

2026 Equipment & Attire Guide

The purpose of this WDAA Equipment and Attire Guide is to provide explanations, additional information and visual guides regarding the appointments (attire and tack) allowed and not allowed under the USEF Western Dressage Division.

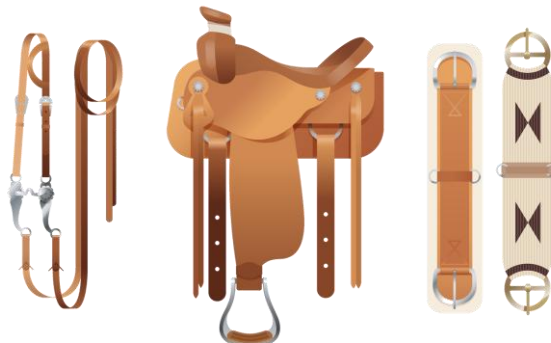
In the case of conflicting verbiage, the current USEF WD Rule Book will supersede this document.

“At Federation Licensed Competitions, the C2 Steward or the person who is under the direction of the Steward and appointed by the competition management will be responsible for overseeing the checking of the horse, tack, and attire. A horse must be eliminated from the test just completed if the horse or any tack and/or attire are in violation of the rules and/or the tongue has been tied. C2 Stewards or Equipment Inspectors are only required to inspect bits and other appointments on a minimum of one-third of the horses in a class.” (See WD124)

At a non-USEF WDAA competition or a USEF Competition Lite, a designated individual must assume the responsibility of overseeing the checking of horses, tack, bits, and attire.

See separate WDAA document entitled Western Dressage Equipment Check Protocol for proper equipment check procedures in place at shows.

Horses with prohibited equipment in the warm-up ring will be eliminated from the next class they are entering unless the equipment can be corrected before the scheduled ride time for that entry. Knowing or repeated use of prohibited equipment in warmup may subject the competitor to elimination, a Warning Card or citation of a Rule Violation. See WD 128 – Elimination and GR 1037 – Recorded Warning and Yellow Cards. Horses with prohibited equipment in the performance ring will be eliminated by the judge or through the steward and show management if prohibited equipment is found during the equipment check after the ride.



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BRIDLE COMPONENTS USED WITH BITS

Headstall (required)

Any Western type headstall must be used. This may include leather, leather-like, or nylon headstalls, any of which may be brightly colored. Headstalls may also include other features or attachments such as top stitching, as long as they are not specifically prohibited in the rules. Some examples are shown below.



Cavesson (optional)

A noseband or cavesson (braided or plain) with space for two fingers placed between the cavesson and the jowl of the horse is allowed. The inside of the noseband must be smooth and free of any metal, other than the buckle.

Examples

<p>Plain Cavesson – Allowed Must be smooth inside</p> 	<p>Nylon Noseband – Allowed If inside is smooth</p> 	<p>Rolled Leather – Allowed Must be smooth and flexible</p> 
<p>Figure 8 Noseband – Prohibited</p> 	<p>Rope Cavesson – Prohibited Not smooth, rough texture</p> 	<p>Leather Covered Rope Cavesson - Prohibited</p> 
<p>Drop Noseband – Prohibited</p> 	<p>Flash – Prohibited</p> 	

BITLESS BRIDLES

A cross-under bitless bridle of Western style is allowed on a horse of any age or level.

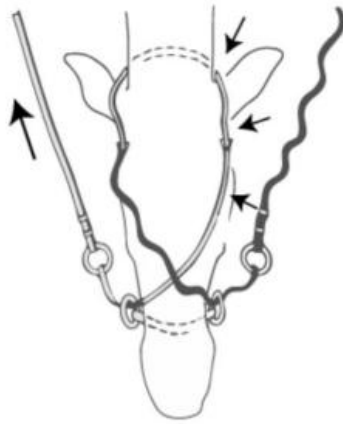
No other option may be used.

