

# **ECTRA RIDER/DRIVER HANDBOOK**

## **Introduction to Competitive Trail Riding and Driving and Safety Issues**

**ECTRA (Eastern Competitive Trail Ride Association, Inc.)**

**ECTRA WEB SITE:** [www.ectra.org](http://www.ectra.org)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Distance riding is a team sport. It offers you the chance to enjoy the countryside and learn an incredible amount about the other member of your team: your horse. It is a sport full of supportive people who are happy to help out newcomers to the sport. At competitions, you will often get the chance to ride in beautiful areas that you might otherwise never see. You may also find yourself in the middle of nowhere with nobody to rely on but yourself and your horse.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide an overview of the preparation and format of the event as well as to discuss safety aspects of the sport. Hopefully it will help the rookie distance rider make an easier entrance into competition and perhaps give the experienced rider a few tips. There is more to safety than just being careful. Proper training, knowledge of the sport and practical equipment can help you ride with more confidence.

Remember, as in most endeavors, everybody knows a trick or two, but few people know all the tricks. Let this booklet serve as a guide but do not rely on it to be the absolute gospel of safety or a “how to” guide for getting involved in the sport, it is just an introduction. Whenever possible, talk to experienced people who have already been through the adventure. They may be able to help you avoid their most embarrassing mistakes. There are two main types of distance trail competitions.

**Competitive Trail Riding and Driving (CTR):** In competitive trail riding (CTR) or driving, the trail must be completed within a set amount of time. Horses that finish early or late receive time penalties. All horses that complete the distance within the prescribed amount of time are judged against themselves. This is accomplished by pre-ride judging and post-ride judging which allows the judges to subtract points for changes in the individual horse including those caused by fatigue, metabolic difficulties, rubs, etc..

**Endurance Riding:** Endurance is a different type of distance trail competition in which the horse/rider team is judged against the other competitors. In this type of competition, the first horse that crosses the finish line “fit to continue” wins the event.

## **PREPARING FOR COMPETITION - EDUCATION AND EQUIPMENT**

Careful planning for a ride makes the experience more enjoyable and less stressful. Often accidents and mishaps can be avoided by some advance preparation. Even though distance riding may be a new endeavor for you, much can be done to minimize the stress on you and your horse. The following steps may aid in preparation.

### **Learning About the Sport**

There are many ways one can learn about distance riding. One of the best is to join a trail riding organization. By joining ECTRA and other national, regional and local trail riding organizations, you will become part of a network of trail riders. By joining ECTRA, you will receive a rulebook, which will explain the sport of competitive trail riding, and a newsletter, which will list upcoming rides and clinics, as well as provide news about the organization and its members. It is a good idea to read the rulebook carefully and ask questions about what you don't understand. Many local clubs put on clinics to help people get started in distance riding, including both lectures and practice rides. There have been numerous good books written on the subject and several magazines are devoted to trail riding. A good way to start is to volunteer to work on a ride. Workers are always welcome and it's a great way to see the sport in action.

### **Start with a Healthy Horse**

Most sound, healthy horses can compete in distance rides, as long as they have been adequately prepared. Because trail riding is a fairly strenuous sport, you want to be sure that your horse is as healthy as possible. Check his health records to make sure that he's up to date on all of his vaccinations (including rabies), deworming, teeth floating and has a current Coggins test (for equine

infectious anemia). It is important to time routine health care such as vaccinations and deworming so that they are never performed within one week of a competition. Evaluate his weight and diet and adjust his feed accordingly. Some riders like to have their vet examine their horses in the spring and perform certain blood tests to check for various deficiencies (i.e. Vitamin E - Selenium levels, etc). If your horse requires supplements of any kind, ECTRA's veterinary committee can advise you whether the horse can compete while taking it or how far in advance of a ride the substance should be withdrawn. Make sure that your horse always has access to fresh water, salt and minerals and is given a balanced diet.

### **Shoeing**

Proper shoeing is critical for distance horses. Most riders like to plan out their shoeing schedule for the season, to ensure that the horse will be recently shod before the important rides. Often as a rider begins conditioning his horse, he discovers that shoeing modifications are needed to correct such problems as forging and interfering. Sometimes the terrain dictates specific shoeing, such as adding pads for rocky trails, borium if the horse is often on pavement or clips if the horse tends to lose shoes frequently. There are many different theories on shoeing and often it requires some experimentation to find what is best for your horse. Some riders keep a set of extra pre-fitted shoes to take to rides to use in an emergency. Most distance riders also carry protection in case a shoe is lost on trail, such as an Easyboot®, which can be used to replace a lost shoe until there is access to a farrier. Keep in mind that new Easyboots® may need to have the heel trimmed to prevent rubbing. Some riders drill small holes in the bottom of the boot to keep them from becoming waterlogged.

### **Selection Of Tack**

Before starting a conditioning program, it is wise to evaluate your tack in terms of comfort, fit and safety. Everything you use should be in good condition and fit the rider and horse well. Because the horse is under saddle for long periods of time, most riders use more padding than they would in casual riding, particularly in the back and girth areas.

