



UNITED STATES DRESSAGE FEDERATION™

BEST PRACTICES

Considerations for Dressage Competitions

Subject to frequent updates

Rev 7/14/20 (most recent revisions in *red*)

In addition to the COVID-19 materials that are posted on the USEF website, [Coronavirus Disease Resources and Updates](#), we have created the following Best Practices information to help facilitate any licensed (Level 1-3) or schooling show navigate through our 'new normal' times. Please keep in mind that this is a fluid document that will be updated as needed.

Competition Management will need to utilize the COVID-19 Best Practices that will work for their specific competition. Some general considerations have been outlined here, to help facilitate this. In all cases, social distancing and face coverings cannot be repeated often enough. Please be reminded that for recognized competitions, USEF requires 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. It is important to check the facemask or face covering requirements for the type of competition you are attending as requirements may differ. It is recommended that competition management discuss their intended procedures with their officials and their staff in order to arrive at the most equitable arrangements for all.

We encourage competition managements to use this list as a guide in formulating their own best practices. Familiarize yourself with the USEF Presidential Modifications (Pres Mods) that have been put in place at this time to General Rules and Dressage Rules. Note what each of these rules cover and the 'new normal' conditions that they create. Please be aware that these are very fluid, and some components may be changed at any time. It is a Best Practice to review these before any competition.

Pre-Show Preparation Things to Think About:

- Post online or in an e-mail all pertinent procedures that will be utilized during the competition. Encourage competitors to bring their own sanitizing materials for their own use.
- Send/arrange for arrival of all paperwork prior to the start of the show.
- Maximize pre-show check-in to try to remove the need for entering the show office upon arrival.
- Establish online, e-mail, and text procedures for normal office transactions.
- Consider arranging competitors' rides with a 'show and go' framework.
- Classes may be run out of sequence and rides from one group scheduled and then another group if this facilitates classes and helps minimize social contact.
- **However, Federation/USDF Championships classes must be run in their entirety and rides may only be scheduled out of sequence to allow a reasonable interval between two or more horses entered by the same rider in the same class or in different classes. Dressage Sport Horse Breeding classes must be run in their entirety (i.e. all horses in classes for the same age-group must be shown consecutively).**

- Consider your state/local limitations regarding the size of gatherings (exhibitor parties). These may not be possible at this time. The food requirement for competitions has been made optional. Think through how you want to handle hospitality or food options: Grab and go/pre-packaged food? Coffee stands with social distancing? Whatever you decide, it must be clear as to what will be available to competitors in your prize list.
- Consider your cancellation and credit policies to allow anyone with possible COVID-19 exposure to receive refunds or future show credits if they have last minute cancellations.
- Consider your vendor area. Work with vendors to see if there is sufficient space? Do they have COVID-19 plans for social distancing? Do you have sponsor obligations with them that may need to be modified?
- Do you have a backup plan if essential personnel (judge, TD, EMT) cannot attend the show at the last minute or have symptoms on a competition day?
- Do you have gloves, hand sanitizer, and facial coverings for volunteers, staff, and officials? Additional supplies should be available for competitors who have not come prepared. For licensed competitions, do you have a non-contact thermometer for monitoring temperatures?

In the Show Office

- Can you limit the necessity of anyone having to enter the horse show office by utilizing phones, e-mails, and texts for changes/adds/scratches/feed and bedding orders?
- Look at the size and layout of your show office. Can you maintain social distancing? Do you need to limit the number of people in it and are plexiglass barriers necessary?
- Packets and packet distribution. Have packets available for pick up outside the show office, in an area which allows for social distancing. All pertinent procedures that will be utilized during the competition should be included in the packet. For example, reminders about facial coverings and social distancing, any schooling restrictions, any grazing or exercise details, specific parking requirements, etc. should be included.
- Consider touch points that will require constant cleaning: clipboards, pens, writing surfaces, etc.
- Provide ready access to disinfecting wipes, hand sanitizer, and gloves for persons when in the show office.
- Utilize online and phone-based checkout, or schedule check out times to limit numbers in the office.

In Stabling, Warmup, and Show Grounds

- Can you institute hand washing and/or sanitation stations in all stables, warmup, and competition areas?
- Have you posted enough signage about maintaining social distancing, facial coverings etc., especially around the warmup and competition enclosures?
- Can you organize your stabling layout with the need for social distancing between animals and/or competitor groups? Look at aisle flow, points of congestion such as equipment in the aisles or tack stalls, cross ties, tents or pop-ups, and washracks. Discourage any equipment sharing such as a hose in the washrack. What areas might need sanitizing stations?
- Look at your traffic flow from the warmup arena and competition arena and try to limit congestion.
- Look at the size of your warmup. Do you need to reconfigure it? Might you need to restrict the number of horses? Can you accommodate non-compete horses?
- Ask competitors to limit their support personnel in the warmup area to avoid congestion.

