that the rope will not get stepped on or tangled.
- Start with grooming your pony so that the saddle will not chafe or rub. Use a hard brush on the body to remove mud first. Then follow with a soft brush on the face, neck, and legs.
- Pick the hooves with supervision of an adult. Check for stones, problems. Be sure to face the rear of your horse, and run your hand down the leg before pinching to ask him to lift his hoof. Always keep a hand on the rump when going behind and talk to your pony calmly and in a regular tone to keep him aware and calm. Be alert and watch your pony's attitude.
- Start with the saddle pad. Place a few inches higher on the withers and slide back in place. This smoothes the hair and allows correct position.
- Place the saddle gently on the horse's back over the pad. Pull the pad up into the gullet. Then secure the billet straps in the pad's straps. The stirrups should remain run up until ready to mount.
- Next secure the girth on the right side first to the billet leathers. (You will hear the words straps and leathers used to mean the same thing.)

- The non-elastic side of the girth goes on the right side if it's not a two-sided elastic girth. If you are using a martingale, do not forget to put the loop through the girth now. Then secure the left side of the girth loosely at first. Pull your pony's front knees and stretch his legs to smooth his skin under the girth. Then tighten the girth. Remember to double-check the tightness prior to mounting.
- Now loosen the halter and secure around the neck of your pony to get ready to put on the bridle.
- Next you put on the bridle. First loop the reins over his head on to the neck. Standing on the left beside your pony, place your bridle on the pony using one of the two approved methods. One is to put your right arm over the pony's head and put in the bit. The other is to hold the bridle over the front of your pony's head with your right hand and then put in the bit. You can encourage your pony to accept the bit and open his mouth by placing a thumb at the corner of his mouth and pulling gently up. Caution with fingers! Adjust the ears gently into the headpiece and make sure the bit is properly adjusted so that two small wrinkles show at the mouth. Then adjust the noseband. If you have a martingale, this is the time to secure the loose end in the noseband or cavesson. Finally secure the cheekpiece and secure all ends in keepers.
- Be sure to carry the reins properly with your right hand about a foot from the bit and the bight butterflyed in your left hand. Never loop your hand in a rein or rope.
- Always make your pony stop and wait for you to go through the door first and then have him follow you quietly after. Be sure to shut the stall door after you walk out. Never ride with open stall doors or gates.
- Have a friend help steady your pony while mounting until you are proficient. The buddy system is always required. Never ride alone or without a radio to summon someone. If in an emergency you find yourself alone at the barn, check in periodically on the radio.
- **Keep safe distances and obey the rules of the road. Happy Trails!**

Cohutta Highlanders Pony Club Turnout and Tack Safety Checklist

Pony (See Pony Club D Manual, pp.293-294)

- ❑ **Grooming:** Pony should be curried and brushed clean so his coat is free from dirt, dust and scurf. Some places to check are:
 - ❑ under the saddle and girth,
 - ❑ under the belly and between the hind legs,
 - ❑ backs of the pasterns and lower legs,
 - ❑ the head and around the ears,
 - ❑ the roots of the mane and tail hair,
 - ❑ the elbows and between the front legs.
- ❑ **Mane and Tail:** The mane and tail should be brushed out and free of bedding and dirt.
- ❑ **Feet and Shoeing:** Feet should be picked out and show evidence of regular trimming or shoeing.

Tack (See Pony Club D Manual, pp.247-262)

- ❑ **Leather:** All leather must be clean, strong and supple. It must be free from cracks, tears and not dried out.
- ❑ **Stitching:** Check for loose or broken stitching. Any stitching that is broken, missing or coming loose should be fixed before you use it.
- ❑ **Billets:** The billets must be strong and stitched firmly to the webbing. Check that the holes are not cracked or stretched out.
- ❑ **Stirrup Leathers and Bars:** Check that the leather is strong, without cracks or too many holes too close together. The stirrup bars should always be in the open position. Check that they are not loose, bent or slanted downward.
- ❑ **Girth:** The girth must be smooth, clean and strong. Be sure to check the stitching that holds the buckles on. If you have elastic ends, check that it is not stretched or worn out. On a string girth, be sure there are no broken or worn out strings.
- ❑ **Keepers and Runners:** Check all keepers and runners that they are in place and not broken or loose. Also check that hook studs are not loose or bent.
- ❑ **Saddle:** Look for a clear channel between pony's spine and saddle. You should be able to fit 3 fingers between front of saddle and pony's withers. Check for pinching by sliding your hand under the front of the saddle, behind pony's shoulder blade. There should be no pinching. Check for saddle balance by comparing the pommel to the cantle. They should be level. Check girth for tightness. Check that it is not too tight.
- ❑ **Bridle:** Check that crownpiece and browband fit with out rubbing or pinching ears. You should be able to fit a fist between the throatlatch and pony's cheek. Noseband should be snug but not tight enough to be uncomfortable. You should be able to slip a finger under any part of the bridle. Snaffle bit should make 2 small wrinkles in lip. Cheekpieces should have 1 or 2 spare holes above buckle. Cavesson noseband should lie ½'' below cheekbone.

Attire (See Pony Club D Manual, pp.283-288)

- ❑ Boots: Paddock boots or tall riding boots. Must have smooth soles, a heel and protection of ankles.
- ❑ Helmet: Properly fitted safety helmet. Must have ASTM-SEI sticker inside.
- ❑ Pants: Breeches, jodhpurs or other riding pants.
- ❑ Shirt: Polo, T-shirt or riding shirt tucked in. If wearing a sweater or jacket, a close fitting one should be worn so that the instructor can see your posture.
- ❑ Accessories: You may wear your Pony Club pin. Do not wear jewelry that could catch on the reins or the pony's mane. No necklaces or dangling earrings, studs are ok. Do not wear combs, hair nets with metal parts, barrettes or pins in your hair that could hurt if you fell. Long hair needs to be tied back.