



SHOW ETIQUETTE



Adapted from <http://www.usdf.org/docs/competitions/td/DressageProtocol.pdf>



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SHOW ETIQUETTE



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SHOW ETIQUETTE

Introduction, Planning Courtesy



INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Professional and amateur sports with ruling organizations have ruling bodies which legislate and administer what is legal and illegal. Many sports also have a protocol that clarifies the etiquette of the sport and the way you go about the business of competing.
- ❖ A protocol explains the difference between what is acceptable and what isn't. Thanks to the work of the USDF Technical Delegate Council, the sport of dressage has its own protocol. Competitors who follow this protocol before, during, and after competitions can take comfort in the fact that, whatever their score, they will have conducted themselves in a way that brings credit to both themselves and their sport.
- ❖ NOTE:
 - These guidelines were inspired by the wisdom and dedication of Colonel Clarence Edmonds, previous chairman of the USDF Council of Technical Delegates.
 - They are patterned after the U.S. Tennis Association's booklet, "The Code." There are rules governing tennis tournaments, but "The Code" puts into writing the unwritten rules of etiquette and good manners expected of tennis players.
 - Dressage competitions are governed by the rules and regulations of USEF. Dressage protocol addresses the etiquette and manners for dressage competitors.
 - A review of these guidelines before your competition year begins and periodically thereafter, even for experienced competitors, will make for more enjoyable competition experiences for all involved.

PLANNING COURTESY

- ❖ Preparation is the name of the game in dressage competition.
- ❖ Both horse and rider must be prepared physically and mentally, not only for the tests ahead but for the action and excitement of a competition.
- ❖ Your preparation should also include proper grooming and turnout, along with thorough knowledge of the rules.
- ❖ The rules for dressage competitions recognized by USEF are published in their rule book.
 - The USEF Rule Book is available online at www.usef.org.
 - A hard copy USEF rule book may be obtained by contacting USEF at (859) 258-2472 and is also available on a flash drive.
 - Before entering a dressage competition, study the rule book carefully. Keep informed of all rule changes by reading USEF's monthly publication, Equestrian.
 - Better still; refer to the online Rule Book, which is up-to-date on rule changes, the latest of which are noted in red and other colors for easy reference.



RULE BOOK



SHOW ETIQUETTE



Travel Requirements, Entering a Dressage Schooling Show

TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

❖ Horse Transportation Laws and Regulations:

- Research any special state, county, or local laws and regulations on the transportation of horses.
- There may be specific requirements for immunizations, health certificates, travel, or quarantine.
- If you are traveling through several states, be aware of their requirements as well.
- For a reference of each state's requirements, obtain a copy of the annual American Horse Council Directory (www.horsecouncil.org or 202-296-4031).

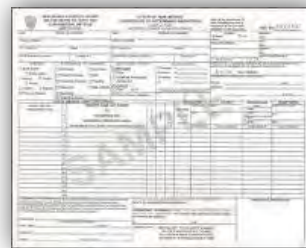
❖ Negative Coggins Test: Many states require a negative Coggins test within six months to one year of travel into the state.

❖ Health Certificates:

- Must usually be dated within ten days of interstate travel
- Some states allow health certificates to be dated within 30 days of travel.

❖ Brand inspections may be required for travel in some areas.

❖ Vehicle Weight Regulations: Many states now have vehicle weight regulations and special license requirements for horse vans.



ENTERING A DRESSAGE SCHOOLING SHOW

❖ What is a dressage schooling show?

- A local dressage show that provides a training environment for horse and rider.
- USEF rules may or may not apply.
- Show rules are determined by the sponsoring organization and/or barn.

❖ Who sponsors schooling shows?

- Not sponsored by USEF and/or USDF.
- May be sponsored by a USDF General Membership Organization (GMO).
- May be sponsored by a GMO Chapter or other local club.
- May be sponsored by a farm.

