

Rule Change Type	Effective Date	Draft Received	Board Action
Extraordinary	12/1/2024	5/6/2024	Approved 6/17/2024

Extraordinary Change Reason

Horse wellbeing is paramount to USEF and this proposal modernizes the horse abuse rule. This proposal accompanies GR702, a standard rule change currently under consideration. The effective date for this EO should align with the effective date for GR702 should the Board approve it.

Rule Change Intent

This proposal is intended to achieve the following: (1) expand the scope of USEF’s jurisdiction to include horse abuse that occurs outside of competition, including at home facilities; (2) clarify examples of what constitutes abuse in our sport; (3) mandate reporting of horse abuse; and (4) clarify that competition management and officials are empowered to eliminate, disqualify, and issue warnings for horse abuse at competitions.

Proponent Details	Contact Information
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USEF Officers

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Linked Rules	Comments
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GR 702 (082-23)

Committee Actions

Council - Natl Breed & Discipline

Draft 2: Recommends Approval 05/28/2024

Council - Intl Discipline

Draft 2: Recommends Approval 05/28/2024

Council - Member Services

Draft 2: Recommends Approval 05/20/2024

SUBCHAPTER 8-F WELFARE OF THE HORSE

GR838 *Unethical Treatment of the Horse—Cruelty to and Abuse of a Horse*

For purposes of this rule, the following definitions apply:

A Covered Horse is defined as any horse that is or has been recorded with the Federation, has participated or is entered to participate in a Federation Licensed or Endorsed Competition, or is on the grounds of a Federation Licensed or Endorsed Competition or is in the care, custody, and control of a Participant.

A Participant is defined as any person who holds or has held a Federation membership; participated in a Federation Licensed or Endorsed Competition as a rider, vaulter, driver, handler, exhibitor, trainer, coach, groom, competition veterinarian, or support personnel for any of these identified roles; or is present on the grounds of a Federation Licensed or Endorsed Competition.

1. Any Participant engaging in the Unethical Treatment of a Covered Horse is subject to penalty. Except in exigent circumstances, the Unethical Treatment of a Covered Horse is defined as any action or inaction that may negatively compromise the Covered Horse's health, safety, or well-being. It may include any action(s) or inaction(s) that causes or is likely to cause a horse pain, a state of obvious distress, or unnecessary discomfort.

Examples of Unethical Treatment of a Horse may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Misuse or excessive use of a whip, spur, or bit;*
- b. Misuse of any equipment or device, including tack;*
- c. Creation of hyper or hypo-sensitization of any physical part of a Covered Horse to enhance performance;*
- d. Any practice or use of devices or objects used to enhance a Covered Horse's performance based on fear or intimidation;*
- e. Training, riding, or competing a Covered Horse with raw, bleeding, or irritated skin or welts consistent with excessive, persistent, or inappropriate use of equipment, including spurs; and*
- f. Continued riding, driving, or lunging an obviously exhausted, lame, or injured Covered Horse.*

2. A Participant is subject to penalty for the Unethical Treatment of a Covered Horse that occurs at or in connection with a Federation Licensed or Endorsed Competition. Additionally, any person who directs another as to the Unethical Treatment of a Covered Horse is subject to penalty.

3. A Participant is subject to penalty for the Unethical Treatment of a Covered Horse that occurs after November 30, 2024 somewhere other than at or in connection with a USEF Licensed or Endorsed Competition. For the Unethical Treatment of a Covered Horse under this paragraph that occurs off U.S. soil by a Participant who is a member of a foreign National Federation, the Federation will refer the matter to the relevant National Federation and FEI for resolution.

4. Any Participant who personally witnesses the Unethical Treatment of a Covered Horse at or in direct connection with a Federation Licensed or Endorsed Competition, must immediately report it to a Federation Licensed Official at the competition.

5. Any Participant who personally witnesses the Unethical Treatment of a Covered Horse outside of a Federation Licensed Competition, should report it to the Federation and the relevant local authorities as soon as practicable.

6. A veterinarian may be appointed by the Federation, Competition Management, or a Licensed Official to inspect any horse on competition grounds, or any horse stabled off grounds that is entered to compete in a Federation Licensed or Endorsed Competition. Refusal to submit an animal for such examination shall constitute a violation of this rule, and the owner and/or trainer may be subject to penalty by the Federation.

