

Montana 4-H Horse Program: Bit Rules & Equipment Guide



Revised June 2019

Basic guide to local, county, and state/regional Montana 4-H Horse shows as well as for those classes in open shows limited to 4-H membership entry. This resource is for agents, organizers, officials, exhibitors, parents and judges.



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the current Montana 4-H State Horse Show Rulebook and Working Ranch Horse Rules. These rulebooks, which are available on the Montana 4-H web site's Horse Project pages, provide additional information about bits, other equipment and attire for respective classes.

Because the Montana 4-H Horse Program is diverse, it is difficult to generate a complete list of acceptable bits. Bits that are permitted by respective breed associations may be acceptable at the judge's discretion. A judge at his/her discretion can penalize a horse with non-conventional types of bits. Please understand that this resource is a guide and gives only examples of legal and unacceptable bits. In no way does it try to include every bit that is allowed or prohibited.

If exhibitors have questions concerning a bit they wish to use, and that specific bit is not mentioned in the current rules or these guidelines, then exhibitors should ask the equipment steward(s) and/or the judge(s) if the bit is acceptable for that show. Exhibitors should have alternative bits available so that they can make a change if it is determined by show officials that their preferred bit is unacceptable for the event.

Each county, district or regional, and state show is officiated by different stewards and judges. Therefore, exhibitors must seek approval from show officials at each show before using the questionable bit. Members should consult with professionals in their riding discipline or contact the appropriate breed association for guidance in selecting a bit in order to find one that is both appropriate and acceptable for use in Montana 4-H horse events.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Montana 4-H and the Montana 4-H State Horse Committee extend our gratitude to the Florida 4-H State Horse Program and the New England 4-H Horse Program as creators of the original content upon which Montana's guide is based. Credit is also given to developers Wendy DeVito, Sandra TenBroeck, Joel McQuagge. The Florida and New England manuals are the most comprehensive guides of bits available to the 4-H community and their materials have been adopted for our use with their permission. The original content has been slightly modified for use in Montana.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Bits and equipment are grouped into categories (Western, Ranch, and Speed Events; English- Hunter, and Saddle/Gaited). Images shown are labeled as either:

Icon	Description
 <i>Figure 1: Encircled Check Mark</i>	Acceptable
 <i>Figure 2: Encircled Question Mark</i>	Acceptable with conditions
 <i>Figure 3: Encircled X</i>	Unacceptable

Western, Ranch, and Speed Events Divisions

- Reference to snaffle bits mean the conventional O-ring, egg-butt, or D-ring with ring no larger than 4". The mouthpiece should be round, oval, or egg-shaped, smooth and unwrapped metal. It may be inlaid but must be smooth. The bars must be a minimum of 5/16" in diameter, measured one inch in from the cheek with a gradual decrease to center of the snaffle. The mouthpiece may be two or three pieces. A three-piece connecting ring of 3/4" or less in diameter, or a connecting flat bar of 3/8" to 3/4" (top to bottom) and 2" maximum width, which lies flat in the horse's mouth, or rollers are acceptable.

Mouthpiece Image	Mouthpiece Name	Acceptable/Unacceptable
 <p><i>Figure 4: O-Ring mouthpiece</i></p>	O-Ring	☑
 <p><i>Figure 5: Egg-butt mouthpiece</i></p>	Egg-butt	☑
 <p><i>Figure 6: Offset D-ring mouthpiece</i></p>	Offset D-ring	☑
 <p><i>Figure 7: Full cheek mouthpiece</i></p>	Full Cheek	☒

The shape of the snaffle ring outside of the horse's mouth is unrelated to the style of mouthpiece on the inside. **You cannot determine what is in the mouth by the shape of the ring! The acceptable shapes are O-ring, egg-butt, and D-ring. And regardless of which shape, the ring may not be more than 4 inches across at its widest point.

