



# Dressage Attire & Equipment

updated 4/1/18

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Introduction

The purpose of this pamphlet is to assist Exhibitors as well as USEF Dressage Technical Delegates, Dressage Judges and Stewards who officiate Dressage classes at any Federation licensed competition. Exhibitors and Officials must be familiar with USEF Dressage Rules DR120 and DR121 in the current USEF Rule Book, plus the accompanying photos and drawings. Illustration through photos and drawings have been used to indicate what makes a particular piece of equipment or attire legal or illegal for use at Federation licensed competitions offering Dressage classes. In no way does this booklet supersede the most current USEF Rule Book. The USEF Bylaws, General Rules, and Dressage Rules are found [HERE](#) on the USEF website.

*Please be advised that the USEF Dressage Department only gives advisory opinions, not binding opinions, regarding the rules since ultimately it is the Federation Hearing Committee which applies facts and circumstances to the relevant rules and determines whether or not each fact constitutes a violation of the rules; and then only after a protest or charge of rule violation is brought before them. Nevertheless, the Federation is often asked to provide guidance regarding the rules and the Federation staff does assist when the rules seem to have clear application to a described situation. It should be noted, however, that the opinion expressed by a USEF staff member would not be binding on the Hearing Committee.*

*\*Bits/equipment will be on the website as new items are reviewed plus some additional information on the rules.*

# Part One - Dress

## DR120 Dress

1. The dress code for all Dressage tests and classes through Fourth Level (see .5 below) is a short riding coat of conservative color, with tie, choker, stock tie or integrated stand-up collar, white or light-colored breeches or jodhpurs, boots or jodhpur boots, and protective headgear as defined in DR120.6 and in compliance with GR801. A cutaway coat (modified tailcoat) with short tails is permitted. Half chaps, gaiters and/or leggings are not allowed. Gloves of conservative color are recommended. Exception: Riders through First Level may wear half-chaps, gaiters or leggings in solid black or brown, without fringe, matching the color of their boots, and made of smooth leather or leather-like material.

The dress code for the USEF test for 4-year old horses is a short riding coat of conservative color, with stock or tie, breeches, and protective headgear as defined in DR120.6 and in compliance with GR801. The dress code for FEI Pony Riders and FEI Tests for Children is dark coat or club uniform coat, breeches or jodhpurs, white shirt with tie or hunting stock, gloves, boots and protective headgear as defined in DR120.6 and in compliance with GR801. Spurs are optional for all of the FEI Tests for Children, FEI Pony Tests, and the USEF test for 4-year old horses. (See DR120.10)

2. For all tests above Fourth Level, **and FEI Junior Tests, and FEI Dressage Tests for 5, 6, and 7 year old horses**, the dress code is: a dark tailcoat or a dark jacket with protective headgear, as defined in DR120.6 and in compliance with GR801, and white or light colored breeches, stock or tie or integrated stand-up collar, gloves, and black riding boots. Spurs are mandatory for FEI tests (except as noted above under DR120.1). (See DR120.8) *BOD 12/11/17 Effective 1/1/18*

3. At all test levels, riders may wear jackets in other colors within the international HSV color scale, as described in FEI Dressage Regulations, Art. 427.1. Contrast coloring and piping is allowed. Protective headgear, stocks, ties, gloves and riding boots may be the same color as the coat. For Grand Prix Freestyle only: any single color tailcoat **or jacket** will be allowed; striped or multi-colored coats are not permitted, and tasteful and discreet accents, such as a collar of a different hue or modest piping or crystal decorations, are acceptable. *BOD 12/11/17 Effective 1/1/18*

4. Current and retired members of the Armed Services and police units may ride in the uniform of their service. All riders who choose to wear Armed Services or police uniform, must wear protective headgear as defined in DR120.6 and in compliance with GR801.

5. Riders in classes and tests at all levels in Level 1 Competitions, and riders in Opportunity classes in Level 2 and Level 3 Competitions, may compete wearing breeches and shirts of any color as permitted in DR120.8. Jackets or vests of any type are allowed but not required and neckwear may be worn only if the rider chooses to compete in a riding jacket. Boots and protective headgear are required as specified in DR120.1-6.

6. From the time horses are officially admitted to the competition grounds by competition management, anyone mounted on a horse at any time on the competition grounds, including non-competing riders, riders on non-competing horses, mounted participants in exhibition classes and those competing in all classes and tests, including Para-Equestrian tests, must wear protective headgear as defined by this rule and otherwise in compliance with GR801. Any rider violating this rule at any time must immediately be prohibited from further riding until such headgear is properly in place. Protective headgear is defined as a riding helmet which meets or exceeds ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials)/SEI (Safety Equipment Institute) standards for equestrian use and carries the SEI tag. The harness must be secured and properly fitted. Unless jackets are waived, while in the competition ring, exhibitors wearing protective headgear must wear a short, dark jacket, dark tailcoat (only permitted for tests above



*Two examples of riding shirts with integrated stand-up collars shown at left. BOTH ARE ALLOWED in dressage competitions and may be used instead of a tie, choker or stock tie.*



*Half chaps, shown above, ARE ONLY allowed in competition through First Level, except with a Dispensation Certificate. They are permitted in warm-up.*

Fourth Level), or Armed Services or police uniform (if eligible), dark hatcovers (where applicable) and must otherwise conform to DR120 (see GR801).

7. One whip no longer than 47.2 inches (120 cm), including lash may be carried in all classes except under penalty of elimination, USEF/USDF Championships, USEF National Dressage Championships, USEF High Performance Championships, USEF High Performance qualifying and selection trials. (Exception: Competitors riding sidesaddle may carry a whip no longer than 47.2 inches (120 cm), including lash, in USEF/USDF Championships.) One whip no longer than 47.2 inches (120 cm), including lash may be carried in all qualifying classes (including NAYRC and NAJC) unless such use is otherwise prohibited by FEI or Federation rules or selection procedures for the classes. However, when a whip is permitted for FEI Pony Tests, the maximum length is 100 cm (1 meter). An adjustable-length whip may not be carried by a mounted rider.



*Whips are measured from the outside of the butt end to the end of the lash. Whips used in schooling are measured the same way.*

8. In locations with high average heat and humidity on the date of a competition, management can publish in their prize list that jackets will be waived for the duration of the competition. Alternatively, management can announce prior to or during a competition that competitors can show without jackets when extreme heat and/or humidity is forecast. This waiver applies to all classes including FEI classes at National Competitions. However, competitors must wear protective headgear and a shirt with sleeves and collar, without neckwear, and without decoration except as described under .15 below. T-shirts are not permitted. Members of the Armed Services or police units may wear summer uniforms.

