

# **THE GODSHALL ACCESSIBILITY REPORT**

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IN HONOR OF CHRISTOPHER GODSHALL

HIS LEGACY WILL CONTINUE TO DRIVE OUR COMMITMENT TO CREATING A MORE  
ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL

**USEA DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE**

# THE CHRISTOPHER GODSHALL LEGACY REPORT ON UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY

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Christopher Godshall was never able to watch his daughters compete in cross-country.

He was diagnosed with Myasthenia Gravis when they were young, and as their riding adventures became more serious, his mobility decreased. By the time his oldest was competing in dressage and eventing, attending shows became nearly impossible. The venues had little shade, and motorized wheelchairs and golf carts were not allowed near or on the courses on show days. It was both frustrating and heartbreaking for his family that he could attend the dressage events but not much else. This frustration, combined with a background in design, inspired his wife, Deborah, to join the conversation about accessibility in the horse show community.

Chris was very supportive of the efforts the USEA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity committee has made to allow greater access for everyone. His continued decline, however, led to his passing on April 1, 2024. Although he is no longer with us, his memory lives on in the ongoing work to ensure that no one else is prevented from fully participating in the activities they love. His legacy will continue to drive our commitment to creating a more inclusive environment for all.



# **PROBLEM/SOLUTION SCENARIOS**

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COMPETITORS

# **SCENARIO 1**

PROBLEM #1.1: Permanently or temporarily disabled competitors need to walk the XC course.

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## **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Allow competitors to employ low-impact, personal motorized vehicles to traverse the course.

\* The Federal Law analysis of a “reasonable accommodation” permits the event sponsor to apply three factors in considering the reasonableness of the accommodation requested. See charts on next page.



# PROBLEM 1.1

ITEMS MARKED AS XX\* WOULD BE EVENT SPECIFIC

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
<p>Abuse of privilege by competitors and potentially their associates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inability to identify competitors with legitimate disabilities</li><li>• Inability to enforce due to inability to identify permitted users</li><li>• Lack of real punishment (no deterrence effect)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Require competitors seeking accommodations to formally request such accommodations in their event registration at least <b>XX*</b> days/weeks before event start date</li><li>• Require competitors seeking accommodations to provide a doctor's note with their registration request as substantiating documentation</li><li>• Provide (unremovable) disposable wristbands in permitted competitor's show packet to be worn while using approved vehicle</li><li>• USEF Rules allow for Yellow Card penalties to deter abuse of privilege</li></ul>
<p>Venue's inability to enforce due to low manpower</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regional Volunteer Coordinator to personally provide or assist with gaining necessary manpower to support enforcement</li><li>• Provide enforcement rights to all or a certain level of show organizers and volunteers</li></ul>

# PROBLEM 1.1 CON'TD

ITEMS MARKED AS XX\* WOULD BE EVENT SPECIFIC

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
Damage to XC course footing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Require personal motorized vehicles to weigh less than <b>XXXXlbs*</b></li><li>• Only permit accommodated competitors to ride personal motorized vehicles on course</li><li>• Require competitors seeking this accommodation to include motorized vehicle type and weight on registration form (to be approved or denied along with disability accommodation)</li><li>• Require competitors to “register” their motorized vehicles at the show office upon arrival to ensure it is the same vehicle identified on previously submitted registration form</li><li>• Prohibit motorized vehicles from accessing certain sections of the course during or following poor weather conditions</li></ul>

## **PROBLEM 1.2**

Permanently or temporarily sight restricted competitors need visual/audio cues at venue.

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## **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

**Dressage:** Inform competitor of the visual cue that will be used (e.g., colored paper, flag, etc.) to signify countdown to enter arena; Readers allowed at all levels of competition in dressage.

**SJ:** Oversized numbers or flags allowed in jump courses. Allow SJ judge to use a visual cue (e.g., colored paper, flag, etc.) to signify countdown to begin course.

