UNITED STATES EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION

INCIDENT RESPONSE GUIDE FOR COMPETITIONS



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INTRODUCTION

The United States Equestrian Federation ("US Equestrian") Incident Response Resource Guide has been designed to provide general guidelines for managing serious incidents if one occurs at a US Equestrian Licensed Competition.

Because the Resource Guide is intended to provide general guidelines and recommendations, not all of its contents will apply to every US Equestrian Licensed Competition organizer. The Recognized Affiliate for your breed or discipline may have resources that are specific to their competitions. References to US Equestrian's rules are cited throughout this Resource Guide. Those rules can be found at usef.org.

Disclaimer: The safety of all equine and human participants is paramount to US Equestrian. This Resource Guide is provided solely as an informational and educational service to US Equestrian Licensed Competition organizers. Each competition's policies, procedures, and protocols are the responsibility of the individual organizer. As such, US Equestrian cannot and does not accept responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of any information or material provided herein. This Resource Guide is not intended to nor does it constitute medical, veterinary, or legal advice or legal opinions and should not be relied upon as medical, veterinary, or legal advice or opinion. By using this Resource Guide you agree to this disclaimer and recognize that it may be necessary to seek the advice of an attorney licensed to practice in the appropriate jurisdiction.

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Under GR846, US Equestrian requires that all Licensed Competitions must have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) in place and ensure competition staff, as well as the Steward or Technical Delegate, are advised of the EAP. This resource guide enumerates important US Equestrian rules and expectations of Licensed Competitions in the event of a crisis, including the preparation of an EAP, and provides Competition Management with additional crisis management resources. As it applies to this resource guide, a crisis may be defined as any equine or human fatality, collapse, or serious and/or life-threatening injury that takes place on the competition grounds.

The intent of an EAP is to facilitate communication between organizers and key officials and maintain the Federation's commitment to participant safety and welfare. The way competition organizers handle a crisis can reflect not just on the individuals involved, but on the entire sport and on the Federation.

This guide does not include information on equine infectious disease situations. For equine infectious disease guidance, please see the Equine Health and Biosecurity Guide for USEF Events.

The information and sample documents in this resource guide are offered solely as an informational and educational service to US Equestrian Competition Managers. The information in this resource guide is comprehensive but is not intended to be exhaustive. Utilize the enclosed materials as appropriate for your Licensed Competition at your own discretion and judgment. This document DOES NOT supersede rules of organizations, such as US Equestrian rules, state, regional, or local ordinances covering EMS providers, or otherwise.

II. BEFORE THE COMPETITION:

a. Safety Coordinator

All US Equestrian Licensed Competitions are required to designate a Safety Coordinator (see GR847). The Safety Coordinator is responsible for establishing and coordinating the medical and veterinary services required throughout the competition.

b. Medical Planning

Ensure that you know the applicable rules. All US Equestrian Federation Licensed Competitions are required to have Qualified Medical Personnel (QMP) present with no other duties. Qualified Medical Personnel must have available appropriate medical equipment, as required by their certifying State or EMS Region, during all scheduled performances at the competition and during all paid scheduled schooling sessions over fences, including one day prior to the start of the competition if applicable, under GR848. Each Licensed Competition must also comply with any applicable state, county, regional, or local laws, which may vary depending on the number of participants and spectators. It is the responsibility of Competition Management to know and adhere to any such local laws. Any special safety rules or guidelines particular to the host facility or venue should be published.

i. Qualified Medical Personnel

US Equestrian defines Qualified Medical Personnel as certified or licensed medical provider or similar provider or first responder who is currently certified in Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS), Basic Trauma Life Support (BTLS), or Pre-hospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS). It is strongly recommended that EMTs and/or Paramedics be used to fill this position. Medical personnel must not exceed the scope of their practice. All medical personnel must be readily identifiable by uniform, bright-colored vest or other means, available, and mobile.

Competition Management should exercise extreme care when hiring Qualified Medical Personnel. While an individual may be certified as a paramedic, there are certain situations which may preclude them from acting as a paramedic at an event if they are not reporting to their designated medical command at the time of their service. Competition Management should confirm the scope of practice that the individual is permitted to perform at the event prior to hiring.

ii. Ambulances and Rescue Vehicles

Under GR848.2, a human ambulance must be on the competition grounds or on call during all scheduled performances at the competition and during all paid scheduled schooling sessions over fences, including one (1) day prior to the start of the competition if applicable. 911 services may be used, provided the competition management conducts the proper pre-competition outreach to the local EMS providers through the documented USEF EMS Communication Checklist. Please refer to Appendix (G) for additional information.

