**Volunteer Handbook**

Volunteer
Committee Members

Insert Club/Association
Insert Date

Insert logo

Volunteer Committee Members Handbook

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About the equestrian sector

An inclusive sport attracting a range of ages, the Equestrian sector provides a pathway from grass roots to Olympic and International level and is one of the only sports that sees men and women and juniors and seniors compete against each other on equal terms.

The essence of Equestrian is developing the ultimate partnership between horse and rider; not only does the rider need to be capable but the horse needs to be educated, allowing horse and rider to unify as one athlete combination.

Eventing along with Show Jumping and Dressage are the three classic disciplines as outlined below:

* Dressage: Often referred to as ‘equine ballet’ because of its beauty and elegance. Its fundamental purpose is to develop a horse’s natural athletic ability and willingness to perform, thereby maximizing its potential as a riding horse. At the peak of a dressage horse’s gymnastic development, it can smoothly respond to a skilled rider’s minimal aids by performing the requested movement while remaining relaxed and appearing effortless.
* Show Jumping: An equestrian event where horse and rider must clear a number of obstacles on a set course and within a specified time. The ultimate goal for each combination is a clear round, under time. Time faults are assessed for exceeding the time allowance.
* Eventing: An equestrian triathlon, in that it combines three different disciplines (dressage, cross country jumping and show jumping) in one competition over one, two or three days, depending on the level of competition.
* Showing: Much like a beauty pageant for horses where they are judged on beauty, conformation, temperament and breed. Horses compete in specific classes both under saddle and in hand and are groomed to perfection.
* Vaulting: Often described as gymnastics and dance on horseback , it can be practised as a non-competitive art or as a competitive sport. Vaulters perform various movements on the back of the horse, individually, in pairs or in teams.
* Driving: Encompasses a wide range of activities from pleasure driving to harness racing to farm work, horse shows and even combined driving, an internationally-recognised competition where horse compete in one, two and four horse teams in a dressage test, over a cross country course and a stadium course (similar to eventing).

In addition, there are various associations within the equestrian sector. Three of the key ones are Equestrian Victoria, Pony Clubs of Victoria and [Horse Riding Club Association of Victoria](http://www.google.com.au/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CB4QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.hrcav.com.au%2F&ei=H2JEVa_SIaLemAX1wYG4Aw&usg=AFQjCNFmLHT2Ung-7Moi4WWcwD34tEQNEw&bvm=bv.92291466,d.dGY).

About the FEI

The [Fédération Equestre Internationale](http://www.google.com.au/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CB4QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fei.org%2F&ei=JOTyU6uoNMPr8AWmwoD4DA&usg=AFQjCNENYadnoY6NcvBHM7xlXTstiB8tHA&bvm=bv.73231344,d.dGc) (FEI) promotes equestrianism in all its forms and encourages the development of the FEI equestrian disciplines throughout the world. Fair play, equality, complicity with the animal and respect for the environment and the horse are the core values of the FEI.

* **Equality**
Equestrianism is one of the few sports where men and women compete on equal terms and share the same podium up to and including Olympic level. There is no maximum age limit for competing athletes.
* **Fair Play**
At all levels, only the best man, woman or team should win fairly and squarely, having competed under even and equitable conditions and under rules that are themselves fair, realistic, and applied with scrupulous competence and even-handedness. No result can be meaningful or valid if it has not achieved on a level playing field. See more in the [FEI Code of Fair Play](http://www.fei.org/system/files/Code_Fairplay.pdf).
* **Complicity with the Animal**
Equestrianism is the only sport that involves two athletes, equine and human. It is the successful partnership between these two elements; the relationship of confidence and respect that is built up between them, that makes the sport so exceptional.
* **Respect for the environment**
The conservation of the environment is important to us. The FEI was one of the first international sports federations to establish a [Code of Conduct](http://www.fei.org/system/files/Code_Conduct_Environment_English.pdf) towards the environment.
* **Respect for the horse**
The welfare of the horse is at the heart of all our activities. In 1991, the FEI adopted a [Code of Conduct for the welfare of the horse](http://www.fei.org/system/files/Code_of_Conduct_Welfare_Horse_1Jan2013_0.pdf), which states: “In all equestrian sports, the welfare of the horse must be considered paramount”. In 2010 the FEI launched the Clean Sport Campaign to reaffirm and strengthen the welfare of the horse in competition and to ensure that entire equine community - athletes, veterinarians, grooms, managers, coaches, owners, and officials - help combat doping and the inappropriate use of medications through better education and increased vigilance. The measures put in place by the FEI Clean Sport Campaign have been widely accepted and successful to date.

