

Kit Carson Riding Club, Inc.

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KCRC TRAIL RULES

It is the responsibility of all KCRC members to abide by these Trail Rules.

General Rules

1. ALL KCRC sponsored rides will be under the direction of an experienced rider who will be designated as **Trail Boss (TB)**. The TB will designate necessary assistance to include safety riders. The TB will stop periodically along the ride to account for and regroup the riders.
2. Members will be responsible for conduct of their children and their guests. Riders under 17 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or adult sponsor.
3. There will be a short briefing before each ride. Horses will be saddled, bridled and ready to ride 10 minutes prior to the designated starting time for the briefing. Late arrivals will have to "catch up" and not hold up the ride.
4. Horses will be held to a walk when passing over paved streets, bridges and rough terrain.
5. Novice or inexperienced horses or horses which might kick should have a red ribbon on their tail.
6. There will be no full out running on any KCRC trail ride. Canterng will be controlled and at the discretion of the TB. A TB knowing the area and the terrain, may designate certain stretches for cantering for those riders who so desire. These riders will not start cantering until they are well ahead of the other riders.
7. Riders will not strike, kick or jerk any horse needlessly. There will be no inhumane treatment of horses.
8. Riders will not pass the TB without permission. Get permission from the TB if you wish to go ahead to take pictures. The TB may ask certain riders to scout some parts of the trail.
9. Obey promptly all signals and verbal instructions of the TB or assistants. Riders who find it necessary to stop should, if possible, plan their stops to cause the minimum inconvenience and delay, making sure to pass the word ahead to the TB.
10. NO dogs are permitted on trail rides.
11. No smoking on trail rides except at areas designated by the TB.
12. No consumption of alcoholic beverages while mounted. Alcohol is acceptable at lunch breaks.
13. Stallions may be ridden only by riders over 21 years of age. They must be mannerly and under control at all times and properly identified with yellow ribbons on tail and forelock.
14. Members having guests will introduce them to the group at the briefing. The guests must sign a release of liability. The hosting member must sign as a witness. Members hosting guests should familiarize the guests with the KCRC trail rules and trail courtesy and etiquette.
15. No riding double and all riders must use a saddle.
16. You should always be able to see the rider in front of and behind you. If not, call loudly to regroup.
17. Training other than what is necessary at the time, i.e., water and bridge crossings, should be avoided as it may interfere with other horses and riders and could cause a safety problem. Make sure your horse has the temperament and training for riding on congested public trails. Busy multi-use trails are not the proper place for schooling horses.
18. Do not leave the group unless it is ABSOLUTELY necessary. Riders forced to leave the group must notify either the Trail Boss or the Drag Rider. This will help maintain accountability for all riders.

Trail Ride Etiquette

1. Walk your horse when going up or down a hill or gully. Do not trot or canter away from hills! This may endanger other riders.
2. Do not ride too close to the horse ahead of you. Keep either abreast or a full horse length behind other mounts and more distance when ascending or descending, going through obstacles and at water crossings. Do not straggle or let the horse ahead of you get out of sight.
3. Ask for permission to pass slower horses. Tell them which side you will pass on. Do not trot or canter up behind or while passing other horses.
4. If the trail crosses water, allow your horse to drink, try to find a spot either above or below the water crossing. After your horse is finished drinking, move out of the water and wait for the horse behind you to drink.
5. When stopping to let your horse catch his breath on hills move your horse to the side of or off the trail and allow other horses to pass, if possible.
6. At the top of a "stress point", do not stop immediately on the trail at the top. Try to find a space so the horses behind you will also have a flat spot to rest. Try not to block or obstruct the horses behind you.
7. Inexperienced riders, or riders with stallions or green or problem horses should identify themselves to the group at the beginning of the ride, during the briefing.

