

Tips & Tools

- KNOW THE LOCAL TRAIL RULES.
- COURTESY IS THE BEST SAFETY ON THE TRAIL.
- RESPECT OTHERS, THE LAND & WILDLIFE -LEAVE NO TRACE.
- LEAVE GATES AS YOU FIND THEM. OBEY GATE CLOSURES AND REGULATORY SIGNS.
- SAY HELLO. ALERT OTHERS WHEN COMING UP FROM BEHIND. PASS WITH CARE. IF UNCERTAIN, ASK.
- KEEP TO RIGHT, PASS TO LEFT, CALL OUT BEFORE PASSING.
- MAINTAIN A SAFE AND CONTROLLED SPEED.
- BE ESPECIALLY CAREFUL WHEN VISIBILITY IS LIMITED.
- A HAND OUT AND DOWN IS A WARNING FOR OTHERS TO SLOW DOWN OR STOP.
- MINIMIZE IMPACT BY STAYING ON DESIGNATED TRAILS.
- AVOID MUDDY CONDITIONS. DON'T CUT SWITCHBACKS.
- KNOW YOUR HORSE'S LIMITATIONS AND YOUR SKILL.
- CURB YOUR HORSE OR DISMOUNT AND MOVE MANURE TO SIDE OF TRAIL. KEEP TRAILHEAD CLEAN.

Additional Resources

Please contact the groups below for additional information. You may also contact CHC directly if you have specific questions, or would like to be more involved with trail issues.

Connecticut Department of Agriculture
www.ct.gov/doag 860-713-2500

University of Connecticut Equine Extension Specialist
www.canr.uconn.edu/ansci/equine/extension/index.html (860) 486-4471

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
www.dep.state.ct.us (860) 424-3000

Equestrian Land Conservation Resource
www.elcr.org

Enjoy the Trails!



***Membership dues made this brochure possible. Please consider joining CHC so that we may continue to serve the industry.*

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Trails Etiquette

The Connecticut Horse Council, Inc.



United in Leadership, Service and
Education since 1971

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The state of Connecticut has a beautiful system of trails through its state parks and forests. We also have a large population of horses, many of whom are ridden on these trails.

CHC would like to remind riders that they are ambassadors for our industry: every time you ride, you need to act responsibly, otherwise we could find horses restricted from trails in the future, as has happened in other states. Often, misunderstandings occur because riders are unaware of certain rules.

Treat the trail with respect

Discourage your horse from snacking. Some plants may be toxic to horses; others could be endangered species. Eating and trampling vegetation leads to bare dirt, which leads to destroyed vegetation and polluted streams. Do not tie horses directly to trees, as they may chew on the bark, causing damage. Minimize soil impact by staying on designated trails and avoiding muddy conditions.

Many horses will move slightly to the side to relieve themselves, (or they can be trained to do so). The responsible trail user will try to keep his horse's end products away from high traffic multiple-use areas. If a horse is trained to keep moving while defecating, the material will biodegrade within days (because equines are herbivores), and with less environmental impact. In some cases, on well used multiple use trails and Greenways, it's a good idea to dismount and move the manure over to the side, or go back & clean up. **Deep hoof prints** and **manure** are the two biggest concerns of other trail users.

Don't smoke on the trail, don't litter, and keep the trail head clear of manure and trash. ***Be environmentally responsible***, and trail-train your horse. Your goal is to

Leave No Trace...

Hunting

Hunters have the right to be in the woods during designated hunting seasons. Dates of various game seasons are available from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). It's wisest for equestrians to not ride where hunters will be, especially during the first several weeks of deer season. If you must ride in areas where hunting is allowed, be aware that hunters may be wearing bright orange or camouflage, depending on the season. They may be hunting with a dog or from a boat or blind. Gunshots are to be expected, and WILL spook a horse. Be cautious when riding on dirt roads or in fields.

In Connecticut hunting with a gun is currently not allowed on Sundays, except on registered private shooting preserves. However, many gun clubs sponsor fun shoots on their property then. Target shooting is also allowed, so be aware regardless of the day of the week. If you ride in Rhode Island, wearing blaze orange is mandatory for anyone in the woods, since hunting is allowed seven days a week.

**** During hunting season, riders, cyclists, hikers, and joggers should wear bright or blaze orange clothing, never white, carry bells; be seen and heard ****

Other Issues

Often, private property abuts state forests and parks. Riders need to be aware of their locations on trails, and should NEVER trespass on private property, whether it is posted or not. Private property is not required to be posted, and you can be prosecuted for being there. Maps of the trails can be obtained from the DEP.

***It is also illegal to make new trails, alterations to trails, or cut trees/brush without express permission of the DEP.**

Know your skills and your horse's

Many trails have terrain and obstacles that may be more difficult for both of you. Many well used Greenways are popular and busy trails for baby carriages, fast riding bicyclists, dogs that may not be under control, etc.

On high traffic trails with multiple surfaces, stay to the right except when passing. Try to stay off blacktop. It may be safer to dismount and lead your horse across some bridges and viaducts, since footing may be slippery.

Standard multiple-use trail regulations give equestrians the right of way. Mountain bikes yield to hikers, and both cyclists and hikers yield to horses. As the privileged user, this means it's up to the equestrian to think safety at all times, take control of encounters with others, and be diplomatic and polite.

Everyone who uses trails should also keep track of the time, and make every effort to be back before dark. Most state forests and parks close at dusk, and the risks of riding in the dark are great. Think Safety!

CHC has worked closely with other user groups and the DEP over the years to ensure trails remain open to equestrians. Please assist us by following the information contained in this brochure.

It is important to remember that your actions reflect on the entire industry, and you are responsible for knowing the rules of the trails you are riding. Every precaution you take protects you, your horse, and other trail users. If you have questions or concerns, please contact CHC directly.