2. References to a bit mean the use of a curb bit that has a solid or broken mouthpiece, has shanks, and acts with leverage. All curb bits must be free of mechanical device and should be considered a standard western bit. A description of a legal, standard western bit includes:

- a. Maximum shank length is 8½" (Diagrams 1 and 2). Shanks may be fixed or loose.
- b. Curb bit mouthpieces must be round, smooth, and unwrapped metal of 5/16" to 3/4" in diameter, measured one inch in from the cheek. They may be inlaid but must be smooth. Nothing may protrude below the mouthpiece (bar), such as extensions or prongs on solid mouthpieces. The mouthpiece may be two or three pieces. A three-piece, connecting ring of 3/4" or less in diameter, or a connecting flat bar of 3/8" to 3/4" (top to bottom) and 2" maximum width, that lies flat in the mouth, or rollers are acceptable (Diagrams 1 and 2).
- c. The port height must be 2½" maximum, with rollers and covers acceptable. Broken mouthpieces, half- breeds, and spades are standard (Diagram 1 and 2).

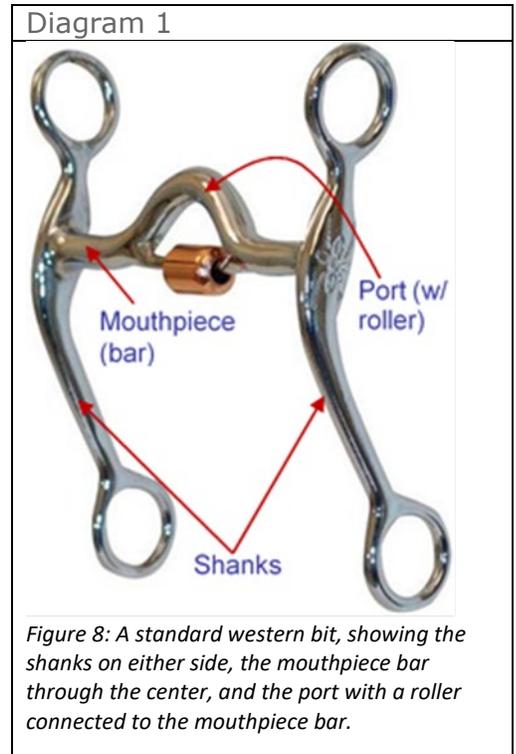


Diagram 2	
 <p><i>Figure 9: Photograph of an example of a western, ranch or speed horse event bit for the use of measurements.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum 8 ½ inches shank length. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Measured from the inside top of the headstall ring to the 'pull point' of the rein ring. • Minimum 5/16 to ¾ inch diameter mouthpiece. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Measured 1 inch from cheek. • Maximum 2 ½ inches port height. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Measured from the top of the port to the bottom of the bar.
 <p><i>Figure 10: A photograph of an O-ring bit.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum 4 inches ring diameter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Measured from outside of metal on largest part of the ring or D. • Minimum 5/16-inch diameter mouthpiece. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Measured 1 inch in from cheek.
 <p><i>Figure 11: Photograph containing the connecting ring of a bit mouthpiece.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting ring, ¾ inch maximum diameter.
 <p><i>Figure 12: Photograph containing the connecting flat bar of a bit mouthpiece.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting flat bar, 3/8 – ¾ inch maximum (top to bottom), 2-inch maximum width.

Western, Ranch, and Speed Events Divisions...continued

What does it mean? ... Mouthpieces

Many of the parameters for mouthpieces are the same regardless if it is a snaffle or a curb. They need to be the same minimum diameter (5/16"), be smooth, may be broken into two or three pieces, and if there is a connecting flat bar or ring, those connectors must meet the same respective measurements. It does not mean the connecting piece has to be a ring or flat bar.

The connecting piece could also be a roller or hinged port. Much of the determination of whether a mouthpiece is acceptable or not comes down to if it is smooth.

What is "smooth"?

Smooth simply means that there are no bumps or ridges that will press into the bars of the horse's mouth or the pressure points on the tongue when pressure is applied. Things that make it not smooth may include (but are not limited to) any kind of twist, a wire wrap, carvings into the metal that create ridges, chain, etc.

Mouthpiece examples (applies to both snaffle and curb bits):.

