



## **OLD NORTH BRIDGE HOUNDS**

[www.oldnorthbridgehounds.org](http://www.oldnorthbridgehounds.org)

### **PROTOCOL IN THE HUNT FIELD**

Welcome to hunting with the Old North Bridge Hounds. ONBH prides itself in offering our members, our guests, and our landowners a safe and very enjoyable experience. Please review this protocol before coming out to hunt with us. It provides essential guidelines on how to prepare for the hunt and how we expect everyone to conduct themselves in the field.

These guidelines help carry on the tradition of hunting. More importantly, they are the key to keeping the horses, hounds, and riders safe. The following pages were developed with your safety in mind.

As you ride in the field of a foxhunt, remember, you are a spectator watching the Staff work with hounds. Your Field Master will try hard to keep you in a position to watch the hunt while picking a safe course, but the ultimate responsibility for riding safely is yours. Please make sure that you do not interfere with the Staff and the hounds, and that you are attentive to your own safety as well as that of your fellow riders.

Correct attire, good manners, and protocol also show your respect for the landowners, the Masters, and the Hunt. Much of the pleasure of those who watch - from landowners to observers - comes from the aura of tradition and pageantry which surrounds a well-mannered and turned out Field.

We thank you and we hope you will enjoy the sport of foxhunting as much as we do!

Ginny Zukatynski jt. M.F.H. and Huntsman  
Marjorie Franko jt. M.F.H.

Stuart Greenberg, jt M.F.H.  
Thomas B.Moran, jt M.F.H.

# ONBH PROTOCOL FOR THE HUNT FIELD

## Conduct of the rider

1. Keep the safety of people, horses, and hounds uppermost in your mind at all times.
2. Be punctual. Be courteous. Arrive at the meet at least 30 minutes before the hunt begins in order to check in with the Field Secretary.
3. Every member should present himself/herself to the Field Secretary at the start of each hunt. Give the Secretary your name and horse's name. (If you have a guest, see the section, "Guests".)
4. The Flights: There are three flights (groups), each led by a Field Master. The First Flight is for riders who plan to jump or who wish to ride at a faster pace. "Pick and Choose" jumpers, those who plan to jump some of the fences, or who wish to follow at a good pace, should ride behind the jumping flight. The Second Flight is led by a Field Master who will lead the group at a somewhat slower pace. No riders in the Second Flight are to jump. As appropriate, a Third Flight may be available for new riders/hunters, horses new to hunting, or where a slow pace is desirable. Within all fields, the order of riders should be: Senior members with colors, Senior members, Junior members with colors, Junior members and non-members.
5. Unless specifically invited by the Masters or Field Master to "ride up," honor the riding order outlined above. Any member with colors, however, may elect to ride at the back of the field.
6. The Field Masters: For the safety and welfare of the hunt, the leadership and direction provided by the Field and Master must be attended to at all times. The Field Master can excuse or reposition any rider in the field if they believe that safety may be compromised.
7. All members should alert the respective Field Master if a problem or potential problem with a horse or rider is noticed. The Field Master determines the appropriate course of action.
8. Never pass the Field Master in any Flight.
9. Signals of the Field Master: raised open hand = slow; raised fist = stop hard and hold; raised hand, one finger = silence.

