



National Open Horse Show Association

Official Handbook for 2026

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Note: Text that is underlined has been added/updated. Text that is denoted with a strikethrough has been removed.

BYLAWS OF NATIONAL OPEN HORSE SHOW ASSOCIATION

ARTICLE I - Name and Mission Statement

Section 1. This corporation shall be known as the National Open Horse Show Association, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Snaffle Bit Association (NSBA).

Section 2. To foster growth in the Open Horse Show community through various programs where every activity benefits members on the regional and national levels.

Section 3. The purpose for which the Corporation is formed for not-for-profit purposes permitted to be exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(5) of the United States Internal Revenue Code, as may be amended from time to time or any corresponding equivalent provision of any future code (the "code").

Specifically, the purpose of the National Open Horse Show Association is to promote cooperation amongst all horse show clubs and exhibitors; to improve the open horse show community through programs, events, and shows and to encourage the use of standard rules for holding and judging open horse shows, maintain records of open horse show results and reward participants regionally and nationally.

Section 4. All of the assets and the earnings of the corporation shall be used for the purposes within the meaning of the code. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to be benefit of or be distributable to any member, director, officer, or any other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth herein.

ARTICLE II - Members

Section 1. There will be one class of ADULT membership and each regular member will have one vote. The vote of regular members will not be transferable by proxies or otherwise. There will be one class of YOUTH membership. Youth members shall be for those persons eighteen (18) years of age and under on January 1 of the current year. Youth members will have all rights and privileges of Adult members, except the right to vote. A non-voting HONORARY membership may be bestowed on any person or business at the discretion of the Board of Directors. All persons, firms, partnerships, ranches, farms and organizations interested in the philosophy and ideals of the Association may become members.

Section 2. Adult members and Youth members shall pay those dues that from time to time shall be determined by the Board of Directors. Said dues shall become due on an annual calendar year. Each member shall receive an annual membership card upon payment of his/her dues and such membership card shall be non-transferable. The membership card shall be in the form prescribed by the Board of Directors and each member, by accepting the membership card, shall be deemed to have agreed to comply with all provisions of the Bylaws and other rules and regulations of the Association.

ARTICLE III - Membership Meetings

Section 1. The annual meeting of the membership of this Association shall be held at a place and date determined by the Board of Directors. This shall be published in the National Open Horse Show Association newsletter or other such generally circulated publication. As it shall be deemed adequate by the Board of Directors to give reasonable notice to such membership.

Section 2. Special meetings of the membership may be called by a majority of the Board of Directors or by the President. Notice of the time and place of the holding of any such special meeting of the membership shall be sent by regular mail to all members at the address indicated in the Association records at least ten (10) days prior to such meeting.

Section 3. The number of voting members of the Association required to constitute a quorum to conduct business in any meeting shall be as determined from time to time by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IV - Officers

Section 1. The officers of this Association shall consist of a President, President-Elect, two Vice Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer. The officers, except the President, shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Association and shall serve until the close of the next annual meeting or until their successors are duly elected or until they are replaced for cause by majority vote of the Board of Directors.

Section 2. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Association and at the meeting of the Board of Directors. He/she shall appoint all committees and committee chairmen. The President, during his/her term of office, may create certain positions, including but not limited to Parliamentarian and Historian, that he/she may deem necessary to advise the office of President or the Board of Directors. Said appointments will run concurrently with his/her term as President. He/she shall perform

such duties and exercise such other powers as are usually incident to such office. The President is an ex-officio member of all committees.

Section 3. The President-Elect shall perform the duties of the President whenever the President is absent from any meeting.

Section 4. The Vice President shall have such duties and responsibilities as assigned by the President or Board of Directors.

Section 5. The Secretary shall keep and safeguard a complete and accurate record of all proceedings of the Association, its Board of Directors, and the standing committee. He/she shall have possession of their records, attend to the proper publication of all reports, conduct official correspondence, attest documents, and perform such other duties as are usual to such office or as may be required by this Association. The secretary shall also issue notice on call to the Board of Directors and members, keep the membership roll, issue membership cards, and conduct, supervise, count, and record the balloting of all elections.