A variety of specialized endurance tack is available on the market. Endurance saddles tend to be lighter than either traditional English or Western saddles. They also generally come with more rings for attaching the items needed for long rides. These saddles often have more options available for rigging and fitting them to the horse. Many of the specialty saddles are of a hybrid design that incorporate both a wide comfortable seat and close contact. While any kind of saddle can be used, it is essential that it fit your horse properly. A badly fitted saddle might be annoying to your horse during a relatively short exercise period in the ring, but it can cause serious harm during a long ride. If you are in a position to purchase a new saddle, research your options. Talk to veteran distance riders about what they have discovered. If you can, borrow different types of saddles and see how they fit your horse. Discount a saddle that does not fit your horse! Do not think that you can compensate for a poor fit by loading up with pads.

Many distance riding bridles have easily removable bits, a full noseband with a halter ring and reins with snaps instead of buckles. This makes it easy to convert a bridle into a halter without having to carry extra tack. Hackamores or bosals are also used by many trail riders. Because trail riding can require steep ascents and descents, some competitors use breastplates and/or cruppers to help keep the saddle in place. A breastplate also offers adds places to attach equipment such as sponges, stethoscope case, etc.

Many riders use wide, lightweight stirrups made from a variety of materials such as plastic or aluminum. The wide platform for the foot is more comfortable for extended time in the saddle. For their own comfort, some riders add padding to their stirrups with Vetrap® or other cushioning material to absorb concussion and give added traction. Stirrup straps can be covered with fleece to minimize rubbing.

Over the years, there has been an informal safety debate about riding footwear. Traditional wisdom dictates heels so that the rider's foot cannot slip through the stirrup. Distance riders tend to wear running or hiking shoes. Many of the endurance type stirrups have such a long platform that it is unlikely to allow the foot to slide far enough forward to get caught. Additionally, many stirrups now are available with toe guards or cages to reduce this risk. Once again, this is a subject that requires individual decision as to what is safest and most comfortable.

Because distance riding often involves getting dirty and muddy, many riders choose tack which can easily be cleaned. One way to minimize the cleaning task is to limit the use of leather. Bridles, reins, breastplates, cruppers, stirrup straps and saddle rigging are available in nylon, biothane or opothane. There are a variety of cinches made of nylon and covered with fleece, felt, mohair or neoprene.

Any type of harness or cart is appropriate for drives with the exception of pneumatic tires. As with riding tack, proper fit is very important. Extra padding may be used on the breast collar and saddle if desired. Spares and a SMV (slow moving vehicle) sign are required (see list at end of booklet) and should be securely carried in the cart.

Condition your horse using the tack and equipment that you intend to use in competition. Basically, you want to carry anything with you that you absolutely need during a competition. Ride management may plan to take your gear out on trail for you, but you should be prepared to care for your horse without outside help.

### **Selection of Clothing and Equipment**

Comfort and safety should be the major concern when selecting clothing. A well-fitted ASTM/SEI approved helmet should always be worn when mounted. If you will be riding in the woods, consider protecting your eyes as well as your head. Sunglasses or even clear safety glasses can save the rider from taking a branch in the eye. Shoes should be comfortable for riding. Consider shoes with soles that do not slide around in the stirrups even when wet or muddy.

This is one equestrian sport where you can wear what you like. When selecting clothing, remember there's a good chance you will get wet. So select clothing that dries quickly, doesn't chafe when wet, won't gain excessive weight in the rain, and doesn't shrink. Carrying gloves and a water repellent jacket or poncho is a good idea for cold, rainy weather. In addition to tack and riding suppliers, look at clothing developed for other outdoor sports such as biking and running. Remember that layered clothing tends to be warmer than one heavy item, and layering allows the option of removing individual layers as conditions warrant. If you are doing a lot of summer riding, remember that light colors are cooler.

Riders carry a variety of equipment. Appendix A contains a sample list of supplies to be carried on a horse. It is neither inclusive nor exclusive. It is a list of the many items which competitors may consider carrying. At a minimum, a rider needs a watch. Also, if the day is hot or humid it is a good idea to carry a sponge or scoop so that you can cool your horse at natural water crossings.

Equipment can be attached to the tack or be carried by the rider. If you choose to use a fanny pack, take care to ensure that anything in it will not hurt you in case of a fall (i.e. you would not want an Easyboot® in your kidney). Equipment carried on your horse should be well secured. Be wary of dangling straps and objects banging against your horse. Trigger snaps are good for attaching things to your tack. As with clothing, outdoor suppliers are good places to find pouches and packs.

Drivers have the advantage of being able to carry extra clothing, food and equipment in their carts. Care should be taken that it is secured properly so that it does not fall out or interfere with the horse or driver.

## **PREPARING FOR COMPETITION - CONDITIONING AND TRAINING**

How well the horse has been prepared for the competition often determines how successful the event will be for the team. The purpose of conditioning is to prepare the horse and rider team to meet the physical and mental challenges of trail riding. This conditioning is a period of training the horse to deal with different situations, as well as physically toughening your horse for the sport. The time spent conditioning can be invaluable in getting to know your horse.