10. Riding on the road: Use the roads rather than trails and fields when hacking to the meet so as not to cross the drag and spoil the scent.
11. Always ride single file on the road so as not to block traffic.
12. When road hacking, stay clear of cars, bicycles, etc. by allowing them to pass. When cars slow down or stop for you, it is polite to thank them.
13. The hunt begins: Stay in line once the hunt has begun. If you're a member and wish to move up, wait until the check to ask the person in front of you if you may. (Please note the appropriate order of the field, #5 above.)
14. Allow at least one horse's length between you and the horse in front of you, so if there is an accident in front of you, you won't run into that horse or over the rider.
15. Do not allow the distance between you and the horse in front of you to be greater than a few lengths. Holding your horse far back disrupts riders behind you.
16. If you must pull out early, always notify the Field Master. If anyone in the field falls or is incapacitated, notify the Field Master.
17. Jumping: Be sure the rider ahead of you has landed safely on the far side of any jump (both elements in the case of an in-and-out) before you take off.
18. Problems: If you have a refusal, get out of the way immediately and allow the field to go by before rejoining the group. Unless there is no visible gap, do not try the fence again. The Hunt Field is not the place for schooling.
19. If you cannot keep up, pull out and let others go by.
20. A fallen rider must never be left alone until remounted or assisted to safety. Only one or two riders should stay with the rider; the rest of the field should move on.
21. If you cannot control your horse, notify the Field Master and return to your trailer or barn. Riders not in control will be excused from the field.
22. A horse that kicks must have a red ribbon on its tail as a warning to other riders. These horses should be ridden at the back of each flight.
23. Warning others: Help prevent injuries to others behind you by calling "Ware Hole," "Ware Wire," "Ware Bottle," etc. if you are in sight of the danger. If many people in front of you have called, remain silent. It is not necessary that

everyone who passes the danger cry out. (It also could interfere with the proper hunting of the hounds.) Otherwise, remain silent while hounds are working!

24. Bees: If bees should attack a rider or a horse, the rider should cry out “Bees.” Riders should move rapidly away from the danger, even if this means moving off a trail and into the woods.
25. Hold Hard: If you hear “Hold Hard”, stop your horse IMMEDIATELY; it is likely there is an emergency. Stand still and remain silent until the Field Master tells you to proceed.
26. After the Hunt: Thank the Masters, Field Masters, the Staff, and the Foxes at the end of every hunt. They have worked long hours for our day’s enjoyment.

## Guests

1. The member who has invited a guest is responsible for making sure he/she is aware of the riding protocol, rules, and attire requirements of the hunt before the hunt day.. Members should be satisfied that prospective guests can control their horses, and can immediately obey commands such as “Hold Hard” and “Ware Staff”.
2. Members should ask the Masters for permission to bring guests before the day of the hunt.
3. Members should present guests to the Field Secretary before the start of the hunt. The guest will give the Field Secretary his/her name, horse’s name and the appropriate capping fee, and will sign the release form.
4. Members should introduce guests to the appropriate Field Master before the beginning of the hunt.
5. Members must ride with their guests. If a guest is riding in the second or third flight, the member should ride back with him/her. Guests of the Staff may be assisted by a designated Member.
6. If a guest is unable to control his/her horse, notify the Field Master and leave the field with the guest.
7. Members should introduce guests to the whole field when invited to do so at the beginning of the hunt.

8. Guests should be introduced to the Masters at the completion of the hunt. Guests should thank the Masters and Staff.
9. Guests who have not hunted before, or who have horses that have not hunted before, must ride with the Third Flight; the host member or a designated member must ride with them.

## **Conduct Toward Hounds**

1. Never interfere with the progress of a hound. The hound ALWAYS has the right of way.
2. Keep away from the hounds at all times.
3. Never get between Staff and the hounds. Avoid hounds at checks.
4. Give way to hounds if they need to pass you. Always turn to face a hound and enable him to pass you. To kick or step on a hound is UNPARDONABLE. If a hound runs in front of you, STOP.
5. If a hound is coming up from behind, allow him to pass and call “Ware Hound” to warn others of his presence. Do not call if many people behind you have given the call loudly.
6. Never cut a hound off from the pack.
7. Avoid jumping a fence if there is any danger of hurting a hound. You may jump the fence when you see the hound well clear of the fence.
8. No member of the field or spectator should speak or shout at any hound at any time. ONLY the Huntsman and Whippers-in may speak to hounds.
9. If hounds should be checking the scent or double back, stand still until the Field Master gives the signal to move on. REMAIN SILENT.
10. If you notice a hound that is behaving in a strange manner or looks as if it has been hurt, report this to the Field Master immediately.
11. If a Staff member must pass through the Field, get out of his/her way. When you hear “Ware Staff”, or see Staff approaching, move your horse off the trail on the same side as the Field Master if space permits. Turn your horse’s head in the direction from which the Staff is coming. As appropriate, call “Ware Staff” to warn others.

