

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

Extraordinary Change Reason

horse welfare

Rule Change Intent

The rulebook currently contains different rules that address prohibited practices. In an effort to streamline and improve the rulebook, this rule change combines some existing prohibited practices in a single rule, while expanding the list to include other important sections, including obscuring the visibility of horses stabled on competition grounds, excessive use of draw reins, and augmented nosebands.

Regarding stabling, this proposal supports equine and human safety and wellbeing by ensuring the inside of stalls are observable by persons outside of the stalls and considers the variances in construction of stalls and venues, recognizing that in situations when the stall's original construction is such that the inside cannot be observed may occur, but is not the norm.

Proponent Details

USEF Officers

Contact Information

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Linked Rules

Comments

American Saddlebred

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/18/2024

Draft 1: The committee had several concerns regarding this proposal. Are the prohibited practices/equipment to be enforced on competition grounds? The committee would like clarification. The committee suggested examples should be added to augmented nosebands. There was a real concern for #5 regarding rubber bands. The committee would like an exception for Saddlebreds as these are often used as a training mechanism in their breed. Any use of equipment that restricts a horse's movement should also be reworked because this would include equipment that is currently legal, such as overchecks. The committee would also like to see a change in the language regarding obscured stalls. Sometimes a stall must be obscured for the safety of the horse (etc. stallions, horses that bite).The committee suggested using language similar to "you cannot medicate or train a horse in a stall that is not observable".

Andalusian/Lusitano

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/04/2024

Draft 1: The committee feels that there should be consideration given to the welfare of the horse by allowing for the coverage of the stall front to a certain extent; possibly dictate parameters of an opening size that is necessary, so that those horses that need a full "quiet space" will have their welfare looked after too. The committee also feels that point 5 (rubber bands) needs redefining as the verbiage in this point should allow for the use of "donut side reins"/stretchy side reins as the current verbiage could cause confusion regarding this type of equipment; surgical rubber tubing is often what is used for reduction of movement, more thought should be given to exactly what verbiage to use for equipment that is being prohibited.

Arabian

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/26/2024

Draft 1: The committee feels that revisions are needed on this rule. They suggest removing the specific examples of points 2, 3, and 5 due to the many functionality of the rule questions that are brought forward; for example: who defines what is excessive use of draw reins? The committee would like the proponent to consider the possibility of those trying to work around this rule by constructing their own temporary structure that could be covered and used for schooling, etc. behind a closed, unviewable area.

Carriage Pleasure Driving

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/05/2024

Draft 1: The committee is in favor of the rule, but feels that #6 needs some adjustment - there needs to be a balance between protection of both equine and human athletes, and practices that allow better animal husbandry for the horses. For example, the covering of stalls to help keep horses calm in stressful situations, or to keep a stallion from becoming overexcited due to the ability to see other horses.