For the Eventing Discipline, Premier Hunter, Level 5/6 Jumper competitions, an equine ambulance is also required on-site. Equine ambulances or transport vehicles should have a ramp for loading horses.

iii. Helicopters

In remote areas helicopters may be the quickest means of transport and can be contacted to respond by EMS when needed. Locations that may need helicopter response should discuss protocols and needs with the EMS providers prior to an event and should identify a designated landing zone with sufficient space clear of environmental, human, and animal presence, electrical hazards, and which has no loose sand or dirt close by.

iv. Veterinarians and Farriers

Depending on your entry numbers from the previous year, you may be required to have a Veterinarian present on the grounds under GR1211.5. Each breed and discipline has different requirements under the rules. Please see the relevant breed/discipline rules for your Licensed Competition. Competitions that are not required to have a qualified veterinarian present throughout the competition must have a written agreement with a veterinarian to be on call. Once Competition Managers enter the contact information for the Official Veterinarian into the competition dashboard an email is sent to the Veterinarian providing critical information on equine fatalities and collapses, drugs and medications, and infectious diseases.

A Farrier must be on the grounds or on call at all competitions under GR1211.6. Please see the relevant breed/discipline rules for your Licensed Competition.

Coverage Plan: Your local EMS provider can provide assistance in formulating a coverage plan. Once you have determined your coverage needs and/or requirements in accordance with the applicable US Equestrian rules and all applicable laws, the appropriate agency should be contacted for assistance. Contract with your Emergency Medical Services, Veterinarian, and Farrier who will be at the show grounds or on call during your Licensed Competition.

c. Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

Under GR846, all Licensed Competitions must have an EAP in place prior to the start of the competition. In accordance with US Equestrian rules and the Competition's EAP, Competition Management must make the necessary arrangements for an ambulance to be on the grounds or on call. Competition Management is further responsible for ensuring that competition Licensed Officials and competition staff are advised of the EAP and that it is distributed accordingly. The EAP must be given to the Steward or Technical Delegate prior to the start of the competition. The Steward or Technical Delegate must submit a copy of the EAP to US Equestrian along with his/her Steward or Technical Delegate report. The EAP should be a comprehensive and easy-to-follow resource for use during a crisis. The names/phone numbers of relevant emergency contacts, as well as the address & directions to the facility are essential. The plan should also cover a basic procedure for who to contact and what actions to take while waiting for the emergency responders to arrive. A sample template of an EAP may be found attached as Appendix A. This template should be altered to best suit your competition's needs and includes a list of some important points to consider when drafting your EAP.

d. Incident Management Team (IMT)

Competition Management should organize a group of officials and staff members who will be responsible for organizing and overseeing the response during and after a crisis occurs. This group of individuals should be designated based on their skills and responsibilities in response to a crisis, not by rank alone. Consider having the following positions on your IMT:

- Someone to direct the entire team and ensure that the proper response is carried out. This role is typically handled by the Safety Coordinator
- Someone to record in writing any actions of the group and the response itself, including the date/timeline of events and members involved, and provide any resources needed by the team
- Someone designated as the only authorized representative to contact US Equestrian and address the public and media regarding the crisis
- Someone to direct the medical response to any human injuries
- Someone to direct the veterinary response to any equine injuries
- Hospital liaison to assist family with communications and in managing the situation

Competition Management should designate a centralized location for the Incident Management Team to assemble in the event of a crisis to respond to the situation efficiently and effectively. Additionally, the team should be of manageable size and qualified in each position.

e. Pre-Competition Meetings

Competition Management must host a pre-competition meeting (daily when rotating personnel) to review and practice the EAP with staff, IMT, EMS providers, and competition Licensed Officials, including the Steward and/or Technical Delegate. After the pre-competition meeting, the EAP should be posted in a prominent place for copies distributed to key event personnel. The safety coordinator or QMP should conduct a daily readiness check of the venue and sport-specific EAP, including a survey of emergency equipment available on site, EMS access points, and available personnel to assist in an emergency.

f. Competition Grounds

Discuss with your Technical Delegate, Steward, EMS personnel, QMP, and Veterinarian the layout of the show grounds – paying particular attention to the need to get an ambulance or other equipment into the venue and appropriate unlocked gate access in terms of width and height of emergency vehicles, and somebody to meet the emergency vehicle and direct efficient access to the incident site.

i. Maps

A map of the location of the facility, with emergency vehicle access points identified, as well as a detailed map of the facility itself should be posted and available during the competition. Maps to the nearest Equine Emergency Clinic and local large animal hospitals are important in a crisis.

ii. GPS Coordinates

GPS coordinates are recommended on the EAP in case a helicopter response is needed. This will also make it easier for other EMS personnel to locate the facility in remote or rural locations.

g. Communications

Walkie-talkies, cellular phones, or PA systems are common means to summon your EMS crew. There must always be two forms of communication available in case one communication system does not work. Talk to your Announcer regarding emergency plans as they may be needed to coordinate a response. Walkie-talkie channels should be clearly listed on the EAP and distributed to show officials.

i. Contact Information

Make a phone number list of all officials, the competition office, EMS, QMP, Show Organizer, Announcer, Veterinarian, and any other numbers that may need to be contacted to manage a crisis. Sample contact lists can be found attached as Appendix B.

ii. Crisis Communication Plan

Prior to the start of competition, the crisis communication plan should be understood by all appropriate members of staff. Every attempt should be made to ensure the privacy of the staff, riders, grooms, and owners in the event of a crisis. US Equestrian asks that all involved in a crisis refrain from making comments to the press, on social media, or within their social networks until an official USEF response has been released. Sample press statements and media hot topic questions and answers can be found attached as Appendix C and D.

h. First Aid Care

Provide basic First Aid supplies or stations for competitors to seek medical attention for minor injuries.

i. Multiple Injuries Plan

The on-site team should plan for site safety, communication, and triage of potentially injured persons or equines in the event of multiple simultaneous injuries or a mass casualty.