9. Competitors will be allowed to wear a hat cover and a transparent or conservative color rain coat in inclement weather.

10. Spurs must be made of metal. Only English-style spurs are permitted, as described below. The shank must be either curved or straight pointing directly back from the center of the spur when on the rider's boot. If the shank is curved, the spurs must be worn only with the shank directed downwards. However, swan necked spurs are allowed.



The inside arm of the spur must be smooth and one or both arms may have rubber covers. If rowels are used, they must be blunt/smooth and free to rotate. Only blunt/smooth rowels are permitted in USEF High Performance Championships, USEF High Performance qualifying and selection trials. Metal spurs with round hard plastic knobs on the shank are allowed ("Impuls" spur). "Dummy" spurs with no shank are also allowed. Only blunt metal spurs (i.e., with no rowels), no longer than 3.5 cm are permitted for FEI Pony Rider tests and FEI Tests for children. The maximum length for spurs used in other classes and tests is 5.08 cm (2 inches) including rowels. This restriction also applies to warm-up and training areas, as well as during competition. Offset spurs without rowels are permitted for riders having an appropriate Dispensation Certificate. Except for USEF High Performance qualifying and selection trials, the length of the spur is measured from the base to the end of the shank. For USEF High Performance qualifying and selection trials, spur length is measured from the boot to the tip of the spur.

11. Riders in USDF Pas de Deux and Quadrille classes are exempt from the dress code requirements of DR120.1-4, except that headgear and boots as required in DR120.1-4 must be worn. Riders must follow the dress requirements outlined in the USDF Rules and Guidelines for Quadrille Competitions and for Pas de Deux.



Toothed spur is NOT PERMITTED except with an appropriate Dispensation Certificate.

« This spur is not permitted

This spur is permitted except in the FEI Pony Tests and FEI Tests for Children, since the length of the shank exceeds 3.5cm.



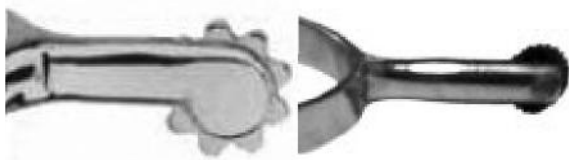
« This spur is permitted

Spur with hard plastic knobs - PERMITTED. The color of the plastic is not a factor, although knobs must be smooth.



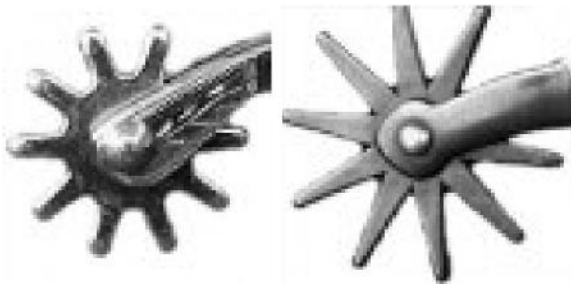
« This spur is permitted

A roweled spur is permitted as long as the rowels are blunt/smooth and free to rotate. Inside arms of the spur must be smooth. In FEI Pony Tests and FEI Tests for Children only blunt metal spurs, i.e. with no rowels, no longer than 3.5 cm permitted.



« These spurs are permitted

Rowels with sharp points are not permitted.



« These spurs are not permitted



**Spur Measurement**  
The length of the spur is measured from the base to the end of the shank for all classes in USEF competitions, except for USEF High Performance qualifying and selection trials.



**Spur Measurement**  
For USEF High Performance qualifying and selection trials, spur length is measured from the boot to the tip of the spur. (For FEI-recognized CDI-P and CDI-CH classes, spurs are also measured from the boot to the tip of the spur.)

12. Individuals holding Federation Dispensation Certificates may be allowed exceptions, i.e.; gloves not required if unable to wear them, half-chaps and black or brown riding shoes with heels. If dispensation for modified shoes or boots is given, safety stirrups are required. Riders may also be given dispensation for modified gloves, hand weights and arm belts. All exceptions to required dress must be listed on the rider's Dispensation Certificate.

13. When the only warm-up available is open to all horses and riders, riders with safety concerns are encouraged to wear an orange vest.

14. Cooling vests may be worn underneath a riding jacket. If coats are waived, a solid-colored cooling or lightweight vest may be worn over a riding shirt as specified in DR120.8.

15. When sponsorship is permitted in accordance with GR1306, the name and/or logo of the individual's sponsor(s) may appear on each of the two sides of jackets or top garments at the height of breast pockets not exceeded 80 cm<sup>2</sup> in size. Logos described under DR121.1 are also permitted as above. The name and/or logo of an individual's sponsor may also appear on the rider's protective headgear if permitted in accordance with GR1306 and DR121.1.

16. Earphones and/or other electronic communication devices are strictly prohibited while competing and such usage is penalized by elimination. Earphones or similar devices are permitted during training and warm-up.

*Exhibitor may wear protective safety vest.*

*Inflatable vests may be worn alone in*

*Dressage Competitions (see GR801.4).*

## Part Two - Saddlery and Equipment

### DR121

1. An English type saddle with flaps and stirrups is compulsory for all tests and classes other than FEI tests. Stirrups must have closed branches. An English type saddle may be constructed with or without a tree but cannot have a horn, swell, gallerie, or open gullet.

Australian, Baroque, Endurance, McClellan, Spanish, Stock, or Western saddles are not permitted nor are modified versions of these saddles (exception: competitors with a current approved Federation Dispensation Certificate). A Dressage saddle which must be close to the horse and have long, near-vertical flaps and stirrups is compulsory for FEI tests. Saddle pads are optional, but should be white or of conservative color. English-style stirrups, without attachments, or safety stirrups are compulsory. Safety stirrups must have closed branches of metal or other breakaway material. While in the competition ring and during awards ceremonies, a logo/monogram or name may appear on either or both sides of a saddle cloth in an area not exceeding 200 cm<sup>2</sup> (26.632 sq. inches). Only the following logos or names are permitted: breed logos (for horses registered with that breed); a national flag (for citizens of that country); USEF or USDF names/logos. Professionals of any age may have a business or product name/logo of their official sponsor. Amateurs may not have a business or product name/logo unless they own the business. Competition award pads and stable name pads are permitted. No other advertisement or publicity is permitted on saddle cloths or horses.



