



HORSE COUNCIL
BRITISH COLUMBIA

General Rules 2024

GENERAL RULES

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Horse Council BC (HCBC)
is recognized by the Government of British Columbia as the official
organization for Equestrian Sport in BC.

Every eventuality cannot be provided for in these rules.

It is the duty of the officials and the competition management to make informed decisions in a fair and sporting spirit, approaching as near as possible the intention of these rules, and in doing so protecting the reputation of the sport and the welfare of the horse.

All Competition Organizers hosting HCBC sanctioned competitions, should be familiar with the HCBC rules and policies and should have copies available for the use of exhibitors, parents, volunteers and officials. At no time are Equestrian Canada Rules to be used at a Provincially sanctioned competition.

The HCBC Rules are reviewed annually and posted on the HCBC website. Submissions for recommended rule changes will be considered until October 1st annually and reviewed for inclusion to the next years' rule book.

Aims Goals and Objectives

To ensure that Competition Organizers have the tools and support they need to operate within the recognized sport framework, follow current safety rules and guidelines and be aware of the risk management that is necessary and of the utmost importance for hosting a well-planned, successful competition.

To provide HCBC sanctioned competitions the support and governance of the current Horse Council BC Rule Book.

To develop, grow and retain a deep pool of well-educated and knowledgeable officials.

To capture the activity that demonstrates the value of Equestrian Sport to government at all levels.

To provide, through education, participation in a quality structured, grass roots competition system and a well-planned development pathway, a feeder system that will grow and strengthen the development of the discipline sports and equestrian athletes.

To align with Long Term Equestrian Development (LTED)

Horse Council BC welcomes and encourages all grass roots and entry level competition organizers to sanction their show with HCBC. By doing so the equestrian sport community in BC can work together to ensure a fun, affordable environment within a fair playing field that will aide towards the growth and success of Equestrian Sport in BC.

HORSE WELFARE STATEMENT

Horse Council BC members are responsible for the well-being and humane treatment of any equine entrusted to their care. Every horse at an HCBC approved event shall, at all times, be treated humanely and with dignity, respect, and compassion. The welfare of the horse is paramount. Any inhumane treatment or the abuse of a horse by any person at an approved HCBC show is forbidden. The obligation and responsibility to handle horses you own, use or that are in your care, with skill and compassion ensuring, regardless of value that they are not subjected to abuse, neglect or mistreatment. Horses used in competition, spectator events, shows, or exhibitions must not be subjected to unscrupulous use of medications, non-nutritive agents, equipment or procedures that may alter performance, appearance or natural function.

The standard by which conduct or treatment will be measured is that which a person who is informed and experienced in generally accepted equine training and competition practices would determine to be neither cruel, abusive, nor inhumane.

It is recommended that competition management publish a statement in their show program regarding the commitment to humane treatment of horses with the penalties to be imposed for confirmed abuse of horses at a recognized event.

Bio Security

It is strongly recommended that horses be up to date on vaccinations and in good health to perform.

Vaccinations offer horses protection from some infectious diseases, but do not eliminate disease risk. Vaccination guidelines vary by region. This should be taken into consideration when weighing the risk for exposure. While there are costs associated with vaccines, those costs are generally much lower than the costs associated with an infectious disease.

Show management has the right and duty to demand removal of a horse from the grounds if it is deemed unfit to compete. Competition management may enforce vaccination requirements for their competition or venue. A request for supporting documentation confirming a horse's compliance with mandatory vaccination requirements is an acceptable condition of entry.

For more information on bio security practice please visit <https://hcbc.ca/equine-welfare/biosecurity/>

HELMET POLICY

Horse Council BC (HCBC) strongly recommends that anyone riding or driving a horse should wear ASTM/SEI/BSI/BS EN; EN; AS/NZS; CE VGI approved protective headgear, specifically designed for equestrian activities. ASTM (American Society for Testing Materials); SEI (Safety Equipment Institute, Inc.); BSI/BS EN (British Standards Institution); EN (European Union Standards); AS/NZS (Australian/New Zealand Standards); or CE VG1 01.040 2014-12 (provided they are BSI Kitemarked).