Section 6. The Treasurer shall oversee the disbursement of the funds of the Association in Payment of just demands against the Association, taking proper vouchers for such disbursement. He/she shall render to the annual meeting of the Association, the Executive Committee and Board of Directors, Finance Committee, from time to time as may be required of him/her, an accounting of all his/her transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the association. Written financial statements for the calendar year shall be presented to the membership at each annual meeting.

Section 7. The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President and Vice President of the Association. This committee will serve as a planning committee to allow for a smoother flow of business and goals between incoming and outgoing Presidents. Recommendations from the Executive Committee will be brought before the Board of Directors for final review and approval.

Section 8. The Executive Director is the chief operating officer of NOHSA and pursuant to the direction of the Board of Directors, shall implement the actions, decisions and directions of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. The Executive Director shall be the custodian for the safekeeping of all documents and records and authority of such. He/she shall collect all monies due and turn the records over to the Treasurer. He/she shall be the ex-officio secretary of all standing committees appointed by the President. He/she shall make a

report of his/her office to the Board of Directors when demanded and to the annual membership meeting and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors from time to time.

ARTICLE V - Board of Directors

Section 1. The management of the affairs, property, business, and control of policy is vested in the Board of Directors.

Section 2. The Board of Directors of this Association shall consist of the current officers, the current sitting National Snaffle Bit Association President, and up to twelve (12) additional members appointed by the President and confirmed by a majority of the current officers. The members will have revolving terms rotating in 3 sets of 3-year cycles.

Section 3. The Board of Directors will meet annually to conduct business deemed necessary for the Association. Other meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the President or five (5) members of said Board of Directors on at least one (1) month prior to written notice delivered by regular mail or facsimile.

Section 4. Four (4) members shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Board of Directors. A majority of such quorum may decide any business that comes before this meeting.

Section 5. Each member of the Board of Directors shall accept the responsibility of attending all meetings. In the event that a member fails to attend two (2) consecutive meetings, such member shall be removed from the Board of Directors.

Section 6. Any vacancy on the Board of Directors shall be filled by the President and confirmed by a majority of the current officers.

Section 7. "Vote by mail or electronic mail" procedure may be used by the Board of Directors. A copy of the statement or motion from the Association shall be sent to each member and with "approval" or "disapproval" written and signed by the member. It must be returned to the Association office within five (5) days. The results of the voting will be tabulated and reported to the members within five (5) days.

- a) The results of voting, when properly conducted, shall have the same force and as effect though resulting from a Board of Directors meeting.

Section 8. The President shall vote only in the event of a tie vote of those members voting.

Section 9. Indemnification: National Open Horse Show Association shall indemnify and hold harmless any officer, director, director at large, employee, their personal representatives and heirs, against reasonable legal expenses, judgment and expenses of settlement which NOHSA previously approves, actually and reasonably incurred in connection with an actual or threatened legal proceeding. If such person acted legally, in good faith and was duly authorized to act on behalf of NOHSA in the transaction from which legal liability arose which was official NOHSA business (except in relation to matters as to which he/she shall have been guilty of negligence or misconduct in respect to the matter in which indemnity is sought). To preserve this right of indemnity, such litigation, whereupon NOHSA shall have the right to direct defense thereof, including, but not limited to, selection of counsel and direction of settlement negotiations.

ARTICLE VI - Rules and Regulations

Section 1. From time to time the Board of Directors shall establish rules and regulations for judging of NOHSA events. The rules and regulations so adopted shall be changed, modified or repealed only by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Any changes in rules or regulations adopted during any year will be effective on January 1 of the following year or at an earlier date should it appear imperative for the well-being of the Association. Membership will be notified of any rule or regulation changes prior to their implementation.

Section 3. Any proposed changes in rules or regulations proposed from the floor of the annual meeting must be considered and voted upon by the newly elected Board of Directors within fifteen (15) days after said annual meeting and if adopted by the Board will be effective on January 1 of the following year or at an earlier date should it appear imperative to the well-being of the Association. Membership will be notified of any rule or regulation changes prior to their implementation.

Section 4. Any charges of infraction of the rules and regulations of this Association shall be registered in writing, signed and filed with the Association's Executive Director who will investigate said charge and make subsequent recommendations for the handling of such matter to the Executive Committee for review and/or hearing.

Section 5. A complete set of Bylaws and Rules and Regulations shall be available to all members on the NOHSA website.

