

## Ethics Proposal – Final Approved Version

(EC = Ethics Committee; LOC = Licensed Officials Committee; BOD = Board of Directors; RD = Regional Director)

### 1. Scope of Work

Proposed Process	Rationale
<p><u>Ethics Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● EC has jurisdiction over violations of the Code of Conduct, Codes of Ethics, Social Media policy, and Confidentiality Agreements.</li> <li>● EC does not review disputes related to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Scores, potential rule violations, or judgment calls at licensed competitions</li> <li>○ Private disputes between members including (but not limited to) business transactions, personal disagreements, and differences of opinion.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Appeals Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Makes final determination on formal appeals related to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Decisions by the Ethics Committee</li> <li>○ Decisions by a Protests Committee at a licensed competition</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Issues that arise at licensed competitions are handled by the Protest Committee at the event in accordance with U.S. Rulebook section 4.9.2.</li> </ul>

### 2. Committee Composition

Proposed Process	Rationale
<p><u>Ethics Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 5 members total: Committee Chair and 4 members.</li> <li>● EC Chair and committee members are selected by the BOD.</li> <li>● One committee member will be an RD.</li> <li>● Committee membership cannot include a current Judge, TD, WE Coach, or a member of the Executive Committee (Pres, VP, Secretary, Treasurer).</li> <li>● If the complaint is lodged against a licensed official, the LOC Chair will sit in on all EC meetings/hearings as a non-voting participant.</li> <li>● Committee members are bound by a Confidentiality Agreement.</li> </ul> <p><u>Appeals Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 4 members: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer</li> <li>● Must sign a Confidentiality Agreement for each case heard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Precluding a Judge or TD from serving on the committee avoids the perception of conflict of interest should the complaint be lodged against a licensed official. Executive Committee members serve on the Appeals Committee, so they cannot be included on the EC.</li> <li>● Participation of LOC Chair will help ensure the LO perspective is considered in discussions and decisions.</li> <li>● Appeals cases are rare. Signing a Confidentiality Agreement for each case serves to reinforce the guidelines for confidentiality.</li> </ul>

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### 3. Process Overview

Proposed Process	Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Any member or competitor has the right to file a complaint.</li><li>● Complaints must provide specific details as applicable (e.g., date, time, individual, horse, description of what occurred).</li><li>● Complaints must be documented and signed, along with any available supporting documentation.</li><li>● Complaints must be accompanied by a fee of \$100. Fee is refunded if complaint is not dismissed in its entirety.</li><li>● If complaint involves a licensed official, the EC notifies the LOC and requests any relevant personnel information.</li><li>● The EC, BOD, or LOC has the right to initiate an investigation of policy violations by Officers, Directors, or Licensed Officials.</li><li>● Overall process from receipt of complaint to resolution will be completed within a 4-week time period. Extensions will be allowed if requested by the EC Chair and approved by the BOD. The decision whether or not to request an extension is at the sole discretion of the EC Chair. Denial or approval of a request for an extension is at the sole discretion of the BOD.</li><li>● If an appeal is filed, the Appeals process will be completed within a 4-week time period.</li><li>● A private email account will be set up for the Ethics Committee to enable individuals to ask questions related to potential ethics violations or report suspected abuse of the Social Media Policy.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Keep fee low enough so as to not deter someone from issuing a complaint, but significant enough to avoid frivolous complaints.</li> <li>● Goal is to complete the process quickly, but process must allow for extensions in extenuating circumstances.</li></ul>

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### 4. Internal Committee Process

