

ARABIAN HORSE ASSOCIATION

Electronic Communications Policy for Judges, Stewards, and Technical Delegates

Social media and networking sites, as well as emailing and texting, (collectively referred to herein as “Electronic Communications”) are common and popular means by which people communicate. However, there are unintended consequences if Electronic Communications are used improperly. Because of their unique standing, AHA-approved judges and stewards, as well as other officials at AHA approved shows (collectively referred to herein as “Show Officials”) need to be particularly careful when using these means of communication. This Policy is established to set guidelines and expectations for AHA-approved Show Officials who engage in Electronic Communications. Additionally, as a USEF licensed official, the USEF Social Media Policy for Licensed Officials also applies.

1. Consider Electronic Communications as public at all times – even if created with private intentions. If you are going to use social media in any form, assume your communication may be read by anyone, including other Show Officials, exhibitors, owners and trainers, at any time.
2. You, as an AHA Show Official, represent the equine judging industry, AHA, your fellow Show Officials and show event officials. Promote judging and AHA shows in a positive light with a general feeling of pride and professionalism. Instill confidence among exhibitors and the public in the AHA judging and Show Official program, avoiding any action conducive to discrediting it.
3. Be aware and cautious when communicating on controversial issues that might involve AHA without knowing where AHA stands on the issue. Contact AHA directly if you have questions and verify information before passing it along.
4. Do not use Electronic Communications to criticize the policies of AHA or its affiliates, assigning practices, etc. If you have a concern for AHA, please contact AHA directly to discuss before resorting to Electronic Communications to voice concerns. Again, as a Show Official, you should always be a positive representative of AHA.
5. Do not make negative comments regarding the performance or ability of other AHA Show Officials, exhibitors, trainers, owners or show management.
6. Do not post comments regarding decisions made by other Show Officials.
7. Always be cognizant of your posts in that your colleagues who have judged/officiated or worked with you and/or your horse at a show will see your post as you may be judging/officiating and/or working with them at a subsequent horse show.
8. Never use social media to solicit shows to work, although an announcement of a promotion or new license is acceptable. A short thank you to a show management AFTER you judge a competition is also acceptable.
9. Do not post details about your show assignments or those of other Show Officials prior to a competition. If someone wants to find out who is going to be officiating at a show, they should go through official channels, not your post.
10. Do not post anything relating to the shows you have officiated or will officiate that calls your objectivity into question.
11. While judging or officiating an AHA-approved show, never be on any social media or electronically communicating with participants the day prior to or during the event. During this time period, do not make posts or even “like” posts, especially of horses or participants you may be or have been judging/officiating or observing.
12. Remember, accountability, and integrity should always be your guiding principles. Jeopardizing your impartiality or professionalism should never be a part of your actions or posts.

Violations of this policy will be handled by the Judges and Stewards Commissioner and the Commissioner’s Review Panel. Consequences for violations may range from a reprimand and up to possible suspension of judging/officiating privileges for such time as decided by the AHA Judges and Stewards Commissioner. This decision shall be based on the severity of the action and/or frequency of violations.

Thank you for keeping this policy in mind and for your commitment and agreement to the high standards expected of you as an AHA-approved Show Official.

AGREED:

Show Official’s Printed Name

Role (Judge/Steward/TD)

AHA Member #

Show Official’s Signature

Date