❖ How to enter:

- Show sponsors will advertise their shows via word-of-mouth, email, newsletters, local equine magazines, etc.
- A prize list, which describes the show, location, show date, opening date, closing date, fees, tests offered, rider dress, etc., is usually provided via email and the internet.
- Following the prize list for entering a show.



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In the Stable



- ❖ **Types of Stabling:** Stabling varies greatly from competition to competition and from region to region. The prize list should tell you about the size and type of stalls, whether there are doors or not, and what bedding, if any, will be available. Plan accordingly.
- ❖ **Stall Assignments:**
 - Check in with the stable manager to find your stall.
 - Keep the stall(s) you are assigned—or work out alternatives with the stable manager. Never change assigned stalls without first checking with management.
 - The stabling chart is developed in advance giving consideration to the various horses stabled so don't change stalls without authorization.
- ❖ **Parking:** Park in designated areas only. Never park in a fire lane, even for a short time.
- ❖ **Keep Aisles Clear:** While unpacking, keep aisles clear for other traffic. Unload your vehicle quickly and move it to the appropriate trailer parking area.
- ❖ **Check the stall** for nails, loose boards, or any other safety hazards.
- ❖ **Don't put holes in any walls** to hang buckets, stall guards, etc. without first checking with the stable manager.
- ❖ **Stall Card:** Use the stall card to list your cell phone number and where you are staying. Management needs to know where to find you in case of an emergency.
- ❖ **Safeguard Your Belongings:** Protect your purse or wallet, tack, and other belongings. Unloading and packing up times are favorites among barn thieves. Introduce yourself to those in neighboring stalls.
- ❖ **Electrical Appliances:**
 - Check with the stable manager prior to using electrical appliances.
 - Unplug all appliances, especially water heaters, when leaving the stable area.
 - Unplug fans when leaving the grounds for the night, or in extreme heat, ask if you can leave the fans on all night.
- ❖ **Music:** Your taste in radio stations or recorded music may not be shared by your neighbors. If you must have music, keep the volume down.
- ❖ **Cross-Ties:** Don't cross-tie in an aisle and obstruct traffic. Use your stall for braiding and grooming.
- ❖ **Parties:** Hosts of barn parties must keep the aisles clear of tables, chairs, coolers, and food. Rent an extra stall if you intend to entertain.
- ❖ **Locate Amenities:** Investigate the area, locating water, muckheap, washing area, and arenas (by number or name).
- ❖ **Horse Bathing:** Wash horses according to management's rules.
- ❖ **Manure:** Dump manure only at designated areas.
- ❖ **Bedding:** Some facilities have restrictions on the type of bedding that can be put on the muckheap.
- ❖ **No Smoking:** No smoking in the barn—ever!





SHOW ETIQUETTE

Trailing In



TRAILERING IN

- ❖ **Check In at the Show Office:** You need to check in with the competition office to see where to park.
- ❖ **Grounds Fee:** Most competitions charge a grounds fee to competitors who haul in so be prepared to pay this fee if it was not included with your entry.
- ❖ **Tie Your Horse or Keep on Trailer:**
 - Always ensure your horse is safe, secure, and comfortable.
 - If properly trained, safely and securely tie your horse to the trailer in a manner that another person could quickly untie the horse in an emergency. Do not leave your horse when s/he is trailer tied.
 - If not trained to trailer-tie, keep your horse on the trailer until you are ready to ride.
 - If you need to leave your trailer, such as to pick up your show packet, keep the horse on the trailer.
- ❖ **Contact Card:** Place an identifying card on your trailer stating your name and contact information in case anyone needs to contact you about your tied horse. A cell phone number where you, or someone else on the grounds who knows about your horse, can be reached should be listed.
- ❖ **Manure:** Dispose of manure according to management's plan or take it home with you.
- ❖ **Bridle Number:** Any time your horse is out of the trailer s/he must be wearing the bridle number, either on the halter or the bridle.
- ❖ **Safety Issues:** Look around at the other trailers in the area for potential safety issues. For example, if you have a mare, check out to see if there is a stallion tied to any of the nearby trailers (not a good idea!) and take appropriate action to move elsewhere or tie to the other side of the trailer, etc.