*HINT: To easily determine if the surface area fits the limit of 200 cm<sup>2</sup>, convert the dimensions of the logo to metric.*

*(1"= 2.54 cm) BEFORE calculating the area.*

*Example 1: logo measuring 4" x 6" converts to 10.16cm x 15.24 cm = 154.84 cm<sup>2</sup>*

*Example 2: logo measuring 5" x 6" converts to 12.70cm x 15.24 cm = 193.70 cm<sup>2</sup>*

*If square, a 200 cm<sup>2</sup> logo would be 5.65" x 5.65". The perimeter of a logo of 200 cm<sup>2</sup> would measure a bit over 22 inches (ie, 4 x 5.65 = 22.6).*

*Both examples are appropriate size logo for each side of a saddle pad used in competition. Beware of obviously inappropriate logos-- e.g. smiley face, Hanoverian logo pad on a leopard appaloosa, etc.*

2. For Training, First and Second Level tests, FEI Tests for Children, and FEI Pony tests, a plain snaffle bridle is required with a regular cavesson, a dropped noseband, a flash noseband (a combination of a cavesson noseband and a dropped noseband attachment) or a crossed noseband. Except for the buckles and a small disk of sheepskin, which may be used in the intersection of the two leather straps of a crossed noseband, the headstall and cavesson/noseband of the bridle must be made entirely of leather or leather-like material. However, wear tabs on cheek pieces and reins may be made of non-leather or other material. A padded cavesson/noseband and crownpiece are allowed. **Nylon or other non-metal material may be used to reinforce leather in the headstall but must not come in direct contact with the horse.** Elastic inserts are permitted in the crownpiece **and cheekpieces only**. A browband is required, and except for the parts that attach to the crownpiece or headstall, is not required to be made of leather or leather-like material. The crownpiece of the bridle must lie immediately behind the poll and may extend forward onto the poll, but it may not be fitted to lie behind the skull (see diagram). Bridles are not permitted in which the noseband is connected to the bit or cheekpiece below the level of the browband. A throatlatch is required except when the combined noseband or Micklem bridle are used. **BOD 12/11/17 Effective 1/1/18.**



*A throat latch is required except when the combined noseband or Micklem bridle is used. This means that the jowl strap is considered a throat latch and can be used to replace, or be used in addition to, a traditional throat latch. In order to meet the requirements of this rule the jowl strap must be fitted around or immediately below the horse's jowl. Nosebands with one or two lower (chin) straps must also have a throat latch, as described above. This clarification applies to all dressage levels and tests where a combined noseband is permitted.*

3. For Federation Third and Fourth Level tests same as (2) above, or a simple double bridle (bridoon [snaffle] and bit [curb] and curb chain, cavesson noseband only). The curb "chain" can be made of metal, leather or a combination. A lip strap and rubber, leather, or sheepskin cover for curb chain are optional.

4. For FEI tests ridden at national competitions, a plain snaffle bridle or simple double bridle may be used, as described above in DR121.2-3. However, for USEF High Performance qualifying and championship classes, USEF Young Adult qualifying and championship classes, USEF Junior championship classes, and USEF Young Rider championship classes, a double bridle is mandatory. Snaffle bridles are permitted for NAJYRC qualifying classes, USEF Junior qualifying classes and USEF Young Rider qualifying classes. Double bridles are mandatory for NAJYRC and USEF Junior and Young Rider championships. Only snaffles, curbs and bridoons pictured under Figure 1-B and in Annex A are permitted in FEI tests. For the FEI Dressage Tests for 4, 5, and 6-year-old horses and the USEF Dressage Test for 4-year old horses, a plain snaffle bridle is required, as above (DR121.2). **Either a snaffle or double bridle may be used in the FEI tests for 7-year old horses.** However, when a snaffle is used in FEI tests, a snaffle is required as described in Figure I and as pictured in Figure 1B and Annex A. The crossed (figure-8, Mexican) noseband is not permitted for the FEI Dressage Tests for 4, 5, 6, and 7-year-old horses and the USEF test for 4-year old horses. **BOD 12/11/17 Effective 1/1/18**

5. Riders competing only in FEI Para-Equestrian tests may use either a plain snaffle bridle or simple double bridle. Riders competing in both FEI Para-Equestrian tests and USDF or USEF tests at the same competition must use a plain snaffle bridle at Grades 1-IV levels. A double bridle may be used in warm-up and while competing only at the Grade V level.

6. Only those bits listed with Figure 1 and Annex A are allowed. At any level of competition, a cavesson or both parts of a flash noseband may never be so tightly fixed that it causes severe irritation to the skin, and must be adjusted to allow at least two fingers under the noseband on the side of the face under the cheekbone. The tightness must be checked at the location in the illustration below and not on the bony area of the cheekbone or bridge of the nose. Cavesson



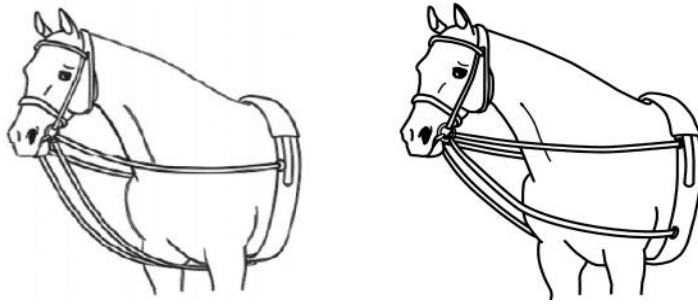
nosebands may be used with a chin pad. At any level of competition, a browband may be multicolored and may be decorated with metal, beads, gemstones and crystals. Non-metal decoration on the surface of the noseband is permitted. Reins must not be made of rope or rope-like material.



*Correct method for checking the tightness of a cavesson noseband (left) and flash noseband (right).*

