

(J) SUGGESTIONS FOR PROPER HUNT ATTIRE

The formal hunting dress, below, is given for guidance only. Over the years, it has proved to be practical, comfortable and comparatively safe, for which reason it has become traditional. Masters have always had the authority to insist on whatever degree of formality or informality of dress that suits their particular countries. These suggestions reflect decades of tradition and should only be deviated from for significant reasons.

When a hunt member with colors is invited or requests to hunt with another hunt during the formal season, the proper attire is always a plain black or navy coat without colors, unless it is a joint meet or you have been invited to wear your hunt's colors by a Master of the hunt with which you wish to ride. To encourage participation, most hunts allow you to wear your colors and buttons if that conforms to local custom.

1. PERSONAL APPOINTMENTS

MASTER – LADY OR GENTLEMAN – FORMAL ATTIRE

Coat: Square-cornered, single-breasted frock coat, cut to suit the wishes of the owner, with no flaps on the waistline and no pockets on the outside of the coat except an optional whistle pocket. A Master who does not hunt hounds should have four (4) front hunt buttons. A Master who does hunt hounds should have five (5) buttons. There should also be two (2) hunt buttons on the back of the coat if it is a frock coat and two (2) or three (3) small buttons on the cuff of each sleeve. The material should be twill or Melton cloth. Scarlet (called “red” or “scarlet”) is the most traditional color for hunting, but if the regular hunt livery is of another color, that color should be worn. Many lady Masters prefer not to wear scarlet and prefer black or navy. The collar and lapels of hunt coats should be in conformity with the hunt's livery. No Master, whipper-in, huntsman or member should wear his or her hunt livery (scarlet coat, hunt colors or buttons) in another country unless invited to do so. When scarlet is worn, both ladies and gentlemen should wear white breeches. It is correct to

wear a black or dark coat when participating in a joint meet without your own hounds.

Breeches: Should be white, tan, rust, canary or buff, of heavy cord, synthetic stretch twill or other material. Lightweight breeches of synthetic knits are acceptable. With a scarlet coat, ladies and gentlemen should wear white breeches.

Vest: Canary, tattersall or appropriate hunt color.

Hat: Black or dark blue velvet safety helmet approved by the American Society of Testing Materials (ASTM), with ribbons down or up, according to local custom. (Ribbons down traditionally indicate professional hunt staff or amateur huntsman.)

Boots: With scarlet coats, traditional hunting boots of black calf with brown tops sewn on, well polished, with tabs sewn on but not down. White or brown boot garters (to match breeches) may be worn. Ladies wearing black or navy may wear plain black boots or boots with patent leather tops with tabs sewn on but not down. Black rubber boots are acceptable in wet weather.

Spurs: Of heavy pattern with moderately short neck and no rowels. Spurs should be set high on the boot just below the ankle, and the spur arms should be parallel to the ground. The buckle should be on top of the boot with the free end of the spur strap on the outside of the boot.

Gloves: Heavy wash buff, brown or black leather. White string or navy wool gloves are also acceptable.

Crop: Traditional hunting whip with lash.

Horn: Masters, huntsman or designated whippers-in only. The traditional hunting horn is carried either between buttons of the coat or in a leather case fastened on either side of the front of the saddle.

No Horn should be carried by anyone except Master, huntsman, or first whipper-in when given permission by the Master.

Wire Cutters: Wire cutters may be carried in a leather case attached to the saddle.

Neckwear: Plain white hunting stock neatly tied and fastened with a plain, horizontal safety pin. Ends of the stock should be pinned down to remain tidy.

Flask and Sandwich Case: Gentlemen may carry either a flask or sandwich case (or both). Ladies may carry either a sandwich case or a combination flask and sandwich case.

HONORARY (AMATEUR) HUNTSMAN

Turnout is the same as for the Master except there should be four (4) or five (5) buttons on front of coat, and ribbon on hat should be down.

PROFESSIONAL HUNTSMAN

Same as Honorary Huntsman *except:*

Couplings: Should carry one set of couplings fastened to dee on off side of saddle.

Crop: Traditional hunting whip and lash or white whip with white lash. The lash should be long enough to strike the ground.

Flask and Sandwich Case: Not permitted.

HONORARY WHIPPER-IN

Same as Honorary Huntsman *except:*

Couplings: Should carry one set fastened to a dee on off side of saddle.

PROFESSIONAL WHIPPER-IN

Same as Honorary Whipper-In *except:*

Flask and sandwich case are not permissible.

Coat should have a large "hare pocket" on inside of skirt.

Stirrup leather should be worn outside coat over right shoulder, under left arm, buckled in front with the point of the strap down.

