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Green Mountain Horse Association

COVID-19 Action Plan

Requirements and Recommendations for Operating a GMHA Approved Competition or Event

Summer 2020

Effective June 1, 2020
Green Mountain Horse Association

COVID-19 Action Plan

This plan is based on the US Equestrian Federation COVID-19 Action Plan as revised and other documents found in their COVID-19 Toolkit. Their guidance is tailored to the needs of the Green Mountain Horse Association (GMHA). Additional information can be found at USEF.org/media/covid19-toolkit.

We are all in this together and the situation requires that each and every one of us take personal responsibility for the health, safety, and welfare of ourselves, our family members, and our colleagues and peers in the competition environment. Whether participant, competition organizer and staff, or vendor and support personnel, we each need to exercise caution, take precautionary measures, be accountable, and utilize good judgement at all times while interacting with one another at competitions.

General

Nothing in this document shall imply or supersede any rules, regulations, guideline from Federal, State or Local authorities that are more strict than guidance in this document.

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Definitions (some):

**Competition Area/Schooling Area** - For purposes of this document, any reference to competition area and/or schooling area includes rings, arenas, fields, cross-country fields, and any other areas designated for competition, schooling or exercise purposes.

**Competition Organizer** – For purposes of this document, Competition Organizer includes any individual or entity that acts as competition manager, licensee, and includes any designee(s) with management authority over the competition and its operations.

**Competition Staff** – For purposes of this document, competition staff includes any individual who is employed or contracted by competition management. Competition staff includes, but is not limited to, ring crews, jump crews, stable crews, competition office staff, medical personnel, awards crew, in-gate personnel, paddock managers, announcers, licensed officials, scribes, etc.

**Isolation** – Separation of a person or group of people known or reasonably believed to be infected with a communicable disease and potentially infectious, from those who are not infected to prevent the spread of the communicable disease.

**Participants** – For purposes of this document, any reference to Participants includes owners, lessees, riders, athletes, parents, vaulters, drivers, trainers, coaches, grooms, longeurs, navigators, personal care assistants (PCAs), and any other required support personnel/staff that are essential for providing care to the horses and/or the athletes.

**Social Distancing** – Defined as avoiding congregate settings or concentration of individuals in a single area and maintaining a minimum of six feet from others unless absolutely impossible.

**Quarantine** – Separation of a person or group of people, known or reasonably believed to have been exposed to a communicable disease but are not yet symptomatic, from others who have not yet been exposed, to prevent the possible spread of the communicable disease.

**Public/Spectators** – For purposes of this document, spectators refers to the general public, fans, or any individuals who are not directly involved in the competition by way of being a participant, a member of competition staff, a service provider (e.g. media or photographer), volunteer, or other support personnel (farrier, veterinarian, etc.)

**Support Personnel** - For purposes of this document, support personnel are those individuals employed or contracted by Participants who are essential for providing care to horses and/or participants. Support personnel includes, but is not limited to, veterinarians, farriers, equine therapists, and braiders, etc.

**Symptoms** – Symptoms of COVID-19 include, but are not limited to, subjective or measured fever, cough, and shortness of breath and/or difficulty breathing. Additional symptoms may include sore throat, muscle pain, headache, chills/shaking, or newly developed loss of taste or smell.
**Temperature Monitoring** – The daily (or alternatively defined period) non-contact body temperature testing utilizing technology that scans forehead temperature (temporal or infrared thermometer) to measure an individual’s body temperature to verify no fever is present. For purposes of this document, a fever is defined as an elevated body temperature of 99.5°F (37.5°C) or higher. This definition of fever utilizes a temperature threshold slightly lower than in CDC guidelines, but this more stringent temperature threshold prevails as the requirement.
MANADORY REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPETITIONS AT GMHA

1. GMHA competitions must operate in accordance with the GMHA COVID-19 Action Plan (the Plan). This plan is based on federal, state and local regulations, WHO recommendations, CDC guidelines and USEF requirements. There will be times when regulations, recommendations, guidelines and requirements may differ. In these instances, the more restrictive regulations, recommendations, guidelines and requirements will prevail and supersede all others, e.g. face masks/coverings may not be required by a state or local government but is required at GMHA competition nonetheless due to CDC guidance.

2. Competition Organizers must complete the “WHO Mass Gathering for Sports Risk Assessment Tool” for each competition at GMHA.

3. Competition Organizers must work with State and local governments and public health authorities prior to the start of the competition to minimize risks.

4. Competition Organizers must read and sign the GMHA Emergency Response Action Plan for COVID-19 for each competition at GMHA.

5. Proof of insurance indemnifying GMHA from liability.

6. All participants, including licensed officials and volunteers shall provide emergency contact information and execute an updated Waiver and Release of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Indemnity Agreement required by USEF and GMHA, as a condition of participation.

7. Require a facemask or face covering for all staff, officials, volunteers, service providers and participants in any setting where there is a possibility of being within six feet of any other individual, and when not mounted on a horse. Competition Organizers must provide facemasks or face coverings to competition staff, volunteers and officials. Facemasks and face coverings shall be appropriate for all audiences and shall not contain commercial or political graphics or text.