7. Martingales, bit guards, any kind of gadgets (such as bearing, side, running, balancing reins, neck straps, nasal strips, tongue tied down, etc.), any kind of boots (including “easy-boots”) or bandages (including tail bandages) and any form of blinkers, earmuffs or plugs, nose covers, seat covers, hoods are, under penalty of elimination, strictly forbidden. One small identification tag, no larger than 1.5” diameter, such as the Ver Tag, may be attached to the horse’s mane. The use of equine body tape or bands (equi-taping, Kinesio tape) is prohibited. Shoes (with or without cuffs) that are attached with nails or glue, or wraps that do not extend past the hair line of the hoof are permitted. Fly hoods (ear covers) are permitted for all classes in order to protect horses from insects. The fly hoods should be discreet in color and design and should not cover the horse’s eyes. After completion of the test, the rider or his representative is responsible for removing the fly hood to present to the designated ring steward for inspection to ensure that nothing prohibited has been added (for example, ear plugs). Logos in compliance with DR121.1 and manufacturer’s logos are permitted. However, per DR121.9, ring stewards are only required to inspect fly hoods and other equipment in one-third of the horses in a class. When an inspection is conducted, all equipment including fly hoods, whips, etc. must be inspected. In championship classes, saddlery inspections are required for each horse. Leg bandages are allowed in Pas de Deux and Quadrille classes. A breastplate and/or crupper may be used, except that a breastplate is not permitted in USEF High Performance Championships, USEF High Performance Qualifying and Selection Trials. A rein is a continuous, uninterrupted strap or line from the bridle bit to the hand. Rein additions or attachments are not permitted. Each bit must be attached to a separate rein and reins may only be attached to bits. Any decoration of the horse with extravagant items, such as ribbons or flowers, etc. in the mane, tail, etc., is strictly forbidden. **(Exception: A red ribbon in a horse’s tail is permitted to identify a horse that kicks).** Braiding of the horse’s mane and tail, however, is permitted. False tails are permitted and if used may not contain any metal parts. *BOD 11/13/17 Effective 12/1/17*

8. The above restrictions (1-7) apply to warm-up and other training areas, however, running martingales (only with snaffle rein of plain snaffle bridle), boots and bandages (without magnets) are permitted. (Exception: running martingales are not permitted for horses entered in USEF High Performance qualifying and selection trials). However, noise cancelling ear muffs/plugs are permitted at prize-giving ceremonies for horses competing at any level, including High Performance classes. Fly hoods (ear covers) that do not cover the horse’s eyes are permitted in warm-up and other training areas and cannot be used for masking noise cancelling earplugs. Single direct side reins or double sliding side reins (triangle reins) are permitted only when lungeing (mounted or unmounted). Double sliding side reins may be attached to the saddle or surcingle and girth as pictured below, or both ends of each rein may be attached to the saddle, surcingle and/or girth. Only one lunge line is permitted only while lungeing. Driving or long lining is prohibited. A single direct side rein is defined as an auxiliary rein affixed to the bit and to the girth, saddle or surcingle on the side of the horse (not between the legs). A lunge line must attach only to the snaffle bit of the bridle (either on the inside or across the head or under/around the chin to the snaffle ring on the opposite side from the handler), halter or cavesson and go directly to the hand of the longeur. A double bridle may not be worn while lungeing. Horses competing at Third Level and above may be warmed up in a either snaffle or a double bridle. (Exception: For breed-restricted Arabian competition see Chapter AR, Subchapter AR-12). A running martingale consists of a divided strap attached to the girth or breastplate (at the front of the horse’s chest); the extension of each strap must be connected from the point of division only to the rein on the same side and must be free to slide. The rings through which the reins slide may not be connected to a neck strap.



*Double sliding side reins (triangle/dreieck zugel)*

9. A nose net may be used in warmup and in competition provided the entry is accompanied by a signed letter from the horse's veterinarian. A copy of this letter must be attached to each test or class sheet. The letter must:

- a. Be written on the veterinarian's stationary and clearly state that the horse has been diagnosed with head shaking syndrome and the syndrome is improved with the use of a nose net.
- b. State the brand of nose net to be used. A list of Federation approved Dressage nose net brands may be found on the Federation's website.

10. Ring stewards appointed by competition management must check saddlery and inspect bits and spurs on both sides of the horse for at least one-third of the horses in each class. Inspection of saddlery and bits must be done at the direction of the technical delegate. Inspection of saddlery and bits must be done immediately as the horse leaves the arena. (See DR126.1i) The checking of the bridle must be done with the greatest caution, as some horses are very touchy and sensitive about their mouths. Bit inspectors must use a new disposable protective glove on each hand for each horse. The responsibility for the correct attire and equipment, however, still rests with the competitor. When communicable disease is a concern, any deviations to established saddlery inspection protocol must be approved by the USEF Dressage Department prior to the competition.



Crescent noseband on a horse – **no longer allowed** at any levels or classes in USEF Dressage Competitions. **Effective 2.1.17**



Photo of a Kineton noseband on a horse.

*Note: The Kineton noseband is NOT legal for use in dressage.*

This noseband is not permitted



11. The following whips are permitted for schooling only: One whip no longer than 47.2 inches (120 cm), or 100 cm for FEI Pony Riders, including lash, may be carried by the rider when mounted. One lungeing whip is permitted only when lungeing. There is no restriction on the length of whip permitted for working a horse in hand. One whip no longer than 47.2 inches (120 cm) including lash may be carried in all classes except, under penalty of elimination, USEF/USDF Championships, USEF National Dressage Championships, USEF High Performance Championships, USEF High Performance qualifying and selection trials, and observation classes. (Exception: Competitors riding sidesaddle may carry a whip no longer than 47.2 inches (120 cm), including lash, in USEF/USDF Championships.) One whip no longer than 47.2 inches (120 cm), including lash may be carried in all qualifying classes (including NAYRC and NAJC) unless such use is otherwise prohibited by FEI or Federation rules or selection procedures for the classes. However, when a whip is permitted for FEI Pony Tests, the maximum length is 100 cm (1 meter). An adjustable-length whip may not be carried by a mounted rider.

12. Numbers must be worn at all times when a horse is being exercised or ridden.

13. Horses competing in Competition Level 4-5 classes (for example: USEF/USDF Regional Championships classes and USEF National Championships classes) must be stabled on the grounds of the competition and must remain on the grounds for the duration of the event from the time of entry until the horse has finished competing in classes designated as Level 4 or 5.

14. Athletes holding a Federation Dispensation Certificate may use special saddlery and equipment as specifically listed on their Certificate. The following equipment is permitted if listed on the Certificate:

- a. Any well fitted saddle that is suited to the needs of the rider.
- b. Devonshire, western, or oxbow stirrups, tethers from stirrups to girth; seat covers; velcro and rubber bands (provided the equipment allows the rider to fall from the horse). Break-away safety stirrups are required if the rider's feet are secured into the stirrups and shoes with distinguishable heels must be worn.
- c. Except for sidesaddle, either two stirrups or no stirrups must be used, unless rider has one leg and no prosthesis on the other leg.
- d. Adapted or bridged reins. If the rein is not to be used in a conventional manner, it must be in as straight a line as possible from the normal hand position (as described in DR117) to the horse's mouth.
- e. One or two whips, not to exceed 4' in length.

