

Compulsory Headgear

The Horses (Protective Headgear for Young Riders) Act 1990 requires all children under 14 to wear protective headgear whilst riding a horse on a road.

There are no plans to extend the age limit currently in place but "In respect of horse riders, the Department [of Transport] advises that protective headgear should be worn."



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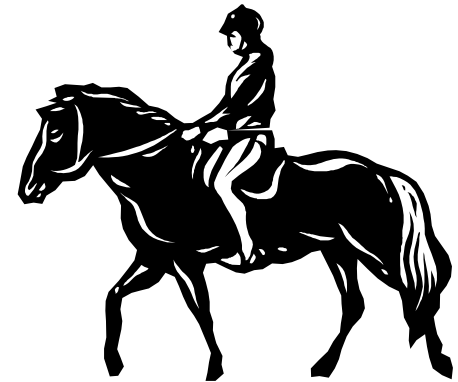
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Headway

Swindon & District

Why Wear a Horse Riding Hat ?



In a typical horse riding accident the rider may be thrown from the horse to the ground and may suffer a blow to the head.

The head may bounce to a second or third impact and, if the head is not protected, the skull may be deformed as it strikes the ground or hard object.

Fortunately, if a well fitted horse riding hat is worn, **the majority of serious head injuries are preventable** .

Horse riding hats reduce serious head injuries that result from direct contact

with a hard surface, by distributing the force of impact over a larger area and through absorbing some of the energy.

The purpose of the hat is to absorb the impact rather than transferring it to the head. The force of the blow should be spread evenly within the helmet rather than one concentrated spot.

It is therefore important that horse riding hats are fitted correctly.



Fitting A Horse Riding Hat

The following are the guidelines of the British Horse Society.

To protect in the way it is designed to the hat must fit properly.

The manufacturers provide a range of sizes and shapes to accommodate the differences in anatomy.

Try different stockists and makes until you find one which is comfortable and fits well.

Check the stockist has a certificate from the British Equestrian Trade Association

qualifying a named member of staff to fit a suitable horse riding hat.

Having found the appropriate hat, check that the shock absorption reaches to the base of the hat and is approximately 2cm thick.

The hat should have a really snug fit, without being too tight.

Any hat with the PAS mark will have either a three or four point harness. Look to see the harness is light but strong and has an easily fastened buckle or clip which cannot come undone by accident.



Most hats are provided with a chin cup but it is not vital to the harness security.

Many people find that a closer and more comfortable fit is achieved by removing the cup and just wearing the strap directly under the jaw.

PAS 015 does not allow for a chin cup unless it is fitted to a secondary strap, Supporting the view that the jaw strap is more secure than the chin cup.

To gain maximum protection, riders must fasten their chin straps correctly and keep

them fastened at all times.

Any hat that sustains a severe blow must be replaced, even if damage is not obvious, as the structure of the helmet may be damaged in absorbing the impact.

European Standards

The types of protective headgear to look for bear the numbers PAS 015 and EN 1384.

EN 1384 supersedes BS 4472 and BS 6473 which are withdrawn.

All these should also have the BSI Kite Mark. BS, EN and PAS denote performance standards.

These helmets are recommended as they are considered to provide greater shock absorption laterally and down to the rim of the helmet (Assuming the helmet is properly fitted and correctly harnessed).

Such helmets are recommended by the British Horse Society for all types of riding and particularly for high-risk activities.