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USUALLY, YOU WANT THE LEATHER ON YOUR tack to be nice and sturdy. But there are a couple of places where it's best if the leather is narrow enough to break if you get in a bind – so you won't be dragged.

One of those places is the rope strap. This is the half-inch strap on the right side of your saddle that wraps around a lariat rope, then loops over the saddle horn. The split to go over the horn is ¼-inch wide on each side. That thin width means the leather will break if you hang the rope on a tree, or if you happen to get bucked off and get hung up in your rope. The strap breaks as a safety feature, and you're free of the wreck.

Sometimes, you see rope straps that are ¾ of an inch wide and that buckle end to end. These are very dangerous, because they won't break if you get hung up in them.

A Thin Line

The strap across the front of chinks or chaps is another place I like to see thin leather. In case you get thrown forward and that strap gets hung on the saddle horn, you want it to break.

I know a man who got caught up in this strap and was badly injured. So it's a lesson I take to heart.

Because the strap isn't very sturdy, I do end up replacing it once in a while, but it's well worth it for the increased safety. □

AQHA member Dennis Moreland has been making quality working tack since 1976. Visit www.dmtack.com to learn more about his Dennis Moreland Second Edition line. Visit www.quarterhorseoutfitters.net and click on DVDs to purchase "Tack Talk," a 120-minute look at a multitude of pieces of tack and the correct way to use them.

By Dennis

Moreland

Sometimes, you want your tack to break.



HOLLY CLANAHAN PHOTOS

