

## Tethering



Incorporating Ada Cole  
Memorial Stables

Redwings' welfare team receives numerous calls from members of the public who are concerned about equines that they have seen tethered on a rope or chain. These are often noticed on open areas of land or close to roadways. People who report such equines to us are usually concerned that the animals are not properly cared for or that tethering itself is cruel.

Under current law, however, tethering is not illegal and welfare professionals can only intervene to help a tethered horse if the horse is actually suffering in some way, like the pony in the picture below.



*Blackjack was caused extreme pain by the headcollar with which he was being tethered. The headcollar was far too small and had become embedded in the skin across the top of poor Blackjack's head. In this kind of situation welfare organisations will intervene swiftly and Blackjack's owner was successfully prosecuted for causing unnecessary suffering to his pony.*

If the horse is in good bodily condition, however, and is tethered so that the fittings are not causing pain or discomfort, then the owner is not guilty of any offence.

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*This cob looks a little unkempt but is well-nourished and appears to be tethered in an open area, free from hazards.*

The following points may be of interest to those concerned about tethered horses:

*Tethered horses are often hardy, native breeds that are generally well designed to cope with British weather and a limited food supply.*

*Tethered horses are often seen without water. This may be because water buckets are easily knocked over or stolen. Instead, the horse may be brought water at regular intervals by hand.*

*Ideally, tethered horses should be able to benefit from some kind of natural shelter or wind break. However, they should never be tethered close to trees or any other structures which their tether may become caught on or wound round. Many more tethered horses are attended by welfare professionals because of accidents involving their rope or chain becoming wound round trees, fences or other objects than because of problems due to lack of food, water or shelter.*

Although tethered horses will benefit from being able to see other equines, they should also not be positioned so that their tethers can become tangled with each other.

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If you are concerned about a particular tethered equine or would like more advice on the subject, please feel free to contact the Redwings' welfare team on 01508 481008 or by emailing [welfare@redwings.co.uk](mailto:welfare@redwings.co.uk). In an emergency situation out of normal office hours you can ring us on 07747 444704 or contact the RSPCA on 0300 1234 999.