The helmet should be properly fitted with safety harness correctly secured, while mounted, riding or driving, ***with the exception for the discipline of vaulting.***

Every time, every ride, all riders all drivers.

Youth competitors must wear properly fitted approved ASTM, SEI, BSI/BS EN, EN, AS/NZS/ or CE VG1 protective headgear, with safety harness correctly secured while mounted on the competition or event grounds and in ALL classes and Performance Divisions.

The wearing of religious headwear will be accepted for adult riders/drivers without penalty. The option to wear an approved helmet with a sports turban is strongly advised.

CONCUSSION POLICY

Resources: For concussion education and awareness resources, please visit the Concussion Awareness page on the HCBC website www.hcbc.ca.

Definition: A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (or TBI), caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way the brain normally works. Concussions can also occur from a fall or a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. All concussions are serious.

Policy Statement: Anyone participating in an activity with horses should understand the signs, symptoms and implications of sustaining a concussion.

It is recommended by health care professionals that anyone presenting symptoms or suspected of sustaining a concussion should cease the activity until they have been evaluated and cleared by medical personnel.

Anyone having contact with, or handling horses is responsible to educate themselves on the prevention and proper management of concussion related injuries.

All Coaches and Instructors recognized by Horse Council BC will be required to participate in concussion awareness training once in every three-year period to maintain current certification status.

LIABILITY

The Horse Council BC (HCBC) Competition Committee, HCBC and co-sponsoring organization, if any, will not be responsible for any accident, injury of horse or person or loss or damage of any article of any kind or nature that may be lost or destroyed or in any way damaged that may occur to, or be caused by, any horse exhibited at a competition.

Each exhibitor, agent or horse owner will be responsible for any injury that may be occasioned to any person, animal or damage to any property while on the competition grounds, by any horse owned, exhibited or in custody or control and shall indemnify and hold harmless HCBC, its officials, staff and Directors individually and collectively, and any co-sponsoring organization, from and against any and all claims, demands, cause of action costs, charges and expenses of every kind or nature whatsoever arising out of, or which may be caused by, or incurred by, reason of the ownership, exhibition, custody or control of any animal exhibited.

HCBC will not be responsible for any financial arrangements between show management, exhibitors, owners, agents, or officials.

All federal, provincial and city laws will be adhered to and shall supersede these rules.

SAFETY

It is essential that every sanctioned competition/event have an emergency action plan in place.

A First Aid kit should be always readily available.

A competition or event must have qualified medical personnel appointed for the duration of the competition who is trained in First Aid Emergency Medical treatment. Qualified Medical personnel are defined as either a:

- Doctor
- Professional emergency personnel, such as EMT or Paramedic
- An adult with recognized and valid First Aid certification who is not competing. This individual may act in some other capacity at the competition providing this does not restrict their availability to all areas on the competition grounds.

It is recommended that the minimum certification required for qualified medical personnel be Standard First Aid Certification.

The facility address, emergency contact name and phone number should be posted at the show office and in other appropriate locations for the benefit of the exhibitors and public at any time.

Emergency Phone Numbers: veterinarian, farrier, hospital name and address should be posted at the show office and in other appropriate locations for the benefit of the exhibitors and public at any time.

It is recommended that all shows arrange for a veterinarian and farrier to be available either on-call or on the show grounds for the duration of the show.

In the event where an accident occurs at an HCBC sanctioned competition or event, Accident Report Forms must be filled out and returned to HCBC. Accident Forms will be emailed to all organizers as part of the sanctioning package, but can be found on the HCBC website at

<https://hcbc.ca/competitions/competition-documents/>

If a competitor suffers a fall in warm-up or during a class, they may be asked to be evaluated by the attending medic. Competitors are solely responsible for ensuring on-site medical assistance takes place. If a competitor refuses evaluation, Competition Management may make the decision to disqualify the competitor from the competition.

ADMINISTRATION

SANCTIONING

Any organization, club, individual or group may apply to Horse Council British Columbia (HCBC) to sanction an entry level competition or event offering any of the disciplines outlined in the HCBC Rule Book. There is no restriction to prize money offered at the competition.

