



**Center for 4-H
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Youth Development**

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TO: Minnesota 4-H Horse Families

FROM: Brad Rugg, Program Director, Fairs and Animal Science

RE: Clarification of New Rules

4-H Helmet Policy

The Minnesota 4-H Horse Association has adopted a policy that will require 4-Hers to use helmets when riding horse at 4-H events and activities. The Center for 4-H & Community Youth Development strongly supports this policy and applauds the 4-H Horse Association for their commitment to providing safe activities for all 4-Hers.

The policy states...

All 4-Hers participating in any 4-H sponsored mounted activity are required to wear properly fastened ASTM/SEI approved protective headgear. Helmet use is required when mounted. The Center for 4-H & Community Youth Development has also extended this policy to 4-H volunteers when they are working with 4-H youth in a 4-H volunteer role during mounted activities.

As we begin to operationalize this new policy in 2007, several points of clarification are necessary to assure that 4-H horse families and volunteers understand the implications.

The policy states that helmet use is necessary when riding a horse at 4-H activities. This includes all 4-H horse activities including 4-H Shows, 4-H trail rides and 4-H lessons. Helmet use is required during all times when the horse is being ridden by the 4-Her – not just while in the ring during the show, but also on the way to and from the ring before and after the immediate show experience.

Helmet use is not required during halter classes or during the daily care and management of the horse at a 4-H event, except when the horse is being ridden. Use is not required, for example, while feeding or washing the horse, leading it to the wash rack or walking it from the trailer to its' stall.

Helmet use will not be required during horse activities such as a demonstration, unless the demonstration includes the actual riding of the horse.

4-H Horse volunteers will be required to wear helmets when they are functioning as a 4-H volunteer working from horse back at mounted activities. In a nut shell, 4-H Horse volunteers need to appropriately model the helmet policy to our 4-H youth and wear a helmet, without fail when riding, at all 4-H sponsored Horse events. Additionally, clinicians who are not screened 4-H volunteers, but hired or volunteer to work with 4-H horse programs are also required to wear a helmet when they are working from horseback at mounted activities.

The policy does not directly affect 4-H parents who ride a horse at 4-H events. 4-H parents are encouraged to use helmets at 4-H events. Moreover, many adults have dual roles as a 4-H parent and 4-H volunteer at the same event. It is critical that they appropriately use helmets when functioning as a 4-H volunteer. Adults serving dual roles would be best served if they modeled appropriate helmet use at all 4-H riding activities.