Proposed Process	Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This <b>organization name</b> Ethics process is designed to ensure that all individuals that are the subject of a complaint will be afforded due process as defined in the following procedures.</li> <li>● EC will review the complaint along with supporting information and evidence.</li> <li>● If individual named in complaint is a licensed official, EC will consult with LOC Chair for any relevant information. LOC Chair will sit in on EC meetings but will have no vote.</li> <li>● EC will interview the person issuing the complaint as the EC deems necessary, in its sole discretion.</li> <li>● EC may interview witnesses named in the complaint or other witnesses that the EC deems necessary, in its sole discretion.</li> <li>● EC will interview the individual named in the complaint, and may, at its sole discretion, interview witnesses designated by that individual.</li> <li>● The individual named as the subject of the complaint will be promptly notified that a complaint has been made and will be given the opportunity to review the complaint, including all written statements, notes of interviews, documents, photographs, or other evidence- The complaining party may elect to remain anonymous. In the event the complaining party or any witnesses elect to remain anonymous, the EC will not disclose their names or other identifying information and will redact any identifying information from any documents.</li> <li>● The individual that is the subject of the complaint will be given 7 days from notification of complaint to file a written response and/or participate in a phone interview.</li> <li>● At the conclusion of the investigation the EC will notify the President (and the LOC if a licensed official is the subject of the complaint) of its decision before formal notification to affected parties.</li> <li>● EC will send written notification of its decision via certified mail to the person who filed the complaint and the individual named in the complaint within the 4-week time period allowed.</li> <li>● Possible actions may include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dismissal of complaint, in whole or in part</li> <li>○ Written warning</li> <li>○ Remedial training</li> <li>○ Temporary suspension of membership and/or license for a specified time period (range 1 month to 2 years)</li> <li>○ Permanent suspension of membership or license</li> <li>○ Other action as deemed appropriate</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The LOC will be responsible for enforcing the decision resulting from a complaint resolution involving licensed officials.</li> <li>● The BOD will be responsible for enforcing the decision resulting from a complaint resolution involving Officers, Directors, or members.</li> <li>● Appeals must be in writing and accompanied by a \$100 fee. The fee will be refunded if the decision is vacated in whole or in part as a result of the appeal.</li> </ul>	<p>Process was designed with the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Thorough investigation of the issue</li> <li>● Due process for the individual named in the complaint</li> <li>● Timely resolution of the complaint</li> <li>● Confidentiality; investigation and resolution limited to only those with a need to know.</li> <li>● The LOC Chair serves to provide a licensed official’s perspective in internal discussions.</li> </ul>

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### 5. EC Housekeeping Duties

Proposed Process	Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Verify that all requisite signatures are obtained for the organization:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Code of Conduct: Officers and Directors</li> <li>○ Code of Ethics: Licensed Officials, Coaches</li> <li>○ Confidentiality Agreement: Ethics Committee members</li> <li>○ Confidentiality Agreement: Appeals Committee members, for each appeal heard</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Ensure that all Officers, Directors, Licensed Officials, and Coaches have read and understand the Social Media Policy.</li> <li>● Maintain a log of complaints filed and their resolution.</li> <li>● Ensure all activities of the EC are properly documented. Maintain all documentation associated with each complaint/hearing in a secured area on the Drive.</li> </ul>	

### 6. Documentation

Proposed Process	Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Code of Conduct (Officers and Directors)</li> <li>● Code of Ethics, Licensed Officials</li> <li>● Code of Ethics, Coaches</li> <li>● Social Media Policy</li> <li>● Confidentiality Agreement</li> <li>● Community Code (to be included on membership applications)</li> <li>● Ethics Complaint form</li> <li>● Complaint Records, filed in a secure area of the Drive; accessible only to the EC Chair and the President</li> </ul>	

***Organization Name***

**COMMUNITY CODE**

The ***Organization Name*** is dedicated to good horsemanship and committed to fostering camaraderie and good sportsmanship in all our events. To that end, we ask all of our members to:

- Make decisions, in training and competition, with the welfare of your horse foremost in your mind.
- Support others; encourage those new to the sport and actively seek ways to help them learn.
- Be considerate of those contributing their time to put on events. Be courteous to officials, organizers, staff, and volunteers.
- Be honest in your dealings with others and demonstrate personal integrity in your words and deeds.
- Volunteer whenever you are able. By donating your time at local events or in service to the national organization, you are helping to grow this sport.

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

This Social Media Policy governs the commentary via social media by Officers, Directors, Licensed Officials, and Coaches when acting as an **organization name** official or can be perceived as acting as an **organization name** official. For the purposes of this policy, social media means any tool for online publication and commentary, including but not limited to blogs, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and any other new media.

This Social Media Policy does not limit a person's right to post their opinions as an individual, when not acting as an Officer, Director, Licensed Official, or Coach.