### **Mental Conditioning**

The preparation phase should include mental conditioning and schooling. This phase is the appropriate time to expose your horse to as many different stimuli as possible. Begin by getting him accustomed to being handled by several people at once. Get him used to having his pulse, respiration and temperature taken by different people. Note the horse's resting levels. Try to have friends simulate the vet exam while you hold him, i.e., handle his legs and feet, palpate the tack area and mucous membranes, etc. Practice trotting him in hand, in a figure eight, and circling in both directions. Get him used to accepting electrolytes. Learn techniques that relax your horse.

Under saddle the mental conditioning should continue. Try to acclimate your horse to as many different conditions as possible. Get him on roads and accustomed to traffic, cows, pigs, trucks, dogs, mailboxes, bicycles, motorcycles, roller blades, bridges, etc. Try to get him through various streams and other water sources and get him used to drinking from various sources away from home, including a scoop. Practice sponging him from the saddle. Get him used to rain slickers, straps and scoops. Use all of the equipment you intend to compete with so the horse is used to the sounds and feel of them.

If possible ride with several other people so the horse gets accustomed to being in a group. Ride him at the front, middle and back of the group and get him used to passing other horses and being passed. If your horse gets harder to handle when ridden in groups or out in the open, you may want to use a stronger bit, or add a martingale for more control. You may want to consider taking riding lessons with your horse to improve your communication and control. The tack should be kept as simple as possible because you will be sponging, etc., For this reason, most riders tend to stay away from full cheek bits and double sets of reins. Whatever you choose, keep in mind that your horse needs to be able to eat and drink while bridled. Most importantly, don't assume that what seems to work at first is the permanent solution. As you and your horse accumulate mileage, you will probably have to make adjustments.

### **Physical Conditioning**

Most riders set out a schedule several months before their first ride. As the weeks progress, the workouts increase, first in duration, and later in speed. The horse should be ridden on a variety of terrain, especially on hills. During the workout the rider can monitor the horse's recovery by taking his pulse and respiration, immediately after dismounting and again every 10 minutes to see how long it takes him to return to his resting level. After each workout it is important to check that the tack is not causing any problems. Check that the girth, bit and straps have not rubbed him. Carefully go over his back, checking that the horse is sweating evenly under the saddle and that there are no swellings or hair loss. Sometimes, as the horse gets fit, the shape of his back changes enough to require modifications in his saddle or extra padding. It is also important to examine the legs after each workout for swelling, heat or interference marks. The rider can track the horse's progress by taking the horse's pulse and respiration before starting the ride, immediately after the ride and every

ten minutes until the horse returns to his resting rate. As the horse gets fitter, the recovery time will decrease.

While conditioning, it's a good idea to travel over a measured course and keep track of the time required to travel each mile. This will make pacing during an actual ride much easier. Observe the horse's normal tendencies toward eating and drinking on the trail so that you will be able to identify abnormal behavior.

It cannot be stressed enough that your horse may need electrolytes as his stress levels are raised by increasing his training. Find trail riding literature on the subject. Talk to your veterinarian and experienced trail riders about when and when not to administer electrolytes. There are many kinds available on the market, including some especially formulated for distance riding. There are different theories on how to administer electrolytes, although more and more riders mix the electrolytes with water or applesauce for dosing with an oral syringe. **You will have to decide what is best for your horse.** When your horse is working hard for hours at a time, you will be responsible for replacing the specific salts being lost to cool that magnificent engine that keeps your horse going.

Be sure to condition in all types of weather, as a ride will be held regardless of weather conditions. The horse needs to become adjusted to heat and humidity gradually rather than facing it for the first time in a competition. It is also beneficial to ride in the rain (but not much fun!) as you will be able to identify any problem areas in your clothing or tack when they get wet. Below is a sample schedule that would prepare a horse and rider for a 25 mile ride. CTRs should be performed at an average speed of 6.5 miles per hour. It takes 2 to 3 months to properly condition skeletal muscle and the cardiovascular system for shorter distance CTRs. For the longer rides, it is important to remember that it requires 2 to 3 years to properly condition the denser tissues such as ligaments and bone. This gradual toughening is critical to minimize risk of injury.

Here are two different conditioning schedules, which you can use as guidelines for preparing your horse for a 25 mile CTR:

#### **Plan 1**

Week 1 - three to five miles a day at a brisk walk.

Week 2 - five miles a day gradually increasing to a trot.

Week 3 - five miles a day with one 10 mile day.

Week 4 - five miles a day with one 10 mile day in 2 hrs.

Week 5 - five miles a day with one 15 mile day in 2 1/2 hrs.

Week 6 - five miles a day with one 20 mile day.

Week 7 - five miles a day with one 20 mile day in 3 hrs.

Week 8 - five miles a day. Day off with light exercise before the ride.

#### **Plan 2**

WEEK 1: Ride 4 to 5 days, 5 miles each day at a strong walk & slow jog. 7-10 hrs. ride time.

WEEK 2: Ride 4 to 5 days, 5 miles each day, with one 10 mile day, at a strong walk and moderate trot. 7-10 hrs. ride time.

WEEK 3: Ride 4 to 5 days, 5 miles each day, with one 10 miles in 2 ½ hours, slow and moderate trot, and walking. On your 10 mile ride practice extended trot. 9-11 hrs. ride time.

