AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL WORKING EQUITATION

Gear Check Guide
2026

Document History

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Document Approvals

Name and Role	Signature	Date
Megan Joerg, Chair on behalf of ANWEL Board		

Related Documents

Title	Location
ANWEL Official Rule Book	*https://anwe.org.au/*
ANWEL Dressage Tests	
ANWEL Dressage Maps	
ANWEL Course Building Guidelines	
ANWEL Club Pack	
ANWEL Policies	
EA Rules	*https://www.equestrian.org.au/*

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1 INTRODUCTION

This guide has been produced to assist clubs and those officials appointed by the Organising Committee to determine the legality and safety of the tack and attire prior to entry into the competition arena. Some extracts from Rule 7 - Tack and Attire are provided for convenience.

It is recommended clubs train a group of people from their club to specifically be Gear Check Stewards for club events such as a championship and HOTY events. It is imperative that each club has competent and confident people for gear checking to uphold ANWEL rules and regulations but also to navigate difficult situations with riders if necessary.

2 GENERAL

2.1 It is the responsibility of the competitor to present in the correct tack and attire.

2.2 Approved rider attire is National, State or Club attire. A rider must not mix and match attire with the exception of the Cattle Phase.

2.3 The same tack/attire must be worn in all compulsory phases, except jackets, spurs, whips and horse boots. Saddles and bridles/bits may be changed for the Cattle phase (provided they are listed as approved gear). Team riders may also change attire to approved club uniform for the Cattle phase

2.4 A rider competing in the incorrect tack and/or attire will be eliminated.

2.5 All riders under 18 are required to wear an Australian certified helmet, which must be securely fastened when mounted.

2.6 It is the responsibility of the rider to ensure they are using a current standard safety helmet. Helmets must conform to EA approved standards. It is recommended that helmets be tagged for ease of identification of helmet compliance to gear check stewards.

2.7 Wearing a non-certified helmet is cause for elimination.

2.8 Use of the Bosal and Mecate in the Cattle phase is subject to approval of the Organising Committee prior to the commencement of the competition.

2.9 Gear Check Stewards should be situated at a designated and pre-determined area which is accessible to all riders prior to entry into the competition area.

2.10 Gear Check Stewards should be supplied with the following:

- Gear check folder
- ANWEL Rule Book
- Equestrian Australia Equipment Annex - Version 23 – 01.01.2026
- table (and chairs)
- shade or suitable cover from heat and weather
- pen(s)
- scissors
  measuring Pincers for bits if required
- cable ties (chosen colours of the day)
- draw/programme
- contact person on the Organising Committee for any clarification of rules or tack
- mounting block
- white disposable gloves

2.11 Gear check must occur prior to the commencement of each of the four phases.

2.12 All horses and riders must present mounted for gear check prior to each phase.

2.13 The Gear Check Steward is to ascertain whether all tack is appropriate for the level being ridden and is in accordance with the current ANWEL Rule Book.

2.14 On completion of the gear check, the rider is to have a cable tie or similar marker placed on the rider's tack so that a judge can clearly determine the rider has complied with the ANWEL Rule Book and has been cleared to ride.

2.15 A different coloured cable tie or marker is to be used for each phase. The judge is to be made aware of the position and the colours/markers being used.

2.16 A decision will be made prior to the day which colours will be used for each phase to eliminate confusion for both the Gear Check Steward and riders.

2.17 Judges are entitled to further check tack on course entry; this may include checking a horse's bit.

2.18 Gear Check Stewards are to refer any issues with riders, their attire or horse's tack to the Ground Jury of the day.

2.19 Gear Check Stewards are to check tack only, they MUST ask riders to adjust their own tack if needed and then represent.

2.20 Gear Check Stewards are firstly to refer to the ANWEL Rule book; then WAWE Rules and then the EA National Dressage Rules (Equipment Annex - Version 23 – 01.01.2026) if further clarification is required. If the issue is not resolved, then a decision by the Ground Jury is required.

3 PROCEDURE

3.1 Riders will approach the Gear Check Stewards table.

3.2 Gear Check Stewards will:

- welcome the rider to the day (for Phase 1 only)
- confirm the rider's name and number of the horse being checked (there could be confusion if the rider has more than one horse at the event)
- ask the rider's permission to inspect the horse, checking with the rider if there are any safety concerns to be aware of
- never touch the horse or tack without being invited to by the rider
- a visual check of all tack to be well fitting so as not to cause pain to the horse
- remove previous cable ties or markers in order to prevent confusion
- once the gear check is completed, attach a cable tie or marker to the rider's stirrup, saddle D or helmet strap and ensure it is visible to the judge on entry into the arena.
- Gear Check Steward must mark the rider off on the gear check forms supplied by the club noting any discrepancies if required.