Examples

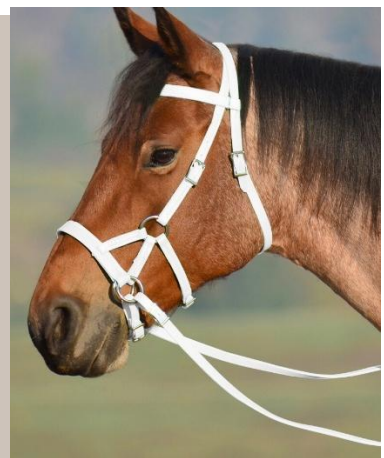
Cross-Under Style – Allowed

a simple and subtle two-loop system (one over the poll and one over the nose) that embraces the whole of the head.

Often referred to as a Dr. Cook's bridle









Bitless Bridles with Side Pulls - Prohibited



BOSAL, BOSALITAS, AND HACKAMORES

A hackamore (bosal) is permitted on a horse of any age, and at any level. Space for two fingers (placed between the bosal and the jowl of the horse) is required. The bosal must be rounded in shape, and constructed of braided rawhide or leather, and must have a flexible non-metallic core attached to a suitable headstall. No other material of any kind is to be used in conjunction with the bosal, i.e. rope, steel, metal, or chains. Bosals may be wrapped with smooth electrical tape to prevent rubbing.





Examples

Traditional Bosal – Allowed 	Pencil Bosal – Allowed Also called a bosalita 	Fiador Strap – Allowed Supports bosal, no leverage 
Electrical Tape Application - Allowed 	Latex, Sheepskin, or Bandage Material Application – Prohibited 	Rope Bosal – Prohibited 
Braided Nylon – Prohibited 	Mechanical Hackamore – Prohibited 	

TWO REIN BRIDLES

A two-rein bridle is a bridle and bit (snaffle or curb) placed over a full or pencil bosal or bosalita.




Examples

Style	Determination	Reason
<p>Two Rein with Snaffle Bit - Allowed</p> 		<p>Consists of a snaffle bit and a pencil or full bosal. The rider must ride with two hands whether using a loop rein or split reins. The rider will hold a bosal rein (mecate) and a snaffle rein in each hand as pictured below.</p>
<p>Two Rein with Curb Bit and Pencil Bosal/Bosalita - Allowed</p> 		<p>The rider has the following choices: Split Reins: The rider can ride with all reins in one hand but can only have one finger between the reins OR the rider can ride with a bit rein and a bosal rein in the left hand and a bit rein and bosal rein in the right hand.</p>
<p>Two Rein with Curb Bit and Pencil Bosal/Bosalita - Allowed</p> 		<p>Romal Reins: The romal must be held with one hand with the romal coming up from the bottom and out of the top of the hand. The bosal rein can then be held in the opposite hand OR the romal and bosal may be ridden in one hand, the reins coming up from the bottom of the hand and out of the top. No fingers can be between the reins.</p>
<p>English Bridoon and Curb Bit - Prohibited</p> 		<p>Components not part of a western two rein bridle. (see above)</p>

REINS & MARTINGALES

Reins may be leather, leather-like material, rope, laced, web, horsehair, rubberized, and have rein stops or hand stops.






Examples:

Laced Reins - Allowed 	Rubber Reins with Stops - Allowed 	Horsehair Reins – Allowed 
Rope Reins – Allowed 	Split Reins – Allowed 	Rein Extensions – Allowed Must slide freely on shank 
Training Martingale – Prohibited Exception: allowed in warmup – must have neck strap 	Triangle Reins - Prohibited Exception: permitted when longeing (mounted or unmounted) 	Draw Reins - Prohibited 

Rein Attachments:



There is no discrimination as to how reins may be attached to the snaffle or curb bit. Reins may attach with buckles, snaps, clips, laces, stud hooks, Chicago screws, rein chains, or any other (smooth) method of attachment that moves freely on the rein loop.

