



MHCGB Code of Practice 2019
For the Welfare of Horses and Ponies at MHCGB Events
And
Conduct of Exhibitors

As a club MHCGB are adopting some of the rules from the British Horse Society Guidelines for The Welfare of Horses and Ponies at Events.

1. Under the Animal Welfare Act (2006) every horse owner or those responsible has a "duty of care" to ensure the animals' well-being. This suffering and ill treatment are no longer the only grounds for prosecution under animal welfare law. It is now an offence to fail to take adequate steps to ensure a horse's welfare, even if the animal is not yet at the point of suffering.
2. The spread of equine disease is a perpetual risk when attending shows. Horse owners should act responsibly and not attend a show if there is a disease outbreak on their yard, even if the horse due to attend a show doesn't appear ill.
3. Horses being transported to a show must be accompanied by their passport.
4. General animal welfare provisions apply on ALL journeys. The horse must be fit to travel, provided with feed, water and rest stops as needed. The vehicle and loading/unloading facilities must be safe and designed to avoid injury and those handling the horse must be competent and not cause the animal unnecessary fear or distress.
5. Competitors need to be aware of The Welfare of Animals During Transport Regulations (EC)No1/2005. Anyone who transports horses over 65km and for up to 8 hours in connection with an economic activity needs to apply for a Transporter Authorisation and have a certificate in competence.

Welfare of horses

6. Overall responsibility for the horse lies with the individual who has charge of the animal on the day of the show. This may not be the horse's owner. However, all of those involved with the horse have a duty of care to ensure its welfare.
7. No horse should be ill-treated in any way on the show ground.
8. The horse should be offered water regularly throughout the day but not immediately prior to a class. Water should be offered more frequently during hot weather. Some horses prefer to drink water only from their own yard. It is therefore a good idea to bring water in a container to prevent the horse from becoming dehydrated.
9. The horse should not be offered ice cold water to drink.
10. Allowing the horse to graze in hand and /or providing hay/haylage will help keep the horse occupied, relaxed, prevent it from becoming bored and help maintain a healthy gut.
11. For safety reasons a horse or pony should only be tied to a horsebox / trailer if it can be quickly and safely released in the event of an emergency or the animal becoming distressed.
12. The weather conditions will affect the welfare requirements of the horse. In hot weather use any available shade to keep the horse out of direct sunlight.
13. During summer weather, horse boxes and trailers can get very hot. If the horse is kept onboard ensure the roof vents and windows are open and the ramp left down/

Control of horses

14. Young horses will require confident handling. The show atmosphere can prove exciting to youngsters lacking experience. Shouting and hitting the animal in most circumstances will make the situation worse.

15. Stallions should be handled by experienced persons. The temperament for the stallion must be taken into consideration and he should not be taken to a show ground if he is likely to be a danger to anyone present. If it is the opinion of the show staff that the stallion may cause an accident to any person or horse at the show ground, the stallion will be disqualified and asked to leave the show ground. Any appeals should be made to the secretary/organiser once the horse has been successfully loaded.

Conduct and responsibilities of competitors.

16. Competitors must consider the health and safety of other competitors, spectators and those working and assisting at the show.

17. No competitor should behave in an aggressive or offensive manner.

18. By entering the competitor has agree to abide by the rules, code of conduct and guidelines set by the show organisers.

19. Under the Welfare Acts, the parents / guardians of under 16 year olds are responsible for the welfare of their children's animals.

20. Handlers should recognise potential problems and keep a good distance from any individual having difficulties controlling their horse.

21. Every competitor should keep a safe distance away from other horses.

22. Competitors should follow instructions from the show stewards and judges.

23. The judges decision is final. No competitor should argue with the show steward or judge. There is an appeals process that can be followed after the class.

24. Blatantly dangerous and irresponsible handling of the horse may result in the competitor being eliminated.

Discipline of the horse

25. Any method used to discipline the horse should be proportionate and applied at the correct time.

26. The following actions are not acceptable ;

- Disciplining the horse for its behaviour in the show ring after it has left the ring
- Use of a whip around the horse's head; kicking of a horse in its belly or rib area
- The competitor venting their anger and frustration by hitting or rough handling of the horse.

27. All accidents must be reported to one of the show organisers.

28. The health and safety of all those who attend the show ground is vital. With this in mind every person attending will be required to sign in with their arrival time and a contact number and sign out on departure; this enables us to account for all those attending. At our area and spring show this will be at the secretary's desk, and at our Grand Champs this will be at our Stable Managers table situated in the permanent stable block.

Please ensure you familiarise yourself with our [MHCGB Code of Conduct](#) and [MHCGB Show Rules](#) which are also available on our website - www.MHCGB.co.uk