## Courtesies to the Landowners

1. Permission to ride cross-country has been granted only to the Hunt, often only for one particular day. Individuals have no right to assume permission to ride at other times over any routes taken by the Hunt. The courtesy extended to the Hunt by the Landowners must not be abused.
2. Shut (or leave open) all gates exactly as you find them. Assist the Field Master with gates as requested.
3. Replace any rail lowered for any reason.
4. Report any damage to any fence to the Field Master so that it may be promptly repaired.
5. Never gallop near farm stock. Do not pick any apples, produce, etc.
6. Avoid crossing newly seeded, ploughed, or wet fields. Ride around the edges of all fields whenever possible.
7. No smoking is permitted at any time. Do not smoke in the woods or fields, near any barns or horses, or on horseback.
8. Pick up any hay and manure in the parking area.
9. Always be considerate of landowners. Greet any landowners viewing the hunt, and thank them at the completion of the hunt if possible. ***Without the good will of the landowners, there would be no hunting.***

## Courtesies at the Tea

1. Prior to entering the host's home, wipe your boots and remove spurs.
2. Hunt or hacking jackets should be worn to the tea.
3. Members should introduce guests to the hosts/hostesses of the tea.
4. No smoking is permitted at teas.

5. At the conclusion of the tea, thank the hosts/hostesses who have provided the home and refreshments.

## **Correct Hunting Attire**

**Headgear:** Hard hats with chin straps are required for all riders.

**Informal Hunting Attire** (worn in September and in the spring)

- Ratcatcher shirt with choker or tie, or turtleneck sweater
- Colored stocktie with horizontal stock pin
- Breeches/jodphurs in beige, tan, or grey
- Tweed coat or plain hacking jacket
- Brown or black boots; field boots permissible

**Formal Hunting Attire** (worn after October 1 in the fall)

Ladies and Gentlemen Without Colors:

- White ratcatcher shirt
- White stocktie, plain horizontal gold stock pin (safety pin fastening)
- Canary, buff, or Tattersall vest
- Canary, beige, or light grey breeches
- Black or navy hunting coat with plain buttons
- Regulation black calf hunting boots without tops (black boot garters optional)

Juniors:

- Ratcatcher is always permissible, otherwise as above
- Jodphur boots permissible

Juniors with Colors:

- Black, navy, or charcoal hunting coat with hunt colors on collar
- Jodphur boots permissible

Gentlemen with Colors:

- White ratcatcher shirt
- White stocktie, plain horizontal gold stock pin
- Canary, buff, or Tattersall vest with small hunt buttons
- White breeches
- Scarlet coat with hunt colors on collar and hunt buttons

- Regulation hunting boots of black calf with brown tops (white boot garters optional)
- Hunting whip complete with thong and lash (optional)

#### Ladies with Colors:

- White ratcatcher shirt
- White stocktie, plain horizontal gold stock pin
- Canary, buff, or Tattersall vest with small hunt buttons
- Canary, buff, or beige breeches
- Black, navy, or charcoal grey hunt coat with hunt colors on collar and hunt buttons
- Regulation hunting boots or black calf with black patent leather tops (black garters optional)
- Hunting whip complete with thong and lash (optional)

#### Other Considerations:

- Gloves should be black or tan leather, or white string.
- Ladies should always wear hairnets (formal and informal hunting).
- Gentlemen may carry either a flask or a sandwich case or both.
- Ladies may carry either a sandwich case or a combination sandwich case and flask.
- Do polish boots.
- Don't: wear colored breeches with scarlet; wear white breeches with field boots or Lady's colors; wear raincoats or hat covers; wear a ready tied stock (it could not be used as a bandage or sling); wear a stock pin without a safety pin fastener.

## Horses and Tack

1. All tack should be clean and in top condition.
2. Horses should be clean, well groomed, and fit for hunting.
3. English saddles and tack are required.
4. Bell boots, galloping boots, and other therapeutic boots are acceptable, but should be black or white. Colored boots are not acceptable.
5. The saddle pad should be a clean plain white or off-white contour pad.
6. Horses' manes should be neat and presentably trimmed. Horses that are also shown in competitions where manes are long should have their manes braided for hunting.