Section 6. Any rule not covered within the Bylaws and Rules and Regulations of NOHSA shall be governed by those of the National Snaffle Bit Association (NSBA).

ARTICLE VII - Elections

Section 1. Prior to the annual membership meeting each year, the Nominating Committee, made up of the current President, President Elect, Immediate Past President and two appointed board members, shall recommend a person for each office to be elected. The Nominating Committee shall report its findings to the members at the annual meeting. Nominations shall also be received from the floor at the annual membership meeting.

Section 2. Any regular member in good standing of the Association may vote at the annual meeting of the officers to be elected.

ARTICLE VIII - Amendments

Section 1. Suggestions for repeal, modification or amendment of the Bylaws may be made by two-thirds (2/3) vote of all regular members in good standing present and voting. Such changes may be adopted by two-third (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors at any regular or special called meeting of the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Bylaws may also be changed or amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors at two (2) consecutive meetings provided that such proposed changes be published on the NOHSA website thirty (30) days prior to the second of the two (2) consecutive meeting where after regular members in good standing of the Association may express written opinion of the proposed changes to Secretary of the Association who shall inform the Committee of such objections. The Board of Directors shall consider these objections in its decision to ratify or further modify or amend such Bylaw changes as voted upon at the second of such two (2) consecutive meetings. Such changes and amendments to the Bylaws so voted by the Board of Directors shall become effective on January 1 of the following year.

ARTICLE IX - Distribution of Assets Upon Dissolution of the Association

Section 1. Upon the dissolution of the Association, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities of the Association, dispose of all the assets of the Association exclusively for the purposes of the Association to the entity determined by the Board of Directors in support of the mission of National Open Horse Show Association. Any such assets not so disposed shall be disposed by a court of competent jurisdiction in the county in which the principle office of the Association is then located.

GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

Membership

1. Membership is open to any individual of good character and reputation that has an interest in the promotion of the open show horse community. Membership in the Association carries responsibilities as well as certain rights. Any member of the Association may be disciplined, fined, suspended and/or expelled upon showing of good cause. Any non-member may be denied membership and the relating privileges whenever it shall be established by satisfactory evidence to the Board of Directors that such non-member is not a worthy candidate. Anyone who becomes a member of the Association accepts to be bound by all rules and regulations of the Association and renounces any recourse, which he or she may have against the Association in connection with the enforcement of those rules. Members shall be admitted and retained in accordance with the rules and regulations of NOHSA.
 - a) As reciprocal assistance to NOHSA for privilege of membership and participation in approved events of National Open Horse Show Association and the NOHSA World Championship Show may use any photograph or other form of likeness reproductions of a member, event participant, horse owner or their horses and registered equine names to promote NOHSA's objectives and activities including, but not limited to, use by third parties with authorization from NOHSA.
 - b) Membership in the Association does not entitle any member to examine, review or copy any information that the Board of Directors of NOHSA deems to be proprietary in nature.
 - c) A current NOHSA membership is required for each exhibitor to be eligible for year-end awards and entry to the National Open Horse Show World Championship Show.
 - d) A current NOHSA membership is required for a Competition Registration.
2. NOHSA memberships begin the day the membership is received in the NOHSA office or paid online. A NOHSA membership is an annual membership and expires December 31 of each year. Memberships purchased after the conclusion of the NOHSA World Championship Show will remain current through the following calendar year. Membership fees are set by the Board of Directors.
3. Available NOHSA memberships:
 - a) Adult memberships are \$30.00 (U.S.).

- b)** Youth memberships are \$20.00 (U.S.)
- c)** NOHSA Partner Memberships are \$30.00 (U.S.)

4. Other fees:

- a)** Duplicate or printed membership card - \$10.00 (U.S.) (lost, stolen destroyed, replacement of any kind)
- b)** Show Record - \$10 (Upper horse or exhibitor (members)

5. NOHSA Partner Membership will be listed as a NOHSA Partner Member on the website with all events posted to the calendar. A full list of benefits can be found on the website.