The Person Responsible listed on application must be a current HCBC member and is responsible for the conduct of the competition in accordance with the current Horse Council BC Rule Book.

Organizers must apply through the HCBC/ Horse Sport Pro online event sanctioning portal.

Instructions for Login and links to the online application process can be found on the Competition page of the HCBC website <https://hcbc.ca/competitions/organizers/>

The competition application and all required information must be uploaded through the online system, preferably within a minimum of one month prior to the competition or event date(s).

The competition must be approved before publishing, posting online or circulating the prize list.

All required information, prize list, entry forms and a current, endorsed certificate of insurance must be provided.

Every competition must obtain a certificate of insurance endorsed by the insurance carrier to cover law suits, claims or judgment for bodily injury or property damage sustained by spectators, participants, or others arising out of the use of the show grounds or operation necessary or incidental to the show and naming Horse Council of British Columbia (HCBC) as an additional insured.

All approved competitions will be emailed a Competition Package including a HCBC Certificate of Sanction which is to be printed and displayed in the Competition Office, or other clearly visible location.

The Competition Organizer is required to provide a copy of the approved Competition Prize List to the Official(s).

Competitions or Events should not start earlier than the time listed in prize list or advertised in the schedule.

Competitions sanctioned with another discipline or breed association may apply for dual sanctioning with Horse Council BC for specific divisions. Discipline or Breed Association rules may supersede HCBC rules at a dual sanctioned show in some divisions.

Clubs may include local club rules provided the local rules do not compromise the integrity and safety standards of Horse Council BC sanctioned competition. Any local club rules must be stated clearly in the Prize List and be approved by Horse Council BC during the application process.

SANCTIONING FEES

The fee for sanctioning a competition is \$42.00 per day.

Payment of fees can be processed by credit card through the [HCBC Online Sanctioning Portal](#) or by mailing a cheque to the HCBC office.

Sanction fees are not refundable.

An NSF charge of \$45.00 will be applied for any returned cheques.

PRIZE LIST

All Prize Lists must contain the following disclaimer:

It is the responsibility of the show/event committee, or competition organizers and the facility owners and managers to ensure that all BC Health Authority and WorkSafeBC directives are followed and enforced. Horse Council is not a regulatory body, and it is understood and agreed that sanctioning and approval of a HCBC Provincial competition /event relates to the use of the rule book and approved officials only.

This Competition is a Horse Council BC provincially sanctioned competition and will be governed in accordance with the Horse Council BC Rule Book. Knowledge of the rules is the responsibility of Competition Management, Officials and Competitors.

The Horse Council BC Rule Book, can be found at www.hcbc.ca

<https://hcbc.ca/competitions/competition-documents/>

Neither Horse Council BC, its Board of Directors, organizing committee, staff, volunteers, officials, or employees of the horse show, will be responsible in any way, for damage, injury, or loss to persons, horses or property of exhibitors, spectators, owners, riders, trainers, or grooms. All competitors and owners of horses must be members of Horse Council BC to participate."

Prize Lists must include:

- Date(s), Start Time, Location, Directions
- Official's names
- Name and contact of the person responsible, or competition manager.
- Entry Secretary's name and contact information.
- Type of Competition
- Entry deadline.
- State the competition will be run under the current HCBC rule book.
- HCBC Prizelist Disclaimer
- Any local club rules must be stated clearly in the Prize List and be approved by Horse Council BC during the application process.
- Entry fees per class or division
- Classes numbers and specifications for each class
- Reserve the right to cancel or combine any class that does not have sufficient entries.
- If post entries or day of adds are allowed
- If Hors Concours entries are allowed
- Number of ribbons for each class and if there are trophies and /or prize money.
- Types of Championships or/and Aggregates and how the awards will be determined.
- Any Age Categories where classes will be split.
- Any special ground rules.
- Whether jumping will be held on grass or sand rings.
- Local Hotels and Accommodations with Contact information

If prize money is offered in any classes, the amounts and class entry fee must be specified in the Prizelist. Prize money distribution by total percentage breakdown or dollar amount by placings for each class where prize money is offered must be shown.

