

| Rule Change Type | Effective Date | Draft Received | Board Action |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Extraordinary | 4/1/2025 | 12/19/2024 | |

Extraordinary Change Reason

participant safety

Rule Change Intent

This rule change simplifies the Federation's return to sport process and requirements for individuals who sustain a fall at a competition. All individuals who have fallen from a horse or cart are required to be examined by qualified medical personnel prior to remounting their horse or cart and returning to competition. For those individuals who suffer a concussion or apparent concussion, the requirements to return to sport remain unchanged.

Proponent Details Contact Information

USEF Officers

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Linked Rules Comments

American Saddlebred

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/18/2024 **Draft 1:** The committee would like to propose that we classify the types of falls. They understand the intent but for those that slide off a horse and land on their feet, should they be required to be evaluated by medical personnel? Often medical personnel may not be readily available so in these cases how would that be handled? Would a time-out be charged and to whom? How long would they be willing to hold the class/show?

Andalusian/Lusitano

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/04/2024 **Draft 1:** The committee is in agreeance with the intent of this rule change, but would like a fall on one's feet to be considered for revision to not count as a "fall" requiring medical evaluation.

Arabian

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/26/2024 **Draft 1:** The committee has several concerns regarding this rule change: Landing on one's feet should not be considered a "fall". The potential of holding a class and waiting for the EMT to arrive to complete the evaluation. The committee would also like point 6 to be addressed in regards to the reporting; is every single fall now supposed to be reported?

Carriage Pleasure Driving

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/05/2024 **Draft 1:** The committee supports the intent of this rule, but have a few minor adjustments they would like to see - first, they want the language in the rule to change from "cart" to "horse drawn vehicle", as the word cart denotes a specific type of vehicle in pleasure driving, rather than any horse drawn vehicle. They also would like "fall" to be defined more clearly in the rule, as they feel currently it is too vague.

Competition Management

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/03/2024 **Draft 1:** The committee agrees with all changes in this rule, other than the requirement for all participants to be evaluated by QMP at the event should they separate from their horse. They believe the focus should remain on those with injuries or exhibiting symptoms of concussion. There is a current shortage of QMP across the country, and with events which operate many rings, this could remove priority from those injured to examine someone who has, for example, fallen from their horse but landed on their feet without injury. Additionally, the committee noted that the responsibility to obtain evaluation from the QMP at the event is on the member, but feels this is unenforceable. It was also noted that requiring this type of evaluation was incompatible with Vaulting and Endurance disciplines.

Connemara

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 11/26/2024

Council - Intl Discipline

Draft 2: Recommends Disapproval 01/07/2025

Draft 2: The Council supports the intent of this rule change proposal; however, additional work is needed on the definition of fall: All disciplines: In 1., fall is not specified as fall from a horse and not capitalized to refer to the definition of Fall (GR122). This could be open to interpretation as any type of fall – like falling off a bike. On training days when there is no competition happening there may not be a qualified medical personnel on grounds to assess participants in order for them to continue riding, driving or vaulting. Outside of competing, there can be non-members riding, driving or vaulting so how would they be identified in order to be on the Medical Ineligibility List or to enforce the list? Fall is defined in GR122 but only for riders, not drivers, vaulters or other participants. For riders, it is defined as separation from the horse. By this definition, then participants under this proposal would need to be cleared by the qualified medical personnel after every time they intentionally dismount. Endurance: It would take qualified medical personnel a considerable amount of time to get to certain parts of the trail if there was a fall. This would have considerable effect on an athlete's ride time which would be outside of an athlete's control. There is concern that the implementation of this rule would push athletes to not disclose falls on trail for fear of having to wait for qualified medical personnel and therefore would not seek medical attention once returning to base camp. Driving: For Driving the appropriate term would be carriage, not cart. The issue in Driving is a fall off the carriage by the navigator or more likely the bottom step. This can happen now without stopping competition on marathon. Stopping competition for minor falls that result in no injury would create significant hardship on the competitors and competition management. Also, there are instances where participants can dismount from the carriage and remount – this happens usually for fixing tack issues. In these instances, they would have to await an exam before continuing and there is concern that this would encourage people to continue driving with tack issues due to not wanting to risk having to wait on the exam. The navigator and bottom step are not always members so how would they be identified in order to be on the Medical Ineligibility List or to enforce the list? Vaulting: Fall is not defined for vaulters in the USEF rules. Since there is not a definition of fall for vaulters in the USEF Rulebook, a fall is open to interpretation that could negatively disrupt competition and training as vaulters often separate from the horse during a performance. The USA Gymnastics concussion guidelines can be helpful for concussion rules for vaulting. USA Gymnastics notes that a concussion should be suspected in any gymnast who experiences appropriate mechanism of injury with mechanism of injury being defined as sustaining direct, indirect or rotational impact to the head, face, neck or body; experiencing whiplash effect, where the head forcibly moves forward & backward due to impact elsewhere on the body; and/or jarring effect from the trunk up to the head and brain (such as a hard fall to the buttocks). If using the USA Gymnastics policy then it should still at all times be the fallen person's responsibility to stop vaulting in the instance of a fall as defined above but with this definition judges can stop a performance and require an exam by the qualified medical personnel should they feel a fall has occurred with this definition of mechanism of injury. Outside of the competition ring, it could be under the purview of TDs to stop a vaulter from continuing to vault should they feel a fall has occurred with this definition of mechanism of injury.