SHOW ETIQUETTE

Competition Office



COMPETITION OFFICE

- ❖ **Ride Times and Arenas:** The tentative time schedule you were sent in the mail is always subject to change. When you first check in with the secretary, verify your rides, classes, rings, and times. Set your watch to the official competition time.
- ❖ **Competitor Packet:** Your competitor packet should include your bridle number, a program, and tickets for any special events you requested.
- ❖ **Changes:**
 - After the competition begins, any change in the schedule needs to be worked out with management in a timely manner.
 - Scratches, rider substitutions, and horse substitutions need to be officially processed and must be arranged before the class begins—the sooner, the better!!
 - If you need to scratch your ride, tell management as soon as possible. They may be able to fill your ride time with someone on a waiting list.
 - The judge also appreciates knowing that a rider is a scratch!
 - If you need to withdraw from the competition, you must secure permission from the competition secretary before you leave the competition grounds. (GR 805).
- ❖ **Check Bulletin Board:** Check the official bulletin board at least twice each day.
- ❖ **PA Announcements:** Pay attention to any PA announcements—they may apply to you!
- ❖ **Scores and Test Sheet Pick-Up:**
 - You should be able to check your score within 45-60 minutes of your ride.
 - Test sheets are usually available for pick-up after the class results and placings are posted.
 - No tests can be returned until the entire class is completed, scored, and results posted.
 - Do not disturb the scorers or secretary by requesting your test sheet before the class is finished.





SHOW ETIQUETTE

Schooling and Warm-up Arenas, Lunging



SCHOOLING AND WARM-UP ARENAS

- ❖ **USEF Rules:** All USEF Rules, including tack rules, apply from the time the entries arrive on the show grounds.
- ❖ **Bridle Number:**
 - A competition assigned bridle number must be worn on the halter or bridle whenever a horse is out of the stall or trailer on the grounds.
 - This includes hand walking, riding or any other exercise.
 - Some competitions issue two copies of the same number for both sides of the horse and require that both be worn. However, per USEF rules, horses or riders are required to display only one number and may not be penalized for displaying only one number.
- ❖ **Schooling Arena:**
 - **Schooling Arena:**
 - A schooling arena is an arena separate from the warm-up arena where you can train your horse.
 - A licensed Competition must provide a sufficient area for schooling horses.
 - **Schooling in Competition Arenas:**
 - If you arrive the day or evening before the competition, ask permission before entering the competition areas.
 - Management sometimes allows schooling in or around the competition ring, but do not assume that you may enter the competition arenas to school.
 - The prize list should describe the schooling policy.
- ❖ **Warm-Up Arenas:**
 - **Warm-Up Arena:**
 - A warm-up is the arena for the work you do immediately before entering the competition arena.
 - The warm-up arena is not the place to train a horse or give a riding lesson.
 - Sometimes only the next two or three competitors are permitted in the warm-up ring. Others will be advised to use schooling areas.
 - **Use of Warm-Up and Schooling Arenas:** The size and layout of the warm-up and schooling areas will vary greatly. Find out if management has a stated policy for warm-up and schooling areas.

LUNGING

- ❖ **Where to Lunge:** Lunge only in designated areas, and give all horses enough room.
- ❖ **Pick Up Your Equipment:** When you are finished, pick up your lunging equipment—don't leave it on the ground as a hazard.
- ❖ **Lunging Rules:** Read the Rule Book on permissible lunging equipment on the showgrounds. The equipment you use at home may not be permitted at the competition.
- ❖ **Bridle Number:** Don't forget your bridle number!