Examples:

Snaps – Allowed 	Stud Hooks – Allowed Allowed on both headstalls and reins 	Laces – Allowed 
Rein Chains - Allowed 	Buckles – Allowed 	Chicago Screws – Allowed 

PERMITTED REIN/BRIDLE COMBINATIONS

Examples

Rein Type/Used with	Snaffle	Curb	Bosal	Bitless Bridle
Loop/Connected Reins, Buckled Reins Split Reins Romal without popper	Allowed	Allowed	Horsehair and rope reins allowed	Allowed
Mecate Reins 	Allowed The tail can be tied to the saddle horn, held by the rider, or tucked under the rider's belt.	Prohibited	Allowed Horsehair or rope	Prohibited
Romal Reins With Popper 	Prohibited	Allowed	Prohibited	Prohibited

BIT SECTION

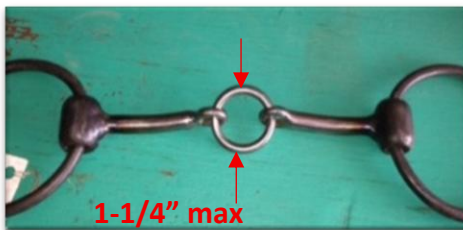
Bars & Connecting Pieces

How To Measure

The bars of the snaffle mouthpiece must be **between** 5/16 – 3/4 inches (7.9 – 19.05mm) in diameter when measured 1 inch (25 mm) from the cheek.



- A connecting ring cannot be fixed and must be 1-1/4" (31.75mm) or less in diameter



- A connecting piece must be 2" (50.8mm) or less as measured between the end of the two bars. Maximum height is between 3/8" – 3/4".




Top connecting piece measures 1-3/4"
– Allowed











Bottom connecting piece measures 1"
– Allowed



Ported snaffle which has port of 3/4
inches and connecting piece (port)
measures 2" - Allowed

Connecting Piece and Bar Examples:

<p>D-Ring with Barrel Connecting Piece - Allowed</p> 	<p>O-Ring with Barrel Connecting Piece – Allowed Barrel covers middle joint</p> 
<p>D-Ring with Continuous Rollers - Allowed</p> 	<p>Double Jointed with Flat Connecting Piece – Allowed</p> 
<p>Center Hinge Joint – Allowed Joint must be smooth</p> 	<p>Non-Fixed Center Ring – Allowed</p> 
<p>Dog Bone Connecting Piece - Allowed</p> 	<p>Inlaid Bars - Allowed</p> 
<p>Synthetic Bars - Allowed</p> 	<p>Synthetic Covered Bars – Allowed</p> 
<p>Wire-wrapped bars - Prohibited</p> 	<p>Twisted Bars - Prohibited</p> 

<p>Flat Bars with Hard Edges – Prohibited</p> 	<p>Bicycle Chain – Prohibited</p> 
<p>Twisted Wire & Double Bars - Prohibited</p> 	<p>Rigid Donut Shape – Prohibited Fixed center ring protrudes below bars</p> 
<p>Snaffle with a Port - Allowed</p> 	<p>Barrel on Bars – Allowed</p> 
<p>Roller on Bars – Prohibited Rollers are not tubular or smooth</p> 	<p>Barrel on Bars – Allowed Barrels are tubular & smooth</p> 
<p>Roller on Center Port – Allowed</p> 	<p>Rivets on Center Joint Piece - Allowed</p> 







Snaffle Bits









- A snaffle bit may be used on a horse of any age being ridden at any level.
- A standard snaffle is a **conventional O-ring, egg butt, full cheek (keepers optional) or D-ring**
- A snaffle bit offers no leverage or curb action.
- The inside of the circumference of the ring must be free of rein, curb or headstall attachments that would provide leverage
- Ring must have outside diameter between 2 - 4 inches (50.8 – 101.6 mm).