6. All member ages are as of January 1 of the current year.

7. Any member or non-member may be suspended and denied privileges of NOHSA by the appropriate committee of NOHSA for failure to pay when due any obligation owing to NOHSA or to an approved show or for giving a worthless check for entry fees, stall fees, office charges, feed bills incurred at a NOHSA-approved event or any fees or charges including bank charges for returned check connected with the exhibition of NOHSA entries; provided, however, that fifteen (15) days before action by written notice of account due and the intention to suspend or withholding privileges of NOHSA shall be mailed to such member or non-member. Upon suspension, the name of the member or non-member may be published in any NOHSA publication at any time. Any suspension and denial of privileges under this section shall terminate upon full payment of the obligation due NOHSA or NOHSA-approved event's show management. Show management must notify the NOHSA office of any uncollectible accounts due within 90 days of the closing of the show.

Competition Registration

- 8. All competing horses** must have a Competition Registration per exhibitor to earn points and awards. Competition Registrations begin the day the registration is received in the NOHSA office or paid online. A NOHSA Competition Registration is an annual registration and expires on December 31 of each year. Registrations purchased after the conclusion of the NOHSA World Championship Show will remain current through the following calendar year. Registration fees are set by the Board of Directors.
- 9. Competition Registrations** are \$10.00 (U.S.) each.
- 10. A copy of the horse's registration papers**, if registered, should accompany the Competition Registration Application. A horse's breed association registered name will be the only name utilized on the Competition Registration.
- 11. Non-registered or grade horses** are eligible for a Competition Registration.

12. The Competition Registration will be issued in the name of the nominator as listed on the application. Any member with a current NOHSA Membership is eligible to show or submit results with any horse that holds a current NOHSA Competition Registration, despite listed nominator.

13. Once a horse's name is issued on its Competition Registration, that name must be used for the entire calendar year and NOHSA World Show qualification period.

Shows Recognized by NOHSA

14. Members may earn year-end points and qualify for the NOHSA World Championship Show at any open or 4-H show not governed by a national association.

a) NOHSA Partner Member Show - An open or 4-H show that is put on by a local club or private entity that is also a NOHSA Partner member in good standing.

1) NOHSA Partner Members hold exclusive rights to host NOHSA-approved classes and use the term "NOHSA Partner Member Show"

b) Online competitions are not recognized by NOHSA as horse shows.

c) Results from shows that offer classes sanctioned by a national equine organization are not eligible for submission. This includes, but is not limited to, any shows that offer classes approved by: AQHA, ABRA, APHA, ApHC, ARHA, FEI, IBHA, NBHA, NCHA, NRCHA, NRHA, NSBA, PHBA, POAC, PtHA.

1) This does not apply to 4-H and FFA. Results from a state or regional affiliate organization open horse show not sanctioned or approved by the parent organization are eligible for submission.

15. NOHSA, all participants, spectators and others, acknowledge that because these rules have been established on the basis of experience and fairness to all who are interested in the betterment of the open horse show community, NOHSA assumes no liability for any injuries, damage or claims of whatever nature from any Affiliate, Show Committee, participant or spectator or other person arising out of performance conducted under the NOHSA Handbook.

16. Show management is responsible for the condition of the show premises, including arena and exercise areas, the conduct and competence of show employees and other representatives, implementation of show activities and all other aspects of this show.

17. As an express condition of the privilege to participate at a NOHSA-approved show or event, each owner of a horse, exhibitor, trainer or participant assumes the risks of participation and release and discharge NOHSA, its officers,

directors, representatives and employees from any and all liability, whenever or however arising, as to personal injury or property damage occurring as a result of any participation or attendance in or at an event conducted by the show or on the grounds thereof.

Competition Rules

- 18.** NOHSA recommends that shows utilize the current year's National Snaffle Bit Association Handbook for governing the judging of individual classes.
- 19.** Points accumulate on a one-horse, one-exhibitor combination competing in Open and 4-H shows that hold a current Competition Registration and a NOHSA Adult or Youth membership. Each show/judge will constitute one set of points on a one-horse, one-exhibitor combination.
- 20.** Exhibitor Results Reports must be submitted with the horse's name as it appears on its Competition Registration. Any discrepancies will not be accepted.
- 21.** Prior to July 1, horses under the age of two may only earn points in classes not shown astride (Halter, Showmanship, In-Hand Trail, etc.).
- 22.** No judge or member of their immediate family shall enter or exhibit horses in any event at which he/she is officiating, nor may any horse owned by such person, be entered/exhibited.