*Left: Oxbow stirrup*

*Right: Devonshire stirrup*

*Either stirrup is allowed only if stated on the dispensation certificate.*



15. Horses may only be exercised and ridden in management-designated areas on the competition grounds.

16. The following rules apply exclusively to USEF High Performance qualifying and selection trials.

- a. Upon arrival on the showground, only the rider when riding, walking, leading or lungeing a horse (lunge whip allowed) is allowed to carry a whip (maximum 120 cm) anywhere on the showground. The groom may also walk, lead and lunge a horse as above. Other parties are allowed to carry a whip, provided it is not in connection with the training of the horse. Under no circumstance is it allowed to school the horses in the stables.
- b. The whip must be dropped before entering the space around the competition arena or the rider will be penalized for an error (see DR122.5h).

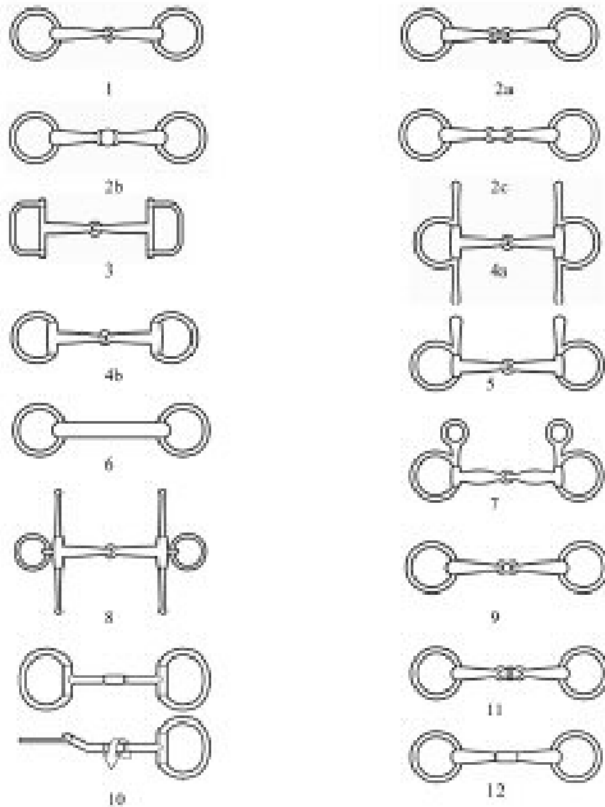
17. The provisions of DR121 apply to both competing and non-competing dressage horses from the time horses are admitted to the grounds which are designated for the Dressage Competition.

**Figure 1**

## A. PERMITTED SNAFFLES\*

(Bits pictured and described below are required for all tests and classes at Second Level and below and optional in Third and Fourth Level Tests.)

(Refer also to Annex A posted on the USEF website for additional information on permitted and prohibited bits)



*The center link may be tilted at a different orientation from the mouthpiece but MUST have rounded edge. A Dr. Bristol bit is not permitted.*

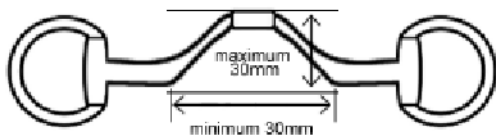
1. Ordinary snaffle with single - jointed mouthpiece.
2. (a, b, c) Double-jointed snaffles.
3. Racing snaffle (D-ring).
4. Snaffle.
  - a) with cheeks, with or without keepers.
  - b) without cheeks (Egg-butt).
5. Snaffle with upper or lower cheeks.
6. Unjointed snaffle (Mullen - mouth).
7. Snaffle with cheeks. (Hanging or drop cheek; Baucher). This may be a D-ring or other ordinary snaffle as pictured in Nos. 1-6.
8. Fulmer.
9. French snaffle.
10. Snaffle with rotating mouthpiece.
11. Snaffle with rotating middle piece.
12. Happy Mouth with roller.

\*Snaffle bits must be smooth with a solid surface. Twisted and wire bits are prohibited. A mouthpiece with more than one rolling part is prohibited. Bits may be made with a rubber or plastic covering, but the bit may not be modified by adding latex or other material. Bits with mouthpieces made of synthetic material are permitted, provided that the contours of the bit conform to the contours of one of the bits

pictured above. Flexible rubber or synthetic mouthpieces are permitted. A double jointed bit or snaffle with rotating mouthpiece may be shaped to allow tongue relief. The maximum height of the deviation is 30mm from the lower part of tongue side to the highest part of the deviation. The widest part of the deviation must be where the mouthpiece contacts the tongue and must have a minimum width of 30 mm. (See illustration below.) The mouthpiece of a jointed or unjointed snaffle may be shaped in a slight curve within the dimensions specified above, but other ported snaffles are prohibited. The mouthpiece of a snaffle may have up to two joints. A bushing or coupling is permitted as the center link in a double jointed snaffle, however, the surface of the center piece must be solid with no moveable parts, except as pictured above. The center link may be tilted in a different orientation from the mouthpiece but must have rounded edges. The diameter of the snaffle mouthpiece must be minimum 10 mm diameter at rings or cheeks of the mouthpiece (exception: for ponies, the diameter may be less than 10 mm). Any bit combining a mouthpiece with any cheekpiece pictured above is permitted. The type of bit should not vary from those pictured above except where specified, and bits should be attached only as pictured in diagram. A cavesson, dropped, crossed or flash noseband is allowed when a snaffle bridle is used in warmup or competition, except as prohibited for some tests.

Correct measurement of tongue relief.

A double jointed bit or snaffle with rotating mouthpiece may be shaped to allow tongue relief. The mouthpiece of a jointed or unjointed snaffle may be shaped in a slight curve with the minimum dimensions specified above, but other ported snaffles are prohibited.

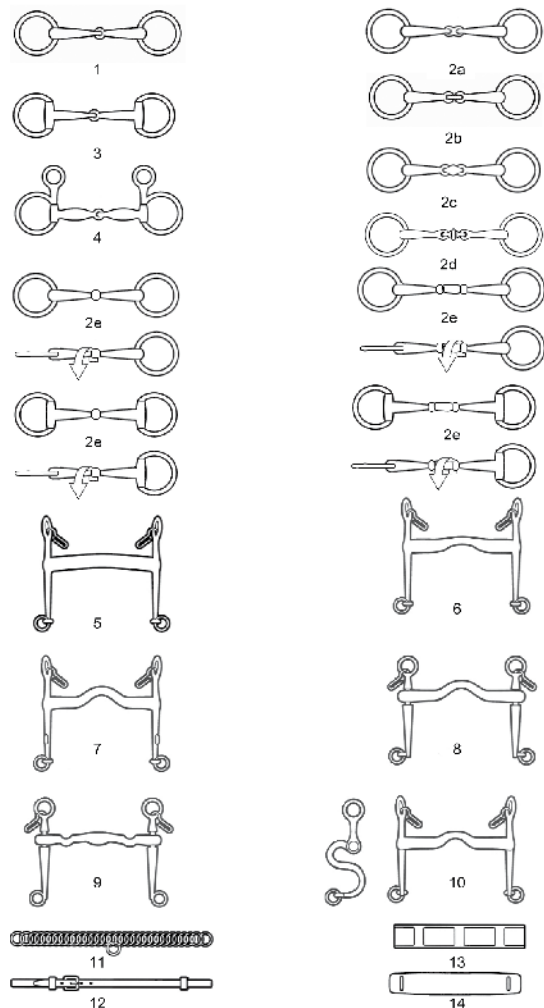


## B. Permitted Bridoon, Curb, and Snaffle Bits

(Bits pictured and described below (under #1 and 2 below) are required for FEI Tests. Bits pictured and described under #1 below are optional in Third and Fourth Level Tests)