4 TACK AND ATTIRE

4.1 Refer also to ANWEL Official Rule Book, Rule 7 – Tack and Attire.

4.2 ATTIRE OPTIONS

4.2.1 It is the expectation that all riders in ANWEL competition wear a uniform. A uniform demonstrates a commitment to present the sport of working equitation in the best possible manner. The wearing of a uniform also demonstrates respect for Judges and fellow riders.

4.2.2 National Working Equitation Attire

- Navy safety helmet
- Cream/champagne moleskins, breeches or jodhpurs
- Navy jacket or vest
- White shirt
- Navy, white and red striped tie or white stock
- Long black or brown boots
- Short black or brown boots (these can be worn with matching Leather gaiters)
- Navy saddle cloth with red binding with white piping.

4.2.3 State Working Equitation Attire – MUST be approved in the relevant affiliated State Association minutes.

4.2.4 Working Equitation Club Attire – MUST be approved in the relevant ANWEL affiliated Club's minutes and only include one or more of the following:

- traditional English (showing, dressage, side-saddle or eventing)
- traditional Western (see bits allowed)
- breed attire (see bits allowed)
- working equitation approved Club Attire.

4.3 TACK OPTIONS

4.4 Any style of bridle or saddle (with approved National or Club saddle cloth) is permitted. All tack must be well fitting so as not to cause pain or distress to the horse.

4.5 Unless otherwise specified in the ANWEL Official Rule Book 2026, all tack and bits are as per Equestrian Australia National Dressage Rules. NOTE: Double Bridles, Curb bits or Pelhams are not permitted at L1 or L2.

4.6 Spurs are to be blunt competition spurs. Blunt rowels are acceptable.

4.7 Whips – dressage style only, in accordance with Equestrian Australia Dressage Rules (http://www.equestrian.org.au/dressage). Whips may be used in the normal way for all levels with the exception of L7 and L8. Permissible maximum length for whips is 1.2m and 1 metre for ponies. The tassel is included when measuring the whip. The whip must not be secured to the horse or tack; it must be held by hand. Only one whip is permitted at all times when riding at the venue.

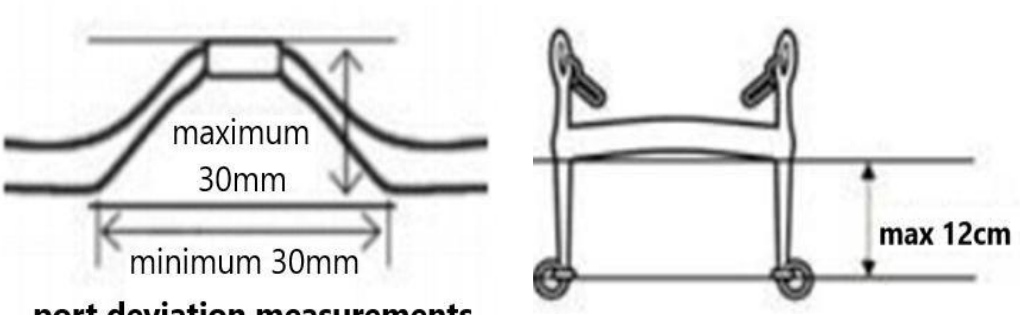
4.8 Additional Bits for L3 to L8

4.8.1 Portuguese curb (shank less than 12cm), consistent with this picture and must meet the measurements on the diagram of a curb bit.

4.8.2 Kimblewick straight (with or without port) jointed or halfmoon.

4.8.3 English Pelham straight (with or without port) jointed or halfmoon (shank less than 12cm.

The fitting of the curb and chain for the Portuguese, Kimblewick, English Pelham and the Bit and Bradoon should be that the curb strap or chain should be done up so that when the reins activate the chain or strap, the shanks of the bit do not rotate beyond 45 degrees and the width of two fingers (3cm) exists between the horse's chin groove and the strap or chain to estimate the tightness of the chain when not activated.



port deviation measurements

4.9 Additional Bridles

4.9.1 Bitless bridle (must meet rule ANWEL Rule Book rule 7.16 (4.14 of this Guide) and must not self-tighten).

4.9.2 Micklem bridle with a bit and without clips. The noseband must fit with two fingers vertically under the chin. This allows the bridle to be correctly and functionally fitted.

4.9.3 Bosal L1–L2 (see also 4.19): minimum diameter ⅝ inc L3-L8; minimum diameter ½ inch. The bosal must have a flexible, non-metal core, fit correctly to avoid rubbing or irritation and comply with the ANWEL Rule Book rule 7.16 (4.14 of this Guide).

4.10 Horse leg protector boots are allowed at all levels except Dressage phase.

4.11 No bandages are permitted.

4.12 Hoof boots are permitted in all phases.

4.13 Nosebands if used MUST be fitted to comfortably (no indentation of the cheek) allow at least one finger between the horse's cheek and the noseband. For further information please refer to Equestrian Australia Equipment Annex - Version 23 – 01.01.2026.