This ring is too small

Snaffle Bit Examples:

<p>Single Jointed O-Ring - Allowed Single & Double Jointed Loose ring provides no leverage</p> 	<p>Double Jointed O-Ring – Allowed Loose ring provides no leverage</p> 
<p>Single Jointed Egg Butt Snaffle - Allowed Reins are free to rotate without leverage</p> 	<p>Double Jointed Egg Butt Snaffle - Allowed Reins are free to rotate without leverage</p> 
<p>Full Cheek Snaffle – Allowed Reins are free to rotate without leverage</p> 	<p>Full Cheek Snaffle with Keepers – Allowed Keepers allowed on upper cheek pieces only</p> 

<p>Decorate Ring on Snaffle Bridle – Allowed If headstall & reins attached so rings are not stabilized</p> 	<p>Mullen Mouth – Allowed</p> 
<p>Ported Snaffles - Allowed</p> 	<p>Double Jointed Ported Snaffle – Allowed</p> 
<p>A Baucher Bit – Prohibited Not an O-Ring, Egg Butt, D-ring or Full Cheek Design</p> 	<p>Kimberwick - Prohibited Slots on ring. Configuration not approved</p> 
<p>Slots on Ring - Prohibited</p> 	<p>Half-Cheek – Prohibited</p> 

Bit Guards and Bit Hobble

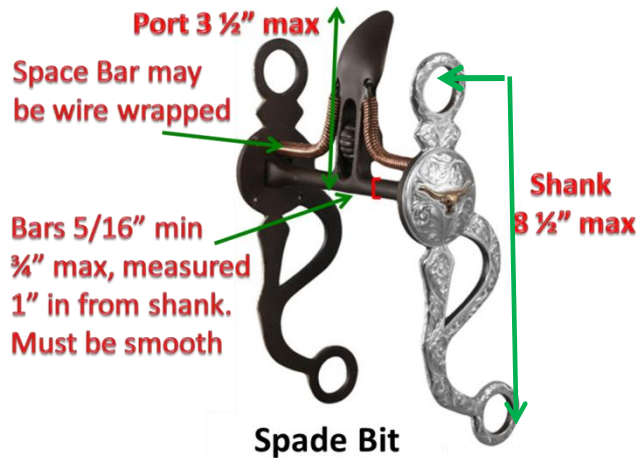
<p>Bit Hobble – Allowed Must be attached below reins</p>  	<p>Bit Guard – Prohibited</p> 
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Curb Bits

There is no discrimination against any standard western bit. A standard western curb bit may be used on a horse of any age being ridden at any level. See WD 121.3 for definition.











How To Measure






- Maximum length of shank: 8.5 inches (216.9mm). To measure the shank length, use a vertical line from the upper most part of the headstall slot to the point of pull for the rein. (see below figure at left)





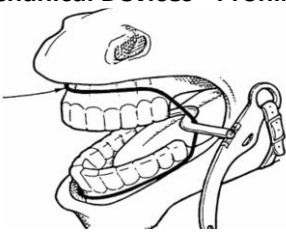

- The curb port must be no higher than 3 1/2 inches (88.9 mm) maximum with roller(s) and covers acceptable. (see above figure at right)
- Spade Bit Only: Wire on the braces (above the bars and attaching to the spade) is allowed.
- The bars of a **curb** may be inlaid but must be smooth or wrapped with smooth, non-abrasive, self-fusing bit wrap. Electrical tape, duct tape, medical tape, etc. is not self-fusing, therefore are not allowed.
 - The bars may be encased in smooth 5/16" (7.9 mm) to 3/4" (19.05 mm) in diameter tubular barrels that rotate around the bars.
 - Nothing may protrude above or below the curb mouthpiece (bar) such as extensions, prongs or rivets designed to intimidate the horse.
 - Rollers attached to the center of the bit are acceptable and may extend below the bar
 - Curbs** with jointed mouthpieces are acceptable and may consist of two or three pieces and may have **one or two joints**.
 - Reins must be attached to each shank of the curb bit.
 - A slobber guard (may consist of a bar, chain, strap, or string) on a curb bit is allowed. Rein chains are allowed with all curb bits
 - All curb bits must be free of mechanical devices.