(Refer also to Annex A posted on the USEF website for additional information on permitted and prohibited bits)

### 1. Double bridle (Bridoon and Curb) bits



#### Bridoons:

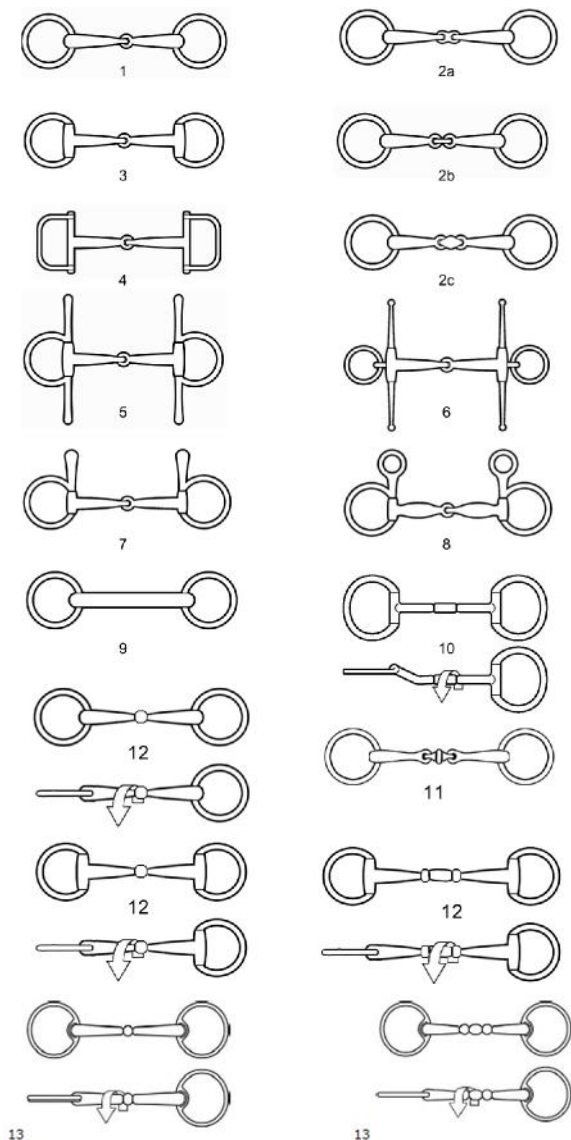
1. Loose ring bridoon bit.
2. a.b.c.) Bridoon bit with jointed mouthpiece where the middle piece should be rounded. (Note: A Dr. Bristol bit is not permitted.) Eggbutt sides are also allowed.
- d) Bridoon bit with rotating middle piece.
- e) Bridoon Rotary bit with rotating middle piece.
3. Egg-butt bridoon bit.
4. Bridoon bit with hanging cheeks.

#### Curbs:

5. Half-moon curb bit.
6. & 7. Curb bit with straight cheeks and port.
8. Curb bit with port & sliding mouthpiece (Weymouth).  
A curb bit with rotating lever arm is also allowed.
9. Variation of bits Nos. 6, 7 & 8.
10. Curb bit with S-curved cheeks.
11. Curb chain (metal or leather or a combination)
12. Lip strap.
13. Leather cover for curb chain.
14. Rubber, leather or sheep skin cover for curb chain.

\* Curb chain hooks can be fixed or not fixed.\*

## 2. Snaffle bridle bits.



1. Loose ring snaffle.
2. a.b.c. Snaffle with jointed mouthpiece where middle piece should be rounded.
3. Egg-butt snaffle.
4. Racing snaffle (D-ring).
5. Egg-butt snaffle with cheeks.
6. Loose ring snaffle with cheeks (Fulmer).
7. Snaffle with upper cheeks only.
8. Hanging cheek snaffle.
9. Straight bar snaffle. Permitted also with mullen mouth and with eggbutt rings.
10. Snaffle with rotating mouthpiece.
11. Snaffle with rotating middle piece.
12. Snaffle or bridoon rotary bit with rotating middle piece.
13. Rotary bit with rotating middle piece and looped rings.

\* Bits pictured under B1 or B2 are required in FEI Tests. Bits must be smooth with a solid surface. A bridoon is defined as a snaffle bit used together with a curb bit to form a double bridle. Bridoons where the center link(s) of the bits can lock, and have the effect of a mullen-mouth snaffle, are not permitted. Bits (including curb and/or bridoon bits of a double bridle) must be made of metal or rigid plastic and may be covered with rubber (in manufactured state); flexible rubber bits are not permitted. The lever arm of the curb bit is limited to ten centimetres (10 cm) (length below the mouth piece). The upper cheek must not be longer than the lower cheek. The snaffle or bridoon mouthpiece must be minimum 10 mm diameter at the rings or cheeks of the mouthpiece. The diameter of the curb mouthpiece must be minimum 12 mm at the cheeks of the mouthpiece. Snaffles used in Young Horse and Children classes must have a minimum diameter of 14 mm. The type of bit should not vary from those pictured below except where specified, and bits should be attached only as pictured in diagram. FEI Level horses may be warmed up only in a double bridle (with both bit and/or bridoon made of metal or rigid plastic) or a metal or rigid plastic snaffle pictured under B. A cavesson, dropped, crossed or flash noseband is allowed when a snaffle bridle is used in warmup or competition, except as prohibited for some tests. Curb chain hooks can be fixed or not fixed. The curb chain may never be so tightly fixed as to harm the horse. *BOD 1/20/18 Effective 2/1/18*

Note: For FEI tests ridden at national competitions, a plain snaffle bridle or simple double bridle may be used, as described in DR121.2-.3. However, for USEF High Performance qualifying and championship classes, USEF Young Adult qualifying and championship classes, a double bridle is mandatory.