Connemara	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/26/2024	Draft 1: The committee feels that this rule change needs more thought and revisions to address issues with the exhaustive list of prohibited practices. The committee questions how one will deem the use of draw reins as excessive and in conflict with this rule. The committee would also like to see changes to the verbiage in the "attention getting devices" point for purposes of clarity especially in regards to fire extinguishers.
Dressage	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 11/13/2024	Draft 1: Approve with following recommendation regarding item 6 - obscured stalls: there needs to be a provision for short term modification for safety requirements.
Driving	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 10/15/2024	
Endurance	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 11/19/2024	
Eventing	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 11/19/2024	Draft 1: Approve with following comment regarding item 6 - obscured stalls: The Committee would like clarity on whether existing stall doors that have large panels (like Dutch doors/solid doors) would not need to be updated to give more line of sight under this rule.
Friesian	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/18/2024	Draft 1: The committee would be in favor of the rule change if points 2, 3, 5, and 6 were removed (as discussed for a potential Draft 2).
Hackney	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/20/2024	Draft 1: The committee had several concerns regarding this proposal. They noted in number 1, the current rule states except for the National Show horse division. If there is a push to put forward these rules for the safety and welfare of the horse, why would that division be excluded? In the language of #2 regarding draw reins, who would determine what is excessive ? There was a real concern for #5 regarding rubber bands. The committee would also like to see a change in the language regarding stalls obscured. Sometimes a stall must be obscured for the safety of the horse (etc. stallions, horses that bite). Overall, this rule change needs extensive work before a second draft can be discussed as majority of the practices listed are common practice with many breeds and disciplines.
Human and Equine, Safety & Welfare	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/16/2024	Draft 1: The Committee believes in the intent of this rule, but believes this rule requires additional work. For example, are there exceptions for obscuring the view of stallions in stabling which can create in some instances a safety concern?
Jumper	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 11/18/2024	
Licensed Officials	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/09/2024	Draft 1: The committee agrees with the intent but understands there is a new draft that is being presented and looks forward to Draft 2.
Morgan	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/04/2024	Draft 1: The committee feels that points 2, 3, and 5 need to be revised and possibly removed due to their enforcement capabilities and questionable nature. The committee would like a revision made to allow for the welfare of those horses that need a "quiet space" at a competition to be considered within the obscured stalls portion of this rule. The committee suggests revising to a certain size/measurement that must remain visible.
National Hunter Committee	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/03/2024	Draft 1: The committee expressed concern with the potential consequences of this rule, such as harsher bits and other equipment being utilized on the horse/pony to get their heads down. The committee further feels rubber bands are useful in training and that this is an overreach. It was recommended that the poling portion should be moved to GR838, since the remaining aspects of this proposed rule are covered under the current GR838 for misuse of tack and equipment.
National Show Horse	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/27/2024	Draft 1: The committee feels that this set of rules is over-reaching in scope and adds to the general membership's feeling that USEF over regulates and has too many rules. The committee also feels that the list is too exhaustive; in regards to draw reins, what is excessive, who makes this determination?
ParaEquestrian	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 10/15/2024	
Paso Fino	
Roadster	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/21/2024	Draft 1: The committee questioned whether a separate rule was necessary or if these practices would already be covered in GR838. Who would be making the decisions of if the equipment was being used in a manner that was abusive? The committee suggested changing the language to read "using equipment in a manner that would be in violation of GR838 would be prohibited".

Saddle Seat Eq	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/21/2024	Draft 1: The committee had several concerns regarding this proposal. This list is not exhaustive and there would be many exceptions for breeds/disciplines as currently proposed. The committee suggested language such as “ use of equipment in a manner that would violate GR838 would be prohibited”.
Shetland	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 11/27/2024	Draft 1: The committee has concerns about the inclusion of rubber bands in this rule, as they are regularly used at Shetland competitions. There was support to see a revision of this rule taking into consideration the concern of all committees.
USHJA	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/12/2024	Draft 1: The renaming and incorporating attention getting devices and poling is great, but there is a place for elastic tools in the hunter/jumper disciplines so more definition is needed here and on the nosebands with regards to rub nosebands.
Welsh	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/05/2024	Draft 1: The Committee feels this rule needs to be more clearly defined.
Western Committee	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/17/2024	Draft 1: The committee has concerns about this proposal. They dislike that this rule seems to state that it would overrule division rules, as they feel division rules should take precedence. Are these pieces of equipment prohibited only for competition or on competition grounds at all? They have concerns about the verbiage surrounding stalls being entirely covered.
Western Dressage	
Draft 1: Recommends Approval 12/16/2024	

Heather Sullivan

Draft #1

This rule is so vague as to be pointless. What is "excessive use" and what constitutes a "extended period of time" when it comes to draw reins? Who is going to be monitoring how long someone is using them and telling them whether it's excessive? Is a padded noseband "augmented"? What about a flash noseband? Some horses may prefer their stalls to be covered by a curtain if they get overexcited at a show. Why should this be disallowed?

