

NEW ZEALAND PONY CLUBS ASSOCIATION INC.

Selecting and Fitting an Equestrian Riding Helmet

Safety Source is pleased to present this guide for selecting and fitting of equestrian riding helmets. We hope you find it helpful.

The recommendations provided are to be used as general guidelines only. As every head differs in size and shape, no guarantee can be given for a perfect fit in every case. No liability can be accepted by Safety Source in the case of injury due to an incorrectly fitted riding helmet. Should you require any further advice please contact:

Bryan Middleton
Safety Source
Ph (09) 415 6144
Fax (09) 415 6146
Email: bryan.middleton@safetysource.co.nz

The enjoyment of riding to many is unequalled, but along with the excitement and thrills comes the risk of injury from a fall. The most serious injury can be to the head and brain. For that reason the wearing of specially designed riding helmets is now common place, even mandatory for most competitive activities.

But as good as a riding helmet may be its ability to do the job it was designed for is greatly reduced if not fitted correctly. This guide has been produced by the NZPCA in conjunction with Safety Source to help riders select and correctly fit a riding helmet to ensure the best head protection possible for equestrian activities.

SELECTING A RIDING HELMET

All manufacturers of riding helmets face the issue of combining safety with style. Although stylish, the thin walled riding helmets of the past offered little in the way of impact protection. For a riding helmet to protect delicate brain tissue it must be able to absorb force from an impact. To achieve this, a riding helmet must have a thick energy absorbing liner.

Checking Standards Approval

Firstly check that the riding helmet preferably complies with New Zealand/Australian Standard AS/NZS 3838. You can determine this by the permanent fixed label inside the riding helmet. If the label identifies the manufactures license number, this is further assurance the riding helmet has been manufactured under an independently audited product compliance programme.

The joint New Zealand/Australian Standard is AS/NZS 3838 (Helmets for Horse Riding and Horse Related Activities). This Standard is written specifically with Australasian riders in mind and considers the environment in this part of the world.

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The following Safety Source range of riding helmets is manufactured and certified to either AS/NZS 3838 and/or PAS015.

- Onyx
- Aintree Eventer
- Cool Rider
- Dublin Velvet

The following Standards are also accepted by NZPCA for Pony Club activities.

All riders are required to wear a properly fitting, securely fastened, correctly maintained riding helmet meeting one of the following standards while mounted:

FOR ALL MOUNTED ACTIVITIES AT PONY CLUB

- AS/NZS 3838 (joint Australian/New Zealand standard)
- PAS 015 (British standard)
- BSEN 1384 (joint British/European standard)
- EN1384 (European standard)
- ASTM F1163 (American standard)

International Quality Standards

Another indication that when you buy Onyx and Aintree is that Safety Source is registered to ISO 9001 for the manufacture and supply of equestrian safety helmets. This provides a formal recognition that Safety Source has systems in place to ensure consistent quality.



Additional Selection Points

Look for designs that offer sizes in incremental steps or have an adjustable harness to assist in getting the best fit.

Do not purchase a riding helmet with the intention of the rider growing into the helmet, this is potentially dangerous.

In most riding helmets is white or black expanded polystyrene foam (known as the impact absorption or EPS liner) that sits between the shell and sewn comfort liner that provides the

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bulk of protection against impacts. Check to see if the impact absorption liner extends right to the very edges of the shell. While this is not mandatory in some safety standards, it does give added protection.

FITTING A RIDING HELMET

The following procedures will help ensure the riding helmet of your choice will fit correctly to give the best level of protection and comfort possible.

Step 1) Select the correct size. Choose a riding helmet which initially feels the most comfortable. Wear it as low down on the forehead as you can without blocking your view.

Note:

- a) Checking if the riding helmet is it too small: Check for any pressure points as this is an indication that the riding helmet is too small or the wrong shape. Try the next size up until no pressure areas are felt.
- b) Checking if the riding helmet is it too big: Place both hands on both sides of the riding helmet and move the riding helmet backwards and forwards checking for excessive movement. If you can place a half finger to a finger between the riding helmet and head it is likely the hat is too big. Try the next size down until the movement backwards and forwards is at a minimum.
- c) Over time it is likely the soft sizing foam and comfort lining will flatten out and mould to the shape of the head, therefore recommended to start with a riding helmet which is of firm fitting, but without pressure points.

Step 2) Do up the chin strap. Tighten chin strap under the lower jaw for a firm fit. The firmer the better, but not so firm as to be uncomfortable.

Step 3) Adjust the side/nape straps so they are under mild tension (firm but not uncomfortable). If the riding helmet has an adjustable ratchet harness follow the manufactures instructions.

Step 4) Final Safety Tests:

- a) Try to tilt riding helmet forward – the riding helmet should not obscure vision.
- b) Try to tilt the riding helmet backwards – the riding helmet should not expose the forehead excessively. If the riding helmet fails this basic test, then re-check steps one to three.

Note: Remember to re-check the riding helmet is correctly adjusted every time it is worn and check the chin and side/nape strap tensions during long or vagarious riding. Any excess forward or backward movement could cause a distraction while riding.

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CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Your riding helmet has been made to exacting standards and although strong in appearance, to provide protection the riding helmet requires care.

Do Not:

- a) Store in direct sunlight or in confined space where temperatures are likely to exceed 50 C.
- b) Drop heavily or use as a seat – the result of this may be damage to the impact absorption liner or outer shell.
- c) Clean with solvents.
- d) Paint the riding helmet.

Do:

- a) Read all instructions labels supplied with the cap.
- b) Clean the riding helmet with warm soapy water.
- c) Inspect the riding helmet regularly for damage such as cracks, rust, corrosion, frayed stitching or webbing or broken buckles. (Dulling of the outer shell may be an indication of shell degradation due to excessive exposure to sunlight. If there is signs of this destroy it and replace it or return it to the manufacturer for inspection).

Warning: If a riding helmet receives a severe impact for any reason it should be destroyed and replaced or returned to the manufacture for inspection. If you are ever unsure as to the safety of your riding helmet, please consult with your local equestrian supplies retailer or the manufacturer.