Mouthpiece Examples	Description	Acceptable/Unacceptable
 <p>Figure 13: A simple jointed mouthpiece</p>	Simple jointed, smooth	
 <p>Figure 14: A connecting bar mouthpiece</p>	If connecting bar is 3/8 – 3/4 inch top to bottom, this is acceptable, and wrap on a connecting bar is acceptable because it is not a primary pressure point.	
 <p>Figure 15: Three unacceptable, not smooth mouthpieces</p>	Mouthpiece is not smooth due to the twists and loose links.	
 <p>Figure 16: Connecting bar mouthpiece</p>	If the connecting flat bar is 3/8 – 3/4 inch top to bottom, this is acceptable.	
 <p>Figure 17: Wire wrapped, unacceptable mouthpiece</p>	Wire wrapped; must be unrapped metal; not smooth	
 <p>Figure 18: Connecting ring mouthpiece</p>	A connecting ring is acceptable if it is <3/4 inch across	
 <p>Figure 19: Two twisted mouthpieces</p>	The top mouthpiece is a fast twist/corkscrew. Below is a slow twist. Both create numerous sharp pressure points, making these mouthpieces unacceptable.	
 <p>Figure 20: Center link, smooth metal inlay mouthpiece</p>	The metal inlay in this mouthpiece is smooth, making it acceptable.	
 <p>Figure 21: Center link, protruding metal inlay mouthpiece</p>	The metal inlay in this mouthpiece has protruding links, making it unacceptable.	

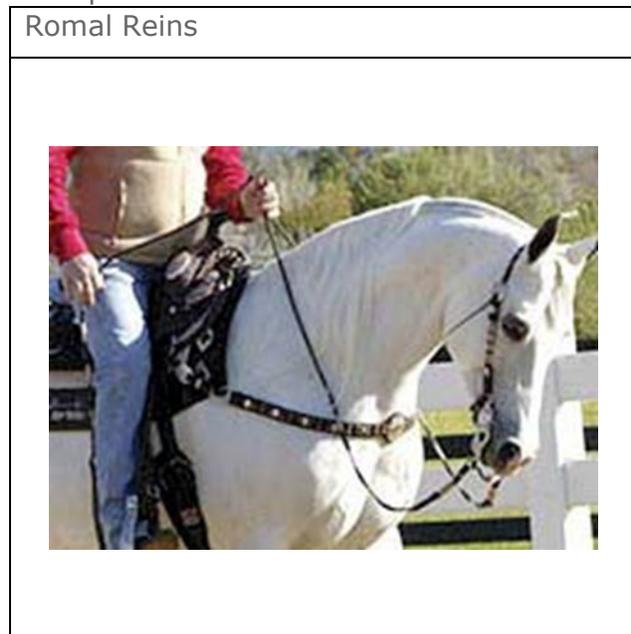
Curb Mouthpiece Examples	Description	Acceptable/Unacceptable
 <p>Figure 22: Example of a curb bit mouthpiece</p>	<p>Half-breed mouthpiece.</p>	
 <p>Figure 23: Prong Bit</p>	<p>Prong bit, with metal protruding below the bar, causing sharp pressure points.</p>	
 <p>Figure 24: Example of a curb bit mouthpiece</p>	<p>Port should measure a minimum of 2 ½ inches high and the shanks should measure a minimum of 8 ½ inches long.</p>	
 <p>Figure 25: Example of a curb bit mouthpiece</p>	<p>An example of an acceptable 3-piece mouthpiece.</p>	
 <p>Figure 26: Example of a curb bit mouthpiece</p>	<p>An example of an acceptable 3-piece mouthpiece.</p>	
 <p>Figure 27: Example of a curb bit mouthpiece</p>	<p>An example of an acceptable 3-piece mouthpiece.</p>	

Western, Ranch, and Speed Events Divisions...continued

References to a romal means an extension of braided material attached to closed reins (**Examples 1**). This extension may be carried in the free hand with an approximate 16" spacing between the reining hand and the free hand holding the romal. The rider's hand shall be around the reins with the fingers closed, thumb on top, and no fingers between the reins.

The romal shall not be used forward of the cinch or to signal or cue the horse in any way. Any infraction of this rule shall be penalized severely by the judge (Examples 1).