**XC:** Visual cues such as a flag vs whistle/horn in dressage and/or digital number countdown provided at XC start box.

# PROBLEM 1.2

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
<p>Abuse of privilege by competitors and potentially their associates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inability to identify competitors with legitimate disabilities</li><li>• Inability to enforce due to inability to identify permitted users</li><li>• Lack of real punishment (no deterrence effect)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See Mitigations/Counters for Problem #1.1</li></ul>
<p>Venue's inability to enforce due to low manpower</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See Mitigations/Counters for Problem #1.1</li></ul>



## **PROBLEM 1.3**

Permanently or temporarily disabled competitors need equipment modifications.

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## **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Competitors see USEF rules:  
GR1310 Dispensations/Classification Certificate and GR1312 Applying for a Dispensation  
Certificate/Classification

# PROBLEM 1.3

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
<p>Abuse of privilege by competitors and potentially their associates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inability to identify competitors with legitimate disabilities</li><li>• Inability to enforce due to inability to identify permitted users</li><li>• Lack of real punishment (no deterrence effect)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See Mitigations/Counters for Problem #1.1</li></ul>
<p>Venue's inability to enforce due to low manpower</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See Mitigations/Counters for Problem #1.1</li></ul>
<p>Riders, please be advised that USEF has a program to review/grant waivers (i.e., dispensation certificates)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Educate riders on program via USEA website/publications</li><li>• Add "accessibility" section to website</li></ul>

## **PROBLEM 1.4**

Permanently or temporarily disabled competitors need specialized parking at venues/stables.

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## **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Ensure accessible parking is clearly marked and allow competitors with special needs to park closer to stables and venues.

# PROBLEM 1.4

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
Abuse of privilege by competitors and potentially their associates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Require competitors seeking special parking accommodations to formally request such accommodations in their event registration at least X days/weeks before event start date</li></ul>
Venue's inability to enforce due to low manpower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide parking attendants with list of vehicles that will require special parking accommodations</li><li>• Regional Volunteer Coordinator to personally provide or assist with gaining necessary manpower to support enforcement</li></ul>
Vehicular movement, engine noise and power chair lifts may be very distracting/disturbing to horses during competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vehicles may only be moved between classes</li></ul>



# **PROBLEM/SOLUTION SCENARIOS**

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OWNERS/TRAINERS



## **PROBLEM 2.1**

Permanently or temporarily disabled owners and trainers need to be able to travel about the event venue.

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## **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Allow owners/trainers to employ low-impact, personal motorized vehicles to traverse the course.

\* The Federal Law analysis of a "reasonable accommodation" permits the event sponsor to apply three factors in considering the reasonableness of the accommodation requested.

# PROBLEM 2.1

ITEMS MARKED AS XX\* WOULD BE EVENT SPECIFIC

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
<p>Abuse of privilege by competitors and potentially their associates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inability to identify competitors with legitimate disabilities</li><li>• Inability to enforce due to inability to identify permitted users</li><li>• Lack of real punishment (no deterrence effect)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Require competitors seeking accommodations to formally request such accommodations in their event registration at least <b>XX*</b> days/weeks before event start date</li><li>• Require competitors seeking accommodations to provide a doctor's note with their registration request as substantiating documentation</li><li>• Provide (unremovable) disposable wristbands in permitted competitor's show packet to be worn while using approved vehicle</li><li>• USEF Rules allow for Yellow Card penalties to deter abuse of privilege</li></ul>
<p>Venue's inability to enforce due to low manpower</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regional Volunteer Coordinator to personally provide or assist with gaining necessary manpower to support enforcement</li><li>• Provide enforcement rights to all or a certain level of show organizers and volunteers</li></ul>

# PROBLEM 2.1 CON'TD

ITEMS MARKED AS XX\* WOULD BE EVENT SPECIFIC

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
Damage to XC course footing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Require personal motorized vehicles to weigh less than <b>XXXXlbs*</b></li><li>• Only permit accommodated competitors to ride personal motorized vehicles on course</li><li>• Require competitors seeking this accommodation to include motorized vehicle type and weight on registration form (to be approved or denied along with disability accommodation)</li><li>• Require competitors to “register” their motorized vehicles at the show office upon arrival to ensure it is the same vehicle identified on previously submitted registration form</li><li>• Prohibit motorized vehicles from accessing certain sections of the course during or following poor weather conditions</li></ul>

## **PROBLEM 2.2**

Permanently or temporarily disabled owners and trainers need access to warm up areas.

