

Compliance Department FAQs

Why was a Compliance Department formed?

The Compliance Department was formed in 2017 to evaluate competitions for compliance with rules and standards to safeguard horse and human safety and welfare at competition facilities across the United States. In collaboration with competition organizers, and Stewards and TDs, the Department helps to fulfill the USEF's mission by supporting competitions which provide a positive experience for members and their horses.

How does the Compliance Department work with organizers and Officials?

One of the ways the Department does this is through conducting competition site inspections. The Department reaches out to the organizer before, during, and after these visits. Compliance staff assess rules compliance and competition standards while they are at the show and communicate what they find to the organizer and the steward or TD. This work enables the Compliance Department to suggest improvements and required changes for the organizer to implement to meet the expectations for a positive and safe competition environment for members and their horses.

How does the Compliance Department decide which competitions to inspect?

The decision to conduct an on-site assessment is determined through a holistic review of USEF-licensed competitions, including assessment of Steward and TD reports, member evaluations, and discussions with USEF staff. Staff resources and time also dictate which competitions we evaluate. The Compliance team also follow up on previous competition assessments to verify that the competition has implemented any previous required improvements.

What does the Compliance Representative look for during an onsite inspection?

The Compliance Representative assigned to the competition checks into issues that previously have been communicated through Officials' reports or received Members' Competition Evaluations. Issues may include alleged rule violations or concerns with facility maintenance, management, stabling, footing, operations, or other fairness or safety concerns.

What does the Compliance Representative do while assessing a competition?

After notifying the organizer they will be conducting an assessment, a Compliance Representative attends the show. Each compliance visit is different, but in general, the team member meets with the organizer and the Steward or TD upon arrival at the facility, followed by an assessment of all aspects of the venue. These tours, usually done alone, are helpful because they allow the opportunity to talk directly with participants, trainers, competition staff, and other officials. As noted above, the Compliance assessment concludes with a review of the findings with the organizer and the Steward/TD, including positives as well as any issues or concerns that were identified.

How are competitions assessed?

The assessment is based on USEF General Rules and discipline-specific chapters and are intended to provide a clear understanding of whether the competition meets or does not meet the expectation for the USEF license granted to the competition. The assessment will also include relevant feedback provided by members at the show.

What happens after a Compliance competition visit?

After concluding the visit, the Compliance Representative drafts a report. The report will note identified deficiencies, as well as areas where the competition exceeded expectations. This information is recorded in USEF's database and submitted to the CEO for his review. A letter is sent to the organizer after the assessment that captures the overall content of the report requiring action to improve, or acknowledging areas that may exceed expectations.

What happens if the issues identified at the competition are not addressed?

The Compliance Department's goal is to work collaboratively with the organizer. The Department suggests improvements to the organizer, as well as improvements which are required. It's important to note that if safety concerns or recurring problems are not addressed to the satisfaction of USEF, USEF's CEO has the authority to place conditions upon a license and could ultimately, revoke the competition's license. Additionally, the competition may be referred to the Regulations Department for a hearing. The decision of any penalty or possible censure is at the discretion of the Hearing Committee.