SHOW ETIQUETTE



Arena Courtesy

ARENA COURTESY

- ❖ The warm-up area is primarily for the use of competitors preparing for an upcoming test. Others should give these competitors priority. Sometimes only the next two or three competitors are permitted in the warm-up ring; others will be advised to use schooling areas.
- ❖ When entering the warm-up arena, be careful not to cut off another rider.
- ❖ Slower gaits take the inside track.
- ❖ Pass left shoulder to left shoulder and look where you are going.
- ❖ When overtaking traffic in the same direction, pass to the inside with care and plenty of clearance. Better yet, take a circle or cut across the arena to avoid passing.
- ❖ Keep at least one horse's length from any other horse.
- ❖ Plan halts for the center of the ring.
- ❖ When turning, check your "rear view" first.
- ❖ Be careful how you use your whip; other horses may react more enthusiastically than your own.
- ❖ Fractious horses should be removed from the area immediately.
- ❖ Upper-level riders should be careful not to frighten green horses and riders in the warm-up arena.
- ❖ Make way for ring maintenance crews in the warm-up arena. Some competitions post ring-maintenance schedules. Be aware of them.
- ❖ Be courteous to other riders who are trying to concentrate on their own warm-up.
- ❖ Do your schooling in a positive manner. Do not school after a test if you are angry. Perform your warm-up routine with a purpose; do not merely meander around the arena.
- ❖ Be polite.
- ❖ Foul language is never tolerated.
- ❖ Remember the warm-up arena is for work. Do your final tack adjustments outside of the warm-up arena. Most competitions request that trainers and helpers stay on the rail, with no foot traffic allowed in the warm-up.
- ❖ Keep in mind that some equipment allowed in warm-up is not allowed in the performance arena. Tack permitted in the warm-up area and the competition arena is specifically stated in the USEF rule book.
- ❖ Do not lunge in the warm-up arena.
- ❖ Be especially courteous to show volunteers. They keep the competition running smoothly and facilitate communication between competitors and management. They are there to help you, but it is your responsibility to get to the right arena at the right time.
- ❖ Inappropriate behavior by a competitor or his/her family members or assistants can be an unpleasant experience for others at the show. In addition, a competitor can be penalized for USEF rule violations as a result of inappropriate behavior of family members.



Pass left shoulder to left shoulder.





SHOW ETIQUETTE

In the Performance Arena



IN THE PERFORMANCE ARENA

- ❖ **Know Your Test:** Know your test, even if you have a reader.
- ❖ **Using a Test Reader:**
 - Instruct your reader to read each movement only once and not to speak to you under any other circumstance; it could result in your elimination.
 - However, a reader may read a movement twice if there is a reason to doubt that the rider heard the original call.
 - Remember not to speak to the reader or your friends until you have exited the arena.
- ❖ **Do Not Talk to the Judge:**
 - Do not engage in social conversation with the judge while circling the arena prior to performance; however, the scribe does need a chance to identify your bridle number.
 - It is also inappropriate to discuss the test with the judge at the arena, either before the bell or after the final salute.
- ❖ **Ride Schedule:**
 - **Shows Usually On Time:** Dressage competitions are scheduled to the minute and most competitions run on time. Check for the official show time with the office or with a paddock steward and adjust your watch if necessary. It is your responsibility to present yourself at the ingate on time. Arriving late for your scheduled ride will result in elimination.
 - **Shows Behind Schedule:** On occasion, a dressage competition may get behind schedule—by a few minutes or a few hours. While it can get behind, it can also get back on schedule surprisingly quickly. Be particularly observant when a competition gets off schedule. Know when you ride in the class, keep track of scratches and plan your warm-up accordingly. Do not count on management to keep you informed.
- ❖ **If There is a Scratch Before Your Ride:**
 - In the event of a scratch, you do not have to ride ahead of your time.
 - If you do opt to ride ahead of your scheduled time, this schedule variation should be brought to the attention of the judge and scribe.
 - When you present yourself at the arena area ahead of your time, you are saying you are ready to be judged. Do not expect additional warm-up time around the perimeter of the performance arena.
- ❖ **If There is a Break Before Your Ride:**
 - If you are scheduled to ride immediately following a break, it is inappropriate to enter the arena perimeter early. Wait until the judge is present and expect the judge's signal in short order. Never enter the arena if the judge is not present.
- ❖ **Enter Arena on Time:**
 - After the signal from the judge (whistle or bell, and occasionally horn, duck call, clapper, etc.), you must enter at A within the required time (45 seconds).
 - You will not be given a warning that your time is running out.
 - In the case of multiple arenas, be sure you know whether your judge has a bell or a whistle.
- ❖ **Error of Course:** If you go off course, get direction from the judge, not from your reader.
- ❖ **Being Excused:** In times of distress, the rider must ask and receive permission of the judge to dismount or to leave the arena.
- ❖ **End of Ride:** After the final salute, it is not necessary to ride to C before leaving the arena. You may simply ride one horse's length forward, turn right or left and leave the arena in the manner specified by the test. Do not circle at A before exiting.





