



SHAKERAG HUNT GUIDELINES

The following is a summary of important foxhunting guidelines. They are common sense rules of safety, courtesy and the traditions of the sport we enjoy together.

More detail can be found in two very informative books - Riding to Hounds in America by William P. Wadsworth, MFH; and Foxhunting in America, recently published by the Masters of Foxhounds Association.

RESPECT FOR OUR LANDOWNERS

Without the generosity of our landowners who allow us to ride and hunt over their land, we would not have sufficient territory to pursue the sport of foxhunting as we know it today.

- Leave gates open that you find open. Close securely those that you find closed.
- Stay to the headlands when navigating around planted fields. Following the field master will keep you out of trouble.
- Ride slowly, preferably at the walk, around livestock so as not to excite them or make them run.
- Be extra careful around loose horses. They have a tendency to jump fences behind you. Know where they are at all times.
- Never set foot on lawns or closely mown shoulders in front of residences and along driveways and roads. Whenever possible stay to the pavement.
- Please remember that foxhunting does not imply permission to trail ride. You must have specific permission from landowners for cross country riding privileges. Shakerag has its own rules for trail riding. Learn what they are and if in doubt, please contact the Masters for more information.

PREPARATION FOR THE HUNT

- All participants in the hunt MUST obtain and carry an annual Georgia hunting license and are required to have a current negative coggins test for their horses. These are required by law. Please keep the hunting license in your pocket while hunting and the coggins in your truck or trailer. Hunting licenses may be obtained online at <http://www.gadnr.org> . Click on Hunting Licenses and you can pay for and print multiple copies for yourself.
- Each time you prepare to hunt, check all tack to be sure it is sound and clean.
- If hunt status for any given hunting day changes, members will receive an email in advance from the hunt secretary or the masters with indications of a change of date, or cancellation if required.
- Make sure that you have prepared enough the day before so you will have plenty of time for the unexpected: the horse you can't catch, the truck that won't start, etc.
- BE ON TIME. The time on the fixture card is the time that hounds move out. Once hounds are ready, it is time to move off. If you are late arriving, there will be no one waiting for you. You will have to join your field the next time the field of riders comes near to the trailer parking area. You should not ride out on your own in search of hounds and riders as you may interfere with the hounds and the day's sport.
- Guests are welcome. If you would like to bring a guest, contact one of the masters by phone or email for permission in advance.

AT THE MEET

- Before every meet, the Masters make announcements about the day's hunting and introduce guests. If you bring a guest, please come early enough to properly introduce your guest to the Master's before mounting up and gathering. Although we have releases available at the meet site, please email a copy of our hunt release form to your guest so they can save time and bring it with them to the hunt. Copies can be found on the homepage of the Shakerag website. Our field secretary keeps a record of attendance at each hunt and collects capping fees for guests and others.
- MEMBERS WITH GUESTS: You are solely responsible for the conduct and safety of your guest throughout the hunting day. Escort them at all times, especially in the hunt field. Make certain you give them the basics on etiquette expectations in the hunt field. Do not leave them to fend for themselves and ensure they are introduced to the Master and Field Masters and that their signed release and capping fees are turned in before riders gather for the morning announcements. It is customary for guests to hand over their fees and releases in an envelope to the field secretary.

WHILE MOUNTED AND DURING THE HUNT, HERE ARE RULES ALL OF US MUST REMEMBER

- If you see a hole or wire or some other danger, point to it as you go by and say "ware hole" or "ware wire" to the person behind you in a normal tone of voice. Loud calling out is not appropriate and may confuse people and distract hounds.
- If hounds approach from the rear, notify the rider ahead of you by saying "ware hound left/right", also using a normal tone of voice.
- Turning your horse in a circle is not a substitute for stopping in a straight line. In fact it is often dangerous. If you cannot stop your horse in a straight line, consider using a stronger bit.
- While riding in the first field, if your horse refuses a coop, please go around to the end of the line to attempt the coop again. Hunting days are not schooling or training opportunities for green horses. If you have repeated problems with refusals, you should move to the second or third field for the day and continue the training of your horse over coops at times other than on hunting days.
- When hounds are running, pass slower horses only in a safe and open area. Remember, foxhunting is not a competitive sport. The only winners are those who come home safely; the only losers are those who spoil the sport for others.
- Do not offer unsolicited riding or etiquette advice to others in the hunt field. If you see a situation that you think is dangerous or improper, report it to one of the Masters.
- If you are on an inexperienced or young horse, please keep it at the rear of the field. If it becomes uncontrollable please excuse yourself and take it home. The Masters or Field Masters have and reserve the right to send anyone home who they consider a danger to themselves or others.
- In the event of a fall of rider or horse, only one or two individuals should stay behind to offer assistance.
- Riders left behind for any reason should rejoin the back of the hilltop or third field and move up to their original position at the next check or in a safe, open area if they wish to rejoin their original field.
- Cell phones should be turned off and not used unless to assist with a medical emergency. It is not appropriate to make phone calls from the field while hunting.

- All members are encouraged to stay out until the huntsman blows End of the Day. However, if you must leave the hunt you wish to go home before that time, notify your field master of your situation. The field master will give you the ok to depart at a time and location that is convenient to the trailer parking and will ensure that you do not interfere with the sport of the day.

HOUNDS AND STAFF

- There are times when the Huntsman or Whippers-in will need to come past you in the field, especially if hounds double back. On hearing the cry "Staff" you must move your horse to the same side of the trail as the Field Master. The Field master will call out "Staff - Move Right/Left". If you are uncertain of the instruction, watch the riders in front of you and move in the same direction, turning your horse's head into the trail. Members should not call out instructions to others since this may be confusing. If you are unable to get out of the way, don't panic, simply stand still and the whipper-in or huntsman will negotiate around you. The same goes for hounds and the cry "Hounds please." Move over to the side and allow the hounds to pass. Above all keep your horse's heels away from any passing rider or the hounds to avoid accidents.
- A horse that kicks a hound or another rider or horse is not welcome in the field. If you are not certain of your horse's behavior, tie a red ribbon in its tail until you can be certain the horse will not kick. Horses that are known to kick must be ridden at the back of any field. The first incident may be excused, but any incident that follows will mean the horse may no longer be hunted. Safety for riders, our hounds and our horses is our priority. Dangerous horses are not welcome.
- Although it may be difficult to do, it is each member's responsibility to notify your field master in the event that your horse (or the horse of your guest) kicks a hound or steps on a hound. If the hound is injured, it may lag behind the pack, become lost and may not be found in time to effectively deal with its injury.
- Remember hounds have absolute right of way at all times. When a group of hounds is behind you on a trail quietly move to the side to let them pass. If a hound(s) pass in front of you on the trail, pull up to allow the hound to move on. Do not pressure the hound or move him out of the way.
- Never speak to or interfere with hounds in any way unless asked by one of the masters.
- When hounds are hunting or at a check, be quiet. Avoid rustling leaves. If you must pat your horse, do it quietly. If hounds are distracted, they may lift their heads and remove their noses from where they will do the most good.
- At checks, give the field master enough room so he or she can hear hounds or the horn. Refrain from loud talking or chatting.
- The staff works very hard and puts forth maximum effort to show good sport. It is tradition at the end of the day to thank them individually with a hearty "Good Night" after hounds are safely back at the meet.