Hat: Ribbon down.

Crop: Regulation hunt whip and lash or white whip and lash that is long enough to strike the ground.

GENTLEMAN MEMBER

Scarlet coat: should have rounded corners and three (3) buttons in front, two (2) on the back and two (2) or three (3) on each sleeve in brass with the insignia adapted by the hunt. Scarlet coats are worn only by members who have been awarded their colors.

Black coat: Black hunting coat or frock coat cut same as scarlet coat are preferable to a shadbelly coat. Buttons should be plain or black. In hunts where the field wears black, members wear the hunt buttons on their black coats. If not awarded colors, buttons must be plain or black. There should be three (3) buttons on the front of the coat and two (2) buttons on back if frock coat. It is not customary to wear hunt colors on the collar of a black coat. It is customary that brass buttons on black coats are reserved for Masters and ex-Masters.

Vest: Canary, tattersall or appropriate color designated by the Master.

Breeches: May be tan, buff or white (only with a frock coat), of heavy cord, synthetic stretch twill or other heavy material.

Hat: ASTM-approved safety helmet in black velvet with chin harness fastened is strongly recommended. Ribbon should be up. If you plan to wear a bowler, it is wise to check with the Master of the hunt, as some hunts do not allow them. Top hats, with optional hat-guard, may be worn

with scarlet coat, frock coat or shadbelly coat, but they are not recommended by the MFHA.

Boots: Plain black calf boots without tops are worn with black hunting coat. Brown-topped boots should be worn with a scarlet frock coat. Black field boots with laces are not considered proper formal boots. White or brown boot garters (to match breeches) may be worn.

Hair: If long, it should be confined neatly.

Neckwear: Plain white hunting stock, neatly tied and fastened with a plain, horizontal safety pin. Ends of the stock should be pinned down to remain tidy.

Spurs: Same as for Master

Crop: Traditional hunting whip and lash (white whip or lash are not appropriate).

LADY MEMBER (ASTRIDE)

Coat: Frock or hunting coat of black, dark blue or dark gray, suitably cut, with plain dark buttons. If she has been awarded colors, she may wear the hunt's buttons and collar trimmings. A frock coat should have rounded corners with three (3) buttons in front and two (2) on back. Hunting coats should have rounded corners and three (3) buttons on the front. Both should have two (2) buttons on each sleeve.

Vest: Canary, tattersall or appropriate color designated by hunt.

Breeches: Buff, tan or canary (not white) cord or heavy synthetic stretch twill (not knitted) material.

Hat: ASTM-approved safety helmet, black or dark blue velvet with chin strap. Ribbon up. If you plan to wear a black bowler, it is wise to check with the Master of the hunt, as some hunts do not allow them. Silk top hat (the crown should be six inches or more and worn only with a frock coat).

The MFHA does not recommend wearing a bowler or top hat in the hunt field. Short dressage hats are not appropriate.

Sandwich Case (or combination flask and sandwich case): Optional. Flask case is not customary.

Hair: Should be neatly confined. Hair nets are advisable and correct.

Gloves: Wash, buff, black or brown leather. White string or navy wool or cotton string gloves in cold or rainy weather.

Spurs: Regular hunting spurs, same as for Master

Neckwear: Plain white hunting stock, neatly tied and fastened with a plain, horizontal safety pin. The ends should be pinned down to remain tidy. No other jewelry should be visible.

Crop: Light hunting whip with lash, smaller shaft than a gentlemen's (white is not appropriate).

Boots: Black calf hunting boots without laces. Black leather or patent leather tops are appropriate with tabs sewn on but not down, especially with a frock coat. If scarlet is worn, black boots with brown leather tops with tabs sewn on but not down are appropriate.

LADY MEMBER (SIDE-SADDLE)

Same as LADY MEMBER (*Astride*) *except*:

Habits: Dark Melton or other cloth, suitably cut.

Veil: Must be worn with a top hat, not a bowler.

Hat: Silk top hat to be worn with double-breasted dress hunting coat (crown should be six inches); black bowler (derby) may be worn with plain jackets. Safety headgear in black with chin harness properly fastened is strongly recommended with ribbon up. It should be noted the top hat and derby offer no protection to the head.

2. EXCEPTIONS TO THE SUGGESTED ATTIRE

JUNIORS

It is not necessary for juniors to wear formal attire, as it is often both difficult and expensive to obtain properly fitting formal attire in small sizes.

Whichever type of “turnout” is chosen, it should be clean and appropriate for various weather conditions, with an ASTM-approved safety helmet with chin strap properly fastened.

FORMAL ATTIRE: Same as for Lady Member (Astride). Junior colors may be worn according to individual hunt customs.