SHOW ETIQUETTE



After Your Test, After the Competition

AFTER YOUR TEST

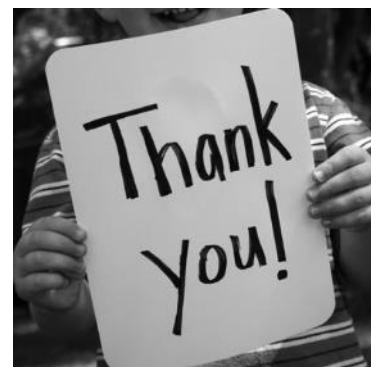
❖ Equipment Check:

- **Ring Steward Check:** Ring stewards are required to spot check tack of one-third of the horses in each class. This happens after your exit from the competition arena. This includes looking at your bit(s), noseband, spurs, whip and both sides of your horse. If your horse would be anxious about this inspection, let the checker know and you could dismount and help the inspector.
- **USEF Rules:** Tack permitted on the competition grounds while training or warming up, and tack allowed in the competition arena, is specifically stated in the USEF Rule Book. If you do not have a rule book, refer to the article and text in USEF DR 121 of USEF's online Rule Book. An outline of the most popular rule book topics and a link to the USEF Rule Book is available at <http://www.usef.org/IFrames/RuleBook/rulebooks.aspx>



❖ Be Courteous to Volunteers:

- Be especially courteous to show volunteers.
- They keep the competition running smoothly and facilitate communication between competitors and management.
- They are there to help you, but it is your responsibility to get to the right arena at the right time.



AFTER THE COMPETITION

❖ Awards Ceremonies:

- Awards ceremonies, organized by management, should be attended to maintain sponsorship participation and as common courtesies to management.
- At some competitions (especially regional championships and FEI-recognized competitions), you must be present and mounted at the awards ceremony or you risk forfeiting your awards and placing in the class.



❖ Clean Stable Area:

- Leave your stabling area clean and neat.

❖ Thank You Notes:

- Send a thank-you note to anyone who has been particularly helpful.
- If you win, send a thank-you note to the trophy donor.





SHOW ETIQUETTE



Evaluation Forms, Tests, & Awards; Technical Delegate

EVALUATION FORMS, TESTS, & AWARDS

❖ USEF Forms:

- USEF forms, which can be obtained from the show secretary or from the technical delegate, may be completed by USEF members participating in the show.
- The forms are the “Members’ Confidential Evaluation of Judges, Stewards, Technical Delegates, and Jumper Course Designers” and the “Members’ Evaluation of USEF Competitions.” These forms can be used for positive or negative comments or opinions.
- USEF footing evaluation forms may be completed and are an effective way to suggest improvements or compliment the show on the quality of the footing.

❖ USDF Form:

- USDF also has a competition evaluation form, which is available from show management, the USDF office, or from the USDF Web site at www.usdf.org.