7. A Federation Licensed Official, Competition Management, or competition veterinarian at a Federation Licensed or Endorsed Competition may issue an official written warning, elimination, or disqualification against any Participant they deem to have Unethically Treated a Covered Horse on competition grounds or directly related to a Federation Licensed or Endorsed Competition. Additionally, any person may be removed from the competition grounds for Unethical Treatment of a Horse. Any report received of alleged Unethical Treatment or penalties imposed on a person(s) as a result of Unethical Treatment must be reported to the Federation. A Participant may be subject to further penalty by the Federation.

8. Anyone reporting a violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed is a violation. Any allegations that prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and will be considered a violation of this rule, subjecting the reporting party to penalty by the Federation.

9. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Federation may pursue disciplinary action pursuant Bylaw 705.2(b).

1. Cruelty to or the abuse of a horse present on the grounds of any Licensed Competition is forbidden, constitutes a violation under Chapter 7, and renders the offender subject to penalty. The Show Committee, or Competition Management in the absence of a Show Committee must bar violators from further participation for the remainder of the competition. It is the duty of the competition officials to report to the Federation any person who indulges in this practice for such further action as may be deemed appropriate.
2. Any person or trainer, as defined by Federation rules, who presents for competition a horse that exhibits signs of recent cruelty or abuse will be subject to penalty under this rule.
3. The Federation or the Judge, Steward, or TD may appoint a veterinarian to inspect any animal on competition grounds or entered to compete. Refusal to submit an animal for examination by an authorized veterinarian after due notification shall constitute a violation.
4. The following are included under the words Cruelty and Abuse but are not limited thereto:
 - a. Excessive use of a whip on any horse in a stall, runway, schooling area, competition ring or elsewhere on the competition grounds, before or during a competition, by any person,
 - b. except in emergency situations any striking of the horse's head (on the poll and forward of the poll) with the whip shall be deemed excessive.
 - c. Rapping the legs of a horse with the butt end of a riding crop or other implement;
 - d. Use of any substance or method to induce temporary heat.
 - e. Manual poling with any object;
 - f. Use of a wire or chain in conjunction with any schooling jump;
 - g. Use of electric device in schooling or showing;
 - h. Use of shackles, hock hobbles and similar devices (not to be construed as rubber or elastic —exercising devices);
 - i. Showing a horse with raw or bleeding sores around the coronets, pasterns, or legs;
 - j. Use of any explosive (e.g., fire crackers, torpedoes, fire extinguishers except in case of fire, etc.) or laser beam devices; anywhere on the competition grounds, except in an exhibition or if required in

class specifications.

k. Withholding of feed and water for prolonged periods;

l. Letting blood from a horse for other than diagnostic purposes;

m. Inhumane treatment of a horse in a stall, runway, schooling area, competition ring or elsewhere on the competition grounds, by any person.

n. Use of any object that prevents the horse's ability to close its mouth. (Exception: use of an oral speculum by a veterinarian or equine dentist to provide legitimate dental/oral medical care.)

o. Soring and/or the use of an action device on any limb of a Tennessee Walking Horse, Racking Horse, or Spotted Saddle Horse (each a breed not recognized by the Federation) in any class at a Federation Licensed Competition is prohibited. An action device is defined by the USDA as any boot,

collar, chain, roller, or other device that encircles or is placed upon the lower extremity of the leg of a horse in such a manner that it can rotate around the leg or slide up and down the leg so as to cause friction or strike the hoof, coronet band, fetlock joint or pastern of the horse. (Protective bell boots or heel boots are specifically excluded from this definition). The use of a weighted shoe, pad, wedge, in conjunction with a hoof band or other device or material (commonly referred to as a performance package) placed on, inserted in, or attached to any limb of a Tennessee Walking Horse,

a Racking Horse, or Spotted Saddle Horse (each a breed not recognized by the Federation) constructed to artificially alter the gait of such a horse, and which are not protective or therapeutic in nature at a Federation Licensed Competition is prohibited.

p. Soring of any horse, including but not limited to the application of caustic chemicals to a horse's legs or hooves, in order to cause pain and/or affect a horse's performance, and/or used as a training technique.

5.—Any action(s) against a horse by any person, which are deemed excessive by a Federation judge, Federation steward, technical delegate or competition veterinarian, in the competition ring or anywhere on the competition grounds or evidence of action(s) described above on a horse on competition grounds may be punished by official warning or elimination. Such action(s) could include but are not limited to excessive or inappropriate use of equipment, including but not limited to the whip or spurs. Evidence may include raw, bleeding, or irritated skin, or welts consistent with excessive use or inappropriate use of equipment

For the purposes of this rule, the term "soring" is defined by the Horse Protection Act, 15 U.S.C. §1821.