Kathy Hobstetter

Draft #1

NOSEBAND - I don't think this is completely thorough until the tightness of 'tack' or 'adapted' nose bands is addressed, aside from what is 'attached'. Watching the nosebands get cranked down to keep a horses mouth shut, it is obvious the noseband inflicts and can create pain and discomfort to the extent the horse can feel a bit paralyzed if it moves it's head. NOT a good representation of welfare for the horse in my opinion.

Kristine Boente

Draft #1

The term “excessive “ for use of draw reins is too vague. I think this would be hard to enforce as a rule.

Amber Asbell-Jackson

Draft #1

"The largest opening and line of sight into the stall cannot be obscured or covered by adding fabric, wood, or other material" This should be revised to accomodate horses from being able to touch each other through barred stalls. Stalls are draped to prevent spreading disease or unruly behavior between horses. It can be dangerous if a horse becomes "herd bound" to its neighbor. Many barns have solid dividers between stalls at home, and showing at a venue with bars allowing horses to socialize becomes a safety issue when horses become herd animals. A herd bound animals performance can also be compromised when they begin to constantly think about their stablemate and not their training.

Cathaleen Canfield

Draft #1

Frederick Beeler

Draft #1

Problem with items 5 & 6.

Item 5. Don't know about other breeds, but for saddlebreds the use of Rubber Bands (ie stretchies) with ankle rings on front legs is a resistance training aid intended to strengthen the horse not unduly restrict movement. In the same manner humans to enhance athletic and therapeutic training. Saddlebred Weanlings and Yearlings are restricted from using these training aids to protect growing joints that can be easily injured if improperly handled.

Item 6. The ability to visually obscure a stall is at times necessary for the safety of a peticular horse or horses. The most common one in personal experience is a futurity weanling that still is at the mares side. Some mares can be overly protective and overstress in the public environment of show stalls.

Item 6. The way the last line is worded no stall being used for the purposes of a changing room (most commonly "tack stalls") can have an obscured view from the aisle. This will create a bigger problem regarding personal privacy when changing for everyone than the implied problem it's trying to solve.

GR839 Attention-Getting Devices-Prohibited Practices and Equipment

The following contains a non-exhaustive list of practices and equipment that are prohibited. Where there is a conflict with the division rules, the more restrictive rule will prevail.

1. **Attention Getting Devices.** Attention getting devices and/or other noisemakers (including but not limited to tape measures, blow horns, altered bamboo poles, explosives, etc.) are not allowed in and around the make up/schooling/warm-up and competition rings during scheduled competition sessions. (Except for the National Show Horse division.) Use of explosives and fire extinguishers by or for exhibitors/competitors (except in the case of fire) is not allowed on competition grounds at any time.
2. ~~Excessive Use of Draw Reins. The excessive use of draw reins for extended periods of time and/or using draw reins in a manner that results in the horse's head being restricted near or between its knees or with its neck in a hyper-flexed position is prohibited.~~
3. ~~Augmented Nosebands. Any nosebands with an interior that is abrasive or not smooth is prohibited, except nosebands made of rope or rawhide. Tack nosebands or nosebands that have been augmented, regardless of whether the noseband was manufactured in that manner or altered after purchase, with any object attached to the noseband that causes or is likely to cause a horse pain, a state of obvious distress, or unnecessary discomfort are prohibited from use on a horse at any time.~~
4. **Poling.** Manual poling, or the use of offsets, is prohibited.
5. ~~Rubber Bands. The use of rubber bands or any other equipment that restricts the movement of a horse's limbs, head, or neck is prohibited.~~
6. ~~Obscured Stalls. Any stall that a horse may be placed in for any reason, including for competition prep, care, or housing, must be open and observable from the aisle. The largest opening and line of sight into the stall cannot be obscured or covered by adding fabric, wood, or other material. All participants must adhere to the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies when using stalls as changing spaces.~~

GR843 Poling

~~Manual poling, or the use of offsets, is prohibited on competition grounds.~~