WEEK 4: Ride 4 to 5 days, 5 miles each day, with one 15 miles in 3 ½ hrs. Ride at a moderate trot (7-8 mph) for 10 minutes each day, and work on extended trot. Slow canter on the flat 2 minutes each day. On the 15 mile day do two 10 minute trotting sessions. 9 ½ to 12 hrs. ride time.

WEEK 5: Ride 4 to 5 days, 5 miles a day, with one 20 miles in 4 ½ to 5 hrs. Work on maintaining a 7-8 mph trot for longer than 10 minutes at a time. Slow canter 2-3 minutes twice each day with transitions to extended trot, working trot and fast walk. 10 ½ to 13 hrs. ride time.

WEEK 6: Ride 3 to 4 days, 10 miles each day. Work on transitions at the trot. Your horse should now have 3 distinct trotting speeds. Give the day off before your competition.

GOOD LUCK & HAVE FUN!!

**NOTE:** Each horse is an individual. Keep a chart to monitor his pulse and respiration recoveries, as these are the best indicators of fitness level. Carry a sponge on a strap while riding and sponge your horse's neck often to help him cool. There are many, many tips and tools. Find a "mentor" to help you and your horse get ready for competition. If your horse has been a "pasture potato" or has been ill, have your veterinarian evaluate him prior to beginning this training schedule. It is also important to remember that your horse will need time off for rebuilding the tissues you are conditioning.

Depending on the speed and distance you are conditioning, 2 to 3 days off per week may be necessary.

### **Safety Factors on Conditioning Rides**

It is always safer to condition with another rider. If this is not possible, make sure that someone is told where you are going and how long you intend to be out. It is wise to carry identification on your person and also attached to the horse in the unfortunate event that the two of you become separated. Pet ID tags can be attached to the bridle.

Remember that accidents can happen on pleasure or training rides and it is best to be prepared for emergencies. It can be helpful to carry a small first aid kit, a knife, some leather or string to make minor tack repairs, an Easyboot® and **always wear a helmet!** Every rider customizes his or her own list of essentials but remember that you have to retain consciousness to use them. **So, always wear a helmet!** You might as well get used to it because **ASTM approved helmets are required on ECTRA rides.**

If you have an excitable horse or would just like to add some additional protection, a variety of safety equipment is available for riding such as back protector vests, safety glasses, safety stirrups, etc. There is also equipment available for the horse's safety such as interference boots, rump rugs, etc. However, interference boots are not allowed in CTR competition. Likewise, many substances that may seem very benign are not allowed, such as liniments, ice, or rubbing alcohol. However, some of these items are allowed in endurance. It is critical to read the rulebook and ask prior to an event if you have any questions. Check with the Drug Committee if your horse is on any kind of medication or supplements since many are illegal in competition.

Make sure that you are familiar with the local hunting seasons and, if there is a chance of hunters being out, be sure to wear blaze orange and equip your horse with a bell. If you plan to be out after dark, make sure that you wear reflective material on you and your horse and carry a flashlight. In many jurisdictions, this is a legal mandate as well as good common sense. The reflective vests made for runners make a rider more visible at dusk, in the fog, or in the rain.

### **Weather Considerations**

In both training rides and in competition, the weather can have a large impact on your horse's performance. By careful observation, you can learn how to help your horse cope with weather changes.

Larger and/or heavily muscled horses often have a more difficult time coping with heat. The rider can help the horse by clipping him (even in the summer if the horse has a heavy coat), altering electrolyte dosages, sponging more often and by encouraging the horse to drink as often as possible. Many riders carry a scoop, which can be used to quickly put copious amounts of water on a horse. It can also be used to offer the horse a drink when the water is not easily accessible for the horse.

Horses adjust to the heat of summer gradually so be particularly careful during the early hot spells. It is also very important to ensure that you are taking care of your own needs in the heat by drinking



plenty of liquids. Dunking your head in the water or tying a wet bandanna around your neck will help remove heat from your body. Remember to use sun block to protect yourself from excessive sun exposure.

Cold and wet weather produces different challenges for the horse and rider. Some horses tend to chill easily and shiver. In severe weather, where the going might be slow, a rump rug can protect the hindquarters and keep the horse more comfortable. There are waterproof, lined rump rugs specifically designed to attach behind the saddle for extended riding in bad weather. It is also wise to carry a space blanket or a poncho to cover your horse if you need to stop in cold weather.

If you are spending a weekend at a ride, remember that weather can go through dramatic changes. It doesn't hurt to pack some extra covers for your horse and yourself. Learn about layering your garments so you can adjust to weather changes. Layering also works for your horse. Sometimes, a rain sheet on top of an anti-sweat sheet is preferable to a rug. Think about how to best handle bad weather because it is hard to enjoy a ride when you are cold, wet and miserable.

### **TRAILERING CONSIDERATIONS**

Before trailering your horse to a competition it is wise to do a thorough safety inspection of the trailer. Check the floor for any sign of rotting. Ensure that the brakes and lights are functioning correctly, the tires are safe and have adequate pressure, and a spare is available. Make sure the license and inspection sticker (if needed) are current, that the hitch is secure and that there are no wasp nests inside. If the trailer has an electric emergency braking system, check its battery.

