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## **Category: Appearance**

### **Felt Hats**

Rodeo queens ALWAYS wear felt hats no matter the season or the weather. Very few felt hats are wear-ready straight out of the box. Take your hat to a qualified person to have it shaped to a current style that is flattering to the shape of your face. High-quality hats are an investment which will pay off in the long run. Quality hats hold their shape better in humid weather.

White and black hats should be your first investment unless you are wearing all brown or tan, then opt for a brown hat. Avoid hat bands other than a ribbon hatband that comes with the hat. Rhinestones, sequins and other bands are not fashionable for rodeo queens. Custom made colored hats can be worn with certain outfits if they are a very close to an exact match in color, but these are often not necessary for local pageants and are most appropriate for state and national competitions or for current titleholders.

Bobby pins and a plastic hat cover should be stored with or near your hat. A contestant or queen should NEVER EVER lose their hat while riding. If you lose your hat during the pageant you will lose anywhere from five to twenty-five (or more) points depending on the judge and every point counts in a pageant. To prevent this from happening to you purchase a hat that fits correctly to begin with and use bobby pins to secure the hat to your hair. If saddle bronc and bareback rider can keep their hats on, so can you.

Never store your hat in the trailer or a hot car. Even high-quality hats can lose their shape in these conditions. If your hat becomes wet while wearing allow it to dry before putting it away. More than one queen has opened her hat box to find a moldy mess after a rainy rodeo performance. If you are a titleholder take your crown off your hat and store it separately.

You will also need a hat sponge or brush to keep your hat clean, and have one for each hat. Sponges and brushes used on black hats will leave black on white hats and vice-versa. Clean your hat after every wearing so it is ready for your next appearance.

### **Boots**

There are two styles of cowboy boots - dress and roper. Taller dress boots MUST be worn with dresses and skirts and can be worn with jeans if desired. These boots are much dressier than a round-toed-

short-heeled roper boot and provide a more feminine, classy appearance. Plus if you're on the short side they have the benefit of adding some height to you. While these boots are an investment, they will add to your appearance points instead. Ebay is a good source for vintage styles and Rod's Western Wear also carries this style. Roper style boots are appropriate for horsemanship, but they should not be of the lace-up style. Riding boots should also not have a "Fat Baby" style of sole.

Boots should (almost) always match the hem of what you are wearing. More information on changing the color of boots can be found at this link. An exception can be made to this rule when you have a SUPER COOL pair of vintage or new custom made boots that go with the outfit (and there are TONS of really cool off-the-rack boots these days, too). Otherwise having contrasting boots makes for a choppy visual and can visually shorten your height. In horsemanship, contrasting boots will draw attention to poor leg and foot position.

## **Accessories**

A quick way to ruin a good outfit is by choosing the wrong accessories. Accessories should not be the first thing people see on you so choose them wisely. Just because something is in "style" does not mean it is appropriate for you to wear while competing for or holding a rodeo queen title.

Many necklines do not require a necklace. Most button-up shirts and many dress necklines that are heavily beaded or adorned do not. If you do opt for a necklace it should match the style of earrings you are wearing.

Avoid overdoing the accessories. While bunches of bangle bracelets, multiple rings and long strands of beaded necklaces may be trendy, they often do not reflect a Western image and make many outfits too busy.

More often than not your belt should match or blend with your jeans or the color that is being worn at your waist line. Bling belts are a lot of fun but can also cut you in two (especially important to avoid if you are short or on the heavy side). Blank belts can be purchased from Tandy Leather Factory and painted to match your jeans and boots. When you have a dress made have the dressmaker construct a belt of the same leather. Recently designers have become quite creative with belts adding to the uniqueness of a queen's style. However, these styles do not flatter every figure so be cautious when selecting these styles.