### Statement of Policy

Officers, Directors, Licensed Officials, and Coaches may use social media as a conduit for conveying their activities in the WE environment. All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards as outlined in the Code of Conduct (Officers and Directors) or Code of Ethics (Licensed Officials and Coaches).

Officers, Directors, Licensed Officials, and Coaches may not represent themselves as an authority for the organization on social media.

### Following the Policy

Officers, Directors, Licensed Officials, and Coaches must make every effort to consider all options within the context of appropriate civil behavior when responding to comments on social media, including the option of no response. It is best to err on the side of caution. When in doubt, do not post, comment, or engage. If you are unsure whether or not something is appropriate to post on social media, contact the Ethics Committee before making the post live. If you, for whatever reason, take an action that is in conflict with this policy, you may be contacted by the Ethics Committee to resolve the situation and may be asked to withdraw, correct, or revise the posting. Failure to adhere to this policy or to the resolution determined by the Ethics Committee may result in suspension of membership or licensure.

### What you Should Do

- Disclose your affiliation. If you talk about **organization name** matters that are within your role as an Officer, Director, Licensed Official, or Coach, you must disclose your affiliation with **organization name**.
- State that it is your opinion. Unless authorized to speak for the **organization name**, you must state that the views are your own. No one should speak on behalf of the **organization name** without express permission.
- Keep your comments respectful, professional, and helpful. Respectful discussions are a way for the sport and the organization to grow.
- Protect yourself. Be careful about what personal information you share online.
- Act responsibly and ethically. Do not misrepresent yourself.
- Honor our differences. **Organization name** will not tolerate discriminatory comments of any kind (including age, sex, race, color, creed, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship, disability, or marital status, or any other legally recognized protected basis under federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or ordinances).

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### What you Should Not Do

- Do not publish, post, or release information that is considered confidential.
- Do not discuss anything to do with a legal issue.
- Do not use the **organization name** logo unless expressly permitted.
- Licensed Officials:
  - Do not use your personal cell phone, computer, tablet, or any other similar device for social media while officiating. Do not post photos of horses or riders taken during the event, including during awards, until the show has ended.
  - Do not disclose specific details of actions taken during a competition, either by you or that you are aware of by virtue of being a Licensed Official. Reference can be made in a general way to actions of competitors or decisions by officials as long as individuals are not identified.
  - Do not share discussions regarding officiating that occurred during a competition.
  - Do not discuss specific horses, competitors, or licensed officials related to a competition on social media.

**ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
**CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

This Confidentiality Agreement protects information related to ethics complaints or investigations from intentional or accidental disclosure.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to serve on the Ethics or Appeals Committee. I will keep all information related to the complaint, the investigation, and the resolution in strict confidence, except as necessary to respond to a subpoena or other legal process, or for the purpose of seeking legal advice. Specifically, I will not disclose:

- The nature or subject of the complaint.
- The names of any of the people involved in the complaint.
- Any information regarding the investigation.
- Any information regarding the outcome.

I understand that I am not authorized to discuss the complaint in any official capacity, regardless of its outcome.

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## CODE OF ETHICS -- LICENSED OFFICIALS

In providing service to the working equitation community, I recognize the need to do so in a professional manner, and deal with the public and colleagues with the highest degree of integrity. By accepting licensing, I understand that the equine industry and clients expect a higher standard of conduct from those who hold this recognition. I agree to continually uphold my character and reputation.

I will adhere to the following creed:

- a. Execute duties without bias or prejudice.
- b. Ensure that the welfare of the horse is paramount and that every horse shall, at all times, be treated humanely.
- c. Adhere to relevant policies/procedures of *organization name* while upholding the U.S. Rules for Working Equitation.
- d. Conduct business in a manner that will enhance the image of *organization name* and the sport of Working Equitation.
- e. Avoid conflicts of interest, either real or perceived.
- f. Uphold the highest standard of professional behavior, recognizing that even the appearance of misconduct or impropriety can be very damaging to the reputation of *organization name* as well as my own.

I understand and agree that the licensing body has the right to investigate complaint(s) regarding a licensed official's alleged conduct. I will participate in the due process proceedings of the Ethics Committee as documented in the Policies and Procedures Manual. I have a right to review all information, documents, photographs, or other evidence used to evaluate my performance in my official duty. I will abide by the decision of the Ethics Committee or Appeals Committee once all avenues of due process have been exhausted.