Check that the towing vehicle is in good working order and that all fluid levels are topped off. Carry some basic tools and supplies for emergencies (i.e., flares, jumper cables, tools, flashlight, CB, maps, rope, jack, trailer jack, water, motor oil, brake fluid, wheel chocks, extra lights, fuses, etc.).

Many riders like to protect their horse's legs with shipping boots or support wraps. If the trailer has a low roof you may want to use a head bumper. Make sure that the horse is adequately blanketed for the weather. If the journey is long, you will need to stop periodically and offer the horse water and a chance to urinate.

Sometimes riders from the same area travel in caravans. If so, you can select a channel on the CB radio to communicate with each other. Call the ride manager ahead of time and ask for the best route to the ride, as maps can be deceiving when hauling a big rig.

Make an emergency plan in case of breakdown. Compile a list of phone numbers of people with trailers or vehicles with compatible hitches whom could possibly trailer your horse in the event of a breakdown. Make sure that you have a little extra hay, water and cash in case of a breakdown.

### **CAMPING CONSIDERATIONS**

Plan how you will camp with your horse and set up a 'practice camp' at home. You can use a picket line, a corral made of electric fencing, PVC or other materials, or tie the horse to the trailer.

When selecting a means of securing your horse overnight, keep his personality in mind. Does he tie well or does he panic easily and break lead ropes? Does he respect an electric fence? Most people use either a small portable paddock or a picket line, as tying to the trailer is fairly restrictive for the horse. If you do tie to the trailer, be careful that no sharp edges are exposed. Duct tape can be used to tape up sharp areas (i.e. license plates). Buckets and hay nets should be hung so they are high enough that the horse cannot catch his foot in it and low enough to be accessible.

If you wish to try a portable corral or a picket line and are unfamiliar with how to set one up, refer to Appendix D for some guidelines. Whichever method you choose, make sure that the horse is used to it before you get to the ride.

If you have some choice in selecting your campsite when you arrive at the ride, keep the following in mind:

- How far is it from the check-in and vetting areas?
  - How far is it from the porta potties and water?
    - Is there shade and/ or grass available?
    - Is it near stallions?
    - Is it clear of holes, stumps, rocks, etc.?

Consider putting reflective material on your horse's halter and tail and some additional reflective markers around your campsite. It is also advisable to have some identification on your horse's halter.

## **THE RIDE**

### **Pre-Ride Considerations**

After you set up your camp, you will check into the ride and have your horse vetted in. If you have any concerns about your horse, discuss them with the veterinarian. The judges want you to finish the ride with your horse in good shape. If the judges don't notice any pre-existing scrapes or swelling on your horse's tack area or legs, be sure to declare those problem areas. Something that might be missed before the ride, could be unfairly counted against your horse after the ride.

Your ride experience will be easier if you set up everything you'll need for the competition well before the ride starts. Since many rides start at first light, you would do well to use the night before to:

- Prepare and pack electrolytes,
  - Fill drinking and wash water buckets for post ride use
  - Assemble a midpoint bag with covers, hay, carrots, etc.
  - Recheck your tack and gear

If you have time, tack up and take a short ride just to make sure that you really got to the ride with all your equipment. 5 AM is a really distressing time to find out your girth is at home. Also, if you can actually get out on a bit of the trail, it will be somewhat familiar for your horse during the excitement of the start of the ride.

The ride management staff will hold a pre-ride briefing to familiarize the riders with the trail and to explain how the hold(s) will be handled. Do not hesitate to ask questions about anything that you do not understand.

The morning of the ride, if you give your horse grain for breakfast, do it at least one and a half hours before the ride. Do not ask your horse to work right away with a heavy stomach. Arrange your post ride gear covers, halter or anything else you might need so that it will be convenient. If it is going to be a hot day, you can cover your buckets of water. A space blanket, silver side up, over your buckets will keep them cool even after hours in the blazing sun. Conversely, silver side down will keep your water warmer in cold weather.

Allow plenty of time for tacking up. It may still be dark and not as easy as in daylight. Do not forget to take care of your own needs during the rush of dawn activities. You want to feel as good as possible so you can concentrate on taking care of your horse.

### **Riding Considerations**

The start of a ride can be very exciting for the horse and the rider. It is advantageous to be ready to ride 20-30 minutes before the start. Get on your horse and start a slow warm-up. If possible, try to warm up both away from other horses and with them. You might be in a group all day or you might end up alone. You and your horse should be prepared for anything.

Because they are herd animals, horses are often happiest traveling with at least one other horse. Ideally, if a young horse can pair up with a veteran trail horse, the ride will probably be easier for the rookie. The more experienced horses usually maintain a steadier pace and can help lead a young horse through water, unusual terrain and potentially scary problems. A word of warning; be careful

to ride with a horse whose pace more or less matches your own horse's way of going. That veteran horse may also be capable of going faster than your horse.

Drivers are usually given a 15 minute window to start. This means that you can start any time in the window and that your time will start when you pass the starting line. Drivers can discuss amongst themselves who wishes to start where depending on the pace of their horses. Riders usually start 10-15 minutes after the last driver. Should a rider catch up to the drivers, he should ask permission to pass before doing so. Riders may be started in small groups or every 30 to 60 seconds depending on the CTR.

