



MEMORANDUM

TO: USEF Licensed Officials Education Committee

FROM: USHJA Safety Committee

DATE: July 12, 2021

RE: LO Education- Safety Vests

During the USHJA Safety Committee conference call on July 12, 2021, and in response to a survey sent to the membership for the June safety vests webinar, the committee discussed the membership's concern surrounding judges' opinions of riders wearing safety vests in various disciplines, but most specifically, in Equitation classes.

While GR801.4 clearly states that "[any] exhibitor may wear...a protective vest either body protecting or inflatable, specifically designed for use in equestrian sport in any division or class without penalty from the judge...", numerous responses from the survey indicated that competitors have concerns they will be penalized during Equitation classes if they choose to wear a safety vest. While it was not specifically stated in the survey, the committee suspects that riders are concerned that safety vests, especially body protectors, appear to change the look or outline of a rider's position throughout the ride and judges may not be judging them equally against riders who are not wearing a safety vest.

The Hunter, Jumper, and Equitation chapters in the USEF Rulebook each reference GR801.4, but there is no language in each chapter that clearly states that safety vests cannot be penalized within each discipline. The Safety Committee initially discussed a rule change proposal that would add language to each chapter explicitly allowing the use of safety vests in all three disciplines to help ensure members that vests are permitted and encouraged. However, after added discussion, they felt it was more effective to educate/remind judges of GR801.4 rather than add language to the rulebook.

The Safety Committee requests that during the development of upcoming licensed officials' clinics curriculum, a discussion of the use and allowance of safety vests in all three disciplines be incorporated into the judges' education content. They request that

clinicians for all three disciplines point out all rules related to safety vests and emphasize that no riders should be penalized for prioritizing their safety. Furthermore, the Safety Committee will request from the Communications Department that a memo be sent to all current judges notifying them of this rule clarification as not all judges are required to attend a clinic in 2022. And finally, they ask that an addition be made to the USHJA LO Resources webpage affirming GR801.4 for Hunter, Jumper, and Equitation judges.

Ultimately, the Safety Committee hopes to prioritize safety among riders at all levels. Their goal is to address concerns expressed during the webinar and from the survey. The committee feels that highlighting GR801.4 to our judges and encouraging them to accept the use of safety vests will give riders the confidence to utilize safety vests if they choose.

Thank you for your consideration.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Whitney Barnard, USHJA Safety Committee liaison, at wbarnard@ushja.org or 859-225-6728.