I recognize that the licensing body has no binding relationship in the business relationship between a licensed official and show management.

I understand that in order to maintain licensure I must maintain a continuous membership with *organization name* and provide proof of continuing education as outlined in the Licensed Officials Program.

I have read and understand the Social Media Policy.

By signing this document, I agree to be bound by this Code of Ethics and the Licensed Officials Program. Failure to do so could result in suspension and/or loss of recognition.

**Printed Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Title** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## CODE OF ETHICS -- COACHES

In providing service to the working equitation community, I recognize the need to do so in a professional manner, and deal with the public and colleagues with the highest degree of integrity. I will adhere to the following creed:

- a. Execute duties without bias or prejudice.
- b. Ensure that the welfare of the horse is paramount and that every horse shall, at all times, be treated humanely.
- c. Adhere to relevant policies/procedures of *organization name* while upholding the U.S. Rules for Working Equitation.
- d. Conduct business in a manner that will enhance the image of *organization name* and the sport of Working Equitation.
- e. Avoid conflicts of interest, either real or perceived.
- f. Uphold the highest standard of professional behavior, recognizing that even the appearance of misconduct or impropriety can be very damaging to the reputation of *organization name* as well as my own.

I understand and agree that the licensing body has the right to investigate complaint(s) regarding a Coach's alleged conduct. I will participate in the due process proceedings of the Ethics Committee as documented in the Policies and Procedures Manual. I have a right to review all information, documents, photographs, or other evidence used to evaluate my performance in my official duty. I will abide by the decision of the Ethics Committee once all avenues of due process have been exhausted.

I understand that in order to maintain licensure I must maintain a continuous membership with *organization name* and provide proof of continuing education as outlined in the Coaches Network Program.

I have read and understand the Social Media Policy.

By signing this document, I agree to be bound by this Code of Ethics and the Coaches Network Program. Failure to do so could result in suspension and/or loss of recognition.

**Printed Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## CODE OF CONDUCT - OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Duly elected and appointed Officers and Directors of *organization name* shall agree to and abide by this Code of Conduct in promoting and advancing the sport of Working Equitation in the United States.

Officers and Directors shall commit to upholding and promoting the highest level of ethical conduct in the performance and administration of their duties on behalf of the *organization name*.

Officers and Directors recognize that even the appearance of misconduct or impropriety can be very damaging to the reputation and integrity of the *organization name* and will act accordingly.

### Accountability

- Officers and Directors shall abide by the articles of incorporation, bylaws, and policies/ procedures and amendments thereto of the *organization name*.
- Officers and Directors shall conduct all *organization name* business in good faith, with honesty, integrity, due diligence, and competence in governing and managing *organization name's* affairs.
- Officers and Directors shall exercise good faith in their dealings with *organization name* members, show managers, vendors, and the general public and will interact with these individuals in a responsible, respectful, and professional manner, free from discrimination, self-dealing, or harassment of any type.
- Officers and Directors shall uphold the strict confidentiality of all closed meetings and other confidential deliberations and communications.
- Officers and Directors shall hold themselves and each other accountable for the administration of financial responsibilities to the *organization name*.

### Conflict of Interest

- Conflict of Interest is defined as an existing or potential incompatibility between an Officer's or Director's private interests and his/her duties toward the *organization name*.
- Officers and Directors will avoid conflicts of interest, both real and perceived.
- Officers and Directors shall exercise the powers vested in their position for the benefit of the organization and its members, rather than for personal benefit.
- Officers and Directors will never use *organization name* assets or information for personal gain, financial or otherwise.
- Appointments to committees shall be made without bias or intent to influence the business of the committees.

### Social Media Policy

I have read and understand the Social Media Policy.

**Printed Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Position** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## Member Feedback – Ethics

The entire Merge Team would like to thank all of you for the excellent feedback, suggestions, and questions regarding the Ethics Proposal. We have amended the proposal in several areas as a result of your comments, as well as the Social Media Policy and Code of Ethics for Licensed Officials. We consulted with two attorneys to answer some of the legal questions, get input on the various associated documents, and provide assurance that we are traveling on safe ground with our approach. It has been a tremendous learning experience for all of us.