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## **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Allow personal motorized vehicles to approach within xx feet of warm up area(s); identify designated areas within warmups for small motorized vehicles and/or chairs

# PROBLEM 2.2

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
<p>Abuse of privilege by competitors and potentially their associates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inability to identify competitors with legitimate disabilities</li><li>• Inability to enforce due to inability to identify permitted users</li><li>• Lack of real punishment (no deterrence effect)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See Mitigations/Counters for Problem #2.1</li></ul>
<p>Potential hazard created by personal motorized vehicles in and around open warm up areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Designated areas delineated for personal motorized vehicle parking outside of but close to designated warm up areas.</li><li>• All coaching within warm up area must be done on foot</li><li>• No personal motorized vehicles allowed inside the bounds of warm up areas</li></ul>



## **PROBLEM 2.3**

Permanently or temporarily disabled owners and trainers need specialized parking at venues/stables.

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## **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Ensure accessible parking is clearly marked and allow competitors with special needs to park closer to stables and venues.

# PROBLEM 2.3

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
Abuse of privilege by competitors and potentially their associates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See Mitigations/Counters for Problem #2.1</li></ul>
Venue's inability to enforce due to low manpower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See Mitigations/Counters for Problem #2.1</li></ul>
Vehicular movement, engine noise and power chair lifts may be very distracting/disturbing to horses during competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vehicles may only be moved between classes</li></ul>



# **PROBLEM/SOLUTION SCENARIOS**

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SPECTATORS

## **PROBLEM 3.1**

Permanently or temporarily disabled spectators need to be able to travel about the event venue.

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## **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Designate routes and areas for viewing and following competitors. Allow spectators to employ low-impact, personal motorized vehicles to traverse the course as allowed.

\* The Federal Law analysis of a "reasonable accommodation" permits the event sponsor to apply three factors in considering the reasonableness of the accommodation requested.



# PROBLEM 3.1

ITEMS MARKED AS XX\* WOULD BE EVENT SPECIFIC

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
<p>Abuse of privilege by non disabled spectators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inability to identify spectators with legitimate disabilities</li><li>• Inability to enforce due to inability to identify permitted users</li><li>• Lack of real punishment (no deterrence effect)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Request for accommodations needs to be submitted in writing with the designated “disability accommodation” personnel for review and consideration at least <b>XX*</b> days/weeks prior to the first day of the event.</li><li>• Request spectators seeking accommodations to provide a doctor’s note with their registration with substantiating documentation</li><li>• Provide wristbands or placards for spectators</li><li>• Establish a warning system for abuses including expulsion from event</li></ul>
<p>Venue’s inability to enforce due to low manpower</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regional Volunteer Coordinator to personally provide or assist with gaining necessary manpower to support enforcement</li><li>• Provide enforcement rights to all or a certain level of show organizers and volunteers</li></ul>



# PROBLEM 3.1 CON'TD

ITEMS MARKED AS XX\* WOULD BE EVENT SPECIFIC

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
Damage to XC course footing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Require personal motorized vehicles to weigh less than <b>XX**lbs</b></li><li>• Only permit accommodated spectators to ride the personal motorized vehicle in designated areas</li><li>• Require spectators seeking this accommodation to include motorized vehicle type and weight on registration form (to be approved or denied along with disability accommodation)</li><li>• Require spectators to “register” their motorized vehicles at the show office upon arrival to ensure it is the same vehicle identified on previously submitted registration form</li><li>• Prohibit motorized vehicles from accessing the course on or after certain weather conditions</li></ul>
Vehicular movement and engine noise may be very distracting/disturbing to horses during competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vehicles may only be moved between classes. XC areas may only be accessed between competitors as directed by volunteer staff.</li></ul>

## **PROBLEM 3.2**

Permanently or temporarily disabled spectators need covered areas to view events.

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## **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Provide tents, overhangs, or other covered seating areas for spectators (as possible given venue constraints).