Vehicular access to sites with large numbers of spectators should be restricted. To prevent vehicles from driving through a spectator site, this could be accomplished with temporary barriers like barricades, fences, signage, or even strategically placed event vehicles to prevent entry. Note that the venue must be accessible to emergency vehicles by the designated entry and access

routes planned for in the EAP.

j. Environmental Conditions/Severe Weather Plan

US Equestrian recommends that when a severe weather warning has been issued, or at the sighting of lighting, the hearing of thunder, or the sighting of other severe weather (such as a funnel cloud, blizzard, etc.), the competition be stopped until at least 30 minutes have passed without severe weather. Should your competition be stopped for lightning, all participants should take shelter in a large, enclosed structure if possible, or in fully enclosed vehicles and stay away from metal or conducting surfaces.

k. Air Quality

US Equestrian recommends when the air quality index reaches 151 or above the competition should be suspended or canceled. The AirNow website airnow.gov provides the air quality index by zip code. Competition managers should consult state and local health authorities for more specific regional guidance. *Note: the guidance is based on human health recommendations, as there are currently no published recommendations specifically for horses.*

l. Heat/cold (Heat Index)

US Equestrian recommends that when the heat index (temperature in °F plus humidity reading) is above 180, competition is suspended or cancelled. Competition managers should consult local veterinary and human health authorities for more specific guidance. *Note: the guidance is based on human health recommendations.*

m. Venue Evacuation Plan

An evacuation plan should be in place for both spectators and horses in terms of pre-identified evacuation routes in case of emergency that warrants evacuation. In the event of a credible threat of an active shooter or explosives, all competition should be paused and Competition Management should work in consultation with law enforcement. In the event of severe natural disaster threat, fires, flooding, or hurricanes, evacuation plans should include emergency stabling locations for non-local horses.

n. Stabling

i. On-Site Stabling – For any stabling provided on the grounds, ensure you have the contact information for the personnel who are responsible for it. For permanent stabling, this would be the individual responsible for regular maintenance. For temporary stabling, this would be the vendor who provided it.

ii. Off-site Stabling – Ensure that you have the contact information for the personnel who are responsible for the off-site stables and/or stabling site(s).

iii. Isolation Stabling or Location – Competition Management must submit to the Federation 14 days prior to the competition an isolation plan. Visit the Competition Isolation Plan website for guidance or contact equinehealth@usef.org.

III. DURING THE INCIDENT:

Implement the appropriate crisis procedure. The severity of each instance will vary and should be handled accordingly. A summary can be found attached and may be distributed to staff and licensed officials to ensure proper procedures are followed. During a horse or human injury, organizers must manage communication with emergency personnel, prioritize assistance, safety, and privacy for the impacted horse or rider and their team, and maintain order for event attendees and other competitors. *For USEF Driving events, see the Driving Incident Protocol for a discipline specific guide.*

Human Injuries

1. Fatality or Serious Injury–A serious injury is defined as any injury or illness that is potentially life threatening or may result in hospitalization.

- Dispatch Responders – Call the QMP and safety coordinator on site to the scene or call 911 if indicated. Note: Do NOT disconnect from a 911 dispatcher call until the dispatcher instructs you to hang up.
- Secure the Scene
  - » Crowd Control – Keep the area clear of everyone except for emergency personnel
  - » Secure Horse(s) – Catch any loose horses
  - » Place Screens – Screens should be placed around a participant who is receiving treatment in competition areas
- Hold (stop) Competition – Activities around the vicinity of the incident should be held until the scene is secured and the injured or deceased person is stabilized and transported by QMP or ambulance. Determine if it is necessary to halt activities in other competition areas if all medical resources are committed to the incident. If activities are halted, ensure proper notification of schedule changes to participants.
- Contact US Equestrian and submit appropriate Accident/Injury Reports
- Competition Management should notify their insurance providers of any serious injury or fatality.

2. Suspected Concussion or Head Injury

- Dispatch Responders – Call QMP and/or ambulance to the scene
- Secure the Scene
  - » Crowd Control – Keep the area clear of everyone except emergency personnel
  - » Secure Horse(s) – Catch any loose horses
- Determination of Head Injury/Concussion - According to US Equestrian rules, any participant who has had a fall at any competition and who shows signs of a concussion or is apparently concussed, will be placed on the Federation Medical Ineligibility List until they have been examined by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner and a properly completed Return to Sport Form is received by the Federation, outlined in GR849.
- Submit appropriate Accident/Injury Reports to US Equestrian

3. Minor injuries, commonly treated with first aid care

- Dispatch Responders – Call appropriate emergency personnel or QMP to the scene, if necessary
- Provide Treatment – Provide first aid treatment as appropriate at the competition

- Further Treatment – If further treatment is necessary, send rider to nearest hospital or clinic based on medical severity
- Submit appropriate Accident/Injury Reports to US Equestrian

AED Requirements

- USEF strongly recommends AEDs at show grounds and for staff to undergo training on how to use them, but it is not a requirement at all competitions.
- It is a requirement for Hunter competitions at all levels and Jumper competitions at Level 2 and above to have an AED on-site and available.
  - » AED must be operable and placed in a designated, safe, and visible location.
  - » All qualified medical personnel must be informed of the AED's location prior to the start of competition.

