

Safety Reins to Help Jockeys Hold Their Horses

Regulations are helping ensure jockeys won't be caught stranded with broken reins.

09-15-2007

Have you ever suffered the shock of realizing your reins have broken? It's one thing to have that happen on a trail ride. But what if you were a jockey galloping full speed down the homestretch when suddenly your reins snapped? It's not a frequent occurrence, but when it does happen it's both frightening and life-threatening. It's akin to being aboard a runaway train. Now, New Mexico horsemen will be required to provide safety reins to jockeys and exercise riders beginning next year. The New Mexico Racing Commission unanimously approved a measure that will require safety reins for Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse races in the state beginning May 15 of next year.

Ohio officially became the first state to impose the safety rein rule, and will require them for Thoroughbreds and Standardbreds. California is considering implementing the rule soon.

Safety reins are sort of a back-up system to regular leather reins. Though there are several manufacturers with their own slight variations to the product, safety reins typically include a nylon cord and a special clip that fastens onto the bit ring. If the regular rein breaks, the jockey—or harness driver—can at least rely on the secondary nylon rein to maintain control of the horse.