



ABHA CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE WELFARE OF THE HORSE

1. GENERAL WELFARE:

- a) Good Horse management Stabling and feeding must be compatible with the best Horse management practices. Clean and good quality forage, feed and water must always be available.
- b) Training methods Horses must only undergo training that matches their physical capabilities and level of maturity for their respective disciplines. They must not be subjected to methods which are abusive or cause fear.
- c) Farriery and tack - Foot care and shoeing must be of a high standard. Tack must be designed and fitted to avoid the risk of pain or injury.
- d) Transport During transportation, Horses must be fully protected against injuries and other health risks. Vehicles must be safe, well ventilated, maintained to a high standard, disinfected regularly and driven by competent personnel. Competent handlers must always be available to manage the Horses.
- e) Transit All journeys must be planned carefully, and Horses allowed regular rest periods with access to food and water.

2. FITNESS TO COMPETE:

- a) Fitness and competence Participation in Competition must be restricted to fit Horses and Athletes of proven competence. Horses must be allowed suitable rest period between training and competitions; additional rest periods should be allowed following travelling.
- b) Health status - No Horse deemed unfit to compete may compete or continue to compete, veterinary advice must be sought whenever there is any doubt – the expense of the owner/rider.
- c) Veterinary Treatment - After any veterinary treatment, sufficient time must be allowed for full recovery before Competition and also if your horse has been vetted out of an event a vet certificate must be presented prior to your next event clearing your horse of injury that they were vetted out on.
- d) Surgical procedures - Any surgical procedures that threaten a competing Horse's welfare or the safety of other Horses and/or Athletes must not be allowed.
- e) Pregnant/recently foaled mares must not compete after their fourth month of pregnancy or with foal at foot.
- f) Misuse of aids - Abuse of a Horse using natural riding aids or artificial aids (e.g. whips, spurs, etc.) will not be tolerated as per the ABHA Rule book.

3. EVENTS MUST NOT PREJUDICE HORSE WELFARE:

- a) Competition areas - Horses must be trained and compete on suitable and safe surfaces. All obstacles and competition conditions must be designed with the safety of the Horse in mind.
- b) Ground surfaces - All ground surfaces on which Horses Walk, train or compete must be designed and maintained to reduce factors that could lead to injury.
- c) Extreme weather - Competitions must not take place in extreme weather conditions that may compromise welfare or safety of the Horse. Provision must be made for cooling conditions and equipment for Horses after competing.
- d) Stabling at Events Stables must be safe, hygienic, comfortable, well-ventilated and of sufficient size for the type and disposition of the Horse. Washing-down areas and water must always be available.

4. HUMANE TREATMENT OF HORSES:

- a) If a Horse is injured or exhausted during a Competition, the Athlete must stop competing.
- b) Injured Horses must be given full supportive treatment before being transported.
- c) Competition injuries - The incidence of injuries sustained in Competition should be monitored. Ground surface conditions, frequency of Competitions and any other risk factors should be examined carefully to indicate ways to minimise injuries.
- d) Euthanasia If injuries are sufficiently severe, a Horse may need to be euthanised on humane grounds by a veterinarian as soon as possible, with the sole aim of minimising suffering.
- e) Retirement Horses must be treated sympathetically and humanely when they retire from Competition.

5. EDUCATION:

The ABHA urges all those involved in equestrian sport to attain the highest possible levels of education in areas of expertise relevant to the care and management of the Competition Horse. This Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse may be modified from time to time and the views of all are welcomed. Particular attention will be paid to new research findings.