Equine Injuries

1. Equine Fatality or Equine Collapse

- Dispatch Responders – Call all appropriate emergency personnel and veterinarians to the scene
- Secure the scene
  - » Crowd Control – Keep the area clear of everyone except emergency and veterinary personnel
  - » Secure Horse(s) – Catch any loose horses
  - » Place Screens – Screens should be placed around the horse that is receiving treatment
- Hold (stop) Competition – Activities around the vicinity of the incident should be held until the scene is secured and the injured or deceased horse is removed
- Contact US Equestrian in accordance with the rules - In the instance of an Equine Fatality or Collapse, US Equestrian may request that the treating veterinarian take urine and blood samples from the injured horse for analysis.
  - » The competition Steward or Technical Delegate has access to the appropriate list of required blood samples. The official show veterinarian received an email prior to the event with list of required blood samples.
- Submit appropriate Equine Accident/Illness Reports to US Equestrian.
- Removal of injured or deceased horse from Competition Grounds
  - » Equine Necropsy – US Equestrian requires necropsies for all Equine Fatalities which occur at or after attending a USEF competition

    If necessary, contact USEF Chief Veterinary Officer for Veterinary Department for necropsy instruction
- Removal Services - Some states regulate the way in which bodies of deceased horses may be handled or processed

2. Other Equine Injuries

- Dispatch Responders – Call all appropriate emergency personnel and veterinarians to the scene
- Secure the scene
  - » Crowd Control – Keep the area clear of everyone except emergency and veterinary personnel
  - » Secure Horse(s) – Catch any loose horses

  - » Place Screens –Screens should be placed around the horse that is receiving treatment
- Provide Treatment – Veterinarians should treat the injury appropriately
- Further Treatment and Transport – If necessary, the horse should be transported to the designated veterinary hospital.
- Submit appropriate Equine Accident/Illness Reports to US Equestrian.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMPETITION MANAGERS:

Human or Equine Injury

A. Keep a tarp/screen available near rings to shield spectators from incidents (train and exercise with individual staff who will be placing tarp prior to the competition)

B. Extra halter and lead rope at all rings

C. Position onsite medical personnel/tent near arenas

D. If possible, ensure an equine ambulance is on-site or available (Ideally, train and exercise on movement of down horse into the trailer prior to the competition)

E. Ensure competition staff and additional personnel are trained in CPR

F. Establish protocol with video staff or company to discontinue video when an incident occurs, additionally ensure confidentiality to prevent any clips from being published online

G. Train in-gate staff and ring announcer on procedure for incidents or fatalities

Equine Illness or Outbreak

Per GR 873, febrile or horses with clinical signs of disease are to be reported to the Equine Health and Biosecurity Veterinarian. See Equine Disease Response Guidance document for additional recommendations and resources and communication plans.

V. CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMPETITION ANNOUNCERS:

Announcers play a crucial role in messaging during a crisis and can not only disseminate basic information but help to maintain calm for spectators. Be aware that in the modern era of smart devices, announcements and radio transmissions can be recorded and published.

Human or Equine Injury

A. Before the start of competition, speak with competition management to determine announcer protocol for incidents that occur during a class, especially if there is a large spectator crowd

B. After an incident, notify the crowd that the medical personnel or veterinarian are on the way

C. Do not disclose any details of the incident, even over radio

D. Regardless of severity of incident, try to provide a positive angle on the situation before competition resumes in the ring

Sample Comments

- "It appears that [rider name] and [horse name] have parted ways and there is currently a hold on course as medical personnel are evaluating the situation."
- "[Rider name] is being evaluated by our qualified medical staff. Please be patient as they handle the situation"
- "Please remain calm as veterinary staff evaluate [horse name] after an unfortunate stumble. The well-being of these animals is of the utmost concern and we appreciate your patience."
- "We are glad to see that both horse and rider are up and able to walk out on their own accord. Thank you to our dedicated staff for their attentive care."

VI. AFTER THE INCIDENT:

A. Contact US Equestrian

If an incident occurs during regular business hours, please call US Equestrian at (859) 810-8733. If an incident occurs at night or on the weekend, please contact US Equestrian at (859) 312-5186. Any incident that results in an injury must be recorded in a US Equestrian Accident/Injury Report and submitted by the Steward or Technical Delegate along with his official competition report. If the incident involves a serious injury, fatality, or a suspected or apparent concussion, it must be reported to US Equestrian office as soon as possible and followed by the appropriate Report filed with US Equestrian in accordance with the rules. Competition Steward/TD must report all equine collapses to Competition Management and US Equestrian within one hour of notification and subsequently file the appropriate Report Form with US Equestrian within 24 hours.

B. Resume Competition

If and when safe and possible, resume the competition.

