

Loping Pen Guidelines (from the [NCHA Rule Book](#))

Horses in the warm up area travel in the same direction in concentric circles.

Entering the Loping Area

To enter the loping area, merge into traffic as if you were entering a traffic circle. Look and wait for a clearing. Once in, maintain the same speed as the horse in front of you. If you want to pass, look behind you so you don't crash into the horse in the other lane.

Loping Lanes

Stay to the inside circle if you want to go slow. This is the slow lane. Stay to the outside circle if you want to go fast. This is the fast lane.

Try not to bunch up and talk or stand still anywhere in the traffic. Never stop in traffic. If you must stop, please slow down and exit to an area devoid of traffic. This also applies to dry working your horse.

If you are going to do some pulling and spinning, do it where you have room.

If you see someone that is looking for a way into traffic or an exit out of traffic, please be kind enough to let them in or out. Always remember to think about the other person and how you would feel in a similar situation.

Suiting Up

When the time comes to boot up or put on chaps, find a safe place out of traffic. Be careful that your horse is not too close to another horse that might kick or bite. Watch your own horse for signs of rude behavior.

Youth Riders

Most youth cutters are in the loping pen to get a horse ready. They can ride and control their horse. They have a good understanding of how to behave themselves. The loping pen is not a place for baby sitting or entertainment, nor for riding lessons. Anyone in the loping area, no matter what the age, should have the ability to control their horse at all times. This is for their own safety as well as for others.

Pedestrians

Pedestrians in the loping area should yield to those people who are there to get a horse ready to show. Dismounting If you must get off your horse, find a safe place to tie them.

Tying Horses

Do not tie kicking horses or studs in the loping pen. Someone may tie a horse next to them. Do not get upset with someone for spanking your horse if it kicks or bites at them.

Loping Pen

Use the loping pen for exercise and to season young horses only when there is enough room. Be considerate of people in there to get their horse ready to show.

Tractor Accommodation

There will be a tractor coming in periodically to work the pen. Move your horse out of the way and move any tied horses away from the area to be worked.

Changing Direction

People will want to change direction from time to time. Whether they want to bend their horse the other way or simply are tired of going right and want to go left, slow down, stop and turn your

horse around. If you want to go another direction, simply ask someone if they would like to turn around. Do not be offended if some contestant ignores your request, it simply means their horse isn't broke and they can't do this maneuver.

Loping Pen Humor

Try to maintain good humor in the pen. People have sometimes been in there for hours, days, a week it seems. Not only can they be preoccupied with what they may be doing, but they may be very tired, even delirious. Try to be defensive only in your driving and keep your attitude on the light side.

Trainers

Always look out for trainers, horseback or not. Even if they were once a looper, they get instant amnesia when entering the loping pen. Don't run over them, good help is hard to find.