Curb Bit Examples:

<p>Hinged Mouthpiece – Allowed As long as no pinch point or sharp edges</p> 	<p>Center Rollers - Allowed</p> 
<p>Port - Allowed</p> 	<p>Decorative Bit - Allowed</p> 
<p>Half Breed Bit - Allowed</p> 	<p>Traditional Spade Bit – Allowed Wire on braces allowed with Spade Bits only</p> 
<p>Gag/Slip Bit – Prohibited</p> 	<p>Gag/Slip/Twisted Wire Bit – Prohibited</p> 
<p>Moustache Bit – Prohibited Downward points in bar design</p> 	<p>Prongs below Bars – Prohibited</p> 

<p>Curb with 3 Connecting Pieces – Prohibited Only 1 is allowed</p> 	<p>Center Roller below Bars – Allowed Unless designed to intimidate</p> 
<p>Jr. Cow Horse Bit – Prohibited Gag bit</p> 	<p>Roping Bit – Prohibited Reins must attach to each shank</p> 
<p>Mikmar Combination Bit – Prohibited Bars are flat and added string not permitted</p> 	



Slobber Guards, Lip Straps, Rein Chains, Latex Wrap

<p>Lip Strap, Slobber Guard - Allowed</p>  <p><i>Lip strap</i></p> <p><i>Slobber Guard-bar shown</i></p>	<p>Rein Chains & Slobber Guard - Allowed</p> 
<p>Mechanical Devices - Prohibited</p> 	<p>Self-fusing Latex Bar Wrap – Allowed</p> 

CURB STRAPS

- Curb chains or curb/chin straps are required with curb bits and must be **flexible**.
- Curb chains or flat leather curb/chin straps must be at least 1/2 inch (12.7 mm) in width and lie flat against the jaw of the horse.
- Curb chain may have leather or nylon adjustable straps connecting the buckle to the chain.
- Leather curb straps may have up to two smooth, thin, metal, loop strap keepers.
- No wire, rawhide, metal, or other substance or wrapping can be used in conjunction with or as part of the flat leather curb/chin strap or curb chain.
- Round, rolled, braided or rawhide curb/chin straps are prohibited.

How To Measure

Ruler	Gauge	Use a metal ruler, gauge, or tape measure. Must be at least ½"
		

Examples

<p>Leather Straps – Allowed Buckle & small metal loops OK</p> 	<p>Double Chain – Allowed Must lay flat</p> 
<p>Single Chain – Allowed Must lay flat</p> 	<p>Coil Chain – Prohibited Cannot lay flat</p> 
<p>Braided or Woven Leather – Prohibited Is not smooth</p> 	<p>Lip Strap through Curb Chain Layers - Allowed</p> 
<p>Non-Flexible Curb Chain/Strap – Prohibited</p> 	<p>Tacks on Inside – Prohibited</p> 

SADDLES

Required Features:

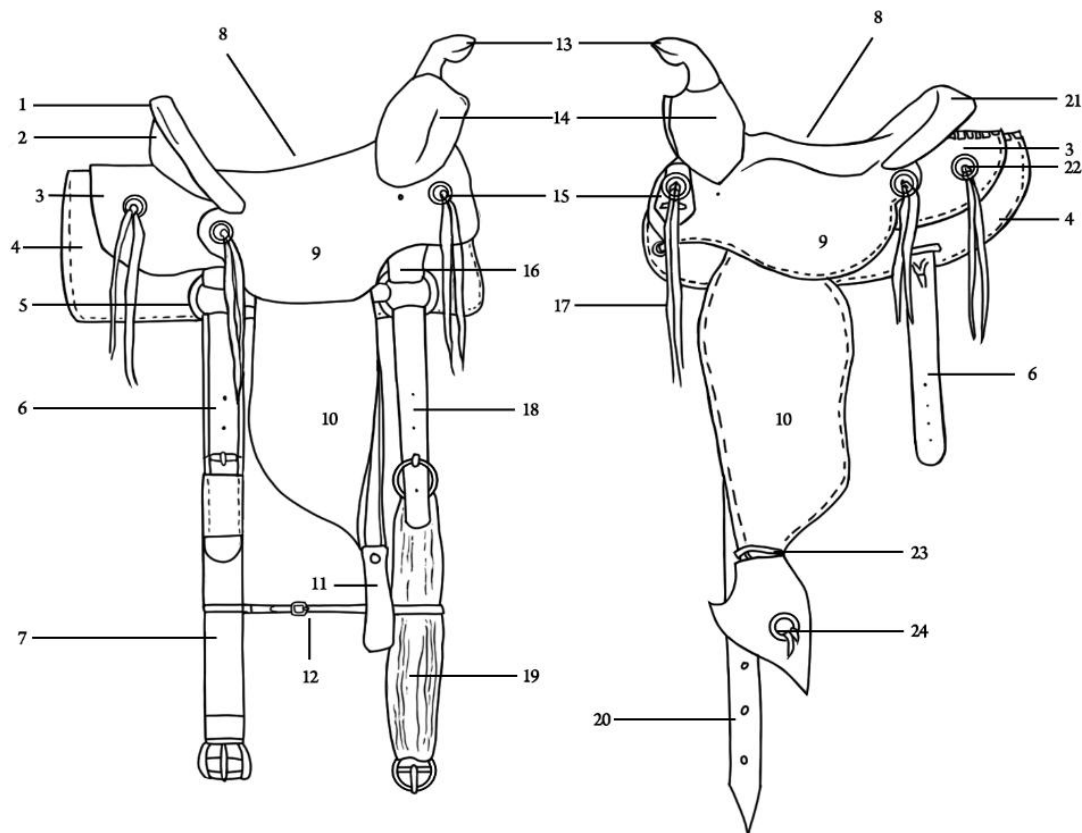
A standard American Western stock saddle with fork/swells, a seat, cantle, skirt, fenders, Western stirrups, and fastened girth or cinch is required. A fender is a solid, wide, continuous piece that extends from the rider's upper thigh to the stirrup on each side of the saddle. A Western side saddle is also acceptable.

Optional Features:

1. Horn
2. Padding or pads on the seat of saddle or added to the seat of the saddle
3. Bucking rolls
4. Tapaderos, except in Western Dressage Equitation
5. A breastplate, breeching, and/or crupper may be used.

Parts of the Saddle

STANDARD AMERICAN WESTERN STOCK SADDLE



- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Cantle (pencil bead style) | 13. Horn |
| 2. Cantle back | 14. Swells |
| 3. Rear jockey | 15. Cinch strap holder (latigo holder) |
| 4. Skirt, square/round | 16. D rig |
| 5. Back Rigging | 17. Saddle string |
| 6. Flank cinch billet | 18. Off billet/latigo, off side |
| 7. Flank cinch | 19. Cinch |
| 8. Seat | 20. Latigo, near side |
| 9. Side jockey | 21. Cantle (cheyenne roll style) |
| 10. Fender | 22. Concho |
| 11. Stirrup | 23. Stirrup hobbles |
| 12. Cinch connector strap | 24. Tapadero (not allowed in equitation classes) |

Examples

<p>Allowed</p> 	<p>Allowed Bucking rolls are allowed</p> 	<p>Tapaderos Allowed, except for Equitation classes</p> 
<p>Austraian Stock Saddle – Prohibited Lacks a skirt & other criteria</p> 	<p>Baroque Saddle - Prohibited Lacks a skirt and fenders</p> 	<p>Thigh Rolls/Blocks – Prohibited Has no swells</p> 
<p>McClellan – Prohibited Lacks many required features</p> 	<p>Hand Loop Only. No Swells – Prohibited</p> 	<p>Divided Fender – Prohibited Not continuous thigh to stirrup</p> 

SADDLE ACCESSORIES

<p>Crupper– Allowed</p> 	<p>Breeching - Allowed</p> 	<p>Breast Collar - Allowed</p> 	<p>Seat Saver – Allowed</p> 
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HORSE ACCESSORIES

Leg and Hoof Boots

Protective “polo” style leg wraps **are permitted**, with color either white or matching natural color of the horse as much as possible. (*See WD121*). No other form of protective wrap is allowed.