❖ Competition officials must be treated with respect. If you have a question about your ride or test sheet, the competition committee, or the technical delegate may arrange a time for you to meet with the judge.

❖ Tests and Awards:

- Before leaving, pick up all tests and awards and return your bridle number(s). Be sure to thank the competition management and their volunteer help.
- Premiums (prize money or awards) not awarded during the show must be paid within 30 days. If management does not satisfy its obligations, contact USEF.



THE TECHNICAL DELEGATE

❖ The USEF dressage technical delegate (TD) wears three hats:

- **Official USEF representative** on the competition grounds. It is the TD’s duty to see that all USEF rules are followed.
- **Advisor to competition management.**
- **Advisor to competitors.** If you have a question about a rule, don’t be afraid to ask.

❖ As an advisor, the TD informs management and competitors of rule infractions and interprets the rules when applying them to particular situations that may arise.

❖ The TD is not a judge or a jury, but an observer and impartial advisor. If you have questions about USEF rules or conduct at a dressage competition, contact your technical delegate. TDs are trained to be vigilant about serious rule violations, and can, should they deem necessary, file charges against management, officials, and competitors.

❖ Formal Protests: Formal USEF protests can be confusing. If you wish to file a protest, always consult the TD, who will advise you of what can be protested and how to go about it. For example, a violation of the rules by a judge can be protested; the judge’s opinion cannot.

❖ Reports: You must report to the show management and the TD any suspected rule violation, unsportsmanlike conduct, or animal cruelty. Do your part to keep dressage competitions friendly and fair.





SHOW ETIQUETTE

Use of Drugs, Miscellaneous



USE OF DRUGS

- ❖ **No Alcohol or Drugs:** The use of alcohol and drugs by people or on horses, has no place at an equestrian competition.
- ❖ **USEF Drug Testing:**
 - Although the local police may be called in to control the people, USEF has authority over the horses.
 - Horses may be drug tested, unannounced, at any time by a designated veterinarian.
 - USEF drug rules are very specific. Any drug that stimulates, tranquilizes, depresses, locally anaesthetizes, or masks said drugs is illegal.
 - The USEF drug rule does carry an exception. Your horse may be given a drug that is illegal for competition, if the drug is used for a therapeutic purpose. In this instance, the horse must be withdrawn from competition for 24 hours and a special USEF Medication Report Form must be submitted immediately to the dressage technical delegate or the designated show office recipient. These forms are available from the office or the TD.
 - [Click Here](#) to open the USEF Guidelines for Drugs and Medications.
 - Study the USEF drug guidelines.
 - Do not assume that your veterinarian or the TD know all the specifics and intricacies of the USEF drug rules.
 - Go over the materials with your veterinarian and double check the rules when medication is prescribed. If you are unsure, call the hotline at (800) 633-2472.
- ❖ **Special Guidelines:** USEF has special guidelines on the use of Butazolidan® and Banamine® (or generic equivalent products), depending on the weight of the horse and the amount of drugs used.
- ❖ **Natural Products:** And don't think that "natural" products are exempt from the drug rules; just because they claim to be "pure" doesn't mean that they don't affect the horse's performance.



MISCELLANEOUS

- ❖ According to the USEF rule book, it is recommended that scribes and apprentice judges not compete before judges with whom they have worked at the same competition.
- ❖ If you have recently purchased any new item of tack or clothing and you are not sure it is permitted under USEF rules, read the rule book or contact the technical delegate for an answer before you go to the show. You can avoid needless elimination by being informed and prepared.
- ❖ Offer to volunteer when you have free time. All shows depend on volunteers, so call in advance and let them know when you will be available (before, during, or after the show).
- ❖ We hope that the information in this section will give you the look and feel of a winner—regardless of your score. The **USEF Rule Book** is essential, but understanding the protocol and etiquette of dressage competition will smooth your way to success.



THE END