

BHS ADVICE ON

# Tethering

The  
British  
Horse  
Society



**This advice guide has been produced in response to the hundreds of calls that the BHS receives each year concerning the welfare of tethered horses\*.**

**It is not illegal to tether a horse. However, tethering should not be used as a long-term means of keeping horses as this can lead to a failure to meet a horse's basic welfare needs as set out in the Animal Welfare Act (2006) and Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.**

**The information contained in this guide should assist owners in tethering their horses in the most welfare-friendly way possible. It also highlights common problems with tethering so that anyone concerned about a tethered horse can make an informed decision about whether that horse should be reported to a welfare organisation.**

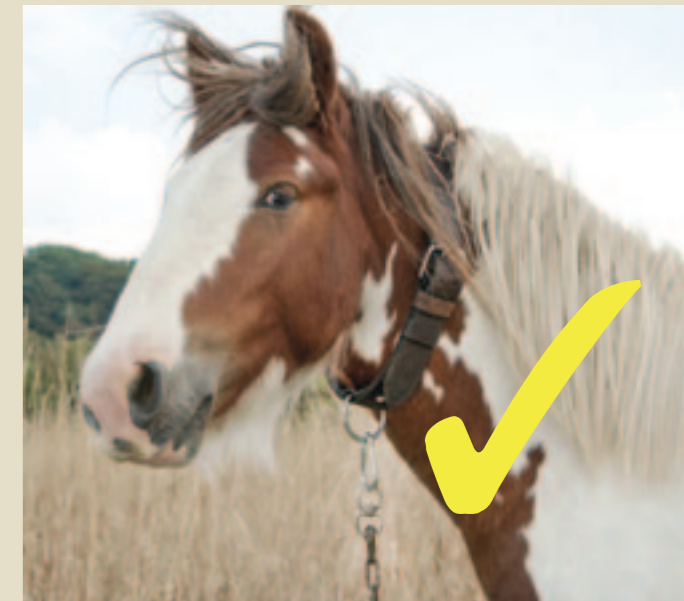
**\*Throughout the guide the word 'horse' refers to both horses and ponies.**

# ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS OF TETHERING



CHAIN AT LEAST 20FT  
(SIX-SEVEN METRES) LONG

HEDGE  
FOR  
SHELTER



- ✓ HORSES need to be exercised daily – don't leave the horse on the tether 24/7
- ✓ MOVE mares off tethers and on to suitable pasture during last third of pregnancy and with a foal at foot
- ✓ ENSURE horses are not tethered in areas with loose animals

## THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HORSE REMEMBER:

- MOVE the horse to fresh grazing regularly
- PROVIDE fresh water in a large container or bucket with a tyre
- CHECK collar(s) daily for any sign of rubbing
- DON'T tether colts or stallions within sight or smell of mares
- DON'T tether horses within 10m of each other – they risk being tangled, kicked or injured
- A swivel device is required on both ends of the chain

A leather headcollar and broad leather neck strap should be used



Seeing horses tethered can be worrying and upsetting for many people. The BHS receives hundreds of concerns every year involving the welfare of tethered horses. Tethering is not illegal, but it is essential the horse owner provides for the welfare needs of the tethered horse.

Ideally, all horses should have access to clean, fresh drinking water at all times. However, some owners of tethered horses do not leave water on site permanently as the buckets may be knocked over, stolen or thrown away. If this method of management is adopted, water must be offered at regular intervals throughout the day. Providing it just once or twice is not adequate. It is far more preferable to use a tyre to secure the water bucket than offer water sporadically.

Many horses will thrive on a diet consisting of only grass, but it is vital that tethered horses are moved regularly to ensure a constant supply of fresh food. During the winter months, or any other time when grass is scarce, additional hay will need to be provided.



**During the winter months horses should be provided with supplementary hay otherwise they can lose weight**

**Not every horse needs to wear a rug. Healthy cob type horses are normally 'good-doers'. They usually cope well with the elements and grow a thick coat to keep warm.**

**Do not worry if a horse is a bit muddy. They will roll on the ground to help groom themselves.**

**Tethered horses should have access to dry, well drained ground and shelter. They should not be close enough that they are in danger of becoming caught up in trees which could lead to a serious accident (below).**

## Concerned for a tethered horse?

The BHS hopes this guide will help to identify if a tethered horse is potentially a cause for concern. If you have concerns the BHS Welfare team can be contacted on 02476 840517 or email [welfare@bhs.org.uk](mailto:welfare@bhs.org.uk).



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