Polo Wraps – Allowed Neutral color or white 	Bright Polo Wraps – Discouraged Except for freestyle 	Bell Boots – Prohibited 
Hoof Boot – Prohibited 	Split Boot – Prohibited 	Hock Boots – Prohibited 

Fly Hood (Ear Covers) & Ear Plugs

Fly hoods (ear covers) should be discreet in color and design and should not cover horse's eyes. Ear plugs are allowed.

Fly Hood – Allowed 	Fly Hood – Discouraged Not discreet 	Fly Hood – Prohibited Not allowed in warmup 
Ear Plug – Allowed 	Ear Plug - Allowed 	Ear Plug – Prohibited Not a plug 

Tail Bandages and Decorations

Tail bandages are cause for elimination. Any decoration of the horse with extravagant items, such as ribbons or flowers, etc. in the mane or tail are prohibited. Exception: costumed freestyle.

<p>False Tails – Allowed</p> 	<p>Tail Bandage – Prohibited</p> 	<p>Tail Bag – Prohibited</p> 	<p>Weighted Tails – Prohibited</p> 
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Eye/Nose Covers and Blinkers

Any form of blinkers and nose covers are cause for elimination

<p>Blinker – Prohibited</p> 	<p>Eye/Nose Cover – Prohibited</p> 	<p>UV Goggles – Prohibited Allowed in warm up only</p> 
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Whips

One whip, no longer than 47.2 inches (120 cm) including lash, is permitted in all classes/tests. See also WD 125.5 for whips allowed in schooling areas.

<p>Riding Crops & Dressage Sticks – Allowed</p> 	<p>Flogger – Prohibited</p> 	<p>Bull Whips – Prohibited</p> 
<p>Longing Whip – Allowed for Longing in Designated Warm Up Area Only</p> 		

ATTIRE

Required apparel:

- Suitable western hat OR protective headgear (exception: musical freestyles)
- Long-sleeved shirt with any type of collar; short sleeves may be worn at the discretion of the judge.
- Trousers, pants, a one-piece long-sleeved equitation suit, provided it includes a collar.
- Boots (with heels), including costume freestyle. See GR 801.10.
- Tall English boots, clearly visible on the outside of pants, are not permitted, unless part of military uniform.




Tall Western Boots – Allowed 	Paddock Boots – Allowed 	Short Western Boots – Allowed 
<p style="text-align: center;">English Tall Boots – Prohibited Unless under chaps/pants or with military uniform</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>		

Optional apparel:

- Inflatable vests for equestrian use
- Vest, jacket, coat, and/or sweater.
- Necktie, kerchief, bolo tie, or pin.

Inflatable Vests - Allowed 	Decorative Vests – Allowed 	Bolo Ties – Allowed 
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- Spurs: Western style, with or without blunt tines, English dressage style, roller ball, and blunt bumper spurs are permitted. Rowels must be vertical. Spurs with sharp tines are not permitted.