Exhibitor Results Reports

- 23.** Points will only be recorded when NOHSA receives a properly completed Exhibitor Results Report via the online form found on the NOHSA website. Requested information will include but is not limited to, show name, show date, show manager or secretary, name of hosting organization and all classes entered. All submissions are subject to verification and members may be required to provide additional information.
- 24.** Submitted Exhibitor Results Reports with incomplete or inaccurate information will be declined.
- 25.** Members should submit an Exhibitor Results Report as soon as possible and no later than 30 days after the date of the show. No Exhibitor Results Report will be accepted after 30 days from the date of the show.
- 26.** Random audits of Exhibitor Results Reports will be done on a regular basis. Information supplied by the NOHSA member will be verified by contacting the show manager or official listed on the report. Disciplinary proceedings will be initiated if any information is found to be falsified.

Points

27. Points shall be compiled on a one-horse, one-exhibitor combination basis. If multiple contestants exhibit the same horse, each exhibitor must submit a separate Exhibitor Results Report. Horses must have a current Competition Registration and exhibitors must have a current membership for earned points to count toward Year-End Awards. It is acceptable to submit a Competition Registration and Membership application with a member's first Exhibitor Results Report as long as it is within 30 days from the date of the show.

28. Points shall be awarded based on the total number of horses shown in the class. For example, if nine horses are exhibited in a class and two are disqualified, points would be based on nine entries. Up to ten (10) placings per class will be recognized by NOHSA. Class points will be awarded as shown in the table below.

29. Disqualified entries and entries that receive a zero (0) score will not receive points for that class.

Point System

30. The following point system will be used:

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th
1 entry										
2 entries	1									
3 entries	2	1								
4 entries	3	2	1							
5 entries	4	3	2	1						
6 entries	5	4	3	2	1					
7 entries	6	5	4	3	2	1				
8 entries	7	6	5	4	3	2	1			
9 entries	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
10 entries	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
11+ entries	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Year-End Awards

31. **National Awards** - NOHSA will present National Year-End Awards to the top horse and exhibitor combinations earning the most points as submitted by the NOHSA member. (Points are earned on a one-horse, one-exhibitor combination; Multiple exhibitors on the same horse must have a Regular or Youth membership and the horse must have a current Competition Registration to earn points)

a) Exhibitors placing top ten for year-end standings in a class category that requires a lope or a canter are not eligible for Year-End Awards in any Walk Jog or Walk Trot category.

32. Regional Awards - NOHSA may present Regional High Point Award recognition to the top horse and exhibitor combinations earning the most points as submitted by the NOHSA member. (Points are earned on a one-horse, one-exhibitor combination; Multiple exhibitors on the same horse must have a Regular or Youth membership and the horse must have a current Competition Registration to earn points)

33. All year-end awards will be calculated from December 1 of the previous year to November 30 of the show year, to be finalized following the 30-day submission period.

34. Ties in Year-End Awards:

- a)** Should there be a tie in total points for the purpose of year-end awards calculations, the following tie-breakers will be used, in the order listed, until such tie is broken:
 - 1)** Total horses placed over in the designated division;
 - 2)** In head-to-head competition, the horse or rider that placed higher the most times;
 - 3)** Total number of shows attended throughout the point accumulation period

Medal Classes

35. The NOHSA Horsemanship Medal class is a Western Horsemanship class that includes both a pattern (chosen for the NOHSA-approved medal patterns) and a rail portion (demonstrating all gaits in at least one direction). The NOHSA Horsemanship Medal Class must be run as an additional class at a NOHSA Partner Show. The competition is open to any age exhibitor. Participation in a NOHSA Horsemanship Medal class does not count toward qualifying in any other NOHSA World Championship Show class.

36. All exhibitors in a NOHSA Horsemanship Medal Class must hold a current NOHSA Membership and horses must hold a current NOHSA Competition Registration to compete in a NOHSA Horsemanship Medal Class. It is the sole responsibility of the exhibitor to be a current member and to make sure their horse is registered with NOHSA.

37. Only NOHSA Partner Members in good standing can host a NOHSA Horsemanship Medal Class. A NOHSA Horsemanship Medal Class Show Application is available to current NOHSA Partner Members on the NOHSA website. The **\$35** (U.S.) application fee must be made in full at the time of submission. NOHSA will supply, at no cost, first and second place medals, the NOHSA Horsemanship Medal Finals Invitations, sample entry forms, and copies of the NOHSA-approved medal patterns. Medals are to be awarded upon completion of the class to the first and second place winners who are NOHSA members in good standing.

