

INTRODUCTION

This handbook outlines the rules and procedures to be followed by distance riders and the management of the Atlantic Canada Trail Riding Association (ACTRA) sanctioned rides. These have been developed and refined through the years and have been found to provide a sound basis for distance riding. ACTRA currently sanctions six different types of events. It is recommended that riders and/or ride managers read the “General Overview” chapter as well as the section regarding the particular event that they wish to enter or host for information specific to that particular type of event.

All competitors in ACTRA sanctioned events need to have proof of third party liability or membership in their Provincial Equestrian Association.

It is impossible to anticipate and write rules to cover every situation that might arise at an ACTRA event. At times the underlying ACTRA philosophy of the rules must be used in order to accommodate acts of nature, vandalism or accidents. In dealing with such situations and in implementing and applying the existing rules, ACTRA relies on the good intentions of its membership to interpret the rules honestly, fairly and in the spirit with which they have been written. To help in these situations, please remember the following:

1. ACTRA places the highest priority in the safety of horse, riders and workers.
2. All competitors should be treated in an equitable and impartial manner to provide a fair competition.
3. The event should be a pleasant, enjoyable experience for horse, riders and workers.

ACTRA recognizes the individuality of each ride and the fact that conditions may occasionally require some deviations. Ride management should request permission for any proposed deviation from the sanctioning director before the ride takes place. In the case of any deviation from the rules, ride management must make an application in writing to the Board of Directors (BOD) for standing of mileage and points.

The two most vital ingredients for any ride are well-marked, accurately measured trails and competent judging. No amount of frill or fancy trophies can make a ride successful if either or both of these areas are deficient.

A “first time” ride will need about six months lead time to organize. Once established, this time can be shortened. It is recommended that new ride managers have an experienced competitor help them to plan a safe trail.

SANCTIONING

Application for sanction should be made early in the planning stages to the ACTRA sanctioning director. It is strongly recommended that sanction be obtained early enough for the event to appear in the ACTRA newsletter’s schedule of events. The newsletter is produced in January, April, June, August and October. The fee for listing a ride in the newsletter is included in the sanction fee. Sanction fees are \$3 per starter for all rides. Ride management should receive sanction kits no later than two weeks before the ride date. Verbal communication requesting a ride date must be confirmed with a written request within a week to the sanctioning person, in order for that ride date to be approved.

The sanction package includes judging and administration sheets, guidelines and completion certificates. Results and sanction fees should be forwarded to the statistician and treasurer, respectively, within two weeks of the ride. The statistician will forward the ride results to the newsletter editor to be published free of charge in the ACTRA newsletter. Leftovers from the sanction kits are to be returned to the sanction director.

Two different rides will not be sanctioned for the same day unless they are located more than 100 miles apart.

TRAILS

Geodetic maps of the area will help plan the route. Clear with the Dept. of Natural Resources for the use of Provincial trails on the

selected date. Secure permission from all landowners for the crossing of any private land.

Mileage must be accurately measured, not estimated.

Trails should be trimmed on the sides and overhead. Riders have missed turns because of shut eyes due to low-hanging branches. Brush and saplings should be cut flat to the ground for safety reasons.

There should be brooks or other watering spots on the trail, at least one every five miles. If natural facilities are inadequate, substitutes may be supplied, such as a water truck with rider's marked buckets. Any unsafe watering spot should be clearly marked.

ACTRA has adopted a two-color flagging tape system for marking trails. The flags are tied on the rider's right when they are traveling in the correct direction on trail. One color is used for the base color with turns being marked with a secondary color flag tied to either the left or right of the main color flag to indicate the direction of the upcoming turn. The placing of flag markers should be done from horseback or standing on the back of a truck. This cuts down on the sabotage factor and puts the flags approximately at rider's eye level.

Directional arrows and mileage markers can also be used, but should be waterproof. White styrofoam plates with waterproof markers can be used, as well as arrows on the ground made with hydrated lime. Arrows should always be used at any junction of trails and should be followed within 50 feet or less by a confidence marker to assure riders that they have turned correctly. On straight, open going, markers at 1/8th to 1/4th mile intervals are usually sufficient. For any point where there are side trails showing on either side of the main trail, a marker should be put in sight ahead to assure riders that they should stay straight.

If it is possible, on the day before a ride, ride managers should send someone over the trail route that has not been there before to check the clarity of the trail marking. If they have trouble, correct or add additional markers as needed. All rides have problems keeping markers in place through populated areas, so it

is wise to have someone familiar with the trail go out ahead of the riders, equipped to replace any missing trail markers.

Any rider going off course, intentionally or otherwise, must return to the same point where they left in order for them to be considered for ride completion awards and mileage.

JUDGES

Judges must have a good working knowledge of horses under stress and they have the final authority on ALL questions pertaining to the safety and placing of horses.

Horses that receive veterinarian medical care while at a ride are disqualified from the ride and any medication or treatment shall be at the owner's expense.