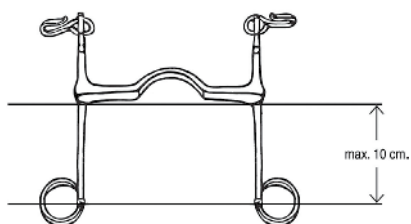


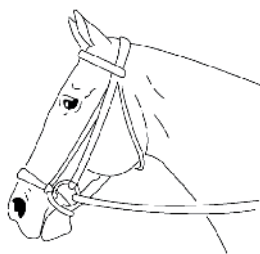
Figure 2. Correct bit measurement. The lever arm of the curb bit must not exceed 10 cm. (length below the mouthpiece). If the curb has a sliding mouthpiece, the lever arm of the curb bit below the mouthpiece must not measure more than 10 cm. when the mouthpiece is at the uppermost position.

### Figure 3

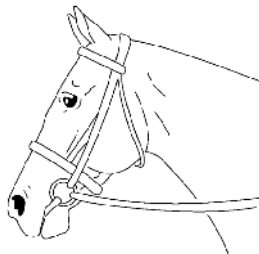
## Permitted Nosebands and Bridles (nosebands are compulsory) BOD 12/11/17 Effective 1/1/18

(Refer also to Annex A posted on the USEF website for additional information on permitted and prohibited nosebands and bridles)

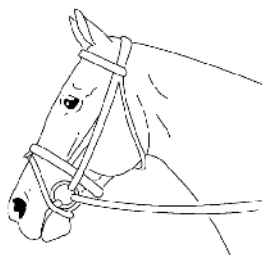
1. Dropped noseband



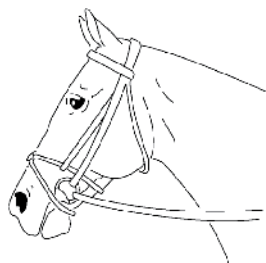
2. Cavesson noseband



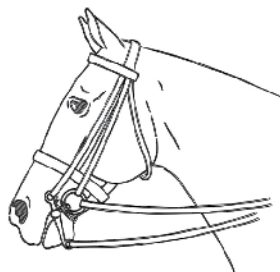
3. Flash noseband



4. Mexican (crossed figure-8) noseband



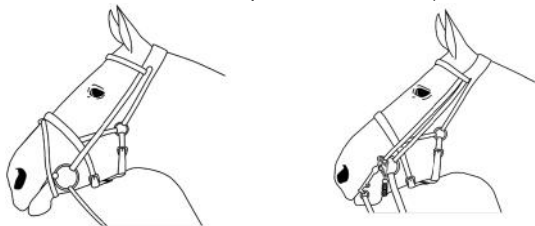
**1, 3 and 4: These nosebands are not permitted when a double bridle is used.**



Double bridle with cavesson noseband, bridoon bit and curb with curb chain



5. Combined noseband (no throatlatch). Permitted for use in at any level (including USEF High Performance classes) and in warm-up with either a snaffle or double bridle, as appropriate for the level. When used as a double bridle, the lower strap of the noseband (flash attachment pictured with the snaffle), is not permitted.



6. Micklem Bridle. Permitted for use at any level where snaffles are permitted. Not permitted for use as a double bridle. Bit clips may not be used with this bridle.



### Decorations on the horse are not permitted – What does this mean?

DR121.7 states that any decoration of the horse with extravagant items, such as ribbons or flowers, etc. in the mane, tail, etc., is strictly forbidden. Braiding of the horse's mane and tail, however, is permitted.

To further clarify DR 121.7, horses should not have extravagant things used on their bodies or hooves. Glitter, decorations and colored hooves are considered extravagant things.

Conservative colored bands or yarn may be used to secure braids, but no other items on the mane or tail.

Items in all of these photographs are NOT PERMITTED in dressage!

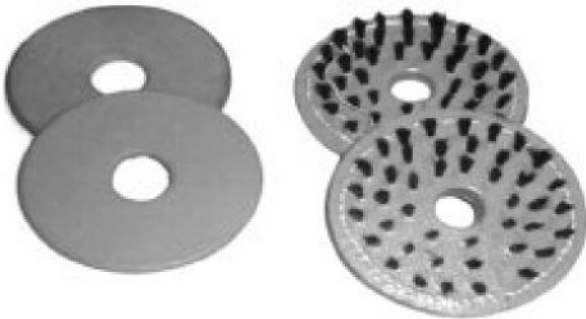


## Examples of Various Equipment



This bit is **NOT PERMITTED** due to the grooves cut into the mouthpiece. All bits must be smooth.

« This bit is not permitted



Examples of bit guards. Bit guards are **NOT LEGAL** in either the warm-up area or the competition itself.

« These bit guards are not permitted



Reins with hand-loop - **NOT LEGAL**, unless accompanied by a Presidential Modification or Dispensation Certificate allowing this style rein as a compensating aid.

« These reins are not permitted

No matter what brand, rein attachments similar to those pictured here are **NOT LEGAL**.



These rein attachments are not permitted

«

Complete reins that include the elastic section **ARE** permitted.

The difference is that this is a complete rein, not an attachment to the rein. A rein is a continuous, uninterrupted strap or line from the bridle bit to the hand. Rein additions or attachments are not permitted.



« These reins are permitted



This bridoon bit is NOT PERMITTED as it does not meet the minimum 10 mm thickness requirement and the mouthpiece is triangular in shape and not smooth.

« This bit is not permitted



Snaffle bit with rotating mouthpiece. This snaffle bit is PERMITTED in dressage.

« This bit is permitted



French link mouthpiece is PERMITTED in dressage

« This bit is permitted



This single-jointed snaffle mouthpiece is PERMITTED in dressage.

« This bit is permitted



Snaffle bit with copper inlaid mouthpiece. This snaffle bit is PERMITTED in dressage as long as the inlay is smooth and solid.

« This bit is permitted



Double jointed snaffle with hinges and the single rolling piece is not smooth. This bit is NOT PERMITTED for dressage.

« This bit is not permitted



Variation of the Baucher bit; PERMITTED for dressage.

« This bit is permitted



Snaffle mouthpiece exceeds dimensions of permitted tongue relief and is NOT PERMITTED for use in dressage.

«————— This bit is not permitted



This snaffle mouthpiece is wire-wrapped and is NOT PERMITTED to use in dressage.