Example 1: Romal Reins



Romal Hold Example	Acceptable/Unacceptable
 <i>Figure 28: Correct Romal Hold</i>	✔
 <i>Figure 29: Incorrect Romal Hold</i>	✘

5. A curb bit must be used with a curb strap or curb chain properly attached so as to make contact with the horse's chin. Chain curb straps must be at least 1/2" in width, and lie flat against the jaw of the horse. No wire curbs, regardless of how taped or padded. Absolutely no rigid material will be permitted under the jaws, regardless of how padded or covered. (**Examples 2**)

Example 2: Curb Straps

Curb Straps	Description	Acceptable/Unacceptable
	All seven of these examples are acceptable	✔

	This strap is okay if it is less than 1/2 inch wide	⊕
	A chain altered to create lumps and that does not fit against the jaw is not acceptable	⊗
	Chain is greater than 1/2 inch wide	⊗
	A rigid bar added to a chain is not acceptable	⊗

Western and Ranch Divisions

- References to hackamore mean the use of a non-mechanical flexible, braided rawhide or leather, or rope bosal, the core of which may be either rawhide or flexible cable. Absolutely no rigid material will be permitted under the jaws, regardless of how padded or covered.

Bosals are the only type of hackamore allowed in the Western Division. These are simple, flexible hackamores with no metal or working parts. Nothing over the nose or under the jaw may be rigid.

What does it mean?... Western Division Hackamores	
 <p><i>Figure 30: Soft material makes this acceptable.</i></p>	⊕
 <p><i>Figure 31: Rigid material under the jaw makes this unacceptable.</i></p>	⊗
 <p><i>Figure 32: Mechanical hackamore is unacceptable.</i></p>	⊗

 <p><i>Figure 33: Rigid material over the nose and the mechanical aspect make this unacceptable.</i></p>	
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2. Slip or gag bits, and donut and flat polo mouthpieces are **PROHIBITED**.

Slip bits allow the mouthpiece to slide up the shank when pressure is applied, thereby increasing the leverage action in the mouth. With gag bits, the reins (attached directly to the headstall) slide through the bit rings and pull the mouthpiece up in a similar fashion. Neither type of 'gag action' is allowed.

Flat polo mouthpieces are functionally the same as a Rutledge Roper. Neither are allowed in the Western division.

<p>What does it mean?... Slip/gag, Donut, and Polo Mouthpieces</p>	
 <p><i>Figure 34: Slip Mouthpiece, with a gag action and not smooth make this unacceptable.</i></p>	
 <p><i>Figure 35: Gag bit and gag action are unacceptable.</i></p>	
 <p><i>Figure 36: Donut mouthpieces are unacceptable.</i></p>	
 <p><i>Figure 37: Flat polo mouthpieces are unacceptable.</i></p>	

Western and Ranch Divisions, continued

3. Horses 4-years-old and younger may be shown in a snaffle bit, hackamore, curb bit, half-breed, or spade bit.
 - a. When using a snaffle bit, a loose hobble strap is optional (leather or nylon only, no chain). Reins to be attached above the hobble strap, if used.
 - b. Leather or woven split reins or mecate reins are acceptable with a snaffle bit.
 - c. Junior horses (4 years old and under) that are shown with a hackamore or snaffle bit may be ridden with two hands on the reins (**Examples 3**). The rider's hands should be carried near the pommel and not further than 4" out on either side of the saddle horn. Rider's hands must be steady with very limited movement. Rider's hands should be visible to the judge(s) at all times.

Example 3: Holding snaffle/bosal reins

 Correct Hold	 Incorrect Hold
 <p><i>Figure 38: Mecate rein - one-piece continuous rein; separate rope attached to saddle or belt.</i></p>	 <p><i>Figure 39: Incorrect Hold</i></p>
 <p><i>Figure 40: Correct Hold</i></p>	 <p><i>Figure 41: Incorrect Hold</i></p>
 <p><i>Figure 42: Correct Hold</i></p>	 <p><i>Figure 43: Incorrect Hold</i></p>

4. Horses 5-years-old and older may only be shown in a curb bit, half-breed, or spade bit.
 - a. Only one hand may be used on the reins, and hand must not be changed (**Examples 4**). When using split reins, the hand is to be around the reins, and if desired only the index finger may be between the reins. Violation of this rule will result in an automatic penalty.
 - b. In ranch classes when showing in a curb bit, reins must be held in one hand, but may be held in any manner.
 - c. Roping reins may be used for speed events and ranch horse classes.