C. Release Press Statement

All competitions are advised to contact US Equestrian's Communications Department to coordinate an appropriate release statement. Sample press release statements can be found attached as Appendix C, as well as sample responses to commonly asked questions. In the event of a human or equine serious injury or fatality, US Equestrian recommends that Competition Management issue its statement on social media and/or its website within a timely manner, ideally on the same day as the incident. Once Competition Management chooses to release a statement, it should refrain from posting any other content on social media for 24 hours, out of respect for those involved in the incident. Particular care should be given to consulting with parents/guardians in the case that the injured individual is a minor.

D. Confidentiality

All individuals involved in incident management at a Licensed Competition are expected to keep all information regarding the incident, any investigation, and individuals or horses involved in the incident strictly confidential. Competition staff and US Equestrian Licensed Officials are to limit all discussions regarding the incident to as needed with people who need to know the information. Under no circumstances should any information regarding an incident be posted on social media.

E. Witness Statements

It is very important to gather all witness names and contact numbers and provide these to US Equestrian as soon as possible. Typically, the collection of witness statements is handled by the competition steward or technical delegate.

F. Video/Photographs

All video footage and photographs of the accident, if available, needs to be preserved for any US Equestrian investigation. These should not be shared with anyone outside of US Equestrian. To the extent witnesses have video footage and/or photographs on mobile devices, the original digital images should be collected by text or email at the same time as witness statements.

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE EMERGENCY PLAN

Please remember that this sample emergency action plan (EAP) is only a guide intended to assist in developing a plan to suit your own competition in accordance with GR846. Please note that a meaningful and complete EAP should be tailored to the specific needs of your competition and fulfil any breed/discipline competition requirements. We also recommend that you show your plan in advance to the QMP who will be at your competition and/or local EMS to see if they have suggestions for your specific competition and area. The EAP should be reviewed and updated as part of the daily pre-competition meeting. The EAP should identify key personnel and individual responsibilities within the designated chain of command. We recommend that the EAP identify who will call 911 with the understanding that, if that individual is not present at the incident site, the first available person should call 911.

Competition Name:_____

Competition ID:_____ Dates:_____

EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

Title	Name	Radio/Walkie Talkie Channel	Cellular
Medical Personnel/EMS			
Show Manager			
Safety Coordinator			
Show Office			
Veterinarian			
Vet Hospital			
Steward/Technical Delegate			

In the event of an emergency, list below WHO will do the following:

Action	Primary Person	Back-Up Person
Call 911, activate emergency response		
Get AED, if available on site, and use if indicated		
Meet emergency vehicle at primary access point to direct to incident site		
Stay with individual with injury/illness		
Scribe to log incident timeline and obtain basic demographic information on individual involved in incident for EMS		
Manage crowd control and privacy screens if needed		

Name of Facility: _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Do not use the competition facility name alone for identification of the location. Use the address to identify the location.

GPS coordinates for the event site (if applicable): _____

Directions to competition facility and emergency vehicle access points (include major landmarks):

_____

_____

_____

_____

In the event that there is an emergency, the call to 911 is to be placed by the designated Competition Staff. Preferably the call will be made by the medical personnel, Competition Management or the Safety Coordinator. The EMS will be provided with confirmation that the call has been made and given ETA of ambulance by caller. Exhibitors are asked to not make 911 calls using their cell phones.

AED locations on site (if applicable): _____

First aid kits/station locations: _____

_____

Attach to EAP the venue map with emergency vehicle access points (primary and secondary) marked:

_____

Local EMS Direct Phone Line: _____

Nearest Level 1 Trauma Center (address, phone): _____

_____

Nearest Community Hospital with emergency services (address, phone): _____

_____

Local Police phone number: _____

Local Fire phone number: _____

Environmental Conditions Plan for event (Severe weather, air quality, high heat/cold temperature):

_____

_____

_____

In the case of human incident:

1. Do not move the individual unless they are in imminent danger or CPR is indicated. Emergency medical personnel will evaluate the patient and determine status upon arrival.

2. Call for all appropriate emergency medical personnel and/or Veterinarian and TD or Steward on site; give detailed location of accident site. If needed, call 911 and have available the patient's sex, age, mechanism of injury, and current condition.

3. Secure any loose horses and control the crowd.

4. If necessary, place screens around the individual for privacy.

5. Send a member of competition staff to the facility entrance to direct emergency vehicles to the incident site and ask the driver not to use lights or sirens on entering the venue (due to the risk of spooking other horses).

6. If required, ring crew and/or other competition staff should clear all obstacles and make the area accessible for ambulance and necessary personnel.

7. Hold competition until all emergency vehicles have departed, medical debris has been cleared by ring crew, ring has been dragged to level and clear any areas marked by responding vehicles, and the competition staff have resumed their appropriate positions.

8. In the event of a serious accident or fatality, the Steward/TD must call US Equestrian at (859) 810-8733 (during business hours) or (859) 312-5186 (outside of business hours).

9. In the event of a suspected head injury or apparent concussion, the competitor must not continue in competition until cleared by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.

10. Steward/TD and Medical Personnel must complete the US Equestrian Accident/Injury Report and submit it to US Equestrian.