«————— This bit is not permitted



This snaffle mouthpiece is hinged and is NOT PERMITTED to use in dressage

«————— This bit is not permitted



This snaffle mouthpiece is not solid and is NOT PERMITTED to use in dressage.

«————— This bit is not permitted



This snaffle mouthpiece is a twisted Dr. Bristol and is NOT PERMITTED to use in dressage.

«————— This bit is not permitted



Snaffle bit with double-jointed mouthpiece. This snaffle bit is PERMITTED in dressage.

«————— This bit is permitted



This type of loose ring snaffle is PERMITTED for dressage.

« This bit is permitted



Snaffle or bridoon with rotating disk or middle piece: THIS BIT IS LEGAL as a snaffle or bridoon for all USEF and FEI levels.

« This bit is permitted



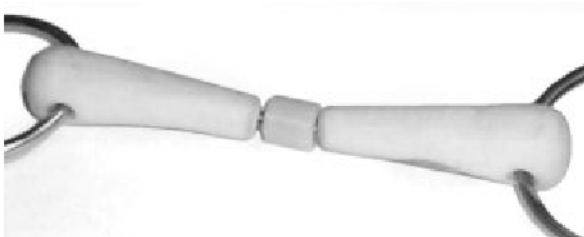
A type of Baucher bit - PERMITTED to use in dressage as a snaffle or bridoon.

« This bit is permitted



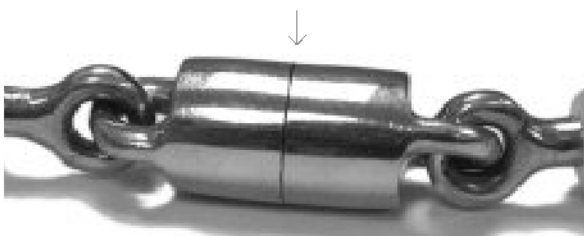
This Myler has tongue snaffle relief as defined in DR126 and is PERMITTED at Training through Second level and also as a snaffle at Third and Fourth levels.

« This bit is permitted



This bit has a synthetic mouthpiece and one rotating piece. It is PERMITTED in Training through Second level and as a snaffle in Third and Fourth levels (but it NOT PERMITTED to be used as a bridoon in a double bridle).

« This bit is permitted



Happy mouth loose ring revolver bit - NOT PERMITTED to use in dressage.

« This bit is not permitted

## Examples of Bridles, Cavessons and Nosebands

**Combined Noseband** – This noseband has a jowl strap and can also be used with or without a traditional throatlatch. Three examples of LEGAL combined nosebands are shown below.



**Tota Comfort Dropped Noseband** - This cavesson is permitted only with a traditional noseband in addition to the jowl strap. Two back straps are required above the bit (in addition to the chin strap below the bit). The back straps must be either a traditional throatlatch and cavesson, or a cavesson and jowl strap.



**Micklem Noseband** - Permitted for use at any level where snaffles are permitted. Not permitted for use as a double bridle. Bit clips may not be used with this bridle.

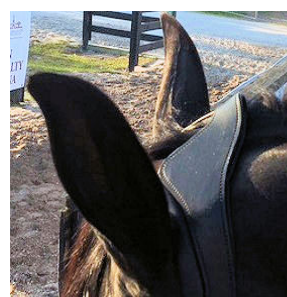
### Examples of cavessons and crownpieces NOT PERMITTED for dressage



*Crownpieces in all four of these photos are NOT PERMITTED. All are positioned too far behind the poll.*

*The Dyan bridle is pictured on left.*

*The three on the right are Antares bridles.*



*This cavesson is NOT PERMITTED without a throatlatch. Two back straps are required (in addition to an optional flash on a snaffle bridle) above the bit. The back straps must be either a traditional throatlatch and cavesson, or a cavesson and jowl strap, but this bridle is not legal without a throat latch (i.e., it is not permitted to have only one strap above the bit).*



*No throatlatch or jowl strap. NOT PERMITTED.*

## Saddlery Inspections

### How to properly check Dressage bits.

The process of checking bits must be done carefully and professionally. Safety, comfort, and cleanliness are all important. Ring stewards appointed by competition management must check saddlery and inspect bits and spurs on both sides of the horse for at least one-third of the horses in each class. Inspection of saddlery and bits must be done at the direction of the technical delegate. Inspection of saddlery and bits must be done immediately as the horse leaves the arena. (See DR126.1h(9)) The checking of the bridle must be done with the greatest caution, as some horses are very touchy and sensitive about their mouths. The bit inspector must use a new protective glove **on each hand** for each horse. **New gloves should be put on each hand as the horse approaches the ring steward. The ring steward must be careful not to touch other items (radio, pen, whip, etc.) before checking the bit on each side.** When communicable disease is a concern, any deviations to established saddlery inspection protocol must be approved by the USEF Dressage Department prior to the competition. Calipers or other measuring devices should be cleaned between each use with a non-caustic disinfectant. Approach the horse quietly, ALWAYS inform the rider of your intent and ask them to loosen the noseband if necessary.

- For information on checking nosebands, refer to page 9.
- For information on checking spur length and logos, refer to page 7.



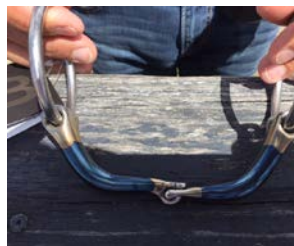
Diameter of bit is measured at the rings or cheeks of the mouthpiece.



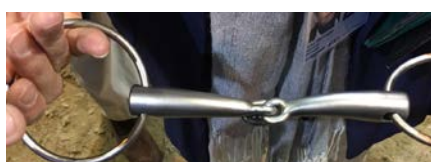
Measurement of a snaffle bit to allow tongue relief. The maximum height of deviation is 30 mm from the lower part of tongue side to the highest part of deviation. The widest part of the deviation must be where the mouthpiece contacts the tongue and must have a minimum width of 30 mm.

### Checking bits both visually and running the forefinger around the center joint is necessary to determine each bit's legality.

The following "Bomber" bit examples are **NOT PERMITTED** as a snaffle or as a bridoon in a double bridle, but you might not find the problem unless you check these bits from all sides! These particular "Bomber" bits are advertised as bridoons with mouthpieces that "lock up". All Bridoons must have a flexible joint (no mullen mouth or mouthpiece that locks). Also, these bits have "angular" edges, which are not permitted.



The "angular" edges in this view of one of the bits above are clearly evident.



The Lorenzini snaffle pictured immediately above looks legal in the photo on the left, but the photo on the right shows the other side of the bit. It is **NOT PERMITTED** due to the center link that is not smooth.