

STANDARDS FOR HELMETS IN RDA

1. INTRODUCTION

All participants in the RDA program will wear approved equestrian helmets whilst undertaking activities except where exemptions apply (see exemption sections below). RDA activities include unmounted tasks such as leading and grooming horses.

RDA Australia will follow industry standards for use of equestrian helmets. Standards will be reviewed and modified from time to time in line with changes in industry standards and risk management practices within RDA. Standards and procedures will be reviewed by the Program Delivery Committees as designated in the RDA Program Delivery policies.

2. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR USE OF HELMETS IN RDA

Helmets that are used in RDA activities must meet one of the Australian or US standards for equestrian use. The following standards are accepted:

**ASNZ 3838 (Australia & New Zealand Standard)
ASTM F1163 (USA Standard) or PAS 015**

Please note: the European standard EN1384 is no longer accepted from 1 January 2016.

Manufacturers guarantee the effective use of their product for a limited time period under a controlled handling environment. For equestrian helmets, this time period is limited to 5 years from date of manufacture. Although helmets may sit on the saddlery shelf for two or more years before purchase, the 5 year life of the helmet must be taken from the date of manufacture and not from the date of sale.

RDA Centres are required to regularly check that helmets used in RDA programs meet these minimum standards and helmets that exceed 5 years from the date of manufacture are replaced before the date is exceeded. This includes helmets owned privately by clients, coaches and volunteers.

3. DISPOSAL OF HELMETS

Helmets are to be replaced if they exceed 5 years from the date of manufacture. If a helmet sustains a hard knock (e.g. from being dropped onto a concrete floor) or if anyone has a fall and hits their head, the helmet can lose its shock absorbing capacity and must be disposed of immediately, even if the lining looks completely unscathed.

RDA helmets that are disposed of must not be sold as they are no longer deemed suitable under industry standards for equestrian use. The chin strap/harness should be severed to ensure it cannot be re-used.

4. USE OF NON-EQUESTRIAN HELMETS

Equestrian helmets are designed specifically to protect the participant from the types of head injuries that are generally sustained in horse riding accidents. Bicycle helmets and other sporting helmets are designed to offer different levels of protection and are therefore generally not suitable for use in the equestrian activities. Should a client need to use a non-equestrian helmet the coach must follow the helmet exemption procedure.

5. HELMET EXEMPTIONS

If a client is unable to wear an equestrian helmet due to a specific medical condition an exemption may be granted. Conditions may include but are not limited to:

- Head size is too small to fit an equestrian helmet. A bicycle helmet may be used in the short term for the participant to become accustomed to wearing a helmet.
- Hydrocephalus (helmet would put pressure on skull or shunt).
- Weight of helmet impedes rider's ability to hold their head up.

Exemptions can be applied for under the following conditions:

- Recommendation must be supported by a Medical Practitioner or Physiotherapist.
- Exemption must be approved by the rider or parent/guardian.
- The rider must ride at all times under controlled conditions, with two side walkers and a trained horse leader.
- The exemption is reviewed annually until such time that the rider is able to wear an equestrian helmet.

An RDA Helmet Exemption Form is to be completed and signed by all required parties. A copy of the form is held at the Centre on the rider's file and a copy is forwarded to the RDA State Office to be recorded by the State Coaching and Safety Committee.

6. EXEMPTIONS FOR VAULTING

Wearing helmets in vaulting activities can pose additional risks especially when working in teams. It is therefore industry standard for vaulting activities to be conducted without helmets. Vaulters do not need to wear a helmet while practicing on the barrel. Novice vaulters in RDA should wear an approved helmet while they are on the horse until such time that they meet the guidelines for non-use of helmets.

The following guidelines are provided for the non-use of helmets in the RDA vaulting program. These guidelines are assessed by the qualified Vaulting Coach in consultation with parents.