Any judge, vet, Pulse and Respiration (P & R) person, volunteer or ride staff officiating at a ride shall not be subject to indignities of any kind during the process of the ride; and it is the duty and obligation of ride management hosting the ride to see that this rule is enforced. Any problems with ride personnel will be reported to ride management and only ride management. Management will handle problems in a fair and diplomatic manner. ACTRA will support ride managers who chose to pull a competitor's score sheet from a ride in the process of enforcing the above rules. Any competitor whose score sheet is pulled will not receive mileage, placing or points for that ride.

Any person may judge at any ACTRA ride if they have an immediate family member competing, or has any monetary interest in any horse entered in the ride, but upon completion of the final exam and receiving a final score, the horse and rider will receive mileage credit only.

Judges MUST understand and agree to use standard ACTRA judging procedures and score sheets without modification.

Ride management should make available some type of sanitary hand cleaner and recommend to judges that it be used between horse examinations.

PUBLICITY

Area newspaper write-ups are helpful and free if presented as news. Tack shop “courtesy boards” can be helpful. “Coming Events” columns of various local horse magazines are frequently free or minimal costs. Managers should remember that it will be necessary to get information to these magazines at least four months in advance of their ride to receive any benefit, as well as to the ACTRA newsletter.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Horses showing evidence of contagious disease are ineligible to compete and shall be promptly removed from the ride grounds. Nursing mares and horses that have been nerved are ineligible to compete. It is recommended that mares in the last half of pregnancy not be entered.

AGE REQUIREMENTS

Although the term “horse” is used throughout this handbook, all members of the equine family, be they ponies, horses, mules, etc. are eligible to compete, provided that they are 48 months, or older, at the time of competition. The veterinarian or judge shall determine the age of unregistered equines. Mounts must be a minimum of five years of age to compete in rides of more than 35 miles.

JUNIOR DIVISION

A junior is a rider who was 16 years of age or under as of the first day of November of that ride season (Nov 1 to Oct 31). A senior sponsor should accompany junior riders at all times during the ride. In the event that a junior rider does not have a senior sponsor at the beginning of the ride, ride management may assist in the selection of a sponsor from within the adults entered. A senior rider may sponsor a maximum of two junior riders per ride. In the event of an emergency, between checks, that either competitor or the competitor’s mount is

unable to continue safely, the identified sponsor and junior should stay together until another sponsor is found.

An ACTRA junior member 14 years or older who has completed 500 miles or more in ACTRA sanctioned events, may apply in writing to the BOD to ride un-sponsored, and compete in the senior division. Such un-sponsored junior riders must also have on file with ACTRA a letter by the parent or guardian, which consents to and requests the un-sponsored status.

Junior riders, sponsored or un-sponsored, may participate in ACTRA competitions only with the written consent of a parent or guardian on the signed entry form. This consent shall imply: acceptance of all ACTRA rules, particularly the ability of a sponsor to substitute another sponsor during a ride as allowed by ACTRA rules and regulations; and prior consent to any emergency medical treatment or aid.

Infraction of the ACTRA rules may result in either the sponsor and/or the junior being disqualified.

Juniors are not permitted to ride stallions in ACTRA sanctioned events.

HELMETS

ACTRA rules require all riders to be wearing approved ASTM/SEI helmets while mounted.

RIDE PERSONNEL

The minimum personnel required to run a ride will consist of a ride manager, a ride secretary, a timekeeper/starter, a writer for each judge or vet, a driver for each judge and their writer, pulse and respiration recorders (number needed depends on number of ride entries), and (preferably) a driver with a horse trailer to be available for picking up any withdrawn horses. ALL drivers should know how to cover the entire area and have time to get to their assigned stations ahead of the first riders.

WRITERS shall record the findings of the judges on the ACTRA judging sheets.

Writers should be provided with pencils, as ballpoint pens do not take well when papers get damp. An alternate color is useful for before and after recording. It is recommended that newbie judges be paired with experienced ACTRA competitors as writers. Some type of protection should be available for the writers to keep the scoring sheets dry in the event of rain.

TIMEKEEPER/STARTERS shall call competitors to the starting line in order of their departure. Permission to change starting order must be obtained from the timekeeper/starter, yet riders of stallions shall be allowed their choice of starting position. Timekeeper/starters also must keep accurate records of start and finish times for each competitor in timed events and calculate any time penalties, if incurred, to be recorded on the competitor's judging sheet. Any official unscheduled holds on the trail shall be timed by a ride official and credited to the competitor(s), such as only the actual minutes required to re-shoe a horse.

RIDE SECRETARY sends out entry forms and receives and acknowledges the entries. They are also responsible for the initial information entered on the judging sheets (names of riders, horse, mount numbers, etc.). They see that the judge's score sheets are filled in properly, including being signed by the judge, supervise the correct tallying of scores and subsequent placing of horses before entering onto the master score sheet and returning score sheets to the riders. Management should provide a third party to re-check calculations on score sheets before awards are given out as well as a private area for writers and ride secretaries to total and sort ride sheets. The ride secretary must also return all master score sheets, including score sheets of any horses that did not complete the ride but were entered, preferably within two weeks after the ride to the appropriate ACTRA directors. If not returned, rider points and mileage earned may be withheld. The ride secretary must also ensure that the sanction fees are sent to the ACTRA treasurer after the ride as the rate of \$3 per ride ENTRY, or \$25 per Special Event.