Example 4: Holding Curb Reins

 Correct Hold	 Incorrect Hold
 <p><i>Figure 44: Correct Hold</i></p>	 <p><i>Figure 45: Incorrect Hold</i></p>
 <p><i>Figure 46: Correct Hold</i></p>	 <p><i>Figure 47: Incorrect Hold</i></p>
 <p><i>Figure 48: Correct Hold</i></p>	

PER RULE 4B: Any of these holds are acceptable in Ranch classes.

Speed Events Division Only

1. References to hackamore mean either a mechanical or non-mechanical hackamore.
 - a. Non-mechanical: Flexible, braided rawhide or leather, or rope bosal, the core of which may be either rawhide or flexible cable.
 - b. Mechanical: The core may be any flexible cable, rawhide, or metal material, and must be covered with leather, soft plastic tubing, or similar material for padding.
 - c. Absolutely no rigid material will be permitted over the nose or under the jaws, regardless of how padded or covered.

What does it mean?... Speed Events and Hackamores	Description	Acceptable/ Unacceptable
 <p><i>Figure 49: Rawhide Bosal</i></p>	Acceptable hackamore	☑
 <p><i>Figure 50: Mechanical Hackamore</i></p>	Unacceptable mechanical hackamore	☒
 <p><i>Figure 51: Easy/Fast Stop</i></p>	Rigid material under the jaw makes this unacceptable.	☒
 <p><i>Figure 52: Stop & Turn</i></p>	Rigid material under the jaw makes this unacceptable.	☒
 <p><i>Figure 53: Fast Stop</i></p>	Rigid material over the nose makes this unacceptable.	☒

Non-mechanical hackamores are allowed but mechanical hackamores are **PROHIBITED** in the Speed Events Division. The materials over and under the nose of the non-mechanical hackamore must be flexible.

- Slip or gag bits, including the Wonder Bit, or flat mouthpiece bits like the Rutledge Roper are **PROHIBITED** in speed events.

What does it mean?... Slip/Gag Bits and Rutledge Roper	Description	Acceptable/ Unacceptable
 <p data-bbox="349 642 641 667"><i>Figure 54: Rutledge Roper Bit</i></p>	<p data-bbox="852 466 1084 562">Flat Mouthpiece makes this bit unacceptable.</p>	<p data-bbox="1258 487 1318 550">⊗</p>
 <p data-bbox="381 957 609 982"><i>Figure 55: Wonder Bit</i></p>	<p data-bbox="812 793 1128 865">Gag action makes this bit unacceptable.</p>	<p data-bbox="1258 802 1318 865">⊗</p>
 <p data-bbox="300 1272 690 1297"><i>Figure 56: Gag Action and Mouthpiece</i></p>	<p data-bbox="812 1075 1128 1213">Gag action and a mouthpiece that is not smooth makes this bit unacceptable.</p>	<p data-bbox="1258 1117 1318 1180">⊗</p>

Slip bits allow the mouthpiece to slide up the shank when pressure is applied (reins pulled), thereby increasing the leverage action in the mouth. With gag bits, the reins (attached directly to the headstall) slide through the bit rings and pull the mouthpiece up in a similar fashion. Bits with this kind of 'gag action' are **PROHIBITED** in Speed Events.

In Speed Events, flat mouthpiece Rutledge Roper bits are also acceptable. The mouthpiece of which should rotate freely on the shanks so it remains flat on the tongue when pressure is applied.

- Horses of any age may be shown with a snaffle bit.
- Riders may use two hands on the reins regardless of type of bit and age of horse. Roping reins are allowed in speed events.
- Judge or equipment official may prohibit the use of bits or equipment deemed too severe.

English Division (includes Hunter but not Dressage)

1. An English snaffle (no shank), Kimberwick, Pelham, or full bridle (Weymouth) must be used. If a bit is used that requires two reins, it may be used with a converter (a U-shaped piece of leather that fastens between the snaffle ring and the curb ring at the end of the shank on the Pelham). The use of a bit converter is not illegal, but some judges may not consider it technically correct so its use may be penalized. Snaffle bit rings may be no larger than 4" in diameter.