Trail Hints

1. Warm up horse slowly, at a walk for the first 10-15 minutes.
2. Walk the last 2 miles, depending on the length of the ride. The longer the ride, the longer the cooling period.
3. Never permit a hot horse to "gorge" himself on water when coming in to lunch stop or immediately after the ride.
4. When dismounting or mounting on a hill, do so on the uphill side, whether it is the near or the off side of the horse.
5. When being passed by motor vehicles or mountain bikes, on narrow roads or mountain trails, keep to the uphill side rather than along the downhill edge of the road.
6. Ride well balanced and lightly, with your heels down in the stirrups. On steep climbs, balance yourself slightly forward, slightly out of the saddle, with one hand grasping the mane if you need it for balance. On downhill, be aware that swaying from side to side may be an irritation to the horse's back. Keep your upper body still and leaning slightly back.
7. When tying your horse at breaks or lunch stops, remove rocks and sticks from the ground in the immediate vicinity of your horse. When tying to a tree, make sure it is a sturdy one with branches well away from eye level. During lunch stops, when your horse is saddled, he should be tied a little shorter than when unsaddled so that he will not lie down or roll with the saddle on. Tie with a quick release knot. Keep all gear away from your horse. Do not tie your horse close to another horse. Be sure to loosen the cinch or girth, but not so much that if your horse shakes the saddle will slip underneath and scare him.
8. Remember when trail riding to pack out what you pack in.
9. Make sure your horse's tack fits properly. You may need a breast collar or crupper on some of the steeper trails to keep your saddle from slipping forward or back.
10. During the ride, check the back cinch on a western saddle often, especially on steep ascents and descents, to ensure it is not too loose. (It has been known for a horse's rear foot to get caught under a loose rear cinch in steep ascents).
11. After the ride, you may wish to loosen the cinch and leave the saddle on for a short time during the cooling period. After removing the saddle, you may wish to invert the saddle blanket and keep it over the saddle area. If it is warm and the horse is salty and dirty, you may sponge rather liberally. On a cool day, sponging would be limited to wiping around the eyes and nostrils and wetting the lower legs, avoiding the heavy muscle groups. A thorough brushing will usually get rid of most of the salt and dirt after your horse is dry.

12. After the cool out period, you may want to feed your horse some hay, saving grain until later. It is wise to listen for bowel sounds before feeding after a tiring ride. If the horse is showing signs of fatigue, it would not be wise to feed him grain.
13. You may wish to blanket your horse and use leg wraps for the ride home.

Trail Boss Duties

The trail boss (TB) will:

1. Be knowledgeable of the KCRC Trail Rules.
2. Select and reconnoiter the trail route, brief the group as to the route, set the pace, and point out areas of interest along the trail.
3. The TB will give the Trail committee a description of the trail, difficulty, availability of water, a start time for the ride, directions to the trail head, and any other important information.
4. Ensure that someone is at the trailhead well ahead of the starting time of the ride.
5. Be sure that all riders and guests have signed in, take a head count prior to departure and at regrouping areas and from time to time along the trail.
6. Be sure there is a first-aid kit and wire cutters available. Riders are responsible for the application of first aid to their own horses. Return first-aid kit after ride.
7. Ensure that an adequate number of Safety Riders and Assistants are designated, depending upon the size of the ride. Introduce Safety Riders and Assistants at the briefing.
8. Start the ride PROMPTLY at the scheduled start time.
9. Establish a pace that ensures the safety of riders and animals.
10. Gear the timing at rest stops so that the last riders in have an adequate rest, especially after a steep ascent or descent. Ensure an adequate number of rest stops.
11. Post road guards as necessary.
12. Be responsible for leaving all gates in the position they were found.
13. Ensure that someone remains at the trailhead to offer assistance until all trailers have departed.
14. Ensure that the TB, Safety Riders and Assistants are identified on all rides.

Trail Boss Rules

1. The TRAIL BOSS is always right.
2. If the TRAIL BOSS is wrong, go back to Rule #1.