EXAMINATION / JUDGING

All ACTRA events have a required pre-ride exam that can take between 3-5 minutes per horse. Management should plan for an examination area that will allow room to have horses trotted out and ideally, room for circles and/or figures of eight with a surface that is fairly hard and smooth. It is recommended that green horses have been previously introduced to being handled by strangers, but judges will have extra patience with these new horses, unless deemed dangerous or unruly. Horses should be trained to trot-in-hand and lunge either direction.

A red ribbon must be worn in the tail of a known kicker and a yellow ribbon must be worn in the tail of a stallion.

There is also a pre-ride briefing that usually takes place between the completion of exams and the starting time. Riders are informed of such things as trail marking colors, starting order, exact ride length, a brief description of the trail, allowed ride time, lunch stop location, which vehicles are available to take stuff to the half-way and any hold times and/or parameters. Rider questions are also answered at this time, and the judges introduced, who may, if they wish, contribute to the briefing.

Each type of ACTRA event has at least one hold where horses are once again checked for their health and wellbeing. During these holds, riders may walk their horse, feed, water, wash or blanket as each sees fit. No time credit is given to riders who wish to stay at the hold after they have been cleared to go. Management must be prepared to trailer back to the ride site any horses withdrawn at this point.

There is also a final exam for each horse at the end of the event before a completion can be awarded. Each type of event varies in its own way so it is wise to check the appropriate chapter for the event riders wish to compete in for the procedure for the final exam.

DRUG/MEDICATION RULES

Any type of tack is permitted unless deemed inhumane or unsafe by the judges. The

use of electrolytes and/or fly spray is permitted as well.

No horse competing in any ACTRA sanctioned ride shall be given any illegal drug or medication for the purpose of altering the horse's performance, within 72 hours prior to the ride. An illegal drug is defined as any stimulant, depressant, tranquilizer, local anesthetic, anti-inflammatory or analgesic, or any medication that alters distribution of body fluids. The finding of a drug or its by-products in the blood, urine or saliva of a horse will be used as evidence that such drug was illegally administered. Penalty for illegal drug use will be disqualification from and withdrawal of awards for that ride. The ACTRA BOD will make the final decision as to imposition of any such penalties. Also prohibited are salves, ointments, liniments, ice boots (except in endurance or limited distance rides), leg compresses, bandages or water that has been artificially heated or cooled (again except in endurance or limited distance rides).

GENERAL MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

A source of water and toilet facilities should be available at the ride site. A first-aid kit should be available and a vet on call.

Entrants should be informed before their arrival as to what meals are provided with their ride entry and which are not, or if the ride is "pot-luck".

Stock markers of various colors are needed to number the horse's rumps, both sides.

Ride managers who wish to ride in their own event need to appoint another person to be the ride manager for the day of the event.

Abuse of mounts, or unsportsmanlike behaviour by the rider and/or their family or crew will result in disqualification from the ride.

The ACTRA rulebook should be available at the ride site in the event of any questions or disputes regarding rules and/or judging procedures.

The use of hand held heart rate monitors at holds will be at the discretion of the ride

manager. Competitors have the right to request a manual heart rate be taken, and all final heart rates will be taken manually with a stethoscope.

GRIEVANCES

All objections must be made to ride management before the rider leaves the ride, or within one half hour after presentation of awards and/or score sheets. All grievances must be made in writing not sooner than two days, (to allow for a cooling off period) following the ride, and not later than five days, to the ACTRA chair with a copy to the Rules Director. All grievances must include a \$10 processing fee.

TRAIL COURTESY

Courtesy is a must. Respect for the rights of another rider is an essential part of horsemanship. Riders failing to display courtesy or sportsmanship do not live up to the ideals of a good competitive horseperson.

A rider should never purposely block a trail to a faster rider. If the trail is such that it is impossible to pass or allow someone to pass, the rider should look out for the nearest place where passing may be carried out safely. The rider following should indicate passing on the right or left, and not crowd the horse in front.

A rider should keep at least one horse's length behind another except when overtaking to pass.

Riders may furnish their own containers and should not monopolize the only hose or water source. No rider should in any way contaminate a common water source that is being used to water the horses.

Riders should follow instructions, keep track of their time and be prompt in returning for checks or examinations. It is the rider's responsibility to keep track of the time for rechecks and holds. It is the management's responsibility to see to it that all riders are informed of the length of the holds and to inform the rider of the number of minutes to recheck time.

SOLE/HOOF PROTECTION

All types of sole or hoof protection are permissible in all sanctioned divisions.

Attachment strap, keeper or gator may not extend above the pastern. The Judges may request to observe the area at any time. Devices which serve strictly as leg protection are not permitted (a leg being defined as all structures above and including the coronet band).

Examples of these devices include, but are not limited to, bell boots, splint boots, wraps or any device that was not manufactured to hold the sole protection in place (11/2012)