Procedures for Equipment Check

DR.126 Ring stewards appointed by competition management MUST check equipment and spurs on both sides of the horse for at least 1/3 of the horses in each class. Inspection of saddlery MUST be done IMMEDIATELY as the horse leaves the arena.

ALL HEAD WORK MUST BE DONE BEFORE CHECKING SPURS OR SIDES OF HORSE.

Wear clean plastic gloves on each hand . Put gloves on as you are approaching horse to be checked. Rider then knows you are putting on new gloves. Ask rider "May I check your equipment"? Move horse to open spot.

Approach the horse as you would a strange dog.. allow the horse to accept you by talking and petting til his eyes soften. Once that happened he is allowing you. To check his equipment. Always approach the horse from the SIDE NOT THE FRONT., NEVER walk behind the horse.

You are only visually looking at the bit… no fingers in mouth. If unsure of bit ask rider what type it is… one or two joints etc. If not sure if legal call the TD. The TD is the only one who can put fingers in mouth. If blood on mouth call TD and hold horse.

Check the noseband, you should get two fingers under the nose band from the side easily . Fingers should be inserted from bottom to top of noseband... Put fingers in from bottom up. If too tight tell rider it needs to be loosened. Make note of horse to check again to see if now looser. If still tight call TD.

After all head work, check spurs on both sides of the horse. If rowel spurs, rowels MUST turn.. if not need to be cleaned. All spurs should come off boot straight and angling down. Exception

Swan Neck Spurs. Maximum length of spur is 2” or 5.05 cm. Measured from heel of boot. As you are checking the spurs you are also looking for blood on the sides. Use your glove to check for blood on a dark horse, if white you can see it. If blood hold horse call TD.Wipe tissue over blood and save in a plastic bag.

Whip can not be longer than 120 cm or 47.2 “ including lash and top. Call TD if too long. Hold horse.

Ear bonnets are legal at all times in all arenas… (inside or outside). If being checked for equipment, bonnet MUST be taken off by rider to show steward there are no ear plugs in ears.

Any time steward is unsure call TD.

Anytime the horse will not allow the equipment to be checked call TD…TD will follow horse to barn to see bit out of mouth. Horse does not get out of being checked.

The provisions of DR 121 apply to both competing and non-competing dressage horses from the time horses are admitted to the grounds. The responsibility for the correct attire and equipment rests with the competitor.

Susan Moran USEF “R” Technical Delegate January 2026