8. Post signage that displays all applicable federal, state and local regulations, requirements and orders as they relate to mass gatherings and sporting events in effect at the competition.

9. Post signage throughout the competition grounds (i.e. competition office, competition and schooling areas, barns, etc.) which includes recommendations about good hygiene along with informing participants and others about ways to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

10. Enforce social distancing requirements throughout the competition grounds at all times. (Further guidelines later in this document).
11. GMHA Officials (i.e. Stewards, Technical Delegates, etc.), GMHA Staff and Competition Organizers will inform individuals when they are not in compliance with the regulations and requirements in effect at the competition and shall report such situations to the Competition Organizer and GMHA. The Competition Organizer and GMHA have the authority under GR 702.1 and GR914 to remove from the facility any person who does not comply with the regulations and requirements in effect at the competition. Stewards/Technical Delegates must report the removal of any person from competition grounds for non-compliance with regulations and requirements in effect at the competition to GMHA.

12. Individual discipline managers may require additional requirements specific to their competition. These additional requirements shall not be less restrictive that the requirements contained in this document, State and Local guidelines or as provided by event licensing bodies.
MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. GMHA competitions must operate in accordance with the GMHA COVID-19 Action Plan (the Plan). This plan is based on federal, state and local regulations, WHO recommendations, CDC guidelines and USEF requirements. There will be times when regulations, recommendations, guidelines and requirements may differ. In these instances, the more restrictive regulations, recommendations, guidelines and requirements will prevail and supersede all others, e.g. face masks/coverings may not be required by a state or local government but is required at GMHA competition nonetheless due to CDC guidance.

2. Participants are required to comply with these and any additional Competition Organizer requirements at all times while present on competition grounds. Failure to do so may result in expulsion from the grounds. These requirements are in effect immediately and until further notice, however, they are subject to revisions as the COVID-19 virus environment changes.

3. These requirements are in effect immediately and until further notice, however, they are subject to revisions as the COVID-19 virus environment changes.

4. Participants must provide emergency contact information and execute an updated Waiver and Release of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Indemnity Agreement required by USEF and GMHA, as a condition of participation. These updated, signed forms shall be given to the competition organizer.

5. Participants must comply with social distancing requirements at all times while on the competition grounds.

6. Participants must wash hands often and adhere to other sanitization practices throughout the day.

7. Participants are required to self-monitor their temperature once daily prior to entering the competition grounds. Anyone with a temperature of 99.5° F (37.5° C) or higher may not enter the facility.

8. With the exception of healthcare personnel, anyone who:
   a.) exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, or
   b.) has tested positive for COVID-19 within last two weeks, or
   c.) has been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last two weeks cannot enter the competition grounds.
13. Participants are required to wear a facemask or face covering when in any setting where there is a possibility of being within six feet of other individuals, and when not mounted on a horse. Facemasks and face coverings shall be appropriate for all audiences and shall not contain commercial or political graphics or text.

**A participant may choose to wear a facemask or face covering when mounted on a horse and cannot be disqualified or penalized for doing so while competing.**

14. Participants must comply with social distancing requirements at all times while on the competition grounds.
Recommended Best Practices for Competition Organizers

The following Recommended Best Practices have been provided to assist Competition Organizers and Competition Facilities with determining risks and developing measures to mitigate those risks. Please note these are not mandatory, however GMHA strongly encourages their implementation.

1. Consider limiting the number of entrances and exits to the venue to manage the number of individuals accessing the competition grounds.

2. Communication – Use radio, phone and online communication methods as much as possible and communicate important information frequently throughout the competition grounds.

3. Provide hand sanitization stations with access to soap and water or alcohol based hand sanitizer at each competition area and schooling/warm up area.

4. Provide hand sanitizer to all officials, ring crew, office staff and maintenance staff.

5. Frequently sanitize surfaces touched by many: door handles, arena gates, wash racks and hoses, etc.

6. Ensure frequent cleaning and sanitizing of bathrooms, provide soap and water or alcohol based hand sanitizer in bathrooms.

7. Strongly encourage all competitors to complete entry forms, in their entirety, including having all requisite memberships in place, prior to entering competition office.

8. Strongly encourage that all entries, adds, scratches, feed & bedding orders, billing/invoicing are done electronically.

9. Install clear plastic, glass or other type of protective shield/barrier in front of office staff.

10. Provide hand sanitizer near the door.

11. Provide an ‘in’ door and an ‘out’ door, if possible.

12. Provide markers to delineate 6 feet spacing between people in the office and in any waiting lines (e.g., markers on floor).

13. Prepare and email competitor bills as early as possible.

14. Establish appointment times for checkout at the competition office.
Recommended Best Practices for Competition, Schooling and Exercise Area Considerations

1. Utilize posted orders of go and/or published ride times including online orders of go and ride times.

2. Consider scheduling course walks as necessary to comply with social distancing requirements.

3. Limit and organize seating areas to comply with social distancing requirements.

4. Restrict the number of people accompanying a horse to the competition area to those persons who are needed for safety or for achieving effective competition, but they all must comply with social distancing requirements.

