

"Trail Etiquette"

On the Trail

1. Know the local trail rules. Courtesy is the best safety on the trail.
2. Minimize impacts by staying on designated trails. Avoid muddy conditions, or cutting switchbacks. Leave gates as you find them. Obey gate closure & regulatory signs.
3. Pass with care. If uncertain, ask. State if you are passing on the left/right. If the trail is too narrow to pass safely - wait.
4. Ride your horse at a safe & controlled speed. Avoid crowding other horses or hogging the trail. Leave space between horses in front or back.
5. Tie a red ribbon in the tail of known or suspected kickers. Point the rump away from riders if they ask to pass. FYI - Stallions should be identified with yellow ribbons. Green horses are to be identified with green ribbons.

When riding in a Group

6. Decide on an acceptable gait. Do not assume every rider, or horse in the group is comfortable with changes of gait. Once a gait is initiated, check (by sight or voice) that everyone is doing okay. If the pace is too fast for anyone, slow down, or break into two groups. One for those who ride fast and one for those who ride slower.
7. Be aware that loping in a group can get horses "hyped up", which, in turn, can cause serious problems that even the most experienced rider may have difficulty controlling.
8. The lead rider should watch for changes in the trail, terrain, or for dangerous obstacles, and warn others. Make sure these and other safety issues get communicated to the last rider in the group.
9. To get your horse accustomed to different positions, consider trading positions within the group.
10. Do not allow slow moving horses to fall too far behind the group. The result could be an anxious horse that ends up rearing or bucking. Periodically, stop & wait for the slowest horse to catch up.
11. Do not follow too close to the horse in front. A good rule of thumb is to be able to see the hooves of the horse in front of you through your horse's ears.

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General Courtesy

12. Stand still and wait for riders who are having problems with their horse, who are adjusting tack, or who have dismounted. Ask before leaving.

13. When schooling your horse move to the back.

14. Never canter or trot up behind other riders. Slow down and ask to pass.

15. When stopping for water, wait for all horses in the group to finish drinking before leaving. For safety, do not crowd into streams, creeks, or troughs.

16. Do not allow horses to touch noses or smell rumps.

17. Never make assumptions about the safety of another horse or rider. Even the most experienced rider or horse may occasionally have problems.

18. When riding in hilly terrain, do not trot or canter up a hill without checking with other riders.

19. When parking, leave room for others to park & tie their horses. Carry a manure fork, and clean up any hay, manure or trash you have created.