

Judges Committee

Standard Operating Procedures

In order to ensure high quality judging, consistency in judging, and compliance to judging rules, the Judges Committee of the National Walking Horse Association sets forth specific procedures for regulating judging.

I. Judges Licenses

To be eligible to become an NWhA judge, a potential applicant must first meet the following criteria:

- i. Possess an individual current year NWhA membership and be a member in good standing.
- ii. Be at least 25 years of age
- iii. Complete the application form and submit to the NWhA Judges Committee prior to September 1
- iv. Submit three (3) reference forms (provided by NWhA). Two of the three references must be from people who possess experience in the walking horse industry such as Board members, Board officers, trainers, judges and/or members. The last reference can be from one of the aforementioned individuals or from outside the Walking Horse industry.
- v. Receive approval to attend Judges Qualifying Clinic from NWhA Judges Committee and Executive Committee.
- vi. Participate in the Annual Judges Qualifying Clinic
 - A. Judges Qualifying Clinic will be held once each year or every two years.
 - B. Payment of Registration Fee
 - C. Pass the NWhA Judges Tests, both rule book (80% minimum score required) and judging (rail and/or versatility)
 - D. Successfully complete interviews by the Judges Committee designees where applicants will be evaluated for expertise in various classes as well as particular judging situations. The interview will take place after completion of the Judges Qualifying Clinic and test.
 - E. Applicant will be ranked according to other applicants attending the Judges Qualifying Clinic.
 - F. Apprentice a minimum of four (4) NWhA shows, which must be pre-approved by the NWhA Judges Committee. This apprenticeship will take place after the successful completion of the clinic, test and interview. Apprenticing may be waived if applicant has qualifying judging experience, as determined by the Judges Committee.

- a. If the first two supervising judges unanimously agree the apprentice has demonstrated exemplary knowledge and skill as an NWHHA judge, they may recommend the apprentice be permitted to be finished with their apprenticeship. This request must be made to the Judges Committee and is discussed and either approved or denied by the Judges Committee.
 - b. Special consideration may be given to apprentices who apprentice multi-day shows.
- x. Criteria that will be taken into consideration during the licensure process will include, but not be limited to: applicant's character and professionalism, knowledge of the horse, knowledge of the history of the Walking Horse, knowledge of NWHHA rules and ability to apply this knowledge when judging.
- xi Final review and approval by the Judges Committee and Executive Committee.

II. Judges Performance

Judges are expected to act professionally at all times. Integrity, honesty and good moral character are of utmost importance. Designation as an NWHHA judge is a privilege, not a right, bestowed by NWHHA according to procedures formulated by NWHHA, to individuals, whose equine expertise and personal character merit the honor. An individual's conduct and ability as a judge must be exemplary; is subject to continual review; and such designation is revocable by NWHHA with or without notice and formal hearing. All judges are expected to comply with the rules for judging put forth in the NWHHA Rule Book and attend the annual NWHHA Judges Clinic once every two years. If judges neglect to comply with these rules, consequences will involve courses of action as outlined in this document.

III. Judge Evaluation Forms

Judges will receive copies of all evaluation forms that deal with their performance. The evaluations will be completed by exhibitors and sent to the Executive Director who will then remove the exhibitor's name from the evaluation before forwarding it on to the affected judge.

IV. Censoring a Judge

A censor, in the form of a letter written by the Chair of the Judges Committee will be sent to a judge who receives negative evaluations or concerns that are of a serious nature and are deemed legitimate. They must be deemed “legitimate” by the Judges Committee before this action is taken. To determine legitimacy, the Judges Committee will review complaints and concerns (the Judges Committee receives the same evaluation forms as the judge with no signatures of evaluators), verify these through an interview process, and then discuss alleged violations among the committee members prior to any action. The censor letter will outline the concerns stated in the exhibitor evaluations and will be placed in the judge’s file.

V. Suspension of a Judge’s License

Suspension of a judge’s license will occur if violations of rules continue to be reported to the NWHHA Judges Committee over a period of time consisting of one or more show seasons or if more serious issues occur which require immediate action. Suspension of a judge’s license may also occur if a judge neglects to attend the Judges Clinic two out of three consecutive years. The judge will receive a letter from the Judges Committee informing him/her of the specific concerns and reasons for the suspension. The length of the suspension will depend on the number and seriousness of violations. Judges who are suspended will be required to successfully apprentice at least two shows and will be assigned to specific judges and shows by the Judges Committee. He/she will not be approved to judge at NWHHA shows during their suspension period and will be evaluated by the Judge’s Committee prior to reinstatement of their license. The suspension letter and any accompanying documentation will be placed in the judge’s file.

If a judge receives a Horse Protection Act violation or an NWHHA violation, he/she will be subject to these penalties:

Violation	First Offense	Second Offense	Third & Subsequent Offenses
Pressure Shoeing	Permanent Loss of License		
Bilateral Sore	2 year loss of license – must reapply for new license	3 year loss of license – must reapply for new license	Permanent. Loss of License
Unilateral Sore	1 year suspension	2 years suspension	Permanent Loss of

			License
Scar Rule	1 year suspension	2 years suspension	Permanent Loss of License
Technical Violations and/or Shoeing Violations	6 months suspension during show season	1 year suspension	Permanent Loss of License
Other Infractions	60 days suspension during show season	6 months suspension during show season	1 year suspension

VI. Revoking a Judge's License

A judge's license may be revoked if the violations of rules continue to be reported to the NWHHA over a period of a show season after the judge has successfully completed the suspension period. Further, a judge's license may be revoked immediately upon any infraction deemed to be based on misfeasance, malfeasance, dereliction of duty or immoral conduct by the Judges Committee. If a judge's license is recommended for revocation by the Judges Committee, the Board of Directors will determine final action. The judge may request a hearing with the Executive Director prior to Board action. All pertinent documentation will be placed in the judge's file.

See chart above for consequences of HPA Violations and/or NWHHA Violations for judges.