38. Contestants placing first or second in a NOHSA Horsemanship Medal class will qualify for the NOHSA Horsemanship Medal Finals, which are held in conjunction with the NOHSA World Championship Show, annually. Once an exhibitor has qualified for the finals, he/she is ineligible to compete in additional NOHSA Horsemanship Medal Classes for the current qualifying year. Exhibitors are not required to show the same horse in the finals that was shown in the preliminary round, however, any horses shown will be required to hold a current Competition Registration at the time of competition.

39. Only classes held at an approved NOHSA Partner Show in good standing count toward qualifying for the NOHSA Horsemanship Medal Finals.

40. The NOHSA Partner Member's show secretary must submit results from a NOHSA Horsemanship Medal Class online within 30 days of the conclusion of the class. Results should include the exhibitors' names and NOHSA Membership numbers, the horses' names and NOHSA Competition Registration numbers, the total number of entries, and the final placings of exhibitors.

Judging

41. Judging is a serious matter and a job that should be conducted with the greatest sense of dignity and fair play possible, laying aside all personality likes and dislikes and applying NOHSA standards while affording each exhibitor and entry the fairest and most unbiased judgment possible.

42. An evaluation of a judge's performance may be submitted in writing by any member in an attempt to find those judges who are making positive applications of the objectives of NOHSA. Members are encouraged to do this. A negative evaluation of a judge's performance by any NOHSA member will be forwarded to NOHSA.

Sportsmanship

43. Exhibitors, owners, and agents must display good sportsmanship at all times. Good sportsmanship includes, but is not limited to, the conduct of the exhibitor, owner, or agent anywhere on the show grounds, all exhibitors, owners, and agents are expected to conduct themselves in appropriate manner at all times with show management, judge(s), NOHSA steward, show participants or spectators.

44. Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated. Unsportsmanlike conduct will be defined as, but not limited to, any action of disrespect, misrepresentation, deceit or fraud directed to judges, show management, NOHSA, NOHSA Staff or personnel, NOHSA members or other

exhibitors or spectators. Any conduct that involves the use of physical force and/or results in physical harm to any other individual(s) will be dealt with severely by the appropriate committee within NOHSA. The suggested minimum penalty for each individual is **\$500** (U.S.) fine and a one-year suspension per incident. Violators will be handled by such committee as deemed acceptable by NOHSA. NOHSA has the right to publish the name of any member, non-member or legal entity who has been disciplined by the Association to include those suspended.

- a)** Exhibitors, owners, or spectators who wish to file a formal complaint to take action against another owner, exhibitor, or spectator for a violation of this rule may do so by submitting a letter in writing to the NOHSA office accompanied by a \$200 (U.S.) deposit. Said deposit will be refunded if complaint is sustained in the formal hearing process. Judges and show committees may file a complaint without payment of the **\$200** (U.S.) deposit.
- b)** Report forms are available at request.
- c)** Penalties for violation are subject to the appropriate committee.

Inhumane Treatment

45. No person shall treat any horse in a cruel or inhumane manner, including, but not limited to, the prohibited conduct specified in the Handbook. Cruelty to horses included in this prohibition, as it indicates a general course of dealing with horses that is unacceptable for NOHSA membership qualification. For violation of this rule, a NOHSA member may be disciplined, suspended, fined, and/or expelled from NOHSA and a non-member may be denied NOHSA privileges. This prohibition against cruelty may include NOHSA members and/or owners of horses, their agents, representatives, and employees, the actions for which a member or owner is also responsible.