- Consider signage about leaving equipment or attire unattended; such as coolers, jackets, whips, and stable towels.
- As spectators are not permitted, encourage people to not remain on the grounds outside of what is necessary.
- Consider the issue of restrooms or portable toilets. This is a major concern of competitors. These need to be cleaned often and stocked with wipes/sanitizer.

Competition Arenas

- Are judge's booths large enough for two with social distancing measures? If using a booth, consider installing a Plexiglas or heavy plastic divider with a small space to pass tests through.
- If in separate vehicles or booths, will you use headsets, or phones? Can you provide a dedicated channel? Will you need charging equipment? If you have multiple judges, how will they communicate?
- How will you provide water/snacks, hand sanitizer, etc.
- Gate closing is not required in Level 4 & 5 (for CDI's FEI rules take precedence) competitions. Management should consider having a consistent policy for all classes in the competition.

How will Tests be Handled

- Will you use a software system that makes judging touchless?
- If the scribe is in a separate location, will a runner wearing gloves deliver the test to the judge for review and signature?
- Whatever method you establish, the review and signature needs to occur before the placement of the class.

Scores and Scoreboards

- For licensed competitions, there are several Pres Mods that you need to review that deal with this area.
- You need to consider how you will be posting scores and the need for social distancing. There could be an emphasis on utilizing online and e-mailed scores rather than just the scoreboard.

Ribbons and Awards

- Consider how to get ribbons/awards to competitors in a COVID-19 safe manner, which minimizes contact with multiple individuals. Consider a place with minimal congestion. The principle of privacy for tests needs to be maintained.
- These times warrant creativity. Are there other approaches that could be utilized? Could you mail things out after the completion of the show? Can you go ribbon-less and provide a ribbon certificate via e-mail?

Equipment Check Procedure – this is the established procedure to be followed at this time for licensed competitions

- Equipment checking will be done on a random basis (not a third of the class at this time).
- The number of competitors who are checked will be up to the equipment checker in consultation with the TD.
- The equipment checker should maintain a 6-foot distance, walking around but not touching the horse.
- If any issue is apparent, blood on the horse or illegal equipment, the TD will be called and document the issue by taking pictures for your Federation report.

- If blood is suspected and closer inspection is required, the rider should dismount and move into a socially distant enough position during the check.
- Have a whip length measurement marked location. Rider or groom will check the whip while being observed by the equipment checker.
- The fly hood will be removed and shown to the equipment checker. Ears will not be physically checked.
- In order to inspect any questionable bit(s) or equipment, the TD will follow the competitor to a designated area.
- The TD will check the removed equipment while maintaining social distancing.

Procedure for Inspecting Horses Closely in the Arena:

- If the judge discovers something of concern during a ride, they may, while maintaining social distance, inspect the horse/rider visually. They should take a photograph and call the TD or show management for closer inspection outside of the arena.

Sport Horse Breeding Classes

- **Secretaries & Competition Management should decide on how they will handle handler/assistant handler release forms, waivers and wristbands at the competition and communicate this effectively to all participants prior to the competition.**
- Consider social distancing between officials, staff, and competitors when you hold these classes.
- Consider the size and layout of the holding area with respect to social distancing.
- Judges may wish to consider self-scribing and completing their own scoresheets. If this is done, it may require extra time in the schedule.
- Consider all touchpoints in regard to clipboards, pens, microphones etc., and the access to hand sanitizers, gloves, and disinfecting items.
- How will you deal with the movement of scoresheets from judges, scribes, and runners?
- **USDFBC Series Finals Awards Ceremonies will be optional and if held, social distancing must be observed.**
- **Facemasks are required on Handlers and Assistant Handlers while in the competition arena unless social distancing (minimum of 6') can be maintained at all times between judges, scribes and handlers.**

Judges and TDs

- Familiarize yourself with the USEF Presidential Modifications (Pres Mods) that have been put in place at this time to General Rules and Dressage Rules. Note what each of these rules cover and the 'new normal' conditions that they create. Please be aware that these are very fluid and some components may be changed at any time. It is a Best Practice to review these before every competition.
- Discuss with competition management travel, hotel, acquiring food, and what practices the competition will have in place.
- Consider having a backup plan that you can recommend for competitions you are contracted for, as to substitute judges or TDs, in case you cannot attend at the last minute.

Specific resources or tools to utilize:

[Licensed Competitions COVID-19 Toolkit for Competition Organizers & Participants](#)

[USEF Webinar on Demand: Planning for a Safe Return to Competition after COVID-19](#)