

SIGNS OF A POORLY FITTED SADDLE

Corresponds with Requirement 11.0

Early warning signs:

- Muscle soreness under or behind the saddle. The horse may flinch when being groomed or behave abnormally when being tacked up.
- Dry patches under the front of the saddle surrounded by sweat after exercise.
- Dry patches on the spine surrounded by sweat after exercise could indicate too many layers or too thick a layer beneath the saddle, filling up the gullet, and pressing on the spine.
- Swellings under the saddle after exercise.

Long-term signs:

- Depressions behind the scapulae (shoulder blades) or elsewhere under the saddle. These may reflect a chronically poorly fitted saddle and pressure points.
- White hairs appear when pressure has injured the hair follicles. However, they usually do not appear until the hair coat changes.
- Dry patches under the front of the saddle surrounded by sweat after exercise.
- Scabby skin lesions under the front or back of the saddle. Depressions behind the scapulae, worse on the left side, reflecting a poorly fitted saddle. The white hairs at the wither are probably the result of rug pressure. Incorrect saddle fit can lead to pain, discomfort, and ultimately poor performance.

Adapted with permission from “Saddlery leaflet” (World Horse Welfare & Animal Health Trust)



SIGNS OF A POORLY FITTED BRIDLE OR BIT

Corresponds with Requirement 11.0

Signs of a poorly fitted bridle or bit include the following:

- White hairs under the bridle
- Head shy behaviour
- Reluctance to allow the bridle to be put on or to open the mouth for the bit
- Sores at the corners of the lips, inside the cheeks, or on the tongue
- Hair rubs underneath the bridle or at the edges of the bridle
- Skin bruising or rubbing of the cheeks (may indicate crushing of the skin between the bit and the noseband)
- Pain on pressure at potential pressure points (base of the ears, over the poll, under the browband attachment, under the noseband)
- Rubbing or irritation of the skin under the bridle

Adapted with permission from “Guide to common signs of problems with the bridle or bit” (World Horse Welfare)