

Rule Change Type	Effective Date	Draft Received	Board Action
Standard	12/1/2025	8/24/2024	

Rule Change Intent

Currently only "unsafe use" of cell phones/electronic devices while mounted is prohibited in a designated schooling/exercise area, and while lungeing hunters and jumpers (this stipulation is missing for equitation horses).

1.
 - 1.
 2. The implication is that use of cell phones/electronic devices while mounted can be "safe" in a schooling area.
2.
 - 1.
 2. The wording "As determined by the competition steward in their sole discretion" appears to assume that a show steward will always and immediately be available to observe, assess, and be knowledgeable enough to make a determination as to whether any particular "use" situation is safe or unsafe in a schooling area. If the steward's opinion is that such use is safe and allowable for one exhibitor, does it automatically apply to another, and/or to all exhibitors at a show? At all times or only sometimes? Will a steward be held liable if a situation nonetheless develops, escalates, and an accident occurs? Is USEF protected from liability because the wording of the rule places sole responsibility for making the determination regarding safety on the steward? Should a USEF Steward (or CSS) be responsible for making such a determination in the first place, given the nature of horses and the variety of rider levels in a schooling area? Should "advanced" or adult riders be permitted to engage in such use, while "lower level" or junior riders are not? Can a Steward or a CSS (or anyone) know that even a quiet schooling area will automatically make "distracted riding" a safe practice?
3.
 - 1.
 2. Further, although a decision made regarding rules by whomever (CSS or Steward) is supervising a warm-up area is meant to be final, when officials (from day to day at one show, or from week to week at different shows) hold different views about what may or may not be "safe use," confusion results. This is only exacerbated when exhibitors question a decision pertaining to such use and the rules are examined for clarity, since the rules as written are not completely clear on this point.
4.
 - 1.
 2. Differences in wording between rules regarding the use of cell phones/electronic devices and whose decisions are final in a schooling area (see [EQ106.7e and EQ114.3] HU Appendix A, 5.a) [JP103.8 and JP103.9]) allow for such a conflict of views to exist between officials at one show (ie Steward/CSS or multiple stewards and/or CSSs), and from show to show. This possible conflict and the confusion it can cause exhibitors ("The steward last week / this morning said it was ok!") should be eliminated.
- 5.

Proponent Details Contact Information

Mary O'Connor

Mary O'Connor

InnerBayLLC@gmail.com

Linked Rules Comments

Committee Actions

EQ106 Appointments

7. Electronic Communication Devices.

[...]

e. The ~~unsafe~~ use of electronic devices, ~~as determined by the competition steward in their sole discretion~~, including cell phones while mounted is prohibited in all areas designated for schooling and exercise, and while ~~lungeing~~ **lunging** horses on competition grounds.

Earphone(s)/Earbud(s) are prohibited in all areas designated for schooling and exercise.

EQ114 Schooling Requirements

1. Schooling Rules for all equitation classes will follow USEF Jumper Schooling Rules (see JP Appendix A) EXCEPT that Swedish Oxers (maximum 12" difference), ground lines on both sides of an oxer, tarps, coolers, and liverpools are acceptable.
2. The use of FEI approved safety cups is mandatory in all warm-up/schooling areas.
3. The ~~unsafe~~ use of electronic devices, ~~as determined by the competition steward in their sole discretion~~, including cell phones while mounted is prohibited in all areas designated for schooling and exercise, **and while lunging horses on competition grounds**. Earphone(s)/Earbud(s) are prohibited in all areas designated for schooling and exercise.

Appendix A. USEF Hunter Schooling Rules

8. The ~~unsafe~~ use of electronic devices, ~~as determined by the competition steward in their sole discretion~~, including cell phones, while mounted is prohibited in all areas designated for schooling and exercise, and while ~~lungeing~~ **lunging** horses on competition grounds. Earphone(s)/Earbud(s) are prohibited in areas designated for schooling and exercise.

JP103 Schooling

7. The ~~unsafe~~ use of electronic devices, ~~as determined by the competition steward in their sole discretion~~, including cell phones while mounted is prohibited in all areas designated for schooling and exercise, and while ~~lungeing~~ **lunging** horses on competition grounds. Earphone(s)/Earbud(s) are prohibited in all areas designated for schooling and exercise.