(1)	Public Comments	Work Team Recommendation/Comments
2	Wow! Lots of thought and hard work obviously went into this. Thank you!	
3	You have just created a SWAMP. The problem of enforcement along with fair and equable treatment is not feasible at this stage of the sport. And based upon past practices of both organizations making the rules up as you go along is worrisome. Has anyone considered asking for legal advice when you are dealing with legal matters? The legal system is not as simple as separating green from red marbles.	The Ethics Committee will not deal with legal matters; any legal matters would be handled in a court of law. The Ethics Committee has defined the principles and standards to be used as guidelines for behavior by those serving as representatives of the organization. With clear guidelines in place, in most cases our job will simply be to educate.
4	looks good; except I have a problem with this statement in the social media policy. "Do not engage in public arguments or discussions where public perception of the organization name could be negatively impacted by the exchange." I feel that there will be arguments/discussions, it is the nature of the beast, and that everyone had the right to voice their opinion, as you say earlier in the document, as long as they are identifying that it is their opinion and are respectful: no name calling, bashing, etc, the organization should not interfere with peoples right to speak out. Respectful arguments and discussions are a way for the organization to grow. I feel that instead of the statement as written, it would be better to make a statement that: all arguments/discussions will be conducted in a respectful, professional, helpful manner.	Excellent point. We amended the Social Media Policy to reflect this idea.

## Member Feedback – Ethics

<p>5</p>	<p>Thank you for your transparency by providing all the forms - I read through them all and they all seem reasonable. I have two comments.</p> <p>Under EC Housekeeping it states: Ensure that all Officers, Directors, Licensed Officials, and Coaches have read and understand the Social Media Policy.</p> <p>I question the word "Ensure" -- how can the EC "ensure" -- the bullet above says they will sign but I don't know if "ensure" is the correct word here. The LC can only truly be determined that they signed (can't determine they read) and it's impossible to determine that they "understand" (unless maybe you tested them). Perhaps better words could be used.</p> <p>"Determine through collection of signed Social Media agreements, that all Officers, Directors, Licenses Officials and Coaches have indicated they have read and understand the Social Media Policy."</p> <p>Also, where is it addressed (maybe through governance process) that the policy documentation and policies will be reviewed and/or modified through proposal and vote as necessary.</p>	<p>The Ethics Committee can “ensure” that Officers, Directors, Licensed Officials and Coaches have read and understand the Social Media Policy because a statement to that effect is included in each of the applicable documents they will sign, i.e., the Code of Conduct for Officers and Directors, Code of Ethics for Licensed Officials, and Code of Ethics for Coaches. The Merge Board considered including the Social Media Policy within those documents for clarity, but the decision was made to leave it as a standalone policy.</p> <p>The Policies and Procedures manual will address the procedure for policy change, which will include submitting a proposal and voting.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>In several of the documents (e.g. codes of conduct, ethics, etc.) you prohibit "discrimination". I think I know what you mean but you are creating a legal document and the actual definition of the word becomes operative. One definition of discrimination is "the ability to judge the quality of something based on its difference from other, similar things:" or "the ability to see the difference between two things or people" (Cambridge Dictionary) or ": the act of making or perceiving a difference : the act of discriminating" (Merriam Webster Dictionary).</p> <p>A member of the Board, the Executive Committee, a Licensed Official, even the Ethics Committee better be discriminating. Elsewise any decisions made by these, and similar groups of individuals, will be haphazard, inconsistent, and likely unfair.</p>	<p>The wording in the Social Media Policy was clarified to state that the organization will not tolerate discriminatory comments of any kind, including age, sex, race, etc. We have been advised by an attorney that “discrimination” is appropriate to use, and that it is important to include the scope of discrimination in this context.</p>