Council - Member Services

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/17/2024
Draft 2: Recommends Approval 12/19/2024

Draft 1: The Council agrees with and supports the intent of this rule change proposal but has concerns about the enforceability of the proposed rule as currently worded since GR848.1 specifically limits the examination of an individual who falls to the competition's Qualified Medical Personnel. Since a fall might occur outside of competition hours (before the competition day's start or after the competition day's end), the individual might not have access to the Qualified Medical Personnel. Additionally, as currently worded, the proposal calls for not allowing a fallen participant to remount "their" horse or cart, when the intent likely wants to prevent a fallen participant from remounting any horse or cart. The Council would recommend approval if the language in GR848.1 were changed to read: "Any participant who has had a fall at a competition, must be examined by the competition Qualified Medical Personnel, a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner before returning to competition or remounting any horse or cart."

Council - Natl Breed & Discipline

Draft 2: Recommends Disapproval 01/06/2025

Draft 2: The Council had concerns with an individual being able to be examined within a timely manner. Even with the addition of individuals in the rule change, the Council felt unsure that these individuals would feel comfortable signing off on returning to competition due to liability reasons. There were also concerns on whether the return would be allowed for the current class or the remainder of the competition, where the examination should take place (i.e. in the ring during the class or excused from the ring), and the self-policing of individuals reporting if they've fallen outside of the competition hours. Some breeds/disciplines already cover falls within their chapters and the result would be elimination.

Dressage

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 11/13/2024

Draft 1: Approve with the following recommendations: Point 4 - Competition management must refuse entries to participate, ADD: 'or refund if already entered', any person on the Federation Medical Ineligibility List. Point 6 - requires a comma after 'unless an exceptional circumstance exists, ...

Driving

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/15/2024
Draft 2: Recommends Disapproval 01/02/2025

Draft 1: While we agree with the use of helmets, we see the lack of specific language as it relates to driving and the different roles of those on carriage as a problem. We are happy to collaborate offline on language for both drivers and navigators to fall under this rule.
Draft 2: Again, we agree with the use of helmets. In this proposal, we see the lack of specific language as it relates to driving and the different roles of those on carriage as a problem, and would seriously hinder our small sport.

Endurance

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/19/2024

Draft 1: While the ESC understands the importance of ensuring athlete safety, the proposed changes are incompatible with the competition format for the discipline of endurance. Currently, there are processes in place at competitions to ensure qualified medical personnel can reach an athlete should there be an injury on trail. If a fall occurs with no need for immediate medical attention, then the athlete re-mounts as per EN105.4b and may be examined once back at base camp. Athletes may be miles out on a loop when a fall occurs where it could take qualified medical personnel considerable time to reach the athlete. Due to the negative impact on an athlete's time, the ESC is concerned that this proposal would encourage athletes to not disclose falls and/or potential injuries/concussions. The ESC also worries that athletes may not seek medical attention once they come into base camp out of fear of consequence for not being examined out on loop. Additionally, the enforceability of the proposal is near impossible for endurance as only small portions of the trail is seen by officials or participants other than the athletes themselves.

