



USEA/USEF EVENTING SAFETY PROGRAMS, STUDIES AND INITIATIVES

USEF/USEA Joint Cross-Country Course Advisor Program

USEF Course Advisors visit an average of 19 Cross-Country Courses each year in an effort to maintain consistent development of course design, education of designers and construction of safe courses.

USEF Frangible Technology Grant Program

Organizers of USEF Recognized Eventing Competitions offering Preliminary levels and above are provided with up to \$500.00 worth of Frangible Devices. From 2008-2013 the USEF provided Frangible Pins to organizers and in 2013 the program was expanded to include innovative new technology such as MIMs clips and reverse pinning kits. The information is available [here](#).

Statistical Analysis

The USEA, with the assistance of the USEF, tracks in detail, the number of starters, falls and types of falls each year in the sport of eventing. The statistics demonstrate that the safety initiatives supported by eventing organizations are effectively minimizing risk. While falls will never be eliminated, the organizations are committed to making the sport as safe as possible. These statistics are posted [here](#).

USEF Rule Changes

Since 2008, the USEF Rules for Eventing have evolved toward protecting the safety of horse and rider. The USEF works closely with the USEA and the FEI on rule development and implementation. A summary of changes is below:

- Introduced rule for Loss of Establishment in 2009: horses and riders can lose their qualification to compete at any level if they demonstrate incompetence at that level through eliminations or falls.
- Reduced the number of refusals allowed on Cross-Country prior to elimination for Training level and above.
- Expanded requirement for wearing protective vests from only the Cross-Country test to include the warm-up area. Invoked the penalty of Elimination for those in violation.
- Included rule requiring portable Cross-Country fences to be secured to the ground.
- Increased qualifying requirements for FEI Competitions to include a provision in which one of the required Qualifying Results must be achieved within a 12 month period prior to the competition. USEF requirements are more stringent than FEI's.
- Return to Play Rule – a rider who falls at an event must have medical clearance before competing again (EV112 Accidents Involving Competitors).
- Expanded EV111 – Dangerous Riding – now includes provisions allowing the Ground Jury and Technical Delegates to stop riders on course for dangerous riding, riding an exhausted horse, excessive pressing of a tired horse, riding an obviously lame horse, excessive use of the whip and/or spurs or riding in an unsafe way. Provisions were also added which allow the President of the Ground Jury to designate several deputies who may flag down competitors for the above named reasons.
- Introduced a rule requiring new Cross-Country obstacles for which frangible technology is appropriate to be built using frangible technology, and requiring retrofitting of existing obstacles to the same code within a one year period of the rule.
- EV112 – Dangerous Riding – amended to deem that a score including 25 Penalty Points for Dangerous Riding may not be considered a National Qualifying Result.
- EV113.2 – Medical Cards – expanded to require additional information about medical history, allergies and injuries (particularly head injuries).
- EV 140.4 – Safety Flag Rule – Introduced a rule requiring the use of safety flags on certain fences. The rule defines the fence types on which safety flags must be utilized, the specifications for the flags, and instructions about the proper securing of these flags on the jumps.

The USEF Rules for Eventing are available [here](#).



Creation of Eventing Watch List

Notifies riders at USEF and FEI endorsed Eventing competitions that their riding has been classified as potentially dangerous. The Watch List is a list of horse/rider combinations which will be observed more closely at upcoming USEF and FEI endorsed competitions due to safety concerns. Multiple Watch List reports will result in mandatory training with a USEA ICP Certified Instructor. [The information is available here.](#)

Implementation of Eventing Fall Forms

Fall Forms are now used to record in detail all falls occurring at obstacles during the cross-country phase. These forms are reviewed to identify trends in factors which may contribute to falls.

USEA Safety Studies and Research

- Pulmonary hemorrhage – Dr. Kent Allen and Dr. Catherine Kohn have formed a team to examine and investigate pulmonary events as causes of equine fatalities. The USEA is providing funding for necropsies for all equine fatalities that occur during an eventing competition. [The information is available here.](#)

- Speed Study – A speed and motion study will be done in order to determine the range of speeds that horses must travel in order to achieve the optimum time at all levels. In addition, this study will track the maximum speed traveled at all levels. [The information is available here.](#)

This study will relate to both the stress placed on the horse and the overall safety of horse and rider.

- Equine Physiology Study - When it was announced that the 1996 Olympic Games were to be held in Atlanta, Georgia in the summer, the USEA embarked on the Equine Physiology Study to research methods to protect horses from the effects of high heat and humidity. Extensive testing was done by world renowned veterinarians and scientists. The knowledge gained completely reversed some of the practices that had previously been used to cool horses down. The large misting fans now in use at many events in the summer were first used in Atlanta. This protocol and others put in place ensured that no horses suffered heat related problems and the weather was eliminated as a safety factor in the 1996 Olympic Games.

- Bit Study - With the introduction of many new types of bits, the USEA commissioned a study by Dr. Hilary Clayton of Michigan State University to examine how certain bits worked in a horse's oral cavity. Several different bits were used and different sizes of horses participated in the study. The results revealed that the size and shape of the oral cavity varies greatly from horse to horse, even horses of the same size and breed. Correct bit selection for the individual horse is essential to ensure the horse's comfort, to reduce resistance and enhance performance.

USEA Initiative

Rule EV119 - Competitor Representative - the USEA proposed and supported through approval and implementation by the USEF, Rule EV119 - the Competitor Representative. This rule requires organizers to designate qualified competitors to inspect the cross-country and jumping courses with the TD or the President of the Ground Jury and to communicate immediately any issue of safety or concern, including obstacle construction or placement, distances in combinations, footing, potential lighting issues, etc. The Competitor Representatives are further required to make themselves available to all competitors who may have concerns. Representatives are then required to follow up with written reports that are submitted to the USEA for review and subsequently forwarded to the USEF's Eventing Technical Committee and the organizer of the event.

Introduced circa 1998, the position of Safety Coordinator is now a mandatory rule at all events. To assist organizers, the USEA Safety Committee wrote the USEA Safety Coordinator's Manual and updates it on a timely basis. An addendum regarding the handling of an equine emergency was added five years ago.

FEI Eventing Risk Management

The USEF actively participates in the FEI's Eventing Risk Management which compiles worldwide statistics every year in the interest of eventing safety and horse welfare. [The information is available here.](#)