The competition's' policy regarding Hors Concours entries (not to be judged) must be clearly stated in the prize list.

PRIZES AND AWARDS

Show management must make the full payment of prize monies as specified in the competition Prize List.

If High Point Awards are to be presented at the competition, the method of tabulating points for such awards is at the discretion of show management and must be stated in the Prize List.

The following schedule of ribbons is recommended:

First Place	Red
Second place	Blue
Third Place	White
Fourth Place	Yellow
Fifth Place	Green
Sixth Place	Pink
Seventh Place	Purple
Eighth Place	Brown
Champion	Red, Blue, White
Reserve Champion	Blue, White, Yellow

The following point scale may be used for tabulating High Point Awards:

# in class	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
1	1							
2	2	1						
3	3	2	1					
4	4	3	2	1				
5	5	4	3	2	1			
6	6	5	4	3	2	1		
7	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
8	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
9 - 15	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
16 - 20	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
21 - 25	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
26 - 30	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5
31 - 35	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6
36 - 40	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7

1.0 GENERAL COMPETITION RULES

1.1 ENTRIES

All exhibitors are required to be current Horse Council BC members when participating in HCBC sanctioned events.

Exception: Lead Line class competitors 6yrs of age and under. Lead Line competitors must be accompanied by an adult holding current HCBC membership.

In the event of failure to sign the entry form, the exhibitors' first entry into the ring shall be deemed in acceptance of these rules.

1.1 a) HORS CONCOURS (H/C) ENTRIES:

Hors Concours entries may be accepted at the discretion of the organizing committee. The competition's policy regarding Hors Concours entries must be clearly stated in the prize list.

Hors Concours entries must pay the same entry fee as regular entries (unless otherwise stated in the prize list) and are subject to the same conditions and rules which apply to regular entries.

Hors Concours entries are not eligible for prizes or awards.

1.1 b) YOUTH ENTRIES

The age limit for a youth competitor is 18 years of age or younger as of January 1st of the current year. A person born on January 1st shall assume the older age as of that date.

Proof of youth's age may be required on entry forms at HCBC sanctioned competitions.

All entry forms for youth exhibitors 18 years of age and under must be signed by parent or legal guardian.

Youth competitors must wear properly fitted approved ASTM, SEI, BSI/BS EN, EN, AS/NZS/ or CE VG1 protective headgear, with safety harness correctly secured at all times while mounted on the competition or event grounds and in ALL classes and Performance Divisions.

Exception: Vaulting

The Youth competitor need not own or lease the horse he or she is competing with to enter any class.

A horse may be entered in any or all youth age divisions, but not more than once in each class. A youth competitor may not show a stallion in any class, regardless of the age or size of the stallion.

1.0 GENERAL COMPETITION RULES

1.2 COMPETITION NUMBERS

Competition numbers will be issued by the Show Secretary to all entries and must be visible at all times while competing.

Competition numbers are available for purchase through the HCBC website <https://store.hcbc.ca/>

1.3 OFFICIALS

Horse Council BC sanctioned competitions should use current, certified Provincial Officials when possible.

Officials with expired status or recognized by another organization may be used, with a guest card, provided they meet the requirements for that discipline as set out by the provincial body responsible for said discipline.

All provincial officials must be current members of Horse Council BC and be listed on the competition or event application. In the event that an official must be substituted, Horse Council BC is to be notified immediately and provided with the name and contact info of the substitute.

It is strongly recommended that for the protection of both the official and the competition management, a written contract be completed between both parties.

Officials should arrive on the competition grounds at least one hour before the first class begins.

The Judge's decision is considered as final in all classes.

Judges should be provided with the Prize List and any tests, courses, or patterns they will be judging at the competition.

Competition management must schedule appropriate breaks for officials.

1.0 GENERAL COMPETITION RULES

1.4 Provincial Rules Officials

The HCBC Provincial Rules Officials may attend provincially sanctioned competitions to offer help and guidance with HCBC rules, assist competition management with the development and rule content in prize lists as well as address questions or concerns arising at a competition. Provincial Rules Officials attendance at competitions will aid to encourage a safe and enjoyable competition experience for both horses and competitors.

