

## Horse Handling and Saddlery Competency Assessment Rubric

### Part A – Horse Handling

Task	Competent	Developing	Limited	Not Yet Competent
Approach a horse in paddock	Demonstrates calm approach with halter ready, enters safely, checks for hazards, horse is aware, greets and approaches on left side	Calm but misses a check or halter not fully prepared	Hesitant, horse uncertain, minor safety issues	Halter tangled/unprepared, fails to check hazards, horse startled, approaches incorrectly
Catch the horse with halter	Rope around neck, halter placed and secured correctly, checks fit	Places halter correctly but needs more practice with rope handling or fit	Struggles with rope placement or halter control	Misses key steps, poor placement, halter insecure
Lead horse to yard/stable	Leads calmly on left side, proper gate handling, safe entry and exit, halter removed properly	Mostly correct, may need more confidence or smoother gate handling	Some errors in leading, horse unsettled, halter removal awkward	Leads from wrong side, gate navigation unsafe, halter removed unsafely
Tie up horse safely	Ties to twine, faces horse to post, uses quick-release knot, correct slack	Knot tied correctly but slack inconsistent, horse not always positioned well	Struggles with knot or slack, safety risk present	Not tied to twine, incorrect knot, slack unsafe
Identify horse's colour, sex, markings	Correctly states brown, gelding, markings and brands	Identifies colour and sex, but misses one marking	Limited knowledge, unsure of terms	Incorrect identification
Measure temperature, pulse, breathing	Accurately records 38.2°C, 32 bpm, 7 breaths/min and states all are normal	Records mostly accurate but slightly off in one measure	Struggles to locate pulse or count breathing, limited accuracy	Inaccurate readings or incorrect interpretation

## Part B – Saddlery

Task	Competent	Developing	Limited	Not Yet Competent
Disassemble, clean, and reassemble bridle	Identifies all parts, cleans noseband, reassembles correctly	Identifies most parts, minor errors in cleaning or reassembly	Misses several parts or struggles with correct order	Parts missed, incorrect assembly
Identify parts of a saddle	Correctly identifies cantle, skirt, gullet, pommel, seat	Identifies most parts but misnames one	Limited knowledge, guesses terms	Misidentifies parts
Secure horse for saddling	Correct quick release knot	Knot correct but slack inconsistent	Knot requires assistance, not secure	Unsafe tie or insecure
Groom horse pre-ride	Brushes saddle area, mane, picks feet, uses sponges correctly	Mostly thorough, misses a small area	Rushes or incomplete grooming	Misses areas, unsafe grooming
Fit saddle and saddle cloth	Saddle and cloth placed correctly, clean, fits well	Correct but slightly uneven	Needs assistance, poor balance	Poor placement or dirty/unfit gear
Fit bridle and check bit size	Bridle fitted properly, bit size correct	Mostly correct fit, slight adjustment needed	Struggles with correct adjustment	Bit ill-fitting, incorrect fitting
Fit cavesson and drop nosebands	Fits as described, allows comfort and control	Slightly too tight/loose but mostly correct	Limited adjustment knowledge	Incorrect placement or tension
Fit running martingale	Adjusted properly, reins slide freely, stoppers used	Adjustment close but not fully correct	Struggles with correct positioning	Too tight/loose, missing safety elements
Fit brushing and bell boots	Placed, fitted and fastened correctly	Minor misplacement but safe	Limited knowledge, struggles with fastening	Incorrect position or fastening
Adjust for safe leading	Stirrups secured, reins positioned safely	Needs reminder for correct rein placement	Limited awareness of risks	Loose stirrups, unsafe rein use

Lead horse with saddle/bridle	Leads on left, clears gate, holds reins safely	Mostly correct, a little hesitant	Struggles with smooth handling	Unsafe rein handling, knocks gear
Secure for unsaddling	Halter on, tied with quick release knot	Knot correct but slightly uneven	Needs assistance to secure properly	Unsafe tie or misses step
Unsaddle and store gear	Saddle/cloth removed, cleaned and stored properly	Correct but inconsistent cleaning	Gear left untidy or out of order	Gear left insecure or incorrectly
Post-ride grooming	Wash or brush depending on weather, dries and comforts horse	Misses a small area, generally correct	Limited technique, incomplete	Misses sweat areas, poor technique
Rug horse correctly	Rug fits, straps done correctly, safety considered	Slight misalignment, generally safe	Limited knowledge, struggles with straps	Rug misaligned, unsafe strap work

## Part C – Paddock Safety

Task	Competent	Developing	Limited	Not Yet Competent
Identify and maintain bedding	Identifies shavings, explains daily mucking and replacement	Identifies bedding but only partly explains maintenance	Gives incomplete or vague description of bedding care	Incorrect bedding or poor maintenance description
Describe fencing	States electric wire on capped pickets, outlines pros/cons	Mentions fencing type but only partial detail of pros/cons	Description is minimal, lacks safety detail	Missing info or safety risks unacknowledged
Design of feed/water points	Describes safe water/feed setup, spacing, drainage	Mentions feed/water setup but misses spacing or drainage detail	Setup description unclear or impractical	Dangerous setup or unclear description
Identify paddock hazards	States hazards (e.g., wombat hole, tree branches) and actions taken	Identifies some hazards but not all, gives partial actions	Recognises very few hazards without solutions	Misses key hazards or lacks mitigation
Identify gates/doors types	Identifies correct gates and sizes for each area	Identifies some gates but misses sizing or purpose	Mentions gates without clear linkage to safety	Incorrect or missing info
Fire safety features	Describes safe fuel/hay storage, pickup of debris	Identifies some features but omits important details	Minimal mention of fire prevention	Misses major fire hazards

Horse vs pedestrian/traffic safety	Fenced separation, gates in place, signage	Partial separation or signage but lacks full clarity	Weak or unsafe explanation of layout	No clear separation or unsafe layout
Yard equipment storage	Describes safe, accessible storage	Identifies storage location but misses safety aspects	Limited recognition of risks in storage	Unsafe access or poor storage