

Rule Change Type	Effective Date	Draft Received	Board Action
Extraordinary	9/1/2025	4/24/2025	

Extraordinary Change Reason

Horse Welfare

Rule Change Intent

USEF recently changed the rules addressing horse welfare and is prioritizing education and awareness resources related to the same. The necessity for a uniform rule prohibiting the use of whips on horses in anger or for reprimand is paramount to ensure the humane treatment of our equine partners. Whips, when wielded in aggression or as a punitive measure, can inflict physical pain and psychological distress, undermining the trust and bond between horse and rider. Establishing clear regulations against such practices will foster a culture of respect and kindness, promoting safer and more ethical equestrian sports. This rule will protect horses from unnecessary harm and encourage more compassionate methods of training and discipline.

Proponent Details	Contact Information
USEF Executive Staff	Leslie Mangan
	lmangan@usef.org

Linked Rules	Comments
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American Saddlebred

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 04/30/2025	Draft 1: The committee is in favor of the intent of the rule change, however, they would like more discussion around the word reprimand. They feel maybe the language should read in anger and in an abusive manner.
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Andalusian/Lusitano

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/08/2025	Draft 1: The committee is not in favor of the word "reprimand" in this rule change and feel that it should be changed due to "reprimand" being too subjective and open to interpretation. The committee feels that the whip is good for use as encouragement or an additional aid and that many times there are signs that a horse has had a whip used too forcefully such as welts or marks. The committee suggests verbiage that considers the amount of force used with a whip and "with intent to injure, annoy, or cause discomfort to the horse".
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Arabian

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/05/2025	Draft 1: The committee is in favor of the intent of the rule but would like revisions on the following: Add language about the enforcement of the rule being at the sole discretion of a competition official (identify who makes the final decision). Remove the verbiage "for reprimand" and replace with other verbiage such as "frustration". The committee feels that the word "reprimand" should be removed and potentially a more positive message such as "a whip is to be used for encouragement of forward movement" could be used. The word "reprimand" can be interpreted differently amongst individuals. The committee likes the verbiage on the use of whips found in EV112 as it defines when to use a whip and has less negative verbiage throughout. The committee suggest incorporating some of the language from EV112 into the GR rule.
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Athletes Advisory

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/19/2025	Draft 1: The Committee agrees in principle with the intent of the rule and would approve if the words anger and reprimand are removed and replaced with "in an abusive manner."
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Carriage Pleasure Driving

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/06/2025	Draft 1: The committee is in favor of the intent of the rule change, but believes that an emotion cannot be evaluated objectively, so disagree with the use of the word "anger" in the proposal. They also disagree with the word reprimand being negative - they suggest replacing this with the word "punishment" in the PRC.
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Competition Management

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/19/2025	Draft 1: The Committee agrees with the intent but feels that the word reprimand is not the right word to include in the rule. The committee agrees that the whip should not be used in anger, but could be used for correction of a horse, particularly in cases where safety is a concern, which could be prohibited with the current language. Perhaps the word reprimand could be changed to 'punishment' or removed all together.
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Connemara

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/13/2025

Draft 1: The committee is glad to see the whips rule being aligned with the added ethical treatment of the horse rules, but does not agree with the particular use of the word “reprimand” in the rule, as it can be thought of as punishment or correction, in which this is sometimes needed when training a horse, just not in excess or out of a person’s anger. The word reprimand is too broad for use in the rule. The committee prefers the verbiage used within the rule change’s intent better – “wielded in aggression or as a punitive measure”. The committee also prefers Eventing’s latest addition to their whip rules regarding the whip is to be used in encouragement to move forward and forward motion.

Council - Intl Discipline

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/27/2025

Draft 1: The IDC agrees with the intent and would recommend approval if the word “reprimand” is changed to “punishment.”

Council - Member Services

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/27/2025

Draft 1: The Council agrees with the proposal’s intent and would recommend approval if the word “reprimand” is changed to “punishment:” “If whips are allowed, they must be no longer than 6’ including the snapper or lash and must never be used in anger or for punishment.”

Council - Natl Breed & Discipline

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/19/2025

Draft 1: The Council agreed with the intent of the rule change but was not in favor of using reprimand. They felt reprimand was not the most appropriate word and felt that the verbiage used in the intent “wielded in aggression or as a punitive manner” was more appropriate.

Dressage

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/13/2025

Draft 1: We support in principle, but recommended the removal of the language 'or for reprimand'. In extreme circumstances, a whip might be necessary for the safety and protection of humans or another horse.

Driving

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 05/06/2025

Endurance

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/13/2025

Draft 1: The ESC would approve this rule change proposal if the wording of "anger or for reprimand" be adjusted to "anger or as punishment".

Eventing

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 05/20/2025

Friesian

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/14/2025

Draft 1: The committee questions the use of the verbiage “anger” and “reprimand” in this rule as they are not sure how each word is to be classified; how does one classify that the whip’s use was in anger or reprimand? The committee feels that the whip can be used for safety reasons that some may view as excessive and is very often used in aid for the correction of a horse for an undesired behavior.