On the standard Competitive Trail Ride, you need to take about 45 minutes for each five mile segment. This is where your pre-ride briefing can be handy. If you were warned that the second five miles of the trail consists of steep, hard climbs, you would need to plan to make up time somewhere on the flat areas so you can take more time when you need to. As a general suggestion, you should try to cover more ground when it is cool or flat. In other words, go harder when it is easy and go easier when the going is hard. There is no minimum time for endurance competitions.

The trail will most likely be marked with surveyor's tape or some similar confidence markers. Be aware of trail markings. If you feel you have lost the marked trail, try to backtrack to the last marker you passed. Be aware of hoof prints and other evidence suggesting the direction of the ride. Unfortunately, sometimes vandals damage trail markings.

Keep a safe distance from other horses and assume that any horse on the ride (including your own) may kick. Remember that you know what the horse has been conditioned to do and, hopefully, you know how he reacts to other horses. It's a good idea to tie a red ribbon in your horse's tail unless you're absolutely certain that he will never kick under any circumstance. If riding a stallion, you must put a yellow ribbon in his tail.

As with your conditioning program, be aware of the weather on the day of the ride. If it's cold or raining, consider taking a rump rug with you to cover the horse's hindquarters at the P & R hold and during any slow periods. If it is hot, you need to be very careful with an inexperienced horse. Unless it is a cold or very wet day, be sure that you sponge your horse at every opportunity and encourage him to drink. Give him electrolytes. Make sure you also take care of yourself by drinking plenty of fluids.

If your horse seems out of sorts, stop and encourage him to eat some grass. Ask other riders to watch him. If you need to stop riding, tell the next rider who passes you to tell the ride management that you need help. Make sure that you stay in place on the trail so they can find you.

### **Hold and After-Ride Judging**

The periods at the hold and before the final vetting are times to rest the horse and get his pulse, respiration and temperature down, without cooling off the big muscles too fast. Ideally the rider wants to approach the hold at a slower pace so the horse begins to cool off before his hold time starts. If it's chilly, it is a good idea to cover his hindquarters with a blanket or even a jacket. Unless it is very cold, the horse is generally cooled by being sponged with water, paying particular attention to the throat, neck, stomach, legs and groin. Generally you want to avoid putting water on the back and loins of the horse so that the large muscles are not chilled. Most riders encourage their horse to drink and nibble at grass while cooling them. A few minutes before the pulse is taken, it is often beneficial to stop the horse from eating and encourage him to stand quietly.

Once the horse has passed his pulse and respiration (P & R) check (10 minutes after entering the hold on a CTR), he will be checked by the vet for lameness, metabolics and excessive fatigue. If you have any concerns about the way your horse has been going on the trail, be sure to discuss them with the vet. The vet and lay judge want to help you get through the ride safely. The competitor must stay in the hold area for 20 minutes, however he or she can take more time if desired.

A 20 minute hold is too short to unhook driving horses. Because the driver must care for his horse while hooked, it is encouraged that he request assistance. If the horse is to be moved any distance, the driver should be in the cart. The hold vet exam and trot out is performed with the driver in the cart. At the end of the drive, horses have a 30-minute period before P&R's in order to allow time for unhooking and unharnessing.

### **JUDGING**

In CTR, judging focuses on changes in individual horses from the pre to post evaluation with the goal of judging the individual horse against him or herself. For this reason, all breeds can compete successfully in competitive trail riding.

### **AFTER - RIDE CARE**

Once your horse has been completely vetted out (BOTH hands-on and trot-out) or judged, you are finished. Some riders like to rub down their horses' legs with liniment or mineral ice and then wrap the legs. If your horse has sustained any cuts or rubs on the ride, they can be treated at this time. If it's chilly, the horse can be covered and left to rest with plenty of water and hay or grass. Remember that a tired and sore horse should be kept slightly warmer than a fresh horse. Keep an eye on them for a while and make sure that they appear comfortable and are eating and drinking. Some people like to feed their horse a mixture of bran or beet pulp and water. If it's been a long, hard ride and you have a long trip home, you may want to consider spending the night so you and your horse will be well rested for the journey. The day after the ride, jog the horse for soundness and check his legs and tack area for swellings and soreness.

### **MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

Ride management can contribute to ensuring everyone's safety by doing some advance planning. One factor that is extremely important is communications. Having a telephone easily accessible throughout the ride is very important. With the advent of cellular phones, it becomes easier to contact medical help in a hurry. CB radios or HAM radio operators also offer ride management a way to communicate with each other and keep track of riders. The ride manager should have a small first aid kit to help with minor emergencies. Frozen ice packs can be extremely useful, along with aspirin, Band-Aids, and a space blanket.

If the ride is held during the heat of summer, plenty of liquids should be available for both horse and rider. Sometimes riders forget to drink and become disoriented, so it is important to encourage them to drink liquids. If possible it is optimal to have some shade at the rest stop. If the ride is held during the cold months, consider packing some extra clothing, horse blankets and space blankets in case a rider or horse becomes chilled. Rides that cross heavily traveled roads should be manned with crossing guards, however, all riders must ultimately be responsible for their own safety when riding in traffic. Sufficient checkpoints should occur in the ride so that no rider is out of touch for a great period of time. Consider the trail and how you could get help to someone anywhere on the trail if needed.

