



## EASTERN REGION ADULT RIDERS CLUB

### ARENAS: HOW WE CAN ALL MAXIMISE OUR WARM UP/LESSON AND STAY SAFE

The rules around use of arenas need to be based on **common sense**. Unfortunately what is often seen happening is anything but! This article addresses common problems seen in areas, and outlines a list of rules that will give everyone a fair go, and maximise safety. The rules are based on EA Arena Traffic Rules as well as common courtesy and common sense! Learn the rules, adhere to them, and we will all be better off.

First and foremost, LOOK WHERE YOU ARE GOING. Isn't this self-evident you may ask? Watch any group of dressage riders, and there is a fair chance most of them will be looking down at their horse's neck or ears. Not only does this prevent you from feeling what is going on under you, but it puts you and other riders at risk of collision. Following on from this, AVOID COLLISIONS. OK, you may have the right of way, but if the other rider doesn't know this, and you insist on holding your line, this may result in grief, or at least anger, neither of which is helpful to riders.

Secondly, warm up arenas are for riding in. PEDESTRIANS SHOULD STAY OFF THE ARENA. This means no coaches giving instruction, no friends chatting or helping you with your gear, no spectators wandering through the warm up arena as a shortcut, and no lunging (except in designated areas). All of these activities should happen in a place away from the communal warm up.

SAFETY FIRST at all times: if your horse is behaving badly or out of control, don't disrupt other riders, go somewhere where you can work calmly by yourself. Also be aware of the reactions of other horses to your own, and don't get too close to nervous or over-reactive horses. Leave a good horse length between you and any other horse (and if you see a red ribbon in a horse's tail, give it extra room as it will be a known kicker). Also if you see a horse carrying a green disc, this denotes that it is a stallion so be aware, particularly if you are on a mare. And finally, if you want to practice halts, find an area where you will not impede others, stopping is generally not permitted in practice arenas.

## General Rules

Walk on the inside track. (The inside track is approximately 2.5 metres from the boundary of the arena – enough for two horses to pass easily side by side outside the walking horse). No walking on the outside track including lateral movements.

Slower pace gives way to faster pace (i.e. slower rider moves off the track).

Lesser movements must give way to more advanced movements anywhere on the arena.

A diagonal line must give way to a circle.

A circle must give way to the outside track i.e. finish your circle a horse length off the track if someone is coming along the track that you started from.

For horses on the outside track, if going in the same direction, faster to the outside and slower to the inside, and so no overtaking on the inside – especially on a circle.

If going in the opposite direction in the same gait, pass left **hand to left hand**.

Try to learn and remember these rules, and if you have trouble understanding them, ask your instructor. It will make the arena a more pleasant, constructive, and safer place for everyone.