



## United States Equestrian Federation, Inc.

*The National Governing Body for Equestrian Sport*

4047 Iron Works Parkway, Lexington, KY 40511  
Phone: (859) 258-2472 Fax: (859) 231-6662 [www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org)

August 19, 2008

Dear Catrin:

Attached, please find a list of specific measures, taken by the USEF in the past nine months, aimed at the issue of safety in National Eventing Competitions. In general, the main goal has been to better determine that Athletes are qualified to compete at the level at which they are riding.

Starting late last winter, the Federation adopted the principle that the best indication of riding competence at any level is the achievement of cross-country rounds without jumping penalties. This principle was incorporated into a new set of qualifications to take effect on December 1<sup>st</sup> of 2008. To accompany these, the Federation recently approved new "establishment and maintenance" of qualification rules. These are aimed at controlling the continued competition of horses (and riders) that fail to demonstrate an ability to compete successfully at a particular level. Horses which fail to meet these requirements will have to move down to the next lower level and meet re-qualification criteria.

The Federation will also require that Athletes meet more stringent qualifications to compete in CICs and CCIs.

In early May, the USEF adopted a rule which penalizes the first fall of rider on cross-country by elimination. We felt validated in that decision when the FEI followed suit a month later. We followed the lead of the FEI in adopting clarifications of the Dangerous Riding rules, including providing the Ground Jury with ability to authorize deputies to serve as their "eyes" on the cross-country to watch for instances of dangerous riding. Finally, we have mandated the use of Frangible Construction, where appropriate, on all cross-country obstacles at the CNC\* level and above.

In the area of data collection and research, we have instituted the use of Fall Report Forms for National competitions so that we can add data to the already established International Fall Database. The Federation is also grateful that our national affiliate organization, the United States Eventing Association, is undertaking two studies relating to safety. First is a comprehensive study of cardio-pulmonary incidences in competing horses. This effort is spearheaded by Drs. Kent Allen and Cathy Kohn and we are hopeful of garnering financial and research support from the International Eventing community. The second study is of "speed and motion" using GPS technology to learn more about the range of speeds that riders actually employ on the cross-country phase, including the maximum speeds that are attained in achieving times within the official



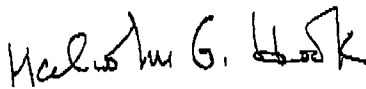
Member, U.S. Olympic Committee

optimum time. We have already gained some surprising results from this study, but the date pool is too small to date to provide any valid conclusions.

Of course, I would be remiss if I failed to mention the National Eventing Safety Conference held in Lexington, Kentucky in early June. Modeled on the FEI Safety Conference in Copenhagen last winter, and co-Sponsored by the USEF and USEA, this successful, two-day effort provided the much of the impetus for the actions of the Federation and its partners in the months since. In the coming months, we hope to establish both a "watch-list" for riders perceived to be at risk and a "return to play" policy for riders following accidents in competition.

I look forward to reading about the efforts of the other NFs in hopes that our continued, joint efforts will contribute to greater safety for Eventing Athletes and their horses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Malcolm G. Hook". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Malcolm Hook  
USEF National Safety Officer

Cc: John Long; CEO, USEF  
David O'Connor; President, USEF  
Nathalie Desscan; FEI Asst. Olympic & Eventing

MSGH/lac



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## EVENTING SAFETY MEASURES

- **Elimination after 1 Fall on Cross-Country**
  - As of May 19, 2008, the first fall of competitor on cross-country will result in elimination.
  
- **Qualifying Results**
  - Except as noted below, National Qualifying Result (NQR): an NQR is achieved by completing the entire Horse Trial and scoring:
    - not more than 50 penalty points in the Dressage Test; and
    - No jumping penalties at obstacles on the Cross Country Test, and not more than 90 seconds (36 penalty points) exceeding the optimum time; and
    - Not more than 16 penalties at obstacles in the Jumping Test.
  - 25 penalty points received for Dangerous Riding will not achieve a National Qualifying Result.
  - **Requirements for Competition at National Horse Trials and Events**
    - PRELIMINARY (1.10m) - The competitor must have obtained an NQR at four Horse Trials at the Training Level or higher.
    - INTERMEDIATE (1.15m) - Both the competitor and the horse, though not necessarily as a combination, must have obtained an NQR at three Horse Trials at the Preliminary Level or higher, plus an additional NQR with no more than 20 Jumping Penalties at obstacles on the Cross Country Test.
    - ADVANCED (1.20m) - Both the competitor and the horse, though not necessarily as a combination, must have obtained an NQR at three Horse Trials at the Intermediate Level or higher, plus an additional NQR with no more than 20 Jumping Penalties at obstacles on the Cross Country Test.
  - **Requirements for Competition in International Horse Trials and Events** - In all instances, at least one of the QRs must have been obtained in the current or preceding calendar year. All competitors and horses must meet the minimum requirements published by the FEI.
    - CIC\* Both the competitor and the horse, though not necessarily as a combination, must have achieved 3 NQRs at either National Preliminary Horse Trials (CNC\*) or National One Star Three-Day Events (CCN\*).
    - CCI\* Both the competitor and the horse, though not necessarily as a combination, must have achieved 4 QRs at any combination of: CNC\*, CCN\*, CIC\*.