5. Consider utilizing technology for information transfer to mitigate the risk of virus spread by the manual transfer of paper (i.e. judge’s cards, scoresheets, etc.).

6. Create a method of giving ribbons and trophies that reduces or eliminates hand-to-hand contact.

Recommended Participant / Stabling Considerations

1. Restrict access to the stabling areas to veterinarians, athletes, officials, grooms, trainers and other essential personnel.

2. Remind all personnel in the stabling areas to comply with all best practices and guidelines in effect at the competition.

3. Provide hand sanitization stations in the stabling area and encourage stable personnel to use frequently.

4. Provide non-contact thermometers (e.g., temporal or infrared) to staff and require temperature monitoring throughout the day.

5. Limit access to stabling area and competition grounds to essential personnel only; discourage multiple family members from accompanying owners and riders.

6. Provide hand sanitizer, gloves, masks, and other PPE deemed necessary to your barn staff and other personnel and encourage them to use these items on a regular basis.

7. Do not mix equipment (tack, grooming supplies, lead shanks, etc.) and sanitize between each use.
8. Regularly sanitize bikes/motorbikes/golf carts/car & truck door handles, stable doors, bucket handles, light switches, etc., and equipment including tack, grooming, feeding, stall cleaning materials, etc.

9. Schedule competition days (ride times, schooling times, etc.) as efficiently as possible to minimize time spent on the competition grounds each day.
Appendix A – Additional Resources


USEF - https://www.usef.org(forms-pubs/Dz_1LDZ3hK8/usef-waiver-release-of-liability)
Appendix B – Example Participant guidelines for Hunter / Jumper Shows

GMHA COVID-19 Guidelines for Hunter Jumper shows

- Hand washing stations and sanitizer are located in multiple areas, however exhibitors are asked to bring their own supplies as well – i.e. hand sanitizer
- Horse Show Staff will be cleaning and disinfecting common areas on a regular basis.
- No outside spectators or guests allowed.
- Each rider will be permitted to bring only a trainer, groom, and one additional person.
- Competitors, trainers, and additional persons are responsible for self-monitoring temperatures, but may be asked to comply with a random temperature check throughout the competition.
- All persons on the grounds shall wear a face mask or face covering while unmounted. Face masks or face covering to be provided by the individual.
- All face masks or face covering shall be appropriate for public viewing and not contain any political or commercial artwork or wording.
- All Horse Show Staff will comply with CDC/State recommendations in place at time of show, i.e. masks, hand washing, when in public areas or interacting with exhibitors/trainers/other staff.
- Riders will not be penalized for wearing a face mask or face covering in the competition ring if he/she chooses.
- DO NOT LITTER. Please use trash receptacles properly so staff does not have to touch contaminated items that may have been discarded improperly.
- Dogs MUST be leashed or confined at all times. If a dog is ground loose on the GMHA property the owner of the dog and the dog will be asked to leave the property.
- Trainers will be held responsible for their barns and ensuring that those affiliated with their barns adhere to GMHA rules. Please discuss with everyone the importance of following the GMHA rules.
- If you are experiencing ANY of the symptoms related to the COVID-19 virus, PLEASE GO HOME.

ENTRY RULES

- All Entries MUST pre-register. No same day entries will be accepted.
- Please include all classes in which you plan to participate. There will be no penalty for scratching classes as long as the office and in-gate are informed of such case prior to the class concluding.
- Adds may be limited and must be conveyed to the office by 12:00 PM the day before the class runs.
• Times for the following day will be posted/announced by 3:00 PM in the award tent and emailed to trainers/competitors.
• Entries missing Coggins, Rabies, valid email address, or a form of payment may be subject to an incomplete fee.
• Show manager and secretary reserve the right to reject an entry in the case of tardiness.
• The show office will operate through windows. Please maintain 6’ between you and the people in front and behind you in line.
• One Trainer per Office Secretary in office for check out;

IN THE BARS

• Trainer barns may be separated by one or more stalls from other barns.
• Trainers/Exhibitors are required to comply with CDC/State/GMHA guidelines in place at the time of show, i.e. face masks or face covering, when in public.

AT THE ARENA

• Social Distancing at In Gates – no congregating at In Gate; only the rider whose trip is scheduled and their trainer allowed at the gate
• Only horses/riders/trainers actively schooling for the current class allowed in schooling area, amount of riders in the schooling area will be monitored and many be limited.
• One horse/trainer per jump; Trainers should follow CDC/State/GMHA Guidelines in place at the time, i.e. wear face masks or face covering plus work gloves when moving jump cups/rails. There will be spray sanitizing solution available in the schooling area for the jump cups.
• Course maps will be posted outside the arena. Trainers and competitors are encouraged to take a picture and move away from the board. Courses are also available for pick up at the office.
• Awards and Ribbons with not be presented at the ring under any circumstances. An award area will be set up by the bulletin board outside the show office. Please be courteous by social distancing from other people looking at results.
• No shared water coolers/mints, etc. at In Gates, exhibitors encouraged to bring their own.