Hat: A plain, properly fitting black ASTM-approved safety helmet with chin strap properly fastened is required, with ribbon up.

Crop: A lightweight hunting crop with or without lash.

Neckwear: A plain white stock, neatly tied and fastened with a plain, horizontal safety pin.

Hair: If long, it should be neatly confined or braided.

INFORMAL ATTIRE: A tweed coat in a muted color (no reds), tan or brown breeches or jodhpurs, shined brown/black jodhpur boots, string or brown/black leather gloves, a plain or patterned muted-colored stock, neatly tied and fastened with a plain, horizontal safety pin. A white stock is not correct. "Ratcatcher" shirts are also correct with a neckband, horizontal plain stock pin or a man's necktie. Muted-color turtleneck shirts are appropriate. Hat as stated under formal attire.

In hunting countries where extremes of temperature occur, modifications to the foregoing suggested formal attire may be in order. Such modifications for extreme temperatures may be made by the Master(s) of individual hunts as needed, particularly in cold weather when parkas and heavy jackets may be worn over regular coats. Likewise, in hot weather, jackets may not be required.

3. INFORMAL OR RATCATCHER ATTIRE

GENTLEMEN & LADIES

Hat: Plain ASTM-approved black or brown velvet helmet with chin strap is strongly recommended, ribbon up.

Coat: Tweed or wool in muted color, tailored and single or double-vented.

Shirt: Ratcatcher or other light-colored shirt. Stock tie (plain or colored) with horizontal pin, or man's necktie. A plain or patterned muted-color stock or necktie, with ends pinned down to remain tidy. White stock ties are not correct. Neckbands are also appropriate for ladies. Turtlenecks and polo shirts are usually reserved for children but are used in some hunts that experience hot temperatures during the hunting season.

Breeches: Earthtone colors – buff, tan, gray or rust.

Spurs: Regular hunting spurs with no rowels.

Boots: Brown or black leather dress boots or brown field boots with laces. Formal boots with brown, patent or leather tops are not appropriate. Rubber boots are acceptable, as are canvas-topped (Newmarket) boots, and jodhpur boots with either canvas or leather leggings. Three-buckle brown field boots are also correct.

Gloves: Black or brown leather or string gloves. White is not correct.

Wire Cutters, Flask, Sandwich Case: Same as in formal attire.

Crop: Regulation hunting whip. Thong or lash may be removed during cubhunting. White whip or lash is not correct.

LADY MEMBER – SIDE SADDLE

Coat: Beige, brown or off-white; suitably cut; plain, tweed or salt sack.

Skirt: Should coordinate with the coat.

Hat: Bowler, velvet hunting cap or black velvet ASTM- approved safety helmet with chin harness fastened. Bowlers and velvet hunting caps without chin straps do not protect the head when hunting.

Veil: Not appropriate for informal attire.

4. ACCESSORIES

Raincoats. Masters may allow certain rain gear (common sense should prevail). They should be used sparingly in muted colors (brown, black or dark green). Staff may wear red rain gear.

Eyewear. Sunglasses or tinted eyewear are not recommended unless specifically prescribed or recommended by a physician or allowed by the Master. This does not preclude clear prescription glasses. However, it is common practice for riders in hunt areas such as California and Nevada to wear sunglasses.

5. TACK APPOINTMENTS

Horses and all tack should be impeccably groomed, clean, polished and shining. It is a disservice to the landowners to do anything less.

Bridle: Brown leather, either double or single. A cavesson (noseband) should be used. Colored or ornamental browbands are not acceptable.

Breastplate: Optional, plain or raised leather. Martingale attachment optional.

Martingale: Optional; if used, it should be plain/raised leather. A running martingale must have “stops” on the reins.

Saddle: Brown. Saddle pads should be saddle-shaped, of a light color (white, buff, yellow). Numnahs or saddle cloths are not proper. Stirrup irons with optional pads should be large, plain and clean (shined). Safety equipment such as cruppers, grazing over-checks and safety stirrups should be used whenever needed.

Girth: Preferably brown leather, but clean neoprene, string and cloth girths are permissible, as are girth covers made of fleece.

Accessories: Accessories such as figure eight and flash nosebands, bell and shin boots, gel and cushion saddle pads may be used for safety, comfort or health of the horse. Accessories like fly hoods and ear or muzzle covers are not appropriate in the hunting field.

Clipped horses: Clipping provides horses the ability to more effectively thermo-regulate their bodies. Therefore, full body clips with the legs left long are recommended. Trace clipping does not provide for efficient thermo-regulation, and ornamental clipping is inappropriate.
