



**EQUESTRIAN
CANADA
ÉQUESTRE**

HORSE WELFARE CODE OF CONDUCT

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Definitions

In this policy,

“Horse” – refers to an active equine under Equestrian Canada (EC) jurisdiction. That jurisdiction is limited to Horses participating in any EC sanctioned events, on any EC sanctioned teams, and or any Horse under the care and training of any Individual, whether at an EC sanctioned event or otherwise.

“Individual”- refers to a person that has a relationship with EC through employment, contract, volunteer position, official status, or the holding of a sport licence and/or coach status.

“Abuse” – refers to physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, hoarding, or other treatment of a Horse deemed cruel, harmful, distressful, or violent in nature.

Preamble & Purpose

1. Equestrian Canada (EC) is committed to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all participants that is free from Abuse. The purpose of this Policy is to stress the importance of that commitment by educating Individuals and the public about Horse Abuse, outlining how EC will work to prevent Horse Abuse, and how such Abuse or suspected Abuse can be reported to and addressed by EC.
2. EC requires that all Individuals adhere to this Code of Conduct and acknowledge and accept that the welfare of the Horse must always be paramount and must never be subordinated to competitive or commercial influences. EC is committed to:
 - a) upholding the welfare of the Horse, regardless of value and performance level, as the primary priority regardless of competitive commitments, expectations, or commercial influences;
 - b) requiring the Horse be treated with the highest level of care, compassion, respect, and empathy;
 - c) requiring that no Horse be subjected to Abuse (ref: Rules of Equestrian Canada, Section A General Regulations, Article A517) or maltreatment;
 - d) ensuring that all Individuals accept and implement, at a minimum, the requirements within the National Farm Animal Care Council Equine Code of Practice;
 - e) ongoing support for scientific studies of animal-based indicators of pain, distress, and/or compromised welfare;
 - f) increasing education and awareness for the evolution of best management and equine husbandry practices;
 - g) requiring Individuals to know and follow the EC Rules and implement industry regulations in all competitions; and
 - h) reviewing, revising, and developing competition rules and regulations that protect the welfare of the Horse.

Zero Tolerance Statement

3. EC has zero tolerance for Abuse of a Horse. All Individuals and members of the public are required to report instances of Horse Abuse or suspected Horse Abuse to EC which shall immediately address such reports as needed under the terms of the applicable policies.



Complaint Process

4. The complaint process for instances of Abuse of a Horse will be governed by EC's [Discipline, Complaints and Appeals policy](#).

General Welfare

5. All Horses must be cared for in accordance with the [Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Equines](#).

Examples of Abuse of Horses ([source](#))

6. "Physical Abuse" – refers to the infliction of injuries or causing unnecessary pain and/or suffering. This Abuse may be caused by hitting, kicking, throwing, beating, whipping, spurring, shaking, poisoning, burning, scalding, suffocation, etc.

Examples of Physical Abuse include but are not limited to:

- a) nosebands used in such a way that they interfere with a Horse's breathing, or be tight enough to cause pain or discomfort;
 - b) excessively whipping or beating a Horse;
 - c) subjecting a Horse to any kind of electric shock device;
 - d) excessively or persistently using spurs or jabbing a Horse in the mouth with the bit;
 - e) riding/driving an obviously exhausted, lame or injured Horse;
 - f) rapping a Horse (poling or rapping is the practice of hitting a horse on the legs as it goes over a jump, to make it think it hit the fence).
 - g) hyper-sensitizing any part of a Horse;
 - h) using shackles or chains (not to be confused with rubber or elastic exercising devices);
 - i) competing with a Horse with raw or bleeding sores;
 - j) using an explosive (i.e. firecracker, fire extinguisher except in the case of fire) or using fire such as lighters, matches, etc.;
 - k) ignoring adverse medication reactions that compromise the Horse's welfare (including but not limited to staggering and falling down) ;
 - l) inappropriate or over-use of medications, drugs, and supplements in both on label and off label scenarios; or
 - m) excess of use in activity, lesson, training, or competition to which physical or emotional impacts are demonstrated.
7. "Emotional Abuse" – refers to persistent threatening behavior, failure to provide basic needs, bullying, excessive teasing, exploitation, or coercion that leads to a fragile emotional state.

Examples of Emotional Abuse include but are not limited to:

- a) on-going and deliberate isolation that results in emotional or psychological distress;
- b) training practices that are either mentally or physically inadequate for a Horse's capabilities;
- c) failing to intervene or diffuse a Horse displaying mental/emotional distress including excessive stereotypical behavior (such as crib biting, wood chewing, pawing/kicking, weaving, fence-pacing, stall-walking, or flank biting).



