

Rule Change Type	Effective Date	Draft Received	Board Action
Standard	12/1/2023	5/1/2023	

Rule Change Intent

This rule change addresses two identified problems within the sport:

I. An inability to attract sufficiently educated and capable volunteer equipment checkers who can safely manually evaluate the legality of bits while in the horse's mouth, immediately following the test. (Reported anecdotally by management at all levels of dressage competitions across all USDF regions)

II. The bit making industry has exploded in recent years, in both materials and computer assisted design and manufacture. This has resulted in a plethora of bits with often minute characteristics that render a bit permitted or not permitted in competition. Similar design issues also apply to bridles, often promoted as "anatomically designed" that may or may not be permitted according to USEF Dressage rules.

The result is that this equipment is best evaluated by the educated TD/Steward, when properly assembled and inspected off the horse, at the competition.

The traditional volunteer Equipment Checker will continue responsibility (under the TDs direction and wearing new non-latex gloves, on each hand) for each inspection, checking a minimum of 1/3 of rider/horse in each class after the ride: cavesson tightness, bridle style, curb chain, spurs, if worn, evidence of blood, fly hoods and whips. They will no longer check bits in the mouth.

The TD retains authority to additionally conduct a physical inspection of equipment at the ring immediately following competition, at their discretion. New non-latex gloves worn on each hand are required.

HOW THIS WILL BE APPLIED:

The TD is responsible for checking a minimum of 50% of the assembled bits and bridles of horses entered. This should be done primarily in the barns or haul in area. The TD may conduct some full equipment checks at the arena after the test has been completed.

Equipment that is hung outside stalls and trailers can be inspected there. If equipment is in a private tack stall either a representative must be present, or grant permission for the TD to enter that space. IF the equipment requires more than a visual check, official should wear a clean glove.

Proponent Details	Contact Information
Dressage	Lauren Moore lmoore@usef.org
Linked Rules	Comments

Committee Actions

Competition Management

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 04/04/2023

Connemara

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 04/28/2023

Draft 1: The committee disapproves of the Technical Delegates for Open Dressage classes having to check bits and bridles prior to the class, this leaves open the opportunity for tack to be switched before the test begins. The committee also feels that the Technical Delegate may not have time to check bits and bridles and that the current practice of this responsibility being under the ring steward is more appropriate. The committee also recommends that the word "new" is added to any place in the proposal where disposable gloves being used. The committee feels the distinction between "disposable gloves" and "new disposable gloves" is very important to ensure those doing the inspections are always utilizing clean/new gloves for every horse/pony.

Council - Intl Discipline

Council - Member Services

Draft 2: Recommends Disapproval 05/09/2023

Draft 2: The Council disagrees with this rule change proposal calling for bits/bridles to be inspected "utilizing methods, timeframe(s) and location(s) identified by competition management." The Council feels that performing inspections prior to competition potentially presents a hardship for competitors who trailer in and out for only a portion of the competition and who may not otherwise be present at the time the inspections are performed. Additionally, this method of testing does not guarantee compliance with equipment requirements when the horse actually competes.

Dressage

Friesian

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 04/26/2023

Draft 1: The committee disagrees with bridles and bits being checked for Open to all breed Dressage classes prior to the class. The committee feels that checking the bits and bridles prior to the class during a time at which the competition decides on, could lead to the switching of tack before the horse competes. The committee recognizes that random checks will be performed immediately after a ride is complete, but that number is not defined as per the current proposal. The committee would also like additional information to be added regarding the reporting of which horses were checked.

Human and Equine, Safety & Welfare

Licensed Officials

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/01/2023

Draft 1: The Committee appreciates the flexibility competitors and TDs would benefit from by having times/locations identified to present bits and bridles to the TD. However, if implemented, the LOC is concerned that not all tack would be inspected while it is on the horse/pony at the conclusion of a test (only 50%), such as the tightness of nosebands, curb chains laying flat, etc.

Natl Breed & Disciplines Council - Advisory

Draft 2: Recommends Disapproval 05/09/2023

Draft 2: The Advisory Group disapproved of the rule change because there were concerns regarding competition management choosing the time when tack could be inspected and if there's too much time in between the class and the inspection, the exhibitor could switch tack. The Advisory Group agrees with the breed committees that there are no reporting guidelines.

USDF

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 05/04/2023

Draft 1: No additional comment

Draft 2: Recommends Approval 05/17/2023

Draft 2: No additional comment

DR126 Requirements for Dressage Competition Management.

2.i. Ring Stewards and supervision of schooling areas.

1. Tack Inspections. Inspection of saddlery and **equipment (except bits)** must be done at the direction of the technical delegate. Ring stewards appointed by competition management are required to inspect the saddlery, dress and equipment worn by at least one-third of the horses in a class immediately as the horse leaves the arena **using a new disposable protective glove on each hand for each horse**. In USEF/USDF Championship classes, saddlery, dress and equipment inspections are required for each horse. When an inspection is conducted, all equipment including fly hoods, nosebands, **curb chains**, whips, and spurs on both sides must be inspected. **The ring steward must also inspect the horse for evidence of blood.**

1. a. Exhibitors must present bridles and bits to the technical delegate for inspection utilizing the methods, timeframe(s) and location(s) identified by competition management with the agreement of the technical delegate. These methods must be communicated to the competitors prior to the start of the competition. The technical delegate must inspect at least 50% of the bits and bridles of horses entered in the competition. Technical Delegates must also conduct random ringside bit checks immediately after rides are completed, some of which can be included in the 50%, using a new disposable protective glove on each hand for each horse.

1.b. Inspection of saddlery and equipment is not required nor advised for group classes such as Dressage Seat Equitation and Materiale. When close inspection of saddlery, bits and equipment is required in order to determine compliance with DR 121 or other equipment provisions, a TD shall accompany the horse to its stall, trailer or other designated area to conduct such equipment inspections.

1.c. In Breed restricted classes at Regular competitions, a ring steward, at the direction of the technical delegate or C2 Steward (if eligible for the classes held), will do a hands-on inspection of saddlery and equipment including bits of at least one-third of the horses in a class immediately as the horse leaves the arena. New disposable protective gloves must be utilized with one on each hand for each horse.

DR206 Equipment and Turn Out.

8. Bit and saddlery inspections, **conducted by a ring steward**, as described in DR126.2.i.1, are not required nor are advised for DSHB classes. **However, exhibitors must present bridles and bits to the Technical Delegate for inspection utilizing the methods, timeframe(s) and location(s) as communicated by competition management prior to the start of competition, with agreement of the technical delegate. The Technical Delegate must inspect at least 50% of the bits and bridles of the horses entered in the DSHB competition that are presented in a bridle. During competition,** when close inspection of saddlery, equipment or bits is required in order to determine compliance with DR 121 or other equipment provisions, a TD must accompany a horse to its stall, trailer or other designated area to inspect such items when they are removed from the horse.