For more information about the FEI, visit: [www.fei.org](http://www.fei.org)

Rules and regulations

Include:

* Governing bodies (eg Equestrian Australia, Equestrian Victoria)
* Relevant criterias
* Relevant committees

Committee Constitution

Include:

* Where to find it
* A summary

Welcome from Committee President

Include:

* Welcome
* Explain their involvement with the club/association
* Why Volunteer Committee Members are important to the club/association
* What the club/association has to offer
* What is planned for the club/association
* Highlight the importance of the club/association
* Thank Volunteer Committee Members for their involvement

About the Club/Association

**Insert Event Name**

Include:

* The history of the club/association
* How long it has been running
* What disciplines are involved
* What is planned for this year
* Include information about the discipline/s involved

About the location

**Insert location name**

Include:

* Address
* Melways reference
* Map
* Directions from the nearest main road/highway
* The club/association facilities

The Committee

Include:

* Key names and roles
* Organisation chart (if available)
* An overview of their experience
* When the meetings are
* Where the meetings are

Occupational health & safety

When on-site, to ensure everyone’s safety, we ask that you observe all safety instructions and signage at all times. This includes using the designated pedestrian paths, not approaching horses (unless permitted by the owner), no flash photography and no running on site.

Whether you are familiar with working with horses or not, it is important that you abide by the OH&S rules and instructions.

Competing horses are usually at the peak of fitness.  Please always exercise care when working in areas adjacent to horse activities and always be aware of horse traffic.

When in close proximity to a competition area, please give consideration to the horses and competitors and do not run, shout or do anything to prevent the horses and rider from being able to do their best.

In addition to riders and horses on site, there is often heavy equipment working on site and care should always be exercised in these areas.

Horses can be unpredictable so even if you are experienced dealing with them, it is important to always follow the rules in your volunteer role.

* When in close proximity to a competition area, please give consideration to the horses and competitors and do not run, shout or do anything to prevent the horses from being able to do their best.
* In addition to riders and horses on site, there is often heavy equipment working on site, particularly at events, and care should always be exercised in these areas.
* Do not approach a horse unless it is a required part of your role.

Remember these important guidelines:

* Remain within the designated area for your role
* You do not disturb riders by officious manner
* You are aware of the relevant evacuation procedures and evacuation meeting points.
* You are aware of who your First Aid Officer is.
* You always exercise care when working in areas adjacent to horse activities and always be aware of horse traffic.
* You use the designated pedestrian paths.
* Do not approach horses (unless permitted by the owner)
* Do not use flash photography.
* Do not run on site.
* You report any accidents, incidents and near misses that occur and document them accordingly with your team leader or President.
* You stay hydrated throughout the day.
* Wear safe and appropriate footwear. That is, flat, closed toe and heel shoes (no high heels or thongs).
* Wear weather appropriate clothing – wide brimmed hat, sunscreen etc for hot weather and waterproof clothing for cold, wet weather.
* Smoking is only permitted in designated areas

Safety at the venue is paramount for riders and it is important you are aware of the safety rules and regulations relevant to where you are volunteering. These may include:

* Approved safety helmets must be worn at all times
* Any person may lead a maximum of two horses while mounted.
* All signs at the venue must be observed
* Horses must be tied in a safe manner

If you see an incident or inappropriate behaviour, report it to your Team Leader immediately.

**Manual handling**
Some roles, including showjumping, will require manual handling including lifting showjumping poles while on shift. Please always exercise care when manual handling and ensure you follow these steps:

* Always bend at the knees
* Always bend with feet and knees pointing in the direction of the item you are lifting
* Avoid reaching and lifting higher than shoulder height
* Avoid bending of the back
* Avoid sideways bending of the back
* Avoid twisting of the back
* Do not lift anything heavier than your capacity
* Always ask your Team Leader for help if you are not comfortable with lifting or carrying of objects

**Evacuation points**
In the event of an emergency and/or evacuation please wait for instructions from your Team Leader or a member of the Organising Committee.

Include:

* Details of evacuation points
* Evacuation maps if available

Dealing with the media

It is important to remember that every event, rally or competition will have a designated spokesperson.

Should an incident occur that attracts media attention, it is crucial you do not comment or make a statement to the media, no matter how innocent you might think it is.

Any requests from media should be directed to your Volunteer Co-ordinator or Team Leader.

Code of conduct

As a volunteer, you will be required to sign a Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct provides a clear understanding, between you as a volunteer and the organisation/committee you are working with, of what is expected when it comes to behaviour. It outlines how organisations are to conduct themselves when working with volunteers and how volunteers conduct themselves in their roles.

It is a mutually signed agreement that outlines the vision and mission, roles and accountability, reporting lines and horse welfare.

It also ensures what we all fit in with the mission and goals of the equestrian sector.

The equestrian sector is committed to supporting and recognising our volunteers and providing a safe working environment, free from discrimination or harassment and the Code of Conduct ensures that this is always adhered to.

You can download the Code of Conduct from the Volunteer portal on the Equestrian Victoria website or obtain one from your club or association.

Policies and Procedures

A set of designated volunteer policies and procedures have been developed for the volunteer workforce.

These policies and procedures are designed to ensure the standard of volunteer program is delivered across the industry.

Policies and procedures include:
- Code of Conduct
- OH&S

-Grievance & Conflict Resolution
-Risk Management
-Recruitment
-Volunteer management

Make sure you are aware of these policies.

They can be viewed on the insert association website.

Notes