

# Identification of Horses

## Importance of Equine Identification

Permanent identification of horses serves many purposes. Horse theft in this country is an all-too-familiar reality for some horse owners, and being able to identify a horse among many is very important to law enforcement officials. This unit will describe some of the methods used to identify a horse.

Horse identification is important for several reasons. It:

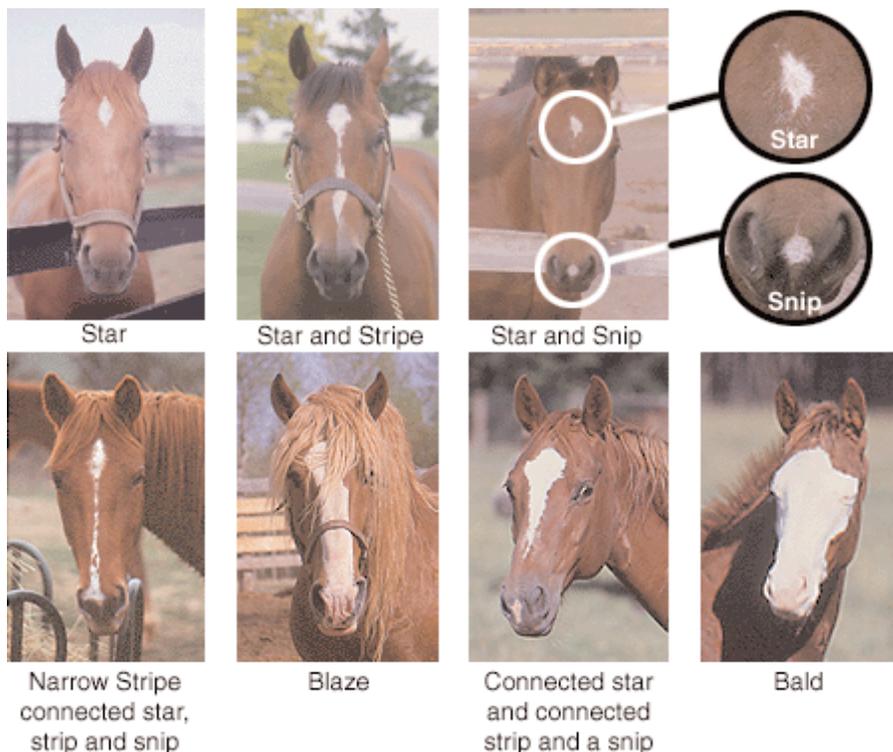
- ◆ provides a method for proof of ownership or transfer of ownership.
- ◆ increases the number of stolen horses that are recovered and may deter theft.
- ◆ is necessary for registry with a breed organization.
- ◆ can be used as an advertising method (permanent identification).
- ◆ There are several different methods that one may use to identify a specific horse as his or her own. With all of these methods, it is important that the owner be able to identify a unique or uncommon characteristic of the horse.

## Using Body Color in Horses

Solid horse colors include bay, black, brown, chestnut (or sorrel), buckskin, gray, white, and palomino. If a horse is roan, owners are encouraged to specify whether it is a blue or a red roan. If the horse has a paint or pinto color pattern, owners should specify if it is overo or tobiano and what the base body color is (black, brown, chestnut, or bay). For appaloosa coloring, owners should record the base color as well as the coat pattern. For example, use descriptive terms, such as "A dark bay Appaloosa with a white blanket and spots that extend up to the withers and a mottled muzzle." Certain breed associations have different ways to characterize the coloring of a horse.

## Identification Using Head Markings in Horses

Equine head markings include any white markings that are visible on the head of the horse. A horse can have one type of head marking or a combination of several types.



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## Identification Using Leg Markings in Horses

Leg markings include any white markings that are visible on the legs of the horse. Each leg can have a different marking description, and it is important that the owner describe these markings, because it gives the horse more individuality and makes it easier to identify. Here are some examples of leg markings:



**Coronet**



**Half Stocking**

White to the midpoint of the cannon bone



**Pastern**

The right hind leg and the left fore leg have white that covers all the pastern and stops just before the fetlock



**Sock**

The white extends to include the fetlock and slightly above



**Stockings**

White extends to the knee or hock

