

Information sheet No. 11

Rug marking guide

Why bother

Marking your rugs will help prevent their theft, help safeguard your horse and, if they are lost, can stop their resale. It will also enable someone to return them to you should they be found. Even if you think it is just an old summer sheet or turnout rug, if it is stolen, your loss is the price of a replacement which can easily be hundreds of pounds. Multiply this by all the rugs you keep at the yard and a theft can be a very expensive event to cope with.

The majority of rug theft occurs during autumn and early winter when the weather becomes colder. Some people see your rug as a quick solution to their cold horse, especially if you have just bought a nice new one. Others see the ready market in used rugs as a quick profit at your expense. Either way you come back to a cold, wet animal only to find your insurance does not cover rugs.

How to mark them

There are several ways to mark your rugs depending on the material they are made from. For light coloured indoor fabrics a black permanent marker pen is a quick solution. Turnouts and thick quilted rugs can have your home postcode painted on. A neat way for marking by hand is to draw around a stencil with a ball point pen and just fill in the letters afterwards.

Iron-on lettering can be made from T-shirt transfer sheets sold in stationers. Use the dark material type too you can match or contrast the rug colour. A good bright colour combination will make the postcode easy to see even when the rug is muddy. You can also add the freeze brand to show the horse is protected that way.

Be sure to test that the rug will stand the hot iron to seal the transfer to the material, follow the maker's instructions carefully and only print with an inkjet printer (a laser will melt the transfer). Three postcodes will fit across an A4 sheet (landscape) using MS Powerpoint or MS Word to set them out in your colours.