In the case of an equine incident:

1. Secure any loose horses.

2. Call the Veterinarian and TD or Steward; give location of incident site. The Veterinarian will determine the status of the horse.

3. Control the crowd.

4. If necessary, place screens around the injured horse for privacy.

5. If transport to emergency veterinary clinic is required, call designated veterinary hospital and notify them of incoming equine patient, have the horse's age, nature and mechanism of injury, and current condition if available (it is best for the veterinarian make this call, if possible).

6. Organize transport of horse to specified veterinary hospital.

7. If required, ring crew and/or other competition staff should clear all obstacles and make the area accessible for equine transport and necessary treating personnel.

8. Hold competition until all emergency vehicles have departed, medical debris is cleared by ring crew, ring has been dragged to clear and level any areas marked by responding vehicles, and the competition staff has resumed their appropriate positions.

9. In the event of a serious accident, collapse, or fatality, the Steward/TD must call US Equestrian at (859) 810-8733 (during business hours) or (859) 312-5186 (outside of business hours).

10. Steward/TD and Veterinarian must complete the US Equestrian Collapse/Illness Report and submit to US Equestrian.

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE CONTACT LISTS

Incident Management Team (Activated in the event of a crisis)

Name	Radio Channel	Cellular

Title	Name	Radio Channel	Cellular
Competition Organizer/Manager			
Safety Coordinator			
Show Office/Competition Secretary			
Medical Personnel/EMS			
Steward or Technical Delegate			
Steward or Technical Delegate			
Veterinarian			
Announcer			
Chief Course Designer			
Cross Country Organizer (if applicable)			
Ground Jury President			
Ground Jury Member			
Ground Jury Member			
Other			

APPENDIX C
SAMPLE STATEMENTS

Please contact US Equestrian's Communications Department in advance to coordinate the release of any statements, as the Department has a more complete crisis communications plan it will implement.

In any incident involving a minor (under the age of 18), no personal information (name, age, hometown, etc.) should be included in a statement or released to the press unless approved and requested by the parents/ legal guardian.

The goal of a crisis communications plan is to provide the public and the media with verified, basic facts. This helps reduce speculation and rumors online about the incident and fosters public trust. The sample statements below are aimed at releasing essential information in a timely manner while maintaining privacy for people involved in the incident. They also allow the Federation and show organizers to express the genuine empathy all of us feel for horses and riders after a crisis.

In the case of an injury to a rider:
This (MORNING/AFTERNOON/EVENING), (FIRST AND LAST NAMES) sustained an injury (DIAGNOSIS) while competing at (EVENT) in (LOCATION). He/She was riding (HORSE NAME) when (DESCRIPTION OF ACT). The horse is (STATUS OF HORSE). We wish (FIRST NAME) a speedy recovery.

In the case of an injury to a horse:
This (MORNING/AFTERNOON/EVENING), at (EVENT) in (LOCATION), a rider sustained a fall. The rider was not hurt in the fall but his/ her horse was critically injured and was humanely euthanized at the site of the accident. The Competition Organizer extends its heartfelt condolences to the rider and the owners of this wonderful and courageous horse.

Rider Fatality Initial statement prior to next of kin being informed:
"A rider suffered a fatal injury and no further information will be released until the next of kin have been informed."

Rider Fatality	Holding Statement	This (MORNING/AFTERNOON/EVENING), an incident occurred involving (FIRST AND LAST NAMES) at (EVENT) in (LOCATION). We are investigating the matter and will provide more information when available.
	Final Statement	It is with great sadness that (EVENT or EVENT MANAGEMENT GROUP) announces that (FIRST AND LAST NAMES) suffered a fatal incident while competing/spectating at the (EVENT) in (LOCATION) on (DATE). (FIRST NAME), aged (AGE) from (HOMETOWN) and horse (HORSE REGISTERED NAME), a (AGE)-year-old BREED/ gelding/ mare/stallion (DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT). He/She was transported to a local medical facility where he/she was pronounced deceased. The (EVENT or EVENT MANAGEMENT GROUP) wishes to extend the deepest sympathy, on behalf of the entire sport, to the (LAST NAME) family and support team.

Horse Fatality	Holding Statement	This (MORNING/AFTERNOON/EVENING), an incident occurred involving (HORSE NAME) who was being ridden by (RIDER NAME) at (EVENT) in (LOCATION). We are investigating the matter and will provide more information when available.
	Final Statement	It is with great sadness that the (EVENT or EVENT MANAGEMENT GROUP) announces that (HORSE'S NAME), ridden by (RIDER NAME) and owned by (OWNER NAME) was humanely euthanized as a result of a fatal incident while competing on (DATE) [for organizers with multiple properties, should specify what (EVENT) in (LOCATION)] (HORSE'S NAME), a (AGE) -year-old BREED gelding/mare/stallion (DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT/INJURY) (eg: fell at fence 15 and suffered fatal injuries). (RIDER NAME) was uninjured/suffered minor injuries/suffered x injury. USEF wishes to extend our deepest sympathies, on behalf of the entire sport, to all those who loved (HORSE'S NAME).