Eventing

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/19/2024

Draft 1: The Committee would like to know how the proposed rule change would affect the Eventing rules where remounting after an athlete fall is permitted (e.g. an athlete who falls in the Dressage test is permitted to remount and continue their test). Additionally, "apparently concussed" should be clearly defined.

Friesian

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/18/2024

Draft 1: The committee is in agreeance with the rule change with the exception that they feel a fall on one's feet, should not constitute a "fall" by definition of this rule; falling on one's feet does not warrant an examination by qualified medical personnel to return to play.

Hackney

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/20/2024

Draft 1: The committee asked if the types of falls could be categorized. They understand the intent but for those that slide off a horse and land on their feet, should they be required to be evaluated by medical personnel? Often medical personnel may not be readily available so in these cases how would that be handled? How long would they be willing to hold the class/show and who would the timeout be charged to ?

Human and Equine, Safety & Welfare

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/16/2024

Draft 1: The committee agrees with the intent of this rule, but would like to see the following changes: 1-The submission of non-serious/non-concussion accident reports appears to be inadvertently removed from the rule, but the group believes that all injuries should be reported to the Federation as has been done in the past. 2-Rather than all falls require evaluation prior to the return to riding (some land on feet, or slide off of horse), the committee recommends that any competition official (stewards/tds/judges/etc.), medical personnel, competition management, or competition staff be permitted to intervene after witnessing a fall and require a rider get evaluation before return to riding. Additionally, the committee felt if the responsibility to seek evaluation fell solely on the participant, it would likely not be enforceable/trackable.

Jumper

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 11/18/2024

Licensed Officials

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/09/2024

Draft 2: Recommends Disapproval 01/13/2025

Draft 1: The committee understands the intent of the rules and is concerned with participant welfare, but does not agree with the language as written and will look forward to a draft 2 to review.
Draft 2: The LOC agrees with the concept of this rule change. The Committee believes more clarity is needed around the reporting requirements and how information with shared with the Federation.

Morgan

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/04/2024

Draft 1: The committee would like a revision to be considered to make an exception to the mandatory examination by medical personnel if a person was to fall, but land on one's feet; this should not be considered a "fall" under this rule.

National Hunter Committee

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/03/2024

Draft 1: The committee agreed with the concussion piece of this rule, however, they feel the requirement of being examined after every fall would be difficult to enforce and would delay the competition schedule.

National Show Horse

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/27/2024

Draft 1: The committee feels that overall this rule change needs revision to consider several points: falling on one's feet should not be considered a fall under the guidelines of this rule; the potential outcomes from this rule such as: making EMTs harder to find and employ for competitions (due to the added liability on them for these decisions); the potential for EMT's to err on the side of caution during examination by not allowing the return to competition due to them being held responsible for this examination and determination (liability of their decision on return to play). The committee would like it considered to leave the rule as is, where it is the rider's responsibility and decision on being examined or not and returning to play.

ParaEquestrian

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 10/15/2024

Paso Fino

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/19/2024

Draft 1: Although the committee is in favor of someone receiving medical help, they feel that the rule should be left at the exhibitor's discretion of whether to seek medical attention or not; also considering that all exhibitors already sign a liability waiver in order to compete. The committee has concern, as the rule is written, that there will be significant delays in competition and that due to the placement of medical personnel at competitions, this rule will not be effectively feasible. The committee feels that if this rule is approved, that it needs to address whether this fall and medical examination will result in an official timeout being charged to the entry or simply a "delay of class" as judging will have paused; the rule does not specify this procedure.

Roadster

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/21/2024

Draft 1: The committee had some reservations. Could we classify types of falls? Should a person who slides off and lands on their feet be required to be evaluated versus someone who is thrown from their horse? Often EMT's or other qualified medical staff are not readily available. How long would we hold the show to determine if this individual could continue?

