



# Arena Riding Etiquette, Safety, and Show Rules



## Stalling Horses

- **If using Stalls:** Stalls are to be cleaned and picked out daily. Before leaving at night; horses should be bedded comfortably with food and water. At the conclusion of the show, all stalls are to be thoroughly cleaned and areas swept.
- At the beginning of the show, check in your stall with the show office and make sure to also check out.
- Leave all stalls the way you found them or better.

## 4-H Riding Attire

- **Western:** Western hat or safety helmet, western boots, long pants, and long-sleeved shirt
- **English:** Black or brown safety helmet, high hunt boots or jodhpur boots, breeches or jodhpurs in traditional colors, ratcatcher shirt with choker or stock tie for girls, button-down collar shirt and a four-in-hand tie for boys, hunt coat.

These horse show rules and etiquettes are simple and easy to follow. Just remember to treat others as you would want to be treated, and everyone will enjoy the horse show and clinic a little more!

## Laramie County 4-H

UW Cooperative Extension Service  
310 W. 19th St. Suite 100  
Cheyenne, WY 82001

307-633-4383  
[sussex@uwyo.edu](mailto:sussex@uwyo.edu)

Just like any other social occasion, attendees at horse shows/clinics are expected to maintain certain standards of behavior. For the safety and enjoyment of everyone involved, both you and your horse should follow established horse show etiquette and safety rules.

## Arena Riding Etiquette

- **Left shoulder to Left Shoulder:** Riders should try to ride in the same direction. If this isn't possible then the left shoulder to left shoulder rule should apply.
- **Slow on the Outside, Fast on the Inside:** Slower riders should ride against the rail including those doing schooling such as lateral work etc... Riders working at a faster pace such as a lope or canter should stay on the inside of the arena (off the rail).
- **Pass on the inside and do not cut riders off:** Try not to pass between a horse and the rail, if you must, announce your intentions. When passing don't return to the rail until there is at least a horse length. Do not cut riders off.
- **Announce Your Intentions:** Tell the other riders what you plan to do: "passing on your left", "jumping fence 3", "leaving arena", "entering arena".
- **Mount Out of the Way:** Mount and dismount in the center--not on the rail while others are riding.
- **Work Together:** Users should be doing similar things when possible, i.e. jumping, riding on the rail. And even though the rule is left shoulder to left shoulder still try to ride in the same direction, understanding it isn't always possible. Be generous with right-of-way. Don't stop to chat, rest, or fix something while on the rail-go to the center or outside of arena.
- **Be Courteous:** If riding circles or working a horse in the middle of the arena, be thoughtful of others also working in the middle. If on the rail, be courteous of riders working in the middle. Do not ride into their circles or lunging pattern.
- **Cue Quietly:** Voice commands and cues to your horse should be done quietly and away from other horses. Accidentally cueing another person's horse as you ride along side them could cause problems.
- **Clean Up:** Clean up the arena after use. Clear out manure, put away jumps, barrels, trotting poles or cones. Leave it the way you found it or better.
- **Follow Posted Rules:** Most arenas have rules posted. Know them and follow them.

## Safety

- **Keep A Horse Length Between:** Don't crowd other riders and keep at least a horse length between you and the horse in front of you. This keeps you at a safe distance from being kicked. Also when there are riders working on both the inside and outside rail, leave enough passing room that one horse isn't able to bite or kick at the horse on the other rail.
- **All Horses Under Control:** There should be no loose horses in the arena while others are riding.
- **Don't Allow Escapes:** Keep all doors or gates closed. A horse could bolt through an open gate and escape.
- **Be Respectful:** Be respectful of other riders and their abilities and if they are having problems with their horse.
- **Give Right of Way:** Be generous giving right of way even if it is not technically the correct right of way.
- **Don't Ride Alone:** Ride, especially when jumping, with a buddy.
- **Always Ride Safe:** Make sure tack is in good condition and always check prior to riding. Replace old, worn, or damaged tack. Wear proper boots and attire. Ride in control.
- **Don't Get in the Way:** Spectators should stand outside the arena, not alongside the rail or in the middle of the arena.
- **Invite the Dogs After the Ride:** No dogs in the arena with horses and riders.
- **In an Emergency, Stop:** If a rider falls off and/or a horse gets loose, all riders must stop and can dismount.
- **No Riding:** Never ride in an arena while horses are tied in that same arena.

## Show Etiquette

- **You are responsible for your horse.**
- **The horse comes first!** Your horse's comfort and care are your primary responsibility.
- **Warm up right:** When riding in the warm-up arena at a show, know all arena rules and riding etiquette.

- **Be aware of your surroundings:** Know your horse and his behavior, and be aware of anything in your surroundings that may frighten or excite him. The safety of everyone around you depends on your being able to control your horse under every circumstance.
- **Look out for other riders:** When riding in a class with others, be aware of where other horses are and avoid getting in their way.
- **Give the right-of-way:** If you're walking your horse through a show, keep an eye out for spectators and always give them the right of way. Remember that your horse could potentially injure someone if he isn't under control. Not every spectator is horse savvy.
- **Keep the in-gate clear:** Don't congregate, start mounting, or grooming your horse at the entrance of the arena, called the in-gate. Leave this area free and clear for other riders to enter and exit. Don't block the gates to the arena. If you are waiting for your class, make sure that you are not in the way of horses that need to enter or exit the arena. Always be ready for your gate call.
- **Space out:** Make sure you have as much space around you as possible at all times (at least a horse length between riders). This will not only make sure that the judge sees you, but if you or another rider has a problem, there won't be a crash. Your horse will also be happier if he is not crowded.
- **Passing:** If you need to pass someone, pass on the inside. If you absolutely must pass on the rail announce your intention so that they know you are there. When you pass, make sure you are well past them before moving over to the rail and do not cut them off.
- **Be a good sport:** Horse shows are supposed to be fun! If you don't win, don't be a poor sport about it. Losing your temper only succeeds in making you look bad.