Provincial Rules Officials are appointed and assigned by HCBC to competitions as requested by competition management or by the HCBC office.

Provincial Rules Officials (PRO) are governed by the HCBC Officials' Code of Conduct and protocol.

1.5 OFFICIALS PROTOCOL / CONFLICT OF INTEREST

An official shall not discuss with any exhibitor the purchase, sale or lease of a horse during a show at which that Judge is officiating.

An official shall not be an exhibitor, rider, driver, trainer, coach, handler, manager, or conditioner of any horse at any show or event at which they are officiating.

A judge may not act as course designer at the same competition in which he or she is judging.

No horse may be shown under an official that has acted in the capacity as an owner, coach, trainer, agent, or conditioner of the horse, within 30 days prior to the event, 14 days if the official is presiding over a virtual/online event and is not judging entries in person.

The Official must comply with class specifications and rules governing individual classes. Class specifications should be noted and included on all class judge's cards where possible.

Officials are prohibited from using tobacco and/or alcohol products, cellular phones, pagers or electronic communication devices in the arena or judges' booth.

All Officials must dress appropriately and professionally (no jeans, shorts, tank tops, etc.)

1.0 GENERAL COMPETITION RULES

1.6 GUEST CARDS

Uncertified officials may be used at provincial sanctioned competitions under the following conditions.

- Individuals must have extensive experience and knowledge of the discipline being judged and of the current HCBC Rule Book.
 - Uncertified officials may be requested to provide HCBC with a minimum of two references.
 - Guest card application must be completed during the competition approval application process. HCBC will approve a maximum of three guest cards to an uncertified official. Once three guest cards have been issued to an uncertified official, further guest card application for that individual will be subject to a fee of \$25.00 charged to the competition. If the guest carded official is from BC, the Official will be encouraged to participate in the HCBC Officials Program to become certified.
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1.7 SCRIBES

Scribes should arrive at least forty-five (45) minutes before the start of the competition. This will allow for enough time to gather any paperwork, tests, bell, whistle etc and equipment needed from the competition office. Scribes should allow for time to go over any scribing instructions with their judge.

Cell phones (or any other personal electronic device) must be turned off while working in the booth.

All test sheets must be completed in ink. Pencil is not permitted.

It is the duty of the scribe to ensure that the test sheets include the competitor's entry number, class, description, and Judge's signature.

Before the test sheet is handed in for totaling, the scribe must give the test to the Judge for review to ensure all movements have been scored and comments filled in.

Scribes must be appropriately dressed (clean and neat, no cut offs, tank tops, etc.)

1.0 GENERAL COMPETITION RULES

1.8 TEST CALLERS

If a competitor requires a test caller, it is their responsibility to provide one.

Calling the test is limited to reading the movement a maximum of twice without adding anything else which might assist the competitor.

Elimination of the competitor may happen should there be a failure to comply by the caller. The Judge must monitor this.

Permitted dress for a Caller is considered “smart casual”, such as jeans, slacks, mid length shorts. Tank tops, flip flops, short shorts, sandals, etc. are not allowed. Inappropriately dressed callers may not be allowed to call a test.

Callers may not wear two-way personal electronic communication devices, ie. Bluetooth headphones, etc. while calling a test. They may however, read tests from a media device. Exception: Para athletes or athletes with hearing impairment may use a two-way communication device, provided a request for dispensation has been submitted in writing to competition management prior to the competition. If in attendance, the PRO (Provincial Rules Official) and judge must be advised of any dispensation.

Callers must position themselves so as not to obstruct the judge’s view. It is best that they stand at either E or B.

1.9 ELIMINATION

All artificial appliances are prohibited in any class. Any incident in contravention of the HCBC Horse Welfare Statement may at the judge’s discretion result in disqualification of the competitor from participating in the remainder of the competition.

After an entry enters the arena, if either the horse or the exhibitor becomes ill or is injured and cannot continue, the entry shall be eliminated from that class.

All horses must be serviceably sound. Any horse showing lameness, broken wind, or impairment of vision shall be refused an award.

Lack of complying to required appointments for a class will result in elimination of the competitor in that class specifying required appointments.