Saddle Seat Eq

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/21/2024

Draft 1: The committee would like to propose that we classify the types of falls. They understand the intent but for those that slide off a horse and land on their feet, should they be required to be evaluated by medical personnel? Often medical personnel may not be readily available till the competition starts so in the cases of falls occurring prior to the start of competition, how would that be handled? The current rule states "competition qualified medical personnel".

Shetland

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/27/2024

Draft 1: The committee would like to see a clearer definition of a fall included in the rule, as there are many ways one could "fall" off a cart, some of which may not require medical personnel. For classes where many horses are judged at once, how long would a class "hold" before continuing on?

USDF

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 01/07/2025

Draft 1: While USDF supports the concept of this proposal, paragraph 4 fails to address the situation where someone was eligible when they submitted their entry but is placed on the ineligibility list after their entry is submitted and before the competition. In such a situation, it is too late to reject the entry as the competitor was eligible when it was submitted and therefore the entry was accepted. We recommend that this proposal be amended by adding a new sentence to the end of paragraph 4 to the effect of "See GR 848.7 on refunds to competitors who were placed on the Medical Suspension List after submitting an entry but prior to the competition date."

USEA

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 01/08/2025

Draft 1: The Board would like to know how the proposed rule change would affect the Eventing rules where remounting after an athlete fall is permitted (e.g. an athlete who falls in the Dressage test is permitted to remount and continue their test).

USHJA

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/12/2024

Draft 1: Not all falls may rise to the level that require this much address.

Vaulting

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/12/2024

Draft 1: GR840.1, tracking 65-24: Disapproval with the following comment: The VSC appreciates the proposal's intent to ensure participant safety; however, the current language is not only unsuitable for Vaulting but also risks negatively impacting the sport by failing to account for its unique nuances and requirements. GR122 only defines a fall for riders and not vaulters or drivers. Since there is not a definition of fall for vaulters in the USEF Rulebook, a fall is open to interpretation that could negatively disrupt competition and training as vaulters often separate from the horse during a performance. The VSC requests an exception from this rule for vaulting with reference to the USA Gymnastics concussion guidelines. USA Gymnastics notes that a concussion should be suspected in any gymnast who experiences appropriate mechanism of injury with mechanism of injury being defined as sustaining direct, indirect or rotational impact to the head, face, neck or body; experiencing whiplash effect, where the head forcibly moves forward & backward due to impact elsewhere on the body; and/or jarring effect from the trunk up to the head and brain (such as a hard fall to the buttocks). It should at all times be the fallen person's responsibility to stop vaulting in the instance of a fall as defined above but the VSC would be in favor of adopting this definition for purposes of this rule so judges can stop a performance and require an exam by the qualified medical personnel should they feel a fall has occurred with this definition of mechanism of injury. In training at competitions, it would be under the purview of TDs to stop a vaulter from continuing to vault should they feel a fall has occurred with this definition of mechanism of injury. In addition, it has been noticed that for riders in all disciplines the definition of fall in GR122 as currently written would consider dismounting to be a fall since GR122 defines a rider fall as a rider separating from their horse. The VSC suggests the definition of fall per GR122 be reviewed in conjunction with this proposal.

Welsh

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 12/05/2024

Western Committee

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/17/2024

Draft 1: The committee feels that this proposal needs far more clarification. What defines a fall? How long is competition management expected to hold classes for an evaluation? Does this require reporting for every fall?

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/16/2024

Draft 1: The committee understands the intent of the rule but feels it needs further clarification. How long are competitions expected to hold classes for evaluations? What happens in the instance where someone falls from an object, rather than a horse? Should individuals who land on their feet be required to be examined by medical personnel?

