

World Conformation Horse Association (WCHA)
Judges Qualification Guidelines

A WCHA approved judge is entrusted with maintaining the integrity of the association. The privilege of the designation bears the responsibility of maintaining continuity among peers, keeping a positive perception of the conformation horse, and most importantly a WCHA approved judge must uphold the conformation standard set forth by the WCHA and objectively place the horses according to the standard when judging competitive events. A WCHA judge must also be responsible, accountable, of good character and of unquestionable integrity.

Membership

- Be a member in good standing of the World Conformation Horse Association.
- Any judge without a current membership in good standing for longer than 30 days will have their approved status revoked.

Guidelines

- A judge may not judge his or her parents, children, spouse, and spouse's parents, relatives of either the judge or his or her spouse. A judge may not judge anyone that lives in the judge's household or an employee or employer. If a judge cannot exercise an objective opinion free from bias, prejudice or outside influence because of any above or below mentioned relationships, then in the case of multiple judges he/she must remove themselves from the event/class in which the individual(s) presenting the conflict is exhibiting. Should there only be one judge then the individual presenting the conflict shall not be allowed to exhibit in the competition.
- A horse may not be shown under a judge if that judge has received remuneration for, including, commission payments and reimbursement for related expenses, or has been an owner, exhibitor, trainer or agent of that horse within the previous three months.
 - Specific examples of disqualification to include, but not limited to: remuneration for riding; training; exhibiting; schooling, including instructing exhibitor on subject horse; or driving subject horse, etc.
 - Remuneration for ancillary services is not subject to disqualification. Specific examples to include, but not limited to: hauling fees; breeding fees and service charges; veterinary services; insurance fees; Sale Company commissions and related fees paid to the Sale Company, etc.
 - All questions regarding qualification or disqualification should be addressed to the Chairman of the Judging and Education Committee who will research in consultation with the other members of the Committee or Executive Committee as appropriate and provide guidance. All questions should be raised well in advance of the competition event to be judged.

- Final interpretation and determination of qualification or disqualification will be up to the sole discretion of the WCHA Executive Committee.
- Should a conflict not be identified in advance of the competition, the judge should notify the show representative or show management of the non-compliance at the first opportunity and in all cases prior to the class being placed. The exhibitor will be counted as an entry; however, the horse shall not be placed in the class or in the case of multiple judges not be placed under that judge. The judge in conflict must report the conflict on his/her card. Show management will notify the Chairman of the Judging and Education Committee of the non-compliance. The Judging and Education Committee will investigate the matter and make a recommendation to the Executive Committee who will review the recommendation and take appropriate actions, including disciplinary action. All parties involved including, but not limited to, the owner; exhibitor; and judge will be held accountable in the event of non-compliance and subject to appropriate actions as determined by the Executive Committee, including disciplinary action.
- A judge shall not exhibit at any WCHA event in which he or she is the officiating judge or member of the officiating judges' panel.
 - At the approval of the Chairman of the Judging and Education Committee, a judge shall be permitted to substitute for the unplanned absence of another scheduled judge in order to permit the show management to continue with the event.
- Judges must at all times act in the best interest of the WCHA and the welfare of the horse.
- Judges must adhere to the Guidelines outlined in this document as well as the WCHA Judges Code of Ethics, WCHA by-laws, which include the membership code of conduct and any other WCHA rules and regulations in effect at a particular point in time.
- Judges must dress appropriately so as to respectfully represent the WCHA including a western hat, boots, belt, long sleeve shirt with collar, tie/scarf/pin, as appropriate, jacket or blazer and dress pants or slacks.
- It is recommended that a judge shall not appear on the show grounds more than 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the show, unless directed differently by show management nor may any member of the judges immediate family be on the grounds at any time during the WCHA event.
- No judge shall visit with a trainer, owner, exhibitor, agent or any person/people that are affiliated with a horse that is being exhibited at the show which he/she is judging.

- A judge who undertakes an obligation to judge a show must make every attempt to fulfill the commitment with all reasonable effort and timely communicate with the show management any inability to do so, to allow show management the maximum time in order to seek a suitable replacement. The judge must also notify the WCHA Judging and Education Committee in writing as soon as possible or within a minimum of 10 days of the circumstances which prevented him/her from judging the show.

Application, Testing, Approval and Re-Testing

- The Judging and Education Committee will oversee the application and testing process.
 - *A WCHA member cannot be both a member of the Judging and Education Committee or the Standard Committee and, an applicant for a Judges Card.* Should a current member of either Committee want to be considered an applicant for a Judges Card, they must temporarily take an inactive leave from their respective Committee during the process. If an individual applies but does not receive a card then their status on the Committee will become active once again. Carded Judges will not be allowed to be a part of the Judging and Education Committee; they are however, available to become members of other WCHA Committees.
 - A sub-section of the Judging and Education Committee and/or Standard Committee, consisting of 3-4 members (including the Chairman of the Judging and Education Committee) appointed by the current Chairman of the Judging and Education Committee, will be used to screen applications for consideration in the testing phase and will also be used as the Judges Panel during the testing phase. Other members may be used to help coordinate the process.
 - The Chairman of the Judging and Education Committee will not compete in WCHA sponsored events during the time in which he/she serves as Chairman of the Committee.
 - The panel will remain in place through 2 application and testing cycles and then a new panel will be appointed.
- Each applicant must be endorsed by 1 WCHA Founding member, 1 WCHA EC member or Director and 2 WCHA members.
- Applicant must have earned at least 10 halter points in any Western Stock Horse breed in the past 5 years or have been an active participant in the Western Stock Horse industry within the last five years.
 - “Active participant” will be determined at the discretion of the Judging and Education Committee.
- An application must be completed as well as signing of the Code of Ethics, signifying compliance.