## Member Feedback – Ethics

<p>Another definition for discrimination is "the act, practice, or an instance of discriminating categorically rather than individually" (Merriam Webster Dictionary). Now, this can be of any various categories, e.g. race, religion, education level, age, gender, credentials, etc. The whole ethics process outlined here is discriminatory. You are categorically holding certain groups to a different standard. That is not bad, but it is discriminatory.</p> <p>Find a better and more accurate word to use or put enough clarifiers in that there is no room for misinterpretation.</p> <p>From the Code of Ethics - Licensed Officials: "I recognize that the licensing body has no binding relationship in the business relationship between a licensed official and show management. However, if show management fails to honor a contract and/or a written understanding with officials, I have the right to petition the licensing body and file charges against show management for breach of contract."</p> <p>Paraphrased it reads "You can complain if you want, but we can't do anything. You can always sue." You have said nothing. Petition the body to do what? You have no mechanism outlined and you explicitly state you have no binding relationship which would give you standing to make any sort of judgement. It does not belong in the document.</p> <p>The social media policy is a mine field. However, I will only point to one section, here. "Do not disclose any actions taken during a competition, either by you or that you are aware of by virtue of being a Licensed Official." On occasion I have seen blogs or posts by various licensed officials that will reference, in a general way, decisions they have made and/or actions of competitors and will use these as teaching tools for the benefit of riders and the sport. The examples were not inflammatory. Unless you were already familiar with the circumstance you would not know the players (except the official posting). They are edifying, not destructive. With this proposed language you have just shut that down.</p>	<p>The Code of Ethics for Licensed Officials has been amended to simply state, "I recognize that the licensing body has no binding relationship in the business relationship between a licensed official and show management."</p> <p>The Social Media Policy has been amended to allow for general comments.</p>
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## Member Feedback – Ethics

7	<p>Ethics Proposal: What happens if there is a complaint made against one of the members on the Ethics Committee? What about putting in something about the committee will help with remediation between the two parties?</p> <p>Embed the social media policy with in each Code of Conduct for Officers &amp; Directors, Licensed Official, and coaches. That way these people are not hunting and searching for the policy, and a way to ensure they are aware of the items in the policy. Also, this will shorten the policy document. It is long and wordy.</p>	<p>Complaints made against a member of the Ethics Committee will be handled the same as any other complaint. The individual would recuse him/herself from the process.</p> <p>The Merge Board considered including the Social Media Policy within those documents for clarity, but the decision was made to leave it as a standalone policy.</p>
8	<p>Any professional, ie coaches, should be added to the list of individuals not allowed to serve on the Ethics committee, to include those that have not been recognized as WE coaches.</p>	<p>The Ethics Proposal has been updated to preclude a WE Coach from serving on the Ethics Committee.</p>
9	<p>LOOKS GOOD</p>	
10	<p>These proposals are very important. I commend the committee that is working through the wording with these proposals. As a Canadian member with WEUnited I have personal experience North of the 49th parallel of illegal actions from the Board of Directors and President.</p> <p>Suggestions from legal counsel : In the event that there is conflict or dispute with a member at a licensed event</p> <p>1) A detailed written complaint with a non-refundable deposit should be enforced. Both parties complainant and accused should be informed of the dispute before leaving the show grounds by an EC official. Complainant should have the right to counter complain also with a detailed written description of the incident, action etc.</p> <p>2) It is important that Confirmation from the named individual in the complaint has indeed received from EC officials all written. Speaking from personal experience I was in Europe ironically at a Working Equitation event promoting Working Equitation when the National BOD sent me a complaint that expired while I was abroad.</p> <p>3) Complaints are often seen as a negative . So lets turn that around and create a process set up for positive criticism or suggesting ideas instead for improvement of the sport. If this is possible, then we can</p>	<p>The requirement for specific details regarding the complaint has been added to the Ethics process.</p> <p>We agree with all comments about complaints not carrying over to other events, fair play, and positivity.</p>