- a)** NOHSA may accept the conviction of an individual or judicial confiscation of a horse under state, federal, provincial, or international law, for an offense of cruelty to or inhumane treatment of a horse, as a presumptive violation of this rule. NOHSA may impose appropriate fines or suspensions.
- b)** Every horse at a NOHSA-approved event shall, at all times, be treated humanely and with dignity, respect, and compassion. Abuse is defined as an action or failure to act, which a reasonable, prudent person, informed and experienced in the customs, accepted training techniques and exhibition procedures or veterinary standards would determine to be cruel, abusive,

inhumane or detrimental to the horses' health. Individuals will be disciplined if it is determined that there was willful abuse of the horse under any of the following circumstances:

- 1) The individual physically participates in the abuse of the animal or shows or rides the horse in a condition considered to be abusive.
- 2) No person shall exhibit any horse that appears sullen, dull, lethargic, emaciated, drawn, or overly tired.
- 3) No person on show grounds, including, but not limited to, barns, stalls, practice areas and show arenas, may treat a horse in an inhumane manner, which includes, but is not limited to:
 - a) Placing an object in a horse's mouth to cause undue discomfort or distress;
 - b) Tying a horse in a manner as to cause undue discomfort or distress in a stall, trailer, or when longeing or riding;
 - c) Use of inhumane training techniques or methods;
 - d) Use of inhumane equipment, including, but not limited to, saw tooth bits, hock hobbles, tack collars, or tack hackamores;
 - e) Any item or appliance that restricts movement or circulation of the tail;
 - f) Intentional inhumane treatment which results in bleeding.
 - g) Penalties and fines for a violation of the abuse rules will be dealt severely by the appropriate committee with NOHSA.

Grievance Issues and Committee

46. A Grievance Committee is established within NOHSA to expedite due process available to all members who may become involved in a rule violation or alleged violation.

- a) The Grievance Committee will consist of three members appointed by the President.
- b) Any member or nonmember may notify NOHSA of a violation. A filing fee of **\$200** (U.S.), payable to NOHSA, must accompany a written complaint(s). All complaints must be addressed to the Executive Director of NOHSA. Judges, board members, Executive Committee members, directors, show management and/or show staff are exempt from the filing fee when acting in an official capacity. The written complaint and filing fee should be sent to NOHSA within 15 days of the incident as herein provided. NOHSA may however act on

infraction(s) outside the 15-day timeline when deemed by NOHSA to serve to protect the integrity of the association, welfare of the horse and safety of the member(s).

- c) Upon receipt of the rule violation/infraction, the Executive Director will provide notice to the affected member and research the incident. The Grievance Committee will review all compiled data and determine if the complaint/violation should progress to a hearing. The Grievance Committee will not issue punishments. Should the Grievance Committee recommend the progression of the incident to a hearing level, the member will be notified in writing by NOHSA and will have 15 business days from receipt of the notice to respond.
 - d) The member, at any time during the grievance process, may notify the Executive Director of his/her intent to declare fault. The hearing committee will then review all materials and provide the member with a decision within 15 business days of the member's receipt of their declaration of a fault status; this may include but not be limited to suspension, denial of association privileges, fine(s), loss of points, monies or awards earned at the event where the infraction occurred. The decision of the hearing committee is final.
 - e) The member declaring fault will be required to acknowledge acceptance of the hearing committees' decision within 48 hours of the rendering. The member's failure to accept the decision of the initial hearing committee within the 48-hour period (either orally or by failure to respond), will result in a full hearing committee being convened, the offer of the initial hearing committee withdrawn and the member will be required to appear in front of the convened hearing committee. The member may be subject to incurring all expenses relative to a convened hearing, which may include but not be limited to attorney's fees and/or court reporter costs.
 - f) Any member may appeal the decision of the hearing committee. The request for appeal must be submitted in writing within 15 business days and be accompanied by a **\$500** (U.S.) fee. The appeals committee will be the NOHSA board.

Disciplinary Procedure

47. Any member or non-member may be disciplined, fined, subject to probation, suspended or expelled from the Association, and denied any or all privileges of NOHSA

whenever it shall have been established by such evidence of the existence of the fact asserted that such member or non-member has violated any pertinent rule of NOHSA. Anyone who attempts to influence an investigation or hearing may be subject to disciplinary action. Filing a malicious or frivolous grievance may result in disciplinary action.

