

# CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct is to be posted at the Show Secretary's stand at each MHJA horse show. The MHJA Code of Conduct is written to support its constitution, specifically Part 2-A Objectives. The Association is organized for the sole purpose of enhancing and stimulating the sport of riding and showing in the state of Michigan, supported by the following objectives:

- a) To service, promote and protect the best interest of the association shows as well as the exhibitors who participate
- b) To insure uniform and consistent standards in all association shows for the exhibitors
- c) To make objective and fair rules governing competitions and enforce the rules relative to the objective benefit of the association shows and the exhibitor
- d) to establish the association shows so that each individual show will provide a maximum of class opportunity to afford the exhibitor a worthwhile show trip
- e) To promote good sportsmanship among exhibitors and spectators alike.

The MHJA is founded on the solid principles of sportsmanship and competition. It endeavors to provide exhibitors and their families with a worthwhile, fair, and positive experience. The MHJA also respects the right of the equine professionals to work/train/show and educate their clients at MHJA shows.

MHJA members believe that sportsmanlike and ethical behavior must be demonstrated to both equine and human competitors. By applying for membership in the MHJA, or entering an MHJA sanctioned event, the individual agrees to the following:

- a) Will treat other members, non-member competitors, their guests and their families with courtesy and respect at all times.
- b) Will refrain from unsportsmanlike conduct (which includes actions, gestures, or speech) in the presence of other members, professionals, non-member competitors, and their guests or families
- c) Will refrain from the use of profanity in the presence of other members, professionals, non-member competitors, and their guests or families.

Equine professionals must recognize the level of esteem and importance they carry in the minds of their clients. A riding instructor/coach/trainer must be a good mentor and teach by excellent example the qualities and characteristics of a true horseman. Often, the equine professional is more than a mentor, they play an integral role in the development of their clients, particularly their younger riders. It is not a path to be taken lightly, but with care, thoughtfulness, and intelligence.

In addition, by accepting membership and working as professionals within the MHJA organization, professional members further agree:

- a) To ensure that the welfare of the MHJA is paramount
- b) To ensure that every horse shall at all times be treated humanely and with dignity, respect, and compassion
- c) To conduct all business affairs with integrity, sincerity and accuracy in an open and forth right manner
- d) To carry out professional duties with due care and diligence
- e) To act with integrity in financial dealings with clients, other professionals, and the public
- f) To handle business and operations in a manner which enhances the image of the MHJA
- g) To follow MHJA protocol to deal with problem resolution at horse shows
- h) To instill confidence among clients and the public in the horse industry, avoiding any action conducive to discrediting it or membership in the MHJA
- i) To communicate with clients and the public in a professional and responsible manner
- j) To develop their professional knowledge and skills
- k) To provide services conscientiously and competently
- l) To ensure that professional actions and general conduct help maintain the prestige of horse related activities and contribute to the quality and responsibility of the horse business.

All competitors, trainers, and parents agree to the MHJA Code of Conduct when they sign the entry form and participate in an MHJA Sanctioned event. It is important that all competitors, trainers, and parents understand that the MHJA expects its competitors, trainers and parents to uphold the MHJA Code of Conduct. Failure to act accordingly will initiate the Code of Conduct Infraction Protocol as outlined below.

## Code of Conduct - Protocol for Handling and Reporting Alleged Infractions

I. If a competitor, trainer, parent or official of the horse show witnesses an action which they believe is contrary to the Code of Conduct, that person shall approach a member of the Rules, Standards and Grievance committee or horse show management immediately. That member of the RSG committee or management should immediately assess the facts and determine what, if any action is required, based on the following.

- a. **If the alleged infraction is in process and witnessed by the RSG or Management** that official should attempt to defuse the situation. Once the situation has settled, the RSG or official shall complete the MHJA Official Incident Report Form (available at the horse show office) and document a full account of the alleged infraction of the Code of Conduct. The attending RSG or Official shall indicate on the Incident report if they feel the incident was significant enough to initiate the sanctioning procedure, or if the incident was handled to the satisfaction of all parties.

b. If the alleged infraction has completed before the arrival of the RSG or Management that official must determine the situation to the best of their ability by interviewing witnesses and the person in question. The RSG or official will complete the MHJA Official Incident Report Form. This Incident serves to document the complaint only. In order for the complaint to be reviewed as an official complaint it must be signed by three different exhibitors/trainers/*or parents* in addition to the RSG or official. In the event that the witness is the horse show judge, no other witnesses are necessary, but the judge must sign the MHJA Official incident report.

c. As part of the resolution process a RSG member and horse show management shall disclose to the alleged offending party that an incident report will be filed, and allow the offending party to read and sign the report. The offending party will have an area to comment on their actions within this report. .

II All complaints will be reviewed by the MHJA officers and presented to the MHJA voting members. The voting members will determine the validity of the alleged infraction. This review will normally be completed at the next scheduled meeting of the voting members. When the voting member determines an alleged infraction is valid, that decision will be retroactive to the date on the completed incident report. However:

a. If a situation is producing an obvious violation(s) of the Code of Conduct, and or multiple offences are occurring in succession, an RSG member along with show management may make an immediate determination that an offense has occurred.

b. If the offending party has previous valid incident reports on file, or is not altering their conduct to reflect the MHJA Code of Conduct, the RSG member must contact the MHJA officers and apprise them of the situation.

c. If necessary the MHJA officers will call an emergency meeting of the voting members. The voting members can then immediately validate an incident report, and initiate the Protocol for Sanctioning Violations, i.e. - provide the necessary verbal and written warnings, and if necessary fine the offending person and disallow that person further participation in MHJA sanctioned events.

III. All offenses reviewed by the voting members and deemed legitimate will remain on file for a period of 2 (two) years from the date of occurrence. After a period of 2 (two) years, the offense is expunged from the offending party's file. Any other offense(s) shall remain on record for its own 2 (two) year period..

#### **Code of Conduct -Protocol for Sanctioning Infractions**

I. If the alleged infraction of the Code of Conduct is deemed legitimate by the MHJA Voting Members the offending person shall be sanctioned as follows:

a.. The first offense shall constitute a verbal warning that such action is not tolerated at MHJA functions. This verbal warning may have been given at the horse show in question. The Voting members will decide if the actions of the RSG Committee or show management constituted the verbal warning and contact the offending person to inform them that the Protocol for Sanctioning Code of Conduct violations has been initiated.

b..The second offense shall constitute a written warning that such action is not tolerated at MHJA functions.

c..The third offense shall cause the MHJA to assess a fine in the amount of \$250 payable to the MHJA office prior to offender being allowed to attend any MHJA function as a spectator, exhibitor, trainer, or in any other capacity. If the fine is not paid within 30 days of notification that the alleged offence was deemed legitimate the person will be added to the MHJA website **NOT IN GOOD STANDING** list.

d..The fourth and each additional offense committed during the 2( two) year time period shall cause the MHJA to assess a fine in the amount of \$500 payable to the MHJA office prior to offender being allowed to attend any MHJA function as a spectator, exhibitor, trainer, or any other capacity. If the fine is not paid within 30 days of notification that the alleged offense was deemed legitimate the person will be added to the MHJA website **NOT IN GOOD STANDING** list.

e. All fines collected for infractions of the Code of Conduct will be deposited in the MHJA Scholarship fund.