

Judges/ 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 NWhA 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 every other year or as deemed necessary by the Judges Committee and Executive Committee
 - B. Payment of Registration Fee
 - C. Pass the NWhA Judges Tests, both rule book (75% 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. Apprentice a minimum of four (4) NWhA shows, which must be pre-approved by the NWhA Judges Committee. This apprenticeship must occur under an experienced NWhA Judge and 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.

- vii. 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.
- viii. Final review and approval by the Judges Committee and Executive Committee.
- ix. All apprentices will have three (3) years to complete the process from the time they pass the NWHHA Judges Test. If they do not complete the process within the 3 year time frame, they must start the process over again with the Judges Clinic, test, etc.

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 must miss a clinic due to unforeseen, emergency type consequences, the Judges Committee may provide a one time "waiver" to those judges. The judge must then attend the next Judges Clinic. If a judge does not renew his/her license on an annual basis, they may be readmitted one time during a three (3) year period if approved by the Judges Committee. After the three year period, judges must start the process of licensure at the beginning (clinic, test, apprenticeship, etc.). 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 Director of Judges (or if unavailable, the EC or JC) 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 Director of Judges (or if unavailable, the EC or JC) before this action is taken. To determine

legitimacy, the Director of Judges (or if unavailable, the EC or JC) will review complaints and concerns and if necessary verify these through an interview process. 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 may occur if violations of rules continue to be reported to the NWAHA 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 Director of Judges (or if unavailable, the EC or JC) 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 Director of Judges (or if unavailable, the JC). He/she will not be approved to judge at NWAHA shows during their suspension period and will be evaluated by the Director of Judges ((or if unavailable, the EC or JC) 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 NWAHA 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 NWA 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 Director of Judges and the Executive Committee. If a judge's license is recommended for revocation, the Executive Committee and 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 NWA Violations for judges.

VII. Judges Committee

The Judges Committee is appointed by the President of NWA and works under the direction and guidance of the EC and/or Board of Directors in coordination with the Director of Judges who is an employee of NWA. The Executive Committee appoints the Director of Judges and oversees all activities of this position.