## Member Feedback – Ethics

	<p>all learn from each other on how to run WE shows/events smoother.</p> <p>4) Written complaints must have strict guidelines as to what information is required to be considered a serious issue. For example; Date, time, venue, horse, state the name of the individual that has done whatever, give a clear description of what occurred, leaving personal opinions out. For example "stomping off " or "coming with a bad attitude" is not worthy of a written complaint. Also - the complainant should write what and how they would like the EC to handle the written situation. Maybe both parties just need cooling off instead of dropping their gloves and arguing.</p> <p>5) EC - should recognize that the best solution is to have NO complaints and encourage - cooling off options, recognize that people are passionate about the sport , try to defuse, repair and deal with the issue ASAP , go to the individuals coaches and mediate through them.</p> <p>6)Social Media attracts negative news , which is wonderful that there is policy being implemented to reduce the talk.</p> <p>7) Incidents or complaints that happen at one event should stay at that event and not carry into the next sanctioned event. Members should not be denied entrance to another event/show because of something that happened two shows previous. If a member in good standing is shutout/turned away/denied registration for an event (this happened with social media and internal gossip) then that venue and show manager should not be allowed to host a sanctioned event.</p> <p>8) Fairplay is important - Once a dispute has gone through the process of submitting a written complaint and all the boxes have been ticked. The fine, punishment whatever should not affect points earned up to the time of when the EC has decided to bring down a gauntlet.</p> <p>9</p>	
11	<p>Thank you to the committee members that put all this together! This visual documentation format/table is very helpful for me to see the changes and work that went into taking current policies of both organizations into consideration and the final outcome plus rationale. I am looking forward to the future and the strength one US</p>	



**Member Feedback – Ethics**

	<p>WE group will have to grow the sport and continue to support all the WE enthusiasts!</p>	
<p>12</p>	<p>Christine Righeimer</p> <p>8:52 PM (0 minutes ago)</p> <p>to Confederation</p> <p>It is probably not surprising that I have many thoughts and questions about the ethics process and the confidentiality agreement. Has anyone consulted with an attorney about the confidentiality agreement? I am NOT soliciting business here. I do think the confidentiality agreement is woefully inadequate and missing many important items. I STRONGLY urge the merger committee to get an attorney for this legal document. Here are just a couple things that jump out at me.</p> <p>There is no definition of confidential information</p> <p>There is no provision for the event of a subpoena or court action that requires someone to reveal confidential information</p> <p>If there is a breach of this agreement, what is the jurisdiction and venue that applies?</p> <p>It is missing a lot of important boilerplate language, ie. severability clause and an "entire agreement" clause.</p> <p>Who pays attorney fees if there is a breach?</p> <p>With respect to the ethics process, it is my opinion it is greatly skewed against the accused. I believe a complaint is a serious matter and anyone that makes a complaint should be required to submit an affidavit signed under oath that the matters are factual and not just someone's opinion. I believe one of the goals should be to minimize complaints and make sure people know if one is submitted, it needs to be more than hearsay, opinion or speculation but actual observable facts and first hand knowledge. This is no less than is required in a court and keeps the committee from having to referee petty complaints (that have likely been a part of previous organizations).</p>	<p>We have been advised by an attorney that the Confidentiality Agreement is appropriate for its intended application, i.e., to ensure that members of the Ethics Committee and the Appeals Committee do not disclose any information related to ethics complaints or investigations. The Confidentiality Agreement is limited to this application.</p> <p>The Ethics Committee is capable of determining whether a complaint has merit or not. The interview with the person making the complaint is one of the first steps in the process. If the complaint is found to be frivolous (e.g., the product of someone's opinion or bad attitude), it will be dismissed.</p>