- All applications will be reviewed by the WCHA Judges and Education Committee and a recommendation for approval or disapproval made to the Executive Committee for final review and approval.
- Testing will consist of a written test (applicant must earn at least a score of 85%), an interview, live judging and oral reasons.
- Final judging qualification and approval will be a compilation of the application process, due diligence on “member in good standing” and “compliance with members code of conduct and Judges Code of Ethics” as well as results of the testing phase. The Judging and Education Committee will make a final recommendation of qualification and approval to the Executive Committee, who will maintain the sole discretion to grant final approval and qualification as a WCHA judge to any individual.
 - An applicant who is not a “member in good standing” or found to have violated the “code of conduct/ethics” for any period of time during the application and qualification process shall automatically be disqualified from further consideration.
- Re-testing or a “refresher” will take place every 2-3years as determined by the Judging and Education Committee in conjunction with the Executive Committee.

Judges Compliance

- WCHA shall reserve the right to take action, including disciplinary action up to and including loss of judges card and removal of any individual from the judges list based on:
 - Inappropriate behavior while judging or participating in WCHA sanctioned events, including the following but not limited to: abusive or foul language, blatant personal misconduct, showing favoritism to or discrimination against either an individual or horse.
 - Intimidating, or attempting to intimidate, a contestant, owner or fellow judge while judging or participating in WCHA sanctioned events.
 - Violation of the Code of Conduct and/or Code of Ethics.
 - Not being a member in good standing for a period of longer than 30 days.
 - Violation of the Guidelines described above.
 - A complaint as appropriate.
 - Poor performance as appropriate.
 - Poor Performance may be defined in a variety of ways, such as but not limited to: complaints and outcomes as determined by results of standard WCHA judges auditing procedures.
 - In all cases a review of the circumstances leading to the assertion of poor performance will be reviewed by the Judging and Education Committee and a recommendation of action made to the Executive Committee for final determination and action. The Executive

Committee retains the sole discretion to determine and implement appropriate actions.

- Individuals in question shall be required to pay their expenses incurred during the investigation and due diligence process leading to a determination and appropriate action.
- WCHA shall reserve the right to establish advanced ratings for judges based on the need and association growth.

Judges Review

- WCHA approved judges will be reviewed at the discretion of the Judging and Education Committee based on their lifetime judging record. Any judge turning 70 years of age will be required to re-test, be physically able to judge a WCHA event and pass a vision test.

Judges Complaints

- All complaints regarding a WCHA judge must be filed within one week (7) days of the infraction or the last day of the show in question, whichever date is latest (postmarked or hand delivered).
- All complaints must be in writing and filed with the WCHA accompanied by a money order, cashier's check, or personal check in the amount of \$100.
- A thorough review and investigation of the complaint will be conducted by the Judging and Education Committee. The Judging and Education Committee will make a recommendation to the Executive Committee who will complete a review of the recommendation and take appropriate actions. If said judge is found to be in violation of a WCHA rule or that the judge has engaged in conduct which is inconsistent with the privilege and honor of being designated a WCHA judge, disciplinary action shall be effective immediately regardless of any appeal which may be exercised.
- A judge shall be notified in writing of the action being taken by the WCHA. The decision will be final, and binding. An appeal may be filed in writing with the Chairman of the Judging and Education Committee within two weeks (14 days) of the date of the letter notifying the judge of the disciplinary action.

Judges Grievance

- A judge or judges must file a grievance against an exhibitor in writing within one week (7 days) after the infraction occurs.
- Any grievance against an exhibitor must be filed with the Chairman of the WCHA Judging and Education Committee without a filing fee and the case will be reviewed by the appropriate committee.

Judges Procedures

- The 1st inspection of the conformation horse will be movement. The horse will start at a marker and begin at the walk. One half the distance to the judge, the exhibitor will begin to trot their horse, trotting to and past the judge to the marker and then continue to trot while making a left turn at the marker. After trotting to one or all judges the exhibitor will line up in a head to tail line. Any horse that is lame or has uncharacteristic movement shall be excused immediately; however, the horse will be counted as an entry.
 - Judges must agree to judge according to the Judges Guidelines as developed and in effect at any given time.
 - Judges must line-up horses in order of preliminary final order for a final inspection prior to the final placing of the class. All horses must be called out and placed individually for final placing.
 - Horses must be judged by an individual inspection.
 - The judge will inspect every stallion for the heritable traits of cryptorchidism and parrot mouth. Any stallion that exhibits either condition will be disqualified. A judge will inspect every mare for the heritable trait of parrot mouth; any mare that exhibits a parrot mouth will be disqualified.
 - The judge will individually score each horse in accordance with the conformation standard set forth by the WCHA.
 - A judge must place a minimum of 15 horses or all horses if there are fewer than 15 in the class.
 - The judge must give oral reasons in a least one class, but not limited to just one set of oral reasons, at a WCHA sanctioned event justifying the placings of the class. The decision as to which class and how many classes the judge will give oral reasons on will be at the discretion of the show management and the WCHA Judging and Education Committee.

*All communications and filings should be addressed and sent to the WCHA Administrative office and they will be distributed to the appropriate WCHA Committee or EC member(s). Communications and filings should be sent with a confirmation of delivery. E-mails and faxes, with exception of forms of communication requiring accompanying fees, are acceptable forms of communication and filing as long as confirmation of delivery is secured.