- a)** No person shall refuse to answer and/or provide NOHSA, its officers, committees, or agents any inquiry, in the form requested, concerning a horse, exhibitor, owner, and/or agent that has been shown with NOHSA. A member or non-member shall not conspire with another person to intentionally violate NOHSA rules or to knowingly contribute or cooperate with another person or persons, either by affirmative action or inaction, to violate NOHSA rules.
- b)** In regards to any violation of show and contest rule, as a part of its disciplinary action, the Disciplinary Hearing Committee may revoke participation privileges in all NOHSA-approved events for a determined or indefinite period. In addition, it may assess a fine. Suspended persons MAY BE required to reimburse NOHSA for any/all costs, including reasonable attorney fees associated with their Disciplinary Hearing and in addition to any fines and/or penalties imposed.
- c)** Any awards and/or prizes and/or purses won in a class where a violation occurred will be forfeited in any case. In the event that an exhibitor is determined to be ineligible for a class and has won prize money that is to be forfeited, said prize money shall be returned to NOHSA for proper redistribution. Sanctions will be ongoing until prize money and awards are returned.
- d)** Whenever anyone shall be accused of any violation, he/she shall be given not less than fifteen (15) days' notice of a time and place for hearing such accusations by an appropriate committee. He/she shall have the opportunity, in person or by counsel, to be heard and to present evidence on his/her own behalf and to hear and refute evidence offered against him/her. Such hearing committee and Board of Directors will be allowed to meet via electronic devices and or conference calls if the complainant or respondent does not register protest or plan to attend the hearing.
- e)** The decisions of such hearing committee shall be final and binding on all parties, subject only to an appeal of the complainant or respondent to the Board of Directors. Said appeal must be registered in writing, stating the grounds for the appeal and filed at the

NOHSA office within 15 days after original hearing date and must include **\$500** (U.S.) appeal fee. The appeal shall be registered and only the evidence and testimony presented at the Disciplinary Hearing of the Appellant will be considered at the Appellant Appeal Review. Should the Hearing Committee's determination be sustained, the appeal fee will be forfeited and the Appellant shall reimburse NOHSA for all costs of the Appellant Hearing including reasonable attorney fees less the appeal fee previously submitted.

- f)** Pending final or appeal hearing by the Appeals Committee, Board of Directors or such other appropriate committee, parties will be given written notice of action to:
 - 1)** Temporarily suspend such horse, member or non-member, the effect of which shall be to deny him/her further participation and privileges in NOHSA and NOHSA-approved events until the Appeals Committee, Board of Directors or other such appropriate committee can hear the matter and take the appropriate disciplinary action.
- g)** **Attorney Fees** - A member or non-member who seeks judicial review of previous NOHSA determinations or who brings any judicial action against NOHSA does hereby accept the condition that by joining and participating in NOHSA-approved events, does hereby agree, if unsuccessful in the attempt prosecute NOHSA or overturn said determinations, actions, rules or regulations, to reimburse NOHSA for its reasonable attorney's fees, court costs and other expenses in defense of such suit.
- h)** **Litigation Agreement** - Every member, by joining the Association or non-member, filing applications or other documents with NOHSA or participating in NOHSA-approved events does thereby agree:
 - 1)** If unsuccessful in any judicial action brought against NOHSA will reimburse NOHSA for its reasonable attorney's fees, court costs, and other expenses in defense of such suit.
 - 2)** No action will commence, whether in law or equity, against NOHSA in any courts other than those Federal and State courts located in Parker County, Texas.

48. At such time as any person has been suspended, expelled or denied NOHSA privileges, in addition to other provisions of this handbook or policy of NOHSA, the following restrictions shall apply:

- a)** That person shall not participate and shall be ineligible to participate during the suspension/expulsion period, in any NOHSA event, nor shall such person be eligible to hold approved judge's credentials or any other NOHSA accreditation.
- b)** No horse which is recorded in the name of such person (including ownership jointly or ownership as part of a partnership or corporation) is eligible to participate in any event approved by NOHSA, NOHSA National Award Programs or event and/or awards program sponsored by a NOHSA Affiliate Association.

General Notice Procedure

- 49.** Each owner, trainer or agent thereof, participating in a NOHSA-approved event, is charged with the responsibility of knowing the rules and guidelines of NOHSA as set forth in the NOHSA Handbook and/or other such publication(s) or relevant correspondence and is conclusively presumed to know such rules and guidelines by his/her participation in the event
- 50.** Every notice required by these rules and regulations may be served by delivery of a copy of the notice to the person to be served or his attorney, either in person or by certified mail, postage prepaid or other receipted delivery service to his last known address as it appears on the NOHSA records. Upon, mailing, such notice shall be deemed received by such person when it is deposited in the United States mail or delivery service receptacle.