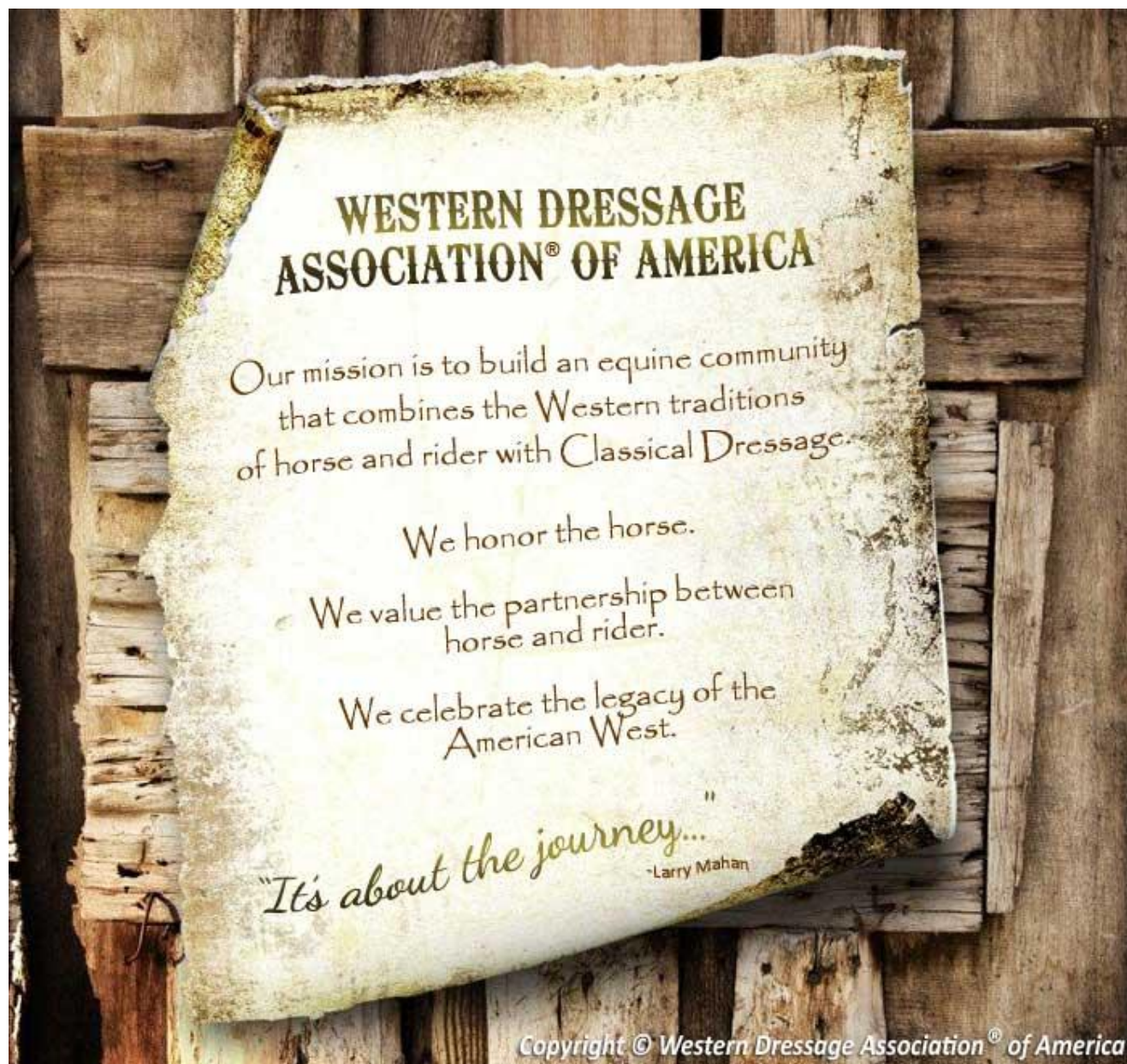
Bumper Spurs - Allowed 	Roller Ball Spur - Allowed 	Pointed Rowels – Allowed If not sharp 
Rowels without Points – Allowed 	Horizontal Rowel – Prohibited 	Pointed Rowel – Prohibited Points are sharp 

- Chaps, Western styled half-chaps, shotgun chaps, chinks, or split riding skirt

Chaps – Allowed 	Batwing Chaps – Allowed 	Shotgun Chaps – Allowed 
Chinks – Allowed 	Armita – Allowed 	Split Riding Skirt – Allowed 
Fringe Half Chaps – Allowed 	Western Styled Half Chaps – Allowed 	Plain Half Chaps – Prohibited 



Mission Statement



To learn more about Western Dressage and join, visit us at:
WesternDressageAssociation.org