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- CIC\*\* The horse and rider, though not necessarily as a combination must have achieved 2 QRs at a CNC\*\* or higher.
  - CCI\*\* Having met the minimum requirements of the FEI, the horse and rider, though not necessarily as a combination must have achieved 3 QRs at a CNC\*\* or higher.
  - CIC\*\*\* Having met the minimum requirements of the FEI, the horse and rider, though not necessarily as a combination must have achieved 2 QRs at a CNC\*\*\* or higher.
  - CCI\*\*\* The horse and rider must meet the minimum requirements of the FEI.
  - CCI\*\*\*\* The horse and rider must meet the minimum requirements of the FEI.
- **Loss of Establishment of Qualification**
    - A horse that is eliminated twice, for non-technical reasons, within any 6 month period loses its qualification to compete at the level at which the eliminations occur.
    - A horse that falls in competition 2 times in any 6 month period loses its qualification to compete at the level at which the falls occur.
    - A rider who falls in competition from the same horse during competition 2 times in any 12 month period will cause the horse to lose its qualification for the level at which the falls occur.
    - Having lost qualification, a horse may be re-qualified by achieving 2 QRs at the next lower level within a 6 month period following the loss of qualification.
  - **Dangerous Riding Penalty/Procedures**
    - The Ground Jury and the Technical Delegate have the authority to stop a rider on the cross country course for dangerous riding, riding an exhausted horse, excessive pressing of a tired horse, riding an obviously lame horse, excessive use of the whip and/or spurs or riding in an unsafe way.
    - The President of the Ground Jury may, in addition, designate one or several deputies (i.e. Eventing Officials up to the level for which they are licensed and not in an official function at the Event, any Level 3 or 4 USEA ICP Instructor or any rider who has represented the USA in a World Championship, Olympic Games, or Pan American Games) for the Cross Country to advise the Ground Jury regarding any action described in 1 or 4 (above). Deputies and obstacle judges will be provided with a red flag to be waved at the rider, at the direction of Ground Jury, to stop the rider if the situation continues or if the infringement of the above is deemed to be serious.





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- **Frangible Technology**

- Obstacles constructed after December 1, 2008, for which approved frangible technology is appropriate, shall be constructed using this technology. Obstacles constructed prior to December 1, 2008 and for which the use of approved frangible technology is appropriate shall be retrofit using this technology prior to December 1, 2009. All open oxers at the Preliminary (1.10 meters) level and above must be constructed using Approved Frangible technology. Information on the appropriate applications of Frangible Technology in cross-country fence construction is available in the USEA Cross-Country Obstacle Design Guidelines. Frangible Technology may be installed only by or under the supervision of Course Designers/course builders who have attended a USEA Seminar on Frangible fence construction.

- **Fall Forms**

- The use of Fall Forms to record all falls occurring at obstacles during the cross-country phase has been implemented. Efforts are being made to ensure proper completion of the forms by officials in order to compile the information for submission to the FEI.

- **Safety Studies and Research**

- Pulmonary hemorrhage - Dr. Kent Allen and Dr. Catherine Kohn will be forming a team to examine and investigate pulmonary events as causes of equine fatalities. The USEA will provide funding for necropsies for all equine fatalities that occur during an eventing competition.
- Speed Study – A speed and motion study will be done in order to determine the range of speeds that horses must travel in order to achieve the optimum time at all levels. In addition, this study will track the maximum speed traveled at all levels. This study will relate to both the stress placed on the horse and the overall safety of horse and rider.

- **FEI Eventing Rule Revisions**

- The USEF Eventing Technical Committee has forwarded its comments on the proposed 2009 Revisions to the FEI Eventing Rules to the FEI Eventing Committee, including suggested changes to the FEI Qualifying Criteria.

