

USA Equestrian (formerly known as "The American Horse Show Association" aka..AHSA)
GUIDELINES FOR LICENSED OFFICIALS AND COMPETITION MANAGERMENTS
REGARDING NEW HUNTER/JUMPER PROTECTIVE HEADGEAR
REQUIREMENTS FOR JUNIOR RIDERS EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 2001

These guidelines address issues relating to enforcement of the rules regarding protective headgear for juniors which will become effective December 1, 2001. The following are the provisions of Article 318.3, .4 and .5 as they are in effect as of that date, with the new material shown in bold italics, and with the old material with particular application for enforcement matters shown underlined:

Article 318.3, .4 and .5

3. Except as may otherwise be mandated by local law, all juniors riding in Hunter, Jumper and Hunter Seat Equitation sections must wear properly fitting protective headgear passing or surpassing current applicable ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) / SEI (Safety Equipment Institute) standards with harness secured while riding anywhere on the competition grounds. Harness must be secured and properly fitted. Any rider violating this rule at any time must immediately be prohibited from further riding until such headgear is properly in place.
EC 2/16/00 Effective 12/1/01

4. Any exhibitor may wear protective headgear (ASTM/SEI) in any division or class without penalty from the judge.

5. Except as may otherwise be mandated by local law, the Federation strongly encourages all riders to wear protective headgear passing or surpassing current applicable ASTM (American Safety Society for Testing and Materials)/SEI (Safety Equipment Institute) standards with harness secured while riding anywhere on the competition grounds. It is the responsibility of the rider, or the parent or guardian or trainer of the junior exhibitor to see to it that the headgear worn complies with appropriate safety standards for protective headgear intended for equestrian use, and is properly fitted and in good condition, and ***the Federation***, Show Committee, and Licensed Officials are not responsible for checking headgear worn for such compliance.

Pursuant to the underlined portions of the rule, which are not new and currently apply now as well as in the future, it is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or trainer of junior exhibitors to see to it that the headgear worn complies with the rule, and USA Equestrian, Competition Managements and Licensed Officials are not responsible for checking headgear worn for compliance. Accordingly, Licensed Officials and Competition Management are not required to have all Hunter/Jumper juniors who are participating at recognized shows remove their helmets so that their insides can be checked to ascertain whether they are ASTM/SEI approved. The responsibility for doing that rests under the rule with each junior's parents, guardian or trainer. Nothing in the rule, however, prevents Licensed Officials and Competition Management

from checking for helmet compliance if either chooses to do so. Thus, it would not be out of order for spot-checking to take place, or if deemed appropriate, for all junior Hunter/Jumper riders to be checked for compliance before they enter the ring, either in particular classes or all classes. Any of these things may be done but are not required to be done.

The rule does state “Any rider violating this rule at any time must immediately be prohibited from further riding until such headgear is in place.” Thus, for example, if it comes to the attention of Licensed Officials or Competition Management that a junior is riding without the chin strap affixed, the rule places an obligation on them to immediately cause the rider to stop participating until compliance is achieved. Another example would be where another person such as an exhibitor or the parent of an exhibitor approaches a Licensed Official or Competition Management and points out that a particular junior rider is using a helmet which is not ASTM/SEI approved. Pursuant to Article 1122.2.2 (renumbered Article 1123.2.2 in the 2002 Rule Book) it is the responsibility of a Steward or Technical Delegate “To investigate and act upon any alleged rule violations without waiting for a protest.” Pursuant to Article 1212.2 of the rules it is the obligation of Competition Management to “Enforce all rules of USA Equestrian from the time entries are admitted to the competition grounds until their departure.” Therefore, in the above circumstance described of a report of possible non-compliance made by another person, the Licensed Officials and Competition Management must investigate, and upon determination of the accuracy of the report, must immediately stop the junior from further riding until ASTM/SEI approved headgear is properly in place.

Summarizing the above, while there is no obligation on management and officials to check every junior rider for compliance with the new headgear rules every time he or she competes, nothing in the rules prohibits such checking on either a random or across-the-board basis, and any possible instances of non-compliance which come to the attention of the officials or management from any source must be investigated, and if confirmed, immediately acted upon.

If officials or management have any questions about any of the foregoing, please immediately contact Katriona McElligott, Assistant Executive Director, Regulation, at 859-225-6959.