# PROBLEM 3.2

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
<p>Abuse of privilege by non disabled spectators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inability to identify spectators with legitimate disabilities</li><li>• Inability to enforce due to inability to identify permitted users</li><li>• Lack of real punishment (no deterrence effect)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide signage asking non disabled spectators to allow disabled spectators priority to all covered areas</li><li>• Require spectators seeking accommodations to provide a doctor's note with their registration request as substantiating documentation</li><li>• Provide wristbands or placards for spectators</li><li>• Establish a warning system for abuses including expulsion from event</li></ul>
<p>Venue's inability to enforce due to low manpower</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regional Volunteer Coordinator to personally provide or assist with gaining necessary manpower to support enforcement</li><li>• Provide enforcement rights to all or a certain level of show organizers and volunteers</li></ul>

## **PROBLEM 3.3**

Permanently or temporarily disabled spectators need access to parking and seating near the venue.

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## **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Ensure accessible parking is clearly marked and allow competitors with special needs to park closer to venues.

# PROBLEM 3.3

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
Abuse of privilege by competitors and potentially their associates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See Mitigations/Counters for Problem #3.1</li></ul>
Venue's inability to enforce due to low manpower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See Mitigations/Counters for Problem #3.1</li></ul>
Vehicular movement, engine noise and power chair lifts may be very distracting/disturbing to horses during competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vehicles may only be moved between classes</li></ul>





# **PROBLEM/SOLUTION SCENARIOS**

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VOLUNTEERS



## **PROBLEM 4.1**

Permanently or temporarily disabled volunteers need to be able to travel about the event venue

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## **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Allow volunteers to employ low-impact, personal motorized vehicles to travel about the venue.

\* The Federal Law analysis of a “reasonable accommodation” permits the event sponsor to apply three factors in considering the reasonableness of the accommodation requested.

# PROBLEM 4.1

ITEMS MARKED AS XX\* WOULD BE EVENT SPECIFIC

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
<p>Abuse of privilege by non disabled spectators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inability to identify spectators with legitimate disabilities</li><li>• Inability to enforce due to inability to identify permitted users</li><li>• Lack of real punishment (no deterrence effect)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Request for accommodations needs to be submitted in writing with the designated “disability accommodation” personnel for review and consideration at least <b>XX*</b> days/weeks prior to the first day of the event.</li><li>• Request volunteers seeking accommodations to provide a doctor’s note with their registration with substantiating documentation</li><li>• Provide wristbands or placards for volunteers</li><li>• Establish a warning system for abuses including expulsion from event</li></ul>
<p>Venue’s inability to enforce due to low manpower</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regional Volunteer Coordinator to personally provide or assist with gaining necessary manpower to support enforcement</li><li>• Provide enforcement rights to all or a certain level of show organizers and volunteers</li></ul>

# PROBLEM 4.1 CON'TD

ITEMS MARKED AS XX\* WOULD BE EVENT SPECIFIC

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
<p>Damage to XC course footing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Require personal motorized vehicles to weigh less than <b>XXlbs</b></li><li>• Only permit accommodated volunteers to ride the personal motorized vehicle in designated areas</li><li>• Require volunteers seeking this accommodation to include motorized vehicle type and weight on registration form (to be approved or denied along with disability accommodation)</li><li>• Require volunteers to “register” their motorized vehicles at the show office upon arrival to ensure it is the same vehicle identified on previously submitted registration form</li><li>• Prohibit motorized vehicles from accessing the course on or after certain weather conditions</li></ul>

## **PROBLEM 4.2**

Permanently or temporarily disabled volunteers need access to a handicap-accessible port-a-potty at or reasonably near each volunteer assignment area.

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## **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Provide handicap-accessible facilities at each phase of the event.

# PROBLEM 4.2

Potential Objections	Mitigations/Counters
<p>Inability of provider to access each phase of the event</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify the closest accessible point to each phase of the event. Identify multiple central areas for accessible facilities.</li><li>• Instruct venue coordinators to be ready to cover for a jump judge who needs to be relieved to use a restroom/port-a-potty</li></ul>