## Appendix A Suggested List of Items to Carry on a Ride

Saddle	Crupper	Girth	Breastplate	Bridle	Bit	Pad
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### So much for the obvious stuff.

Hoof Pick	Easyboot®	Bandanna	Aspirin	Knife	Fly Bonnet	Chapstick
Space Blanket	Kleenex	Gloves	1st Aid Kit	Water Bottle	Rain Slicker	Fly Spray
Helmet	People Food	Electrolytes	Vetrap®	Whistle	Sponge	Carrots
Watch(s)	Vet Card	Map		Extra Trigger Snap		
	Lengths of Rawhide or Cord			Stethoscope or Heart Monitor		

Yes, this looks like a lot of stuff but there is little weight here and with practice this can be a compact load.

## Appendix B Suggested List of Items to Send to a Hold

Note - Make sure items are marked with your name. Everything can be put in a large trash bag and marked with bright colored surveyor's tape to make it distinctive.

Hay	Extra Sponge	Cooler	Gatorade	Electrolytes	Snack items for your horse
Snack items for you	Buckets (pick brightly colored ones and make sure your name is on them).				

## Appendix C Suggested List of Camping Supplies

### Horse Supplies

Coggins	Medical Records		Horse Registration		Saddle	Saddle
Pads	Cinch/Girth		Bit	Breastplate	Crupper	Red Ribbon
	Halter					
Easyboot®	Fanny pack	Lead Shank	Cooler	Leg Wraps	Rump Rug	Towels
Waterproof blanket		Sheet	Anti-sweat sheet		Salt block	Hay
Grain (pre-measured in baggies)			Electrolytes	Hay Bag(s)	Apple sauce	Sponges
Oral Syringes	Apples and Carrots		Grooming supplies		Fly Spray	
Sweat scraper	Electrolytes	Horse 1st aid kit		Baggies (both sizes)		

### Paddock Supplies

Water	Buckets (lots)	Hammer/Mallet	PVC or Electric Fencing	
Tool Kit	Batteries	Fence Batteries	Picket line	rings, snaps
Pitchfork	Waterproof Bins	Neck Rope	Surveyor's Tape	Tarp
	Broom		Muck Bucket or Wheelbarrow	

### People Supplies

Raincoat	Gloves	Food/Drinks	Warm Clothes	Two pairs of shoes	
Helmet	Paper towels	Aspirin	Lantern	Two pairs of socks	
Ice Chest	Toilet paper	Towels	Sun block, Bug Spray	Tights or Sweats	
Chairs	Sunglasses	Matches	Duct tape	Flashlight and Batteries	
Trash bags	Personal items (i.e., soap, washcloth, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrush, etc.)				

Very Important - Do you know where you are sleeping and what you are eating?

### Driving Spares

Knife, screw driver, pliers, small hammer, leather punch, hoof pick, wheelwrench to fit axle, spare rein or rein splice, halter and lead per horse, cooler or quarter sheet, a hames strap, if applicable pare trace or trace splice, length of rawhide, string or wire, SMV sign is required.

## Appendix D Paddocks and Picket Lines

### Electric Fence

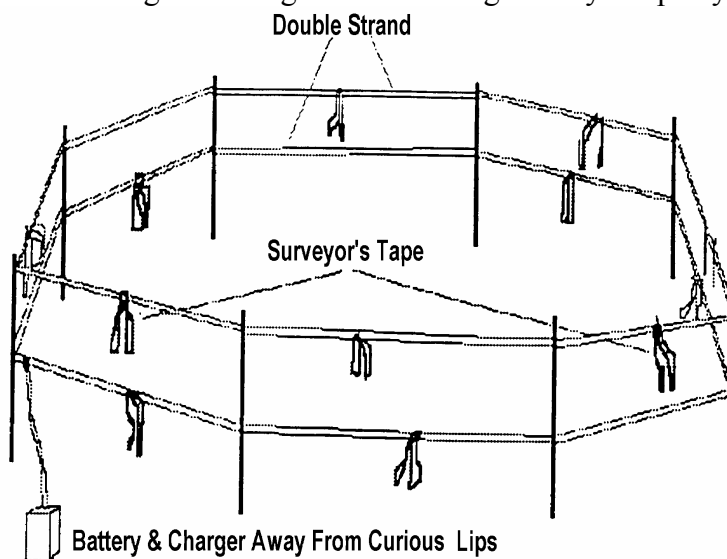
The most convenient of all portable paddocks is the one constructed of electric fence. Except for the posts, all of the materials can fit in a container as small as a toolbox. It is quick to set up and gives

you a wide range of sizes and shapes for the paddock. The biggest drawback is that it can be defeated by a number of non-obvious failures. The following information may help you decide which way you want to go.

Most horses develop a healthy respect for the electric fence. They don't tend to enjoy taking that shock very often. This is fine so long as you are dealing with a rational horse who knows that the fence is there. As with any equipment, it should be tested at home. See if your horse will spend an extended period of time in a relatively small electrified area. If you have no problems at home, you are probably headed in the right direction. Horses that roll a lot may get their feet caught and then tear the fence down.

Now, consider where you are going. Plan to deal with the following factors and you may be able to spend more time enjoying the weekend.

