

Rule Change Type	Effective Date	Draft Received	Board Action
Standard	12/1/2025	1/31/2025	

Rule Change Intent

Currently only "unsafe use" of cell phones/electronic devices while mounted is prohibited in a designated schooling/exercise area, and while lungeing hunters and jumpers (this stipulation is missing for equitation horses).

1.
  - 1.
  2. The implication is that use of cell phones/electronic devices while mounted can be "safe" in a schooling area.
2.
  - 1.
  2. The wording "As determined by the competition steward in their sole discretion" appears to assume that a show steward will always and immediately be available to observe, assess, and be knowledgeable enough to make a determination as to whether any particular "use" situation is safe or unsafe in a schooling area. If the steward's opinion is that such use is safe and allowable for one exhibitor, does it automatically apply to another, and/or to all exhibitors at a show? At all times or only sometimes? Will a steward be held liable if a situation nonetheless develops, escalates, and an accident occurs? Is USEF protected from liability because the wording of the rule places sole responsibility for making the determination regarding safety on the steward? Should a USEF Steward (or CSS) be responsible for making such a determination in the first place, given the nature of horses and the variety of rider levels in a schooling area? Should "advanced" or adult riders be permitted to engage in such use, while "lower level" or junior riders are not? Can a Steward or a CSS (or anyone) know that even a quiet schooling area will automatically make "distracted riding" a safe practice?
3.
  - 1.
  2. Further, although a decision made regarding rules by whomever (CSS or Steward) is supervising a warm-up area is meant to be final, when officials (from day to day at one show, or from week to week at different shows) hold different views about what may or may not be "safe use," confusion results. This is only exacerbated when exhibitors question a decision pertaining to such use and the rules are examined for clarity, since the rules as written are not completely clear on this point.
4.
  - 1.
  2. Differences in wording between rules regarding the use of cell phones/electronic devices and whose decisions are final in a schooling area (see [EQ106.7e and EQ114.3] HU Appendix A, 5.a) [JP103.8 and JP103.9]) allow for such a conflict of views to exist between officials at one show (ie Steward/CSS or multiple stewards and/or CSSs), and from show to show. This possible conflict and the confusion it can cause exhibitors ("The steward last week / this morning said it was ok!") should be eliminated.
- 5.

Proponent Details	Contact Information
Mary O'Connor	Mary O'Connor InnerBayLLC@gmail.com
Linked Rules	Comments

Arabian	
Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/02/2024	Draft 1: The Committee is very strongly against this rule change proposal, as they feel that phones are vital for emergency communications, quiet coaching through walkies or electronic communication devices are helpful, and prohibiting the use of phones would risk the safety of both horse and rider. Who and how would this rule be enforced, especially considering it would only apply to Hunt Seat Equitation riders and competitions do not restrict where HU EQ riders are to warm-up?
Council - Natl Breed & Discipline	

Friesian	
Draft 1: No Action 10/02/2024	Draft 1: The Committee feels that potentially prohibiting only cell phones and not all electronic devices could be acceptable, since it can be hard to communicate with riders across a large warm-up arena with all the noise and commotion. The Committee also is unsure of this change due to the potential of similar rule changes moving into other EQ divisions and breed/disciplines.

Human and Equine, Safety & Welfare

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/16/2024

Draft 1: The committee recognizes that phones are now used to run training operations/barns at horse shows, and to coordinate schedules at horse shows. The committee feels that the stewards/TDs should be responsible for enforcing safe use of devices and it should be in their discretion. The committee recommends including enhanced training in the steward/TD training materials regarding this matter, rather than prohibiting the use of these devices.

Licensed Officials

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/09/2024

Draft 1: The committee feels this is not an area they should regulate or control.

Morgan

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/16/2024

National Hunter Committee

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/02/2024

Draft 1: The committee noted that cell phones are necessary for communication at competitions, and that the current rule suffices.

National Show Horse

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 10/02/2024

Natl Breed & Disciplines Council - Advisory

USHJA

Draft 1: Recommends Disapproval 12/12/2024

Draft 1: Too restrictive. It is in capable hands with the stewards, and this removes steward or schooling supervisors' discretion which we feel is important.

## EQ106 Appointments

### 7. Electronic Communication Devices.

[...]

~~e. The unsafe use of electronic devices, as determined by the competition steward in their sole discretion, including cell phones while mounted is prohibited in all areas designated for schooling and exercise, and while lungeing **lunging** horses on competition grounds. The unsafe use of cell phones and other electronic devices, as determined by the competition Steward in their sole discretion, is prohibited anywhere on competition grounds. The use of electronic devices, including cell phones, is prohibited while mounted in active schooling and exercise areas, and while lunging horses on competition grounds. Earphone(s) and Earbud(s) are prohibited in all areas designated for mounted schooling & exercise.~~  
Earphone(s)/Earbud(s) are prohibited in all areas designated for schooling and exercise.

## EQ114 Schooling Requirements

1. Schooling Rules for all equitation classes will follow USEF Jumper Schooling Rules (see JP Appendix A) EXCEPT that Swedish Oxers (maximum 12" difference), ground lines on both sides of an oxer, tarps, coolers, and liverpools are acceptable.
2. The use of FEI approved safety cups is mandatory in all warm-up/schooling areas.
- ~~3. The unsafe use of electronic devices, as determined by the competition steward in their sole discretion, including cell phones while mounted is prohibited in all areas designated for schooling and exercise, and while lunging horses on competition grounds. Earphone(s)/Earbud(s) are prohibited in all areas designated for schooling and exercise. The unsafe use of cell phones and other electronic devices, as determined by the competition Steward in their sole discretion, is prohibited anywhere on competition grounds. The use of electronic devices, including cell phones, is prohibited while mounted in active schooling and exercise areas, and while lunging horses on competition grounds. Earphone(s) and Earbud(s) are prohibited in all areas designated for mounted schooling & exercise.~~

## Appendix A. USEF Hunter Schooling Rules

~~8. The unsafe use of electronic devices, as determined by the competition steward in their sole discretion, including cell phones, while mounted is prohibited in all areas designated for schooling and exercise, and while lungeing **lunging** horses on competition grounds. Earphone(s)/Earbud(s) are prohibited in areas designated for schooling and exercise. The unsafe use of cell phones and other electronic devices, as determined by the competition Steward in their sole discretion, is prohibited anywhere on competition grounds. The use of electronic devices, including cell phones, is prohibited while mounted in active schooling and exercise areas, and while lunging horses on competition grounds. Earphone(s) and Earbud(s) are prohibited in all areas designated for mounted schooling & exercise.~~

## JP103 Schooling

~~7. The unsafe use of electronic devices, as determined by the competition steward in their sole discretion, including cell phones while mounted is prohibited in all areas designated for schooling and exercise, and while lungeing **lunging** horses on competition grounds. Earphone(s)/Earbud(s) are prohibited in all areas designated for schooling and exercise. The unsafe use of cell phones and other electronic devices, as determined by the competition Steward in their sole discretion, is prohibited anywhere on competition grounds. The use of electronic devices, including cell phones, is prohibited while mounted in active schooling and exercise areas, and while lunging horses on competition grounds. Earphone(s) and Earbud(s) are prohibited in all areas designated for mounted schooling & exercise.~~