8. Neglect is defined as a lack of care, often resulting from ignorance, poverty, or extenuating circumstances. Neglect usually results in a failure to provide the basic necessities of life: adequate levels of food, water, shelter, veterinary care, grooming, or sanitation resulting in poor physical conditions.

Examples of neglect include but are not limited to:

- a) leaving a Horse without adequate food, drink, and exercise;
 - b) failing to safely and securely tie or contain a Horse while at the event location.
9. Hoarding: Animal neglect on a large scale involving multiple numbers of animals and frequently inadequate housing and husbandry conditions.
 10. Animal sexual abuse: Any abusive act involving the rectum, anus, or genitalia; or sexual contact with animals which may or may not result in physical injury to the animal.

This list and set of examples is not intended to be exhaustive.

Extreme Weather Conditions:

11. Competitors and competition organisers must observe the Equestrian Canada guidelines provided for extremely hot, cold, and poor air quality conditions during competition (attached links).

Duty to Report Abuse

12. Anyone that witnesses or has reasonable grounds to believe that a Horse is suffering or has suffered Abuse, is obligated to report it. Reasonable grounds refer to the information that an average person, using normal and honest judgment, would need to decide to report. A person should not rely on anyone else to report on their behalf nor delegate the reporting. Anyone providing information to others should be encouraged to report their concerns themselves as their duty to report.

In determining whether to report the Abuse to EC, local animal welfare enforcement, or law enforcement, the person should use as much information as they have available to them about the Horse or the person(s) involved. Reports of Abuse involving Individuals or Horses as defined in this policy should be reported to EC. Other reports should be directed to animal welfare or law enforcement. When in doubt, a person should make contact with their report and the receiving agency will direct them as appropriate.

Penalty Range is a Guideline Only

13. The penalty types and ranges below are simple guidelines and are not mandatory. These guidelines are intended to provide a basis upon which discretion can be exercised consistently in like circumstances but are not binding on the Hearing Committee Panels. Depending on the facts and circumstances of each case, a Hearing Committee Panel may determine that no purpose is served by imposing a penalty at all. Conversely, a Hearing Committee Panel may determine that the facts and circumstances of a specific case may call for the imposition of penalties above or outside of the stated range. Examples include, but not are limited to, prior rule violations, egregious misconduct, the need for increased deterrence, or certain policy considerations.



Categories of Rule Violations & Sanctions

Infraction	Policy	Fine	Suspension
15. Excessive use of whip or spurs or tongue straps and improper use of bits *	Horse Welfare Code of Conduct	First Offense: up to \$6,000.00 Second Offense: up to \$12,000.00 Third Offense: up to \$24,000.00	First Offense: up to 6 months Second Offense: up to 12 months Third Offense: up to 24 months
16. Use of illegal equipment*** with no intent to cause harm or pain to a Horse or which doesn't cause harm or pain to a Horse *	Horse Welfare Code of Conduct	Discretion of the Hearing Panel	
17. Intentional use of illegal equipment*** to cause harm or pain to a Horse *	Horse Welfare Code of Conduct	First Offense: up to \$12,000.00 Second Offense: up to \$18,000.00 Third Offense: up to \$36,000.00	First Offense: up to 12 months Second Offense: up to 18 months Third Offense **: up to 36 months
18. Cruelty/Abuse/Neglect – Includes excessive riding, lunging, training and showing, deprivation of water and feed, striking with an object, unintentional death, and violations of the 12-hour injection rule involving forbidden substances for purpose of competition. *	Horse Welfare Code of Conduct	First Offense: up to \$12,000.00 Second Offense: up to \$24,000.00 Third Offense: up to \$60,000.00	First Offense: up to 12 months Second Offense: up to 24 months Third Offense: up to 60 months **
19. Death and Maiming – Includes acts in which the death of a Horse occurred, but was not intended *	Horse Welfare Code of Conduct	First Offense: up to \$36,000.00 Second Offense: up to \$60,000.00 Third Offense: up to \$100,000.00	First Offense: up to 36 months ** Second Offense: up to 60 months ** Third Offense: Lifetime ban
20. Intentional death for financial or other means	Horse Welfare Code of Conduct	\$100,000.00	Lifetime ban
* If there are multiple horses involved, the penalty should apply to each Horse and run consecutively.			



Infraction	Policy	Fine	Suspension
<p>** Must appear before the Hearing Panel and provide proof of rehabilitation before being eligible to regain membership.</p> <p>*** Illegal equipment are modifications to tack/equipment to cause intentional pain or injury with the objective of punishment or to enhance performance as well as any equipment or accessories that admit or cause electric shock.</p>			



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