Hackney

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/12/2025

Draft 1: The committee agrees with the intent but is not in favor of tissue being included in the sample listings. Tissue implies that biopsies could be taken. The committee also requested that further clarification be added to the rule to include that hair sampling would not be used to track previous history of drugs given.

Human and Equine, Safety & Welfare

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/19/2025

Draft 1: The Committee agrees with the intent but feels that the word reprimand is not the right word to include in the rule. The committee agrees that the whip should not be used in anger, but could be used for correction of a horse, particularly in cases where safety is a concern. The Committee would approve if the word 'reprimand' was removed, or if changed to 'punishment'.

Jumper

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/13/2025

Draft 1: The JSC suggests ending the sentence with "...must never be used in anger." Otherwise, where do you draw the line between correcting a behavior and a reprimand.

Licensed Officials

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/12/2025

Draft 1: The LOC does believe that the appropriate use of a whip is needed and agrees that the language should include "never be used in anger." The Committee is confident that officials can identify when an exhibitor may be punishing a horse in anger. However, the Committee discussed that the correct purpose of a whip is to provide a reprimand if the situation warrants it. The Committee recommends adjusting the "reprimand" language to explain the intention of the use of the whip is to avoid excessive punishment. It may also be helpful to articulate the proper use of the whip so members can distinguish between proper and improper or excessive use.

Morgan

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/08/2025

Draft 1: The committee does not agree with the use of the word “reprimand” in this rule and feels that it should be changed, as “reprimand” is open to individual interpretation and there may be circumstances where the need for reprimand is warranted due to a safety issue.

National Hunter Committee

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/05/2025

Draft 1: The committee did not agree with the use of the word 'reprimand' for this rule change proposal, as they mentioned the use of a whip as a training aid or for discipline if needed. The committee noted that horses are large and unpredictable animals, and the use of a whip for reprimand is necessary at times. In addition, the committee did not agree with the language 'in anger OR for reprimand', noting that anger cannot always be determined by visual observation, and the term OR did not fit in this rule change proposal.

National Show Horse

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/07/2025

Draft 1: The committee is in favor of the intent of the rule but would like revisions to the verbiage "reprimand", as the committee feels that this word is open to interpretation differently amongst individuals and the language could be more positive in a productive, forward, and progressive way. The committee suggests changing the verbiage to "frustration" or "abuse". Also, the committee is in favor of language regarding the usage of whips found in EV112.3 if adapted in a more generic way since it would be a GR rule applying to all breeds and disciplines.

Paso Fino

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 05/15/2025

Roadster

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/12/2025

Draft 1: The committee is in favor of the intent but would like reprimand to be reconsidered. Whips are to be used as an aid and reprimand is another word for correction. The committee believes that if a whip is used inappropriately, it would already be covered by GR838.

Saddle Seat Eq

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 04/28/2025

Draft 1: The committee is in favor of the intent of the rule change, however, they would like more discussion around the word reprimand. They feel maybe the language should read anger and reprimand versus or.

Shetland

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 05/14/2025

USDF

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/15/2025

Draft 1: While we support this RCP in principle, we strongly believe that the second part of the new language (whips must never be used for reprimand) must be deleted from the proposal. While definitely not the norm, there are certain situations and circumstances when, to protect the safety of people and other horses, it is both necessary and appropriate to use a whip to reprimand a horse. An example would include during a jog or in-hand breed class when a stallion is striking out causing imminent danger to its handler and/or other people or horses in their vicinity. We believe that just prohibiting the use of a whip in anger will still protect the welfare of the horse as intended by this proposal, while also protecting other people and horses from harm. If the proposal was changed in this fashion, USDF would recommend approval.

USEA

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 05/22/2025

Vaulting

Draft 1: Recommends Approval 05/13/2025

Welsh

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/06/2025

Draft 1: The committee is in favor of the intent of the rule change, however, they feel different verbiage should be considered. Handling colts on the ground can be dangerous and they may need to be reprimanded for the safety of the handler. Anger is an emotion and can be read various ways and hard to prove.

Western Committee

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/08/2025

Draft 1: The committee agrees with the intent of the rule change, but feels that a "reprimand" isn't necessarily negative, and should be removed from the proposal, leaving the language as "should never be used in anger".

Western Dressage

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 05/14/2025

Draft 1: The committee does not like the current verbiage for this change. They must prefer the language as written in the EV chapter, which clearly defines appropriate use, time, and placement.

GR803 Use of Whips

No item may be used inside or outside the ring while showing a horse except one whip per handler. If whips are allowed, they must be no longer than 6' including the snapper or lash ***and must never be used in anger or for reprimand.*** No appendages of any kind are permitted. One lunging whip is permitted only when lunging. Some breed and/or disciplines may have use of whip division rules that depart from this rule and as such, the division rule governs. (GR151.1)