Snaffles: The shape of the snaffle ring outside of the horse's mouth is unrelated to the style of mouthpiece on the inside. **You cannot determine what is in the mouth by the shape of the ring! The acceptable shapes are O-ring, egg-butt, D-ring, and full cheek.

What does it mean?... English Bit Types	Description/Title	Acceptable/Unacceptable
 <p>Figure 57: O-Ring/Loose Ring English Bit</p>	O-Ring/Loose Ring	☑
 <p>Figure 58: Egg-Butt English Bit</p>	Egg-Butt	☑
 <p>Figure 59: Offset D-Ring English Bit</p>	Offset D-ring	☑
 <p>Figure 60: D-Ring English Bit</p>	D-Ring	☑
 <p>Figure 61: Full Cheek English Bit</p>	Full Cheek	☑

Pelhams and Kimberwicks use a snaffle and/or curb action. A Pelham has a shank and requires reins to be attached to both the snaffle ring and curb ring. Kimberwicks have 'cut-outs' where a rein can be attached to either location – one resulting in more snaffle action and one with more curb action. Full bridles (Weymouths) have separate curb & snaffle (bridoon) bits and require two reins.

What does it mean?... English Bit Types	Description	Acceptable/ Unacceptable
 <p>Figure 62: Kimberwick Bit</p>	<p>This bit has two location options to attach one rein</p>	<p>☑</p>
 <p>Figure 63: Kimberwick Bit</p>	<p>This bit has two location options to attach one rein. Either rein attachment location is acceptable.</p>	<p>☑</p>
 <p>Figure 64: Pelham Bit</p>	<p>This is the correct use of a Pelham bit.</p>	<p>☑</p>
 <p>Figure 65: Pelham Bit</p>	<p>This bit requires two reins.</p>	<p>☑</p>

2. Any bit having a fixed rein requires use of a curb chain. Curb chain must be at least 1/2" wide and lie flat against the jaw of the horse.
 - a. Triangle ("knife edge"), true gag action, and elevator bits are PROHIBITED.
 - b. Snaffle bits with slow twist, corkscrew, or twisted wire mouthpieces are PROHIBITED.

With gag bits, straps connect the reins directly to the headstall, sliding through the bit rings. When pressure is applied, it pulls the mouthpiece up higher in the mouth. Elevator bits have an exaggerated height headstall attachment, or mouthpieces that slide up & down on the cheek rings and create a mouthpiece-lifting gag action when pressure is applied.

What does it mean?... Gag and Elevator Bits	Description	Acceptable/ Unacceptable
 <p data-bbox="305 1066 479 1094"><i>Figure 66: Gag Bit</i></p>	<p data-bbox="625 898 1182 961">The true gag action on this bit makes it an unacceptable bit.</p>	
 <p data-bbox="284 1302 495 1329"><i>Figure 67: Elevator Bit</i></p>	<p data-bbox="673 1207 1133 1270">This is an elevator bit, making it unacceptable.</p>	
 <p data-bbox="284 1623 495 1650"><i>Figure 68: Elevator Bit</i></p>	<p data-bbox="673 1486 1133 1549">This is an elevator bit, making it unacceptable.</p>	

English Division, continued

3. Solid or broken mouthpieces must be 5/16" to 3/4" in diameter, measured 1" from the cheek and may have a port no higher than 1½" (see **Diagram 3**). On broken mouthpieces, connecting rings of 3/4" or less in diameter or connecting flat bar of 3/8" to 3/4" (measured top to bottom), which lie flat in the horse's mouth, or rollers are acceptable.
4. Smooth round, oval or egg-shaped, and straight bar or solid mouthpieces are allowed. They may be smooth inlaid, synthetic wrapped (including rubber or plastic), or encased. Waterford bits are allowed.

Regardless of the type of bit (snaffle, Pelham, Kimberwick, etc.), mouthpieces must meet the same requirements – have a diameter of 5/16" to 3/4", may be solid (1 piece) or broken (2 or 3 pieces), and if there is a connecting ring or flat bar, those connectors must meet the same respective measurements. It does not mean the connecting piece has to be a ring or flat bar.