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

After a crisis, it's important to be prepared for potentially-challenging questions from media. Remember that they are often asking questions their readers/viewers are/will be asking of them, and that emotions on all sides may run high in the wake of a crisis. These sample answers are designed to allow management to engage with media while avoiding speculation or defensiveness. If you're not comfortable responding to media on-site, you can encourage them to contact US Equestrian's Communications Department at 859-810-8733. We discourage Competition Managers from engaging with critical comments on social media.

1. **Cruelty - Q:** There is a gathering opinion that these events are cruel to horses. Do you agree?

A: The inspiration for many participants and regulators alike is a love for the horse. This is the driving force for everything we do, including our regulatory focus on safety and welfare. At every (Competition Management) competition, maximum consideration is given to the safety and welfare of both horse and rider.

- If necessary, please share examples of a specific policy (GR 838) and include resources to report unethical treatment of a horse.
  - » usef.org/compete/regulation/reporting-processes/unethical-treatment-of-a-horse

2. **Bad Weather** - **Q:** Do you think the event should have been stopped (sooner) because of the weather?

A: The inspiration for many participants and regulators alike is a love for the horse. This is the driving force for everything we do, including our regulatory focus on safety and welfare. Conditions are constantly monitored by Competition Management. Had the conditions been considered unsafe, the decision would have been made to halt the event.

3. **Wealth/Inaccessibility** - **Q:** Isn't it fair to say you are more interested in ___ (gate receipts, prize money, sponsors, etc.) than the animals' welfare?

A: The inspiration for many participants and regulators alike is a love for the horse. This is the driving force for everything we do, including our regulatory focus on safety and welfare. Horse welfare is always paramount, and we take every precaution to make sure that these animals and their riders are competing in a safe environment. The starting point for all participants in the sport is a bond with the animal, and we take seriously our responsibility for their health and comfort.

4. **Danger** - **Q:** Doesn't this incident prove that the sport is too dangerous?

A: The inspiration for many participants and regulators alike is a love for the horse. This is the driving force for everything we do, including our regulatory focus on safety and welfare. The safety of our riders and horses is always a priority, and we take measures to avoid incidents. Despite these efforts, incidents may occur and, when they do, we are ready to act.

5. **Request for Detail** - **Q:** What exactly happened out there? What caused the incident?

A: I don't have the full details at this time, and the incident is currently under investigation.

Briefing of Riders

At the rider's briefing, they should be told simply how to cope with approaches by the media in adverse situations. A suggested response might be: "I cannot comment at the moment, but I understand all the facts are being gathered for a press statement by the competition's director/organizer."

APPENDIX E
SUMMARY OF CRISIS PROCEDURES

Human Injuries

- Fatality or Serious Injury
  - » Dispatch Emergency Responders or call 911
  - » Secure the scene safely
  - » Secure horse(s)
  - » Hold (stop) competition
  - » Crowd Control
  - » Place Screens
  - » QMP or EMS Assessment and disposition to appropriate level of medical care
  - » Contact US Equestrian
  - » Submit Accident/Injury Report

- Concussion or Possible Head Injury
  - » Dispatch Responders
  - » Secure the scene safely
  - » Secure horse(s)
  - » Crowd Control
  - » Determination of Head Injury/Possible Concussion by QMP or EMS and disposition to appropriate level of medical care
  - » Submit Accident/Injury Report

Equine Injuries

- Equine Fatality or Equine Collapse
  - » Dispatch Responders
  - » Secure the scene safely
  - » Secure horse(s)
  - » Hold (stop) Competition
  - » Crowd Control
  - » Place Screens
  - » Contact US Equestrian
  - » Removal of Injured or Deceased Horse from Competition Grounds
  - » Equine Necropsy
  - » Removal Services
  - » Submit Accident/Illness Report

- Serious Injuries or Minor Injuries
  - » Dispatch Responders
  - » Secure the scene
  - » Secure horse(s)
  - » Crowd Control
  - » Place Screens
  - » Provide Treatment
  - » Further Treatment and Transport
  - » Submit Accident/Illness Report

APPENDIX F
RESOURCES

General Equestrian Safety:
- University of Kentucky's Saddle Up Safely Program: equine.ca.uky.edu/saddleupsafely

Breed/Discipline Organizations Safety:
- American Vaulting Association: equestrianvaulting.org/vaulting-safety/
- The United States Pony Clubs, Inc.: ponyclub.org/safety

First Aid/CPR Training:
- American Heart Association: cpr.heart.org/en/
- American Red Cross: redcross.org/take-a-class?utm_source=RCO&utm_medium=RCO_Navigation_Training_Certification
- The American Health Care Academy: cpraedcourse.com
- The American AED/CPR Association: aedcpr.com
- ProCPR: procpr.org
- CPR Professor: cprprofessor.com

Concussions/Head Injuries:
- USEF Return to Sport after Concussion Strategy: usef.org/forms-pubs/kzMxQoKQroE/equestrian-specific-return-to-sport
- Brain Injury Association of America: biausa.org/
- Brain Injury Center: braininjurycenter.org/
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/NCIPC/tbi/Coaches_Tool_Kit.htm
- Sport Concussion Assessment Tools (SCAT): bjsm.bmj.com/content/bjsports/57/11/622.full.pdf