- The vaulter is of a skill level that helmets are a safety concern (includes complicated moves such as shoulder stand or team movements).
- The vaulter is cognitively and physically capable to practice self-preservation skills in the case of a fall by being able to:
 - demonstrate a safe, unassisted dismount, and
 - demonstrate the components of a safe fall.
- The program is accredited as an RDA Vaulting program and operates under RDA policies and procedures and the person lungeing the horse is accredited for RDA Lungeing for Vaulting.

7. EXEMPTIONS FOR CARRIAGE DRIVING

The following guidelines are provided for helmet exemptions in RDA Carriage Driving.

- Head size is too small to fit an equestrian helmet
- Hydrocephalus (helmet would put pressure on skull or shunt).
- Weight of helmet impedes driver's ability to hold their head up.

The following additional risk management procedures must be applied:

- The driving activity is conducted at walk only in a safe, enclosed area no larger than 100m x 40m (standard size for Carriage Dressage Arena).
- Two additional helpers to assist during activities with one helper walking at the head of the horse carrying a lead rope, and one walking next to the carriage on the RDA driver's side to provide support if necessary.
- RDA Helmet Exemption Form is signed and completed as per RDA procedures.

DELEGATION	AUTHORITY
RDA Program Delivery sub-committees	Provide advice to the RDA Limited Board on RDA procedures and standards.
RDA Limited Board	Ratify RDA procedures
RDA EO's and State Managers	Implement policy

STATUS

Version 1

Consultation with Program Delivery sub-committees on 4/5/14
Ratified by the RDAA Board on 23/7/14.

Version 2

Consultation with Carriage Driving sub-committee on 4/2/15
Ratified by the RDAA Board on 31/3/15.

Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia Limited

Coaching and Program Delivery

RDA Facilities Policy

Version 2 – February 2015

Attachment D

Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia Limited EQUESTRIAN HELMET EXEMPTION FORM

All clients in the RDA program will wear approved equestrian helmets whilst undertaking activities except where exemptions apply. Helmets must comply with one of the following standards: ASNZ 3838; or ASTM F1163/PAS 015. If a client is unable to wear an equestrian helmet due to a specific medical condition an exemption may be granted. Conditions may include but are not limited to:

- Head size is too small to fit an equestrian helmet. A bicycle helmet may be used in the short term for the participant to become accustomed to wearing a helmet.
- Hydrocephalus (helmet would put pressure on skull or shunt).
- Weight of helmet impedes participant's ability to hold their head up.

This form is to be used for approval of the use of a non-equestrian helmet or for a client to participate without a helmet.

NAME OF CLIENT		AGE:
CLIENT ADDRESS:		
		POSTCODE:
RDA CENTRE:		
MEDICAL CONDITION:		
REASON FOR EQUESTRIAN HELMET EXEMPTION:		
OTHER PROTECTIVE HEADWEAR APPROVED (if any):		
TYPE OF ACTIVITIES DELIVERED:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Riding sessions will be delivered under controlled conditions with two side walkers and a trained horse leader.• Carriage driving sessions will be delivered under controlled conditions with one helper walking at the head of the horse carrying a lead rope, and one walking next to the carriage on the RDA driver's side.• The helmet exemption will be reviewed annually until such time that the client is able to wear an equestrian helmet.		
COACH NAME:		SIGNATURE:
MEDICAL PRACTITIONER OR PHYSIOTHERPIST APPROVING EXEMPTION:		
NAME:		SIGNATURE:
QUALIFICATIONS:		DATE:
CLIENT/PARENT CONSENT		
The client, parent/guardian accepts legal responsibility for riding without a helmet during the RDA program specified above.		
SIGNATURE:		DATE:
THIS EXEMPTION WILL BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY.		
Next Review Date:		

Send a copy of this form to the RDA State Office. Centre to keep original copy on rider's file.

VERSION 2, February 2015

RDA Australia acknowledges the assistance of RDA Victoria in the development of the 2007 version of this form.