Example of measuring noseband

Example of nose net

4.14 Nose nets are permitted to be used in competitions and warmup with a supporting letter from the horse's usual veterinarian. Use of a nose net is to be declared at the time of entry and the supporting letter be available on the day of the competition. The nose net must be made of transparent material as shown in the example. The nose net must not cover the mouth or bit.

4.15 Ear Bonnets are permitted to be worn under the following conditions:

- the ear bonnet must not cover the horse's eyes
- the ear bonnet must be clearly made from a material which does not provide any sound reduction
- failure to present to the gear steward for ear bonnet inspection after each phase will incur elimination (refer ANWEL Rule **Error! Reference source not found.**)

- no materials may be used to plug the horse's ears
- the Gear Steward will verify that no additional insulation from the manufactured state has been inserted and that ear plugs have not been inserted.

4.16 Monkey grips are permitted on saddles in all phases.

4.17 A fly mask may be allowed in the warmup area. Fly masks are not permitted in the competition phases unless a supporting letter from the horse's usual veterinarian is provided for the use of the equipment. Use of a fly mask is to be declared at the time of entry and the supporting letter be available on the day of the event.

4.18 Tack not permitted - riding in any of the tack listed below on the competition grounds on the day of competition will result in immediate elimination:

- running/standing martingales
- running reins
- chambon, de gogue
- tongue ties
- blinkers
- ear plugs (may be used for presentations)
- ANY equipment that the Ground Jury for the relevant competition determines is against the intent and general principles of working equitation.

4.19 The Hackamore specification, fit and adjustment:

4.19.1 Proper hackamore fit is important for correct function.

4.19.2 A hackamore is made up of a noseband with nose button (1) that is often called a bosal, a hanger (4) or headstall and a single rein called a mecate (3). Depending on the region where you live, the words bosal and hackamore may be used interchangeably.

4.19.3 Common materials used in construction of the hackamore are rawhide, kangaroo, latigo, rope and horsehair. The rawhide, kangaroo and latigo are cut into even strips, bevelled, and braided around a flexible but firm core commonly made of coiled rawhide. The nose button and heel knot (2) are also made of braided rawhide, kangaroo or latigo.

4.19.4 Rope hackamores are made of a single piece of rope and usually have a nose button of braided rawhide, latigo or nylon cord and a heel knot of braided rawhide. Horsehair hackamores are made of twisted mane hair with a rawhide heel knot. The hangers and headstalls are generally made of leather.

4.19.5 The hangers are made of a single, narrow piece of leather and may be held out of the eye with a leather string going under the cheek. Headstalls usually have a brow band with fiador which helps to keep the headstall away from the horse's eyes. Mecates are made of twisted horsehair or nylon rope and should be close to the same diameter as the bosal.

4.19.6 General guidelines for adjusting the hackamore correctly are:

a. Adjust it so it lies evenly on the nose between the inside corner of the eye and the bottom of the nostril.

b. The mecate should be tied to the bosal with just enough wraps that you can fit fingers between the chin and the mecate knot. The mecate knot should rest on the chin when the horse is at rest.

c. It's important not to use a bosal that's too long for your horse. If the heel knot hits the horse's chest when the mecate is pulled and/or he gives his head to the pressure of the pull you know the bosal is too long.

4.19.7 Use of the Bosal and Mecate in the Cattle phase is subject to approval of the Organising Committee prior to the commencement of the competition (also 2.8).

4.19.8 Properly fitted and adjusted, the hackamore/bosal conforms to the nose and sides of the face more akin to the fit of a custom hat that doesn't squeeze or pinch. This allows the bosal to focus on the fatty tissues of the sides of the face more than the bony structures. Nothing should be tight, but there should be as little gap as possible in these areas to avoid wobble, rubbing and lag time to receive the next signal.

4.19.9 For the horse's comfort and to promote real progress, we want no pain or built-in points of pressure. The entire inside of the hackamore's body must be smooth and properly made. The hackamore needs to be tied up correctly with the mecate and the hanger adjusted appropriately. The mecate should be untied and allowed to hang loosely when not in use.

4.19.10 There must be room enough under the jaw for the lift and release action of the hackamore. Any further lift than parallel to the ground, is too much and should be avoided.

4.19.11 Correctly made and positioned, small side buttons not only keep the hanger in place to function well, but they also help lessen potential wobble, static and irritation.

4.19.12 If "cherries" or skinned, sore spots from the bosal present on the horse's face this indicates an ill-fitting bosal. For the correct fitting, please see the photos on the next page.

Ill-fitted bosal with gaps around face

Well fitted bosal

4.19.13 Underneath, there needs to be a space between the horse's jaw and the mecate knot above the bosal's heel knot to allow for the lift and full release. This width will vary from horse to horse.

4.19.14 A Fiador is an optional addition to the bosal.

4.19.15 The mecate rein must be secured as pictured below.