

HI-VIZ

Hi-viz garments play a key role in rider safety when hacking out on roads. Manufactured in fluorescent colours and featuring reflective tapes, they should meet a current EU standard for high-visibility garments.

When buying this type of clothing, always ensure that the entire garment meets the appropriate safety standard, rather than just a specific component. Those that do will have been tested to ensure that they are durable and will not fade or lose reflectivity after washing or a short period of use.

A garment's colour and luminance ensure that a rider can be seen clearly during the day, while the retroreflective strips are illuminated by vehicle headlights to make the rider more visible in the dark.

If you wear a garment that does not meet a standard, you might be taking unnecessary risks and, if you were involved in an accident, your insurance cover could be invalidated.

The current hi-visibility standards are:

EN ISO 20471:2013 – for professional use (those working around horses).

EN 1150 – for non-professional use (leisure riders).

EN 13356 – for accessories such as hatbands and gloves.



SAFETY BOOTS

For safety's sake, a riding boot needs a small heel – no less than 1/2in high – to prevent the foot slipping through the stirrup. It should also have a smooth, firm sole with a solid shank between the heel and ball of the foot, and offer plenty of support to the ankle. There should always be up to a 1/2in gap between the stirrup and the widest part of the foot.

A reinforced toecap is a good idea to help prevent injury if you are stood on by your horse or pony. Any shoes with added toecaps should bear the CE mark and have been tested to European standards EN ISO 20346 or 20345. These test the ability of the reinforced toe to bear weights of up to 1,000kg while having an appropriately strong sole construction that functions on both hard and soft surfaces. Beware of shoes claiming that the toecap meets a standard, as it is the entire boot that must be tested.



PHOTO CREDITS

Front cover:
Top, left – Gatehouse
Top, right – Equisafety
Bottom, left – Mountain Horse
Bottom, right – Charles Owen/Airowear

Riding Hats: TimeInc
Body Protectors:
Top – Wadswick Country Store
Bottom – Champion
Air Vests:
Top – Racesafe
Bottom – Treehouse Sporting Colours
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BETA Guide to Rider Safety Equipment



PPE standards do not include items worn by the horse – they apply only to garments worn by riders. So harnesses, tail bandages and exercise sheets do not carry safety standards.

Hi-viz garments also include a label specifying how many times they can be washed during their lifetime and a sizing chart. It should never simply state S, M or L.

A WORLD OF CHOICE

When it comes to safety clothing and equipment, riders have never had so much choice. There is a wide selection of hats, body protectors, boots and hi-viz gear currently on the market – each carefully designed to meet specific requirements and cater for individual budgets.

This handy BETA guide highlights the key pieces of clothing and kit required for riding and handling horses safely, and explains just how and why they are of benefit to you.

All equipment in this leaflet must carry the CE mark to show compliance with basic health and safety requirements shown in the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Directive. The CE mark is neither a quality mark nor standard in itself but a mandatory declaration under EU law.

For the very best customer service and extensive product knowledge, always shop with a BETA retail member – many of them offer an expert fitting service, too. Look out for their certificate displayed in-store, which shows that they have been trained by BETA to fit riding hats and body protectors. Search by postcode for your nearest retail member at www.beta-uk.org

RIDING HATS

Thanks to modern technology, manufacturers are able to produce hats that are incredibly strong, lightweight and comfortable.

They are designed to protect the head but, for them to work properly, the hat needs to be fitted and fastened correctly. Any hat that suffers severe impact – even by repeatedly dropping it on a hard surface – should be discarded and a new one bought. After all, it's easy to replace a hat, but impossible to replace a head!

Hats can be made to a wide variety of standards, often dependent on the country in which they are sold or made. The hat standard should be marked on the inside of the hat, either on or underneath the lining.

There is a range of quality symbols to choose from, many of which are linked to specific standards. These indicate that the products and manufacturing process undergo regular checks for consistency and quality.

If you plan to compete in the hat, it is important to check the rules of the disciplines involved to ensure that your hat meets their requirements.

For further information about riding hats and safety standards, check out our leaflet *The BETA Guide to Riding Hats*.



BODY PROTECTORS

Body protectors help to keep you safe by absorbing high levels of energy created when falling off or being kicked or stood on by a horse. To provide the best protection possible, it is essential that the garment fits well and all critical points of the body are covered.

BETA's body protector standard sets the benchmark for safety and is recommended by all leading riding organisations and disciplines. Riders competing under the rules of a discipline or organisation should always check which standards are permitted.

Currently two versions of the BETA standard are valid, the 2009 version marked with a purple label and the newly published 2018 version with a blue on black label. Both versions are accepted by riding organisations and disciplines.

Body protectors are made to three different levels of protection, as follows:

BETA/EN 13158

Level 1 – provides the lowest level of protection that is only considered appropriate for licensed jockeys. Level 1 is designed to meet the weight restrictions that apply to professional jockeys whilst racing.

Level 2 – offers a lower than normal level of protection. It is considered suitable for general riding in very low risk situations and for professionals such as licensed jockeys when specified by their racing authority or regulatory body.

Level 3 – is considered appropriate for general riding, competitions including eventing and working with horses. Level 3 body protectors should prevent minor bruising that would have produced stiffness and pain, reduce soft tissue injuries and prevent a limited number of rib fractures.

A more detailed overview of body protectors and standards is available in the *BETA Guide to Body Protectors*.

SHOULDER PROTECTORS

These are designed to protect the end of the collar bone and can be bought to fit with most brands of body protector, attached via loops found on the shoulders. You can also find a range of specialist T-shirts that have padded shoulders built into them. Shoulder protectors are made to EN 13158 Level 3 and/or BETA Level 3 standards.



AIR VESTS

Air vests and jackets are made with air bags, which inflate when a mechanism is activated as the rider is thrown from the horse. When this happens, a trigger – just like a rip-cord – is pulled taut to set off and inflate the garment. There are a variety of different types on the market, with varying body coverage and inward or outwardly inflating air bags.

Although there is currently no European standard specifically for these types of equestrian garments, some companies choose to have them tested to one of the following criteria, neither of which is compulsory:

- SATRA M38 specification for equestrian air vests.
- EN 1621-4 standard, designed for motorcycle air vests.

Air vests and jackets should always be fitted by a trained supplier to ensure correct attachment of the cord. Because the body protector offers constant protection, we recommend that it should always be worn under an air vest, which only offers protection on inflation. In addition, air vests work well for flat falls but offer limited, if any, protection against direct kicks when falling or on the ground.

Hybrid versions of these garments are available, combining a body protector, which should always be approved to BETA Level 3, with an integral air vest.