1. Is the camping area itself enclosed? If there is a reasonable secure area such as a fenced in field, your horse will be safer if something fails with your own paddock.
2. What is the weather going to be like? If it is going to be cold or rainy, you may have your horse thoroughly bundled up. At that point, you can no longer be sure that your horse will even feel the current in the wire. One thing you can do is use two or more strands of wire to increase the chance your horse's nose will hit a wire.
3. How does your horse react to strangers? Remember that you will be taking him to a place where there may be a number of nervous horses exhibiting various degrees of upsetting behavior. There have been cases where one spooked horse took down other paddocks, releasing more horses to knock down still more paddocks.
4. If it is dark, does anyone know your paddock is there? You can make your paddock more visible in the dark by tying white strips of surveyors tape to the strands of fencing or use glow sticks.
5. Can the paddock be stronger? There is a good case for incorporating your trailer as part of a paddock. If the camp is getting excited, it is much easier to grab your horse and immediately tie him to the trailer without having to get through a paddock gate. Just be sure that no electrified portion of the paddock is in direct contact with your trailer. Not only will your battery run down faster, your trailer will be charged. That gets real exciting when you open your tack compartment.



### **PVC Fencing**

It must be understood that a PVC paddock will not restrain a horse who truly wants to leave. But most horses will respect it because it looks like a real fence. As with all equipment, try it out at home

in an area that you can control. If the PVC paddock won't hold your horse at home, you probably don't want to try it when you're camping.

You will need some sort of stake for each section of paddock. Since this paddock weighs practically nothing, it helps to have some sort of restraint to keep the fence from skidding sideways. Figure out where you want your first section of paddock to go and drive a stake into the ground. It should stick up high enough to reach the Tee joint of the fence post. Slip the hollow post over the stake and the section of paddock will stand by itself. The reason that you only need one stake per section is that the unsupported end of the first section will be fastened to the support end of the second section and so on.

There are many ways to attach the sections to create the complete paddock. Duct tape, bungee cords, tarp tie downs or baling twine will all work. Remember to leave one section with an easily removable connector so you can have a gate for the paddock.

Some people will build an arc shaped fence with both ends attached to the trailer. It makes for a stronger set up, uses the trailer as part of the paddock and may create a windbreak for your horse.

At the very least, keep a roll of duct tape in your vehicle. It is amazing how much repair you can do with the tape. It is a good idea to have some extra joints, straight sections, PVC glue, sandpaper and a hacksaw.

### Construction of PVC Paddocks Sections

#### Materials

PVC Pipe 1 1/2" x 10' (5 for every two sections)

Elbow Joints 1 1/2" (4 for every two sections)

Tee Joints 1 1/2" (4 for every two sections)

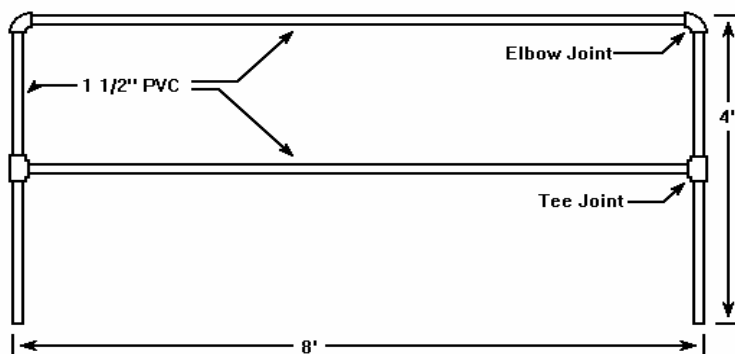
PVC Glue

Hacksaw

Sandpaper

#### Construction

1. Cut two pipes to a length of 7' 10". There are two reasons for this length. One is that if the PVC is much longer, it tends to sag. The other is that the finished section ends up 8' long and fits neatly in the bed of a full size pickup truck.
2. You will have two short pieces left over. It is recommended that they be shortened to 1' 10". Cut 2 more matching lengths from another 10' section. Once again, this is mostly done for transport reasons. It gives you a section 4' tall which once again fits easily in the bed of a pickup truck.
3. Use the sandpaper to rough up any section that will be glued. This includes the insides of the Tee and Elbow joints.
4. On a flat surface, assemble the paddock section without glue. If you are satisfied with the appearance, begin gluing one joint at a time, following the directions on the glue can. You will only have a few seconds before the glue begins to set up so be sure that you do have things lined up properly.



### Suggestions for a Picket Line

1. A picket line can be set up using a rope at least 50 feet long and 5 (or more) 3- inch steel rings.
2. Place the rings toward the center of the rope as shown below.
3. Tie the ends of the line to sturdy (8-10" diameter) trees, trailers or posts. Make sure that the lowest point of the line is at least 6 feet off the ground (or more, depending on the size of the horse). Position the stationary rings so that the horse cannot get close enough to the anchor points to cause damage. For example, you do not want your horse to be chewing tree bark all night.
4. The horse can be tied to the middle, free moving ring (or a stationary one if desired). Be sure that his lead rope is not too long. A neck rope can be used to tie him.
5. The hay bag and water bucket can be tied to the stationary rings.
6. Rope stretches and will probably need periodic tightening.