Nothing may protrude below the mouthpiece (bars or prongs).

What does it mean?... Mouthpieces	Description	Acceptable/ Unacceptable
 <p>Figure 69: Simple jointed, round mouthpiece</p>	Simple jointed, round	
 <p>Figure 70: Three-piece mouthpiece</p>	Three-piece mouthpiece	
 <p>Figure 71: Roller in joint mouthpiece</p>	Roller in joint is acceptable	
 <p>Figure 72: Single twist, wire wrapped mouthpieces</p>	Single twisted wire, or wire wrapped mouthpieces are unacceptable	
 <p>Figure 73: Multiple link & twisted wire mouthpieces</p>	Double twists and loose links are unacceptable	
 <p>Figure 74: Mouthpiece; port is less than 1 1/2 inches</p>	Three-piece with port as connector	
 <p>Figure 75: Mouthpiece; port is less than 1 1/2 inches.</p>	One-piece wide port	
 <p>Figure 76: Fast twist and slow twist mouthpieces</p>	The top mouthpiece is a fast twist/corkscrew. Below is a slow twist. Making these mouthpieces unacceptable.	
 <p>Figure 77: Waterford bit mouthpiece</p>	Waterford bit is specifically listed as acceptable; three smooth, round balls linked together.	
 <p>Figure 78: Triangle/knife-edge mouthpiece</p>	Triangle or knife-edge bit is unacceptable; very sharp on the bars & tongue.	
 <p>Figure 79: Multi-roller, rough mouthpiece</p>	Multiple rollers set in the mouthpiece may result in many pressure points.	
 <p>Figure 80: Smooth, round roller mouthpiece</p>	Mouthpiece made of a series of rollers results in allowable smooth, round shape.	

Diagram 4: Saddle/Gaited Bit Measurements	Rules
 <p data-bbox="246 529 760 550"><i>Figure 81: Pelham bit with a three-piece mouthpiece</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting flat bar, 3/8 – 3/4 inch maximum, measured top to bottom • Minimum 5/16 inch to 3/4 inch maximum mouthpiece diameter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Measured 1 inch from cheek ○ Regardless of type of bit.
 <p data-bbox="376 928 630 949"><i>Figure 82: Weymouth bit</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum 1 1/2 inches port height <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Measured from the top of the port to the bottom of the bar ○ Regardless of bit type. • Minimum 5/16 inch to 3/4 inch maximum mouthpiece diameter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Measured 1 inch from cheek ○ Regardless of type of bit.
 <p data-bbox="354 1138 662 1159"><i>Figure 83: Bridoon mouthpiece</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridoon Mouthpiece <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ May have smaller diameter than 5/16 inch ○ Weymouth (curb) portion must still be 5/16 inch minimum
 <p data-bbox="230 1650 776 1671"><i>Figure 84: Walking horse bit with two-piece mouthpiece</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum 8 1/2 inches shank length <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Measured from the inside top to the headstall ring to the 'pull point' of the rein ring. • Minimum 5/16 inch to 3/4 inch maximum mouthpiece diameter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Measured 1 inch from cheek ○ Regardless of type of bit.

A few final reminders for Gaited classes...

1. Bridles/bits should coincide with the style of riding chosen. See the appropriate section (Western, Hunter, or Saddle Seat) for bit requirements.
2. Paso Finos may show in hackamores as approved by the Paso Fino Horse Association (PFHA) for Pleasure classes.
3. Tennessee Walking Horses (TWH) may be shown in a curb bit typical for the breed as long as the mouthpiece and shanks comply with the parameters described above for Saddle Seat.

What does it mean?... Bits for Gaited Classes

Gaited horses may be shown in Western, Hunter, or Saddle type tack, depending on the breed of the horse and/or the preferences of the exhibitor. Follow the bit rules for the style of riding used.

Tennessee Walking Horses (TWH) are typically shown in long shanked curb bits. This is an allowable bit for the TWH for both Western and Saddle Seat tack.

Paso Finos often show in types of hackamores not described in this section. See the PFHA rules for Paso Fino bridles.