The judge shall have the authority to eliminate any entry from a class who at their discretion is not under sufficient control and or considered by the judge to be a safety risk.

The judge, and/or competition management, have the authority to eliminate from the competition / event, any exhibitor, owner, or agent, for cruelty to or the abuse of a horse.

Obvious lameness is cause for elimination in all classes. The judge has the sole authority to make this decision, which is final, with no right to appeal or protest.

1.0 GENERAL COMPETITION RULES

1.10 UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

Any unsportsmanlike conduct by an owner, exhibitor, agent, or spectator including but not limited to abuse of one's horse, excessive use of foul language, intoxication anywhere on the grounds of the event, blatant disrespect for any other attendee at the event, or any other detrimental conduct shall jeopardize their right to further exhibit at the competition.

At any time, the judge, and/or competition management, may issue a first warning to any exhibitor, owner, or agent for any unsportsmanlike conduct. Upon failure to comply with this warning, the exhibitor, owner, agent, or spectator shall be disqualified from any further participation at the competition.

Any disqualification from a class or sanctioned competition for unsportsmanlike conduct by any person may be reviewed by the disciplinary committee of HCBC and or applicable breed or discipline association.

No points or awards may be given to any person or person's horses if they are disqualified from a sanctioned competition or event for any unsportsmanlike conduct.

1.11 Protests

Protests for any violation of HCBC competition /event rules at any HCBC sanctioned competition/event may be filed by an exhibitor, owner, trainer, spectator and or parent of a youth exhibitor at that show.

Inquiries must be made through a member of the competition committee regarding a decision. Should the competitor not be satisfied with the result of the inquiry, an official protest must be lodged to competition management. At no time may the judge be approached directly unless the competition specifically prints an exception to this policy. In the event contact with the judge is permitted, at no time will abusive or confrontational language or gesturing be tolerated, under penalty of elimination and possible further disciplinary action initiated.

The person lodging the protest shall do so in writing within 12 hours of the time of the cause of the protest and submit the protest to the competition management.

No protest will be recognized unless it is accompanied by a deposit of \$100.00 in cash, which shall be forfeited if the protest is not sustained.

Neither HCBC nor any organizing committee of the competition will recognize any protest that is not in writing, not signed, or not accompanied by the protest fee.

Any protest shall be adjudicated by a Protest Committee, consisting of two competition officials not involved in the dispute and a committee representative also not involved in the dispute.

1.0 GENERAL COMPETITION RULES

1.11 Protests (cont'd)

An official of the competition /event, a director of HCBC, or Provincial Rules Official may file a claim at any HCBC sanctioned competition /event to either the competition committee or the Board of Directors of HCBC for any violation of HCBC recognized event rules.

The judge's decision representing his or her individual preference may not be protested unless it is in clear violation of the recognized event rules. The judge's decision will be considered final.

1.9 Procedure

Upon receiving a protest or a dispute, the Protest Committee shall promptly hold a hearing and obtain from any witnesses, all necessary information and evidence.

All persons directly involved and concerned shall be immediately notified and given opportunity to attend a hearing.

The Protest Committee shall then adjudicate the issue impartially, make effective its decision upon the parties of interest and report its decision to the parties of interest. A report of the decision shall also be given to the HCBC Competition Manager

1.10 Appeals

An appeal of a Protest Committee's decision may be made to the HCBC Officer specializing in Competition and Sport.

Appeals must be made in writing within 20 days of the date of the Protest Committee's decision and must be accompanied by an appeal fee of \$300.00 payable to Horse Council BC.

The hearing on the appeal shall be heard within a 30-day period from date of filing.

The Appeal Committee of the Board of Directors of HCBC shall consist of two members of the HCBC Board plus one member from the competition organizing committee.

Shows sanctioned under NRHA and or WCRA will follow their respective rules and policies regarding protests / appeals.

The competition organizing committee of a competition at which a protest is lodged and upheld, must hold all awards, points and prize money for the protested classes in escrow for a placed horse and all following horses, until after a 20-day appeal deadline has passed.

If no appeal is filed, then such awards, points and/or prize money will be awarded at the end of the appeal deadline.