Helmets:
- ASTM/SEI approved helmets search: seinet.org/search.htm#sections=SportsAthleticsandRecreation_collapse3,SportsAthleticsandRecreation_Equestrian_collapse31
- VTech Equestrian Helmet Ratings: helmet.beam.vt.edu/equestrian-helmet-ratings.html

Weather:
- Federal Emergency Management Agency: fema.gov
- The Weather Channel: weather.com
- National Lightning Safety Council Institute: lightningsafetycouncil.org/
- National Severe Storms Laboratory: nssl.noaa.gov
- National Weather Service: noaa.gov/weather or weather.gov
- Weather Underground: wunderground.com
- AirNow (AQI): airnow.gov/

Disclaimer: This Resource Guide is provided solely as an informational and educational service to US Equestrian Licensed Competition organizers. All policies, procedures, and protocols are the responsibility of the individual organizer. US Equestrian is concerned about the safety of all equine and human participants. US Equestrian cannot and does not accept responsibility for the content of any information or material provided. This Resource Guide is not intended to nor does it constitute medical, veterinary, or legal advice or legal opinions and should not be relied upon as medical, veterinary, or legal advice or opinion. By using this Resource Guide, you agree to this disclaimer and recognize that it may be necessary to seek the advice of an attorney licensed to practice in the appropriate jurisdiction.

APPENDIX G
EMS COMMUNICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

This is a template of Key Emergency Action Protocol Information for the safety coordinator to communicate to local EMS when an event will be relying on calling 911 for EMS services, and no ambulance services will be on site for the event. Contact the non-emergency number for the local EMS provider that covers the competition site 1 week prior to the event start date as well as on the first day of competition (including any licensed schooling days) to provide this information. Please work with the competition officials to determine what information should be communicated for your specific event as competition circumstances vary widely.

- Name and description of the equestrian event
- Event dates (start to end)
- Location address: Event address and geographic coordinates or closest major intersection, including venue open access points for emergency services that can fit emergency vehicle size
- Provide a map of the competition course (if applicable, i.e., endurance race or cross-country course)
- Emergency cell phone contact for safety coordinator and a second contact (i.e., show manager)
- Approximate number of competitors and spectators anticipated at the event and the age range (i.e., children to elderly)
- Terrain, vehicular access considerations, environmental hazards (water obstacles, ditches)
- What qualified medical personnel (QMP) will be on site?
- Ask EMS, is there additional information that you need from us regarding the equestrian event?

The safety coordinator must document on the Steward or TD report submitted to USEF the caller name, the EMS station call recipient's name and their contact number, and the dates contacted.

Equestrian event specific factors to communicate to EMS:

- Communicate that there are horses throughout the event grounds and that horses may spook or run when reacting to sirens or emergency vehicle lights. Emergency vehicles should turn off emergency lights and sirens when entering the venue grounds. Note to EMS that there may be horses, riders, and horse trailers in parking lots and throughout the venue and to drive slowly and cautiously around animals.
- If the event features a cross country or endurance course, communicate that the course may not be accessible fully by emergency vehicle and that the EMS may need to travel by foot with portable medical gear, gator, ATV, or by golf cart.
- Ensure that designated access point gates for emergency vehicles are unlocked or will have personnel controlling access during the event and that the gates are wide (at least 20 feet) and tall (at least 13 feet) enough for ambulance vehicle entry/egress clearance.
- Note presence of water jumps at the event if applicable. Note the presence of cattle or other animals if applicable. If there is a cross country or a driving course, please note the possible need for a fire department excavator if a horse is down or rider is trapped. That would be communicated at the time of an incident if one occurs. Cross country course sites should have a tractor with sling and chainsaws on site to disassemble obstacles if needed.
- Helicopter instructions--Specify the landing zone (LZ) location by geocoordinates and nearest landmarks. Describe any hazards (trees, power lines, buildings) and terrain (flat preferred, note presence of slopes or hills) near the landing zone. LZ should be well away from live animals and away from piles of dirt/loose footing or sand/debris that may fly into the air when the helicopter lands. Generally requires a 75' X 75' area clear of obstacles during the day and a 100' X 100' area clear of obstacles at night.

Competition ID:_____

Pre-Competition Communication with Local EMS

Caller Name:_____ Phone Number:_____

Date and Time of Phone Call:_____

EMS Station Call Recipient's Name:_____

EMS Station Call Recipient's Phone Number:_____

EMS Communication Details

Competition Dates:_____

Estimated Daily Start and End Times:_____

Competition Name:_____

Address of Facility:_____

_____

_____

Competition Manager Name:_____ Phone Number:_____

Safety Coordinator Name:_____ Phone Number:_____

Approximate Number of Competitors/Spectators Present:_____

Approximate Age Range of Competitors/Spectators Present:_____

Event Type (Eventing, Dressage, etc.): _____

Competition Terrain/Environmental Hazard(Water obstacles, ditches, etc.):

_____

_____

Number and Type of Qualified Medical Personnel Present at Competition:

_____

_____