GR848 Accidents Involving Individuals Concussions, Injuries, and Return to Sport

1. This rule pertains to accidents involving individuals at Federation Licensed or endorsed competitions. Any participant who has had a fall at a competition, must be examined by the competition Qualified Medical Personnel, a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner before returning to competition or re-mounting their any horse or cart. The fallen person is fully responsible for ensuring that this examination takes place.
 2. Any participant who has had a fall at any competition, and who shows signs of a concussion or is apparently concussed, will be placed on the Federation Medical Ineligibility List until they have been examined by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner and a properly completed Return to Sport Form is received by the Federation.
 3. For all individuals evaluated pursuant to this rule, the Steward or Technical Delegate shall submit a properly completed Accident/Injury Form to the Federation Director of Competitions with their Steward or TD Report, unless otherwise noted below.
 4. Competition Management must refuse entries to participate from any person on the Federation Medical Ineligibility List.
 5. The Steward or Technical Delegate at the competition must submit an Accident/Injury Report within 24 hours of any incident that gives rise to a concussion or apparent concussion.
 6. The Steward or Technical Delegate at the competition must immediately notify the Federation and submit an Accident/Injury Report within 24 hours, unless an exceptional circumstance exists for any serious injury or fatality that occurs.
3. Fatalities and Serious Injuries. In the event of a human fatality or serious injury, the Steward or Technical Delegate shall notify the Safety Coordinator, Competition Management, and the Federation immediately, or as soon as practicable. Within 24 hours, except in exceptional circumstances, the Steward or Technical Delegate shall submit a completed Accident/Injury Report form to the Federation.
4. Unconsciousness/Concussion.
- a. In the event of a fall/accident where the competitor is apparently concussed or unconscious, the competitor is precluded from competing until evaluated by qualified medical personnel, as defined in GR 847.1.a. If the competitor refuses to be evaluated, he is disqualified from the competition and must follow the Return to Competition guidelines in accordance with the rules.
 - b. A Time-Out may be called in accordance with applicable division rules.
 - c. If qualified medical personnel suspect that a competitor has sustained unconsciousness or a concussion, the competitor must be precluded from competing until cleared to compete in accordance with the Return to Competition rules.
 - d. The competition Steward or TD shall notify Competition Management and the Safety Coordinator of the fall/accident as soon as practicable. In the event that a Steward or Technical Delegate is unable to be present at an accident or injury, the Safety Coordinator or Manager must inform the senior Steward or Technical Delegate of said accident or injury within one hour for proper follow up and reporting, as required by the Federation.
 - e. For all competitors evaluated pursuant to this section, the Steward or Technical Delegate shall submit a properly completed Accident/Injury Form, and, if applicable, any corresponding signed release to the Federation Director of Competitions within 24 hours of the fall/accident, except in exceptional circumstances.
5. Medical Suspension. Any competitor who is determined ineligible to compete under any of the preceding paragraphs will be placed on the Federation Medical Suspension List that will be posted on the Federation's website.
6. Return to Competition. In the event that a competitor is determined ineligible to compete under one of the preceding paragraphs, the competitor shall submit to the Federation, a signed release, which includes criteria established by the Federation from time to time, completed by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or a nurse practitioner in order to be eligible to once again compete in Federation Licensed or endorsed competitions.
7. Refusal of Entry. Any competitor on the Federation Medical Suspension List is responsible for not competing in any further Federation Licensed or endorsed competition until he is removed from the medical suspension list. Competition management shall refuse entries of any competitor who is on the Federation Medical Suspension List, unless he submits to the Federation a properly signed release in accordance with the Return to Competition rules. Competition Management is responsible for checking the Medical Suspension List prior to accepting entries.
- a. Substitution. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the rules herein, if an entry is accepted prior to the time the competitor was added to the Federation Medical Suspension List, a substitute competitor may be named.
 - b. Refund. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the rules herein, for any competitor who appears on the Federation Medical Suspension List, a Federation Licensed or endorsed competition shall refund the entry fees and Jumper nominating fee, if applicable, less office fees, if applicable. Stabling fees may not be refunded, unless the stabling is filled.

GR1033.4.a.2

4. Forms – Forms submitted to the Federation must be on the correct competition year's form as provided by the Federation. Incomplete forms, prior year's forms, or illegible forms will not be accepted. The following forms must be submitted in a timely manner to:

[...]

2. ***Accident/Injury Form for any serious accident or injury that occurs at the competition, including any incident that gives rise to a concussion or apparent concussion, Accident/Injury Report Form on the official form provided by the Federation must be submitted to the Federation in accordance with GR848.***