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	<p>I am not a fan of anonymous complaints. I believe if someone has a complaint, they should take responsibility for it and identify themselves. An accused is guaranteed the right to confront their accuser in court and an accused has a right to cross examine witnesses, etc. I believe any accused person should have a right to this as well because reputations are on the line if someone is found guilty. This also results in accountability and real complaints, not just wild allegations. People should not be allowed to defame another member without accountability.</p> <p>There is no definition of what can be used as evidence. I believe there should be clear guidelines for what can and can't be used as evidence.</p> <p>There is also no definition for what burden must be met for a finding of guilt. Is it beyond a reasonable doubt? Clear and convincing evidence? A preponderance of the evidence? Whichever one is chosen should also be defined so both parties are clear on what needs to be proven.</p> <p>I think this part of the new organization is SO IMPORTANT to prevent ongoing political issues and petty arguments in the future. The clearer the process, the better. If it is vague, it will be VERY HARD for the decision makers to know how to proceed and it will lead to many more disputes.</p>	<p>Litigation standards are not applicable to an Ethics Committee, the sole purpose of which is to determine whether a violation of the organization's ethics has been committed. The due process procedures that will be used by the Ethics Committee when an ethics violation has been alleged will ensure that both the complainant and the alleged wrongdoer will be permitted to fully and completely state their respective positions in fairness to both "sides." Neither will, or should be, held to the legal standard used in court trials for an ethics investigation.</p>
13	<p>Thank you to committee members working on these- they are important and deserve careful thought.</p> <p>1) fees for launching protests, complaints should be higher-they are \$200-\$300 in other organizations</p> <p>2) Conflict of interest needs to be clearly defined for Licensed Officials and Coaches and added in rulebook. I suggest following USEF by the letter for this.</p> <p>3)Coaches- I feel strongly we are not ready to endeavor to certify trainers or coaches yet. We barely have the Judge's program correctly outlined (it has a ways to go).</p> <p>4)What are the ramifications for breaching the social media policy?</p>	<p>1) We chose to keep the fee low enough so as to not deter someone from issuing a complaint because of the cost, but significant enough to avoid frivolous complaints. We are particularly conscious of the difficult economic environment.</p> <p>2) Conflict of Interest is clearly defined in the Rulebook (section 3.20) for licensed officials, show officials, and trainers/coaches.</p> <p>3) The organization does not certify Coaches. The application process is designed to identify an individual's WE experience and knowledge.</p> <p>4) As stated in the SMP, if someone takes an action that is in conflict with the SMP, he/she will be contacted by the Ethics Committee to resolve the</p>

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	How will that be handled?	situation and may be asked to withdraw, correct, or revise the posting. Failure to adhere to the policy or to the resolution determined by the Ethics Committee may result in suspension of membership or licensure.
14	I'd like to recognize the tremendous amount of work that went into this proposal. Thanks to all involved for the time and effort put forth. The social media policy contains some misspellings: Linkln (capitalize l in "ln") and Snapchat (not Shapchat). I feel that in the Internal Committee Process that the individual named should be allowed to know the name of the person filing the complaint. There are pro's and con's to both allowing and not allowing the individual to remain nameless, however I believe in the constitutional right that everyone should be able to face their accuser.	On the website it is spelled LinkedIn (lowercase "l"). Fixed Snapchat. Thanks!  We are dealing with an Ethics Committee and not a court of law, however, even in court accusers are on occasion allowed to remain anonymous. Given how small the WE community is we decided that anonymity for the person filing the complaint was important, if that individual requests anonymity.
15	agree	
16	Ethics confidentiality's should not be discussing in any capacity official or private .... very well thought proposals thank you for the work Francine King	
17	Ethics confidentiality's should not be discussing in any capacity official or private .... very well thought proposals thank you for the work Francine King	
18	I feel this is a greatly improved, clear and concise proposal. In particular, the social media policy gives the officials room to express opinions that the membership may benefit from and gives a framework for civil discourse regarding the growth of the sport.	
19	Looks good	
20	Good overall draft of policies. I have several question for further clarification: 1) Do Licensing Officers have limitation of service or yearly renewal? I am not clear on their specific role and timeline. 2) What is the posting of membership status then on social media- do you provide a list of those that have lapsed membership.	1) At this time there is no term limit for members of the Licensed Officials Committee. 2) Only current members will be listed on the website. Results from Ethics violations will be kept in strict confidence.

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<p>Meaning for members that have been restricted due to Ethics Violation, does the membership community become aware to report any further abuses or are the Ethics Committee/Coaches/Licensing Officers etc to track that?</p> <p>3) What is the level of reporting abuses per Social Media postings and interactions? Is that placed somewhere- perhaps a link to the FB group conduct guidelines? Do you provide a resource to the Social Media group manager as well to help direct those questions to?</p> <p>4) Is there a caveat somewhere in Community Code to provide times when either the vet/medical personnel is called, or the security/police? Or if there is any question of that, who to take the escalating situation to for that action?</p>	<p>3) A private email address will be set up for the Ethics Committee. Individuals can report suspected abuse of the SMP or ask questions related to potential ethics violations.</p> <p>4) The Community Code is intended solely as a guide for member behavior. There is no provision for any escalating action related to this code unless the activity falls within the realm of a formal complaint or protest.</p>
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