



Electronic Communications Policy for Judges

Social media and networking sites as well as emailing and texting (collectively referred to herein as “Electronic Communications”) are common and popular means by which people communicate. But there are unintended consequences if Electronic Communications are used improperly. Because of their unique standing, AQHA-approved judges need to be particularly careful when using these means of communication. This Policy is established to set guidelines and expectations for AQHA-approved judges who engage in Electronic Communications.

1. Consider Electronic Communications as public at all times—even if created with private intentions. If you are going to use social media in any form, assume your communication may be read by anyone, including other judges, exhibitors, owners and trainers, at any time.
2. You, as an AQHA-approved judge, represent the equine judging industry, AQHA, your fellow judges and show event officials. Promote judging in a positive light with a general feeling of pride and professionalism. Instill confidence among exhibitors and the public in the AQHA judging program, avoiding any action conducive to discrediting it.
3. Be aware and cautious when commenting on controversial issues that might involve AQHA without knowing where AQHA stands on the issue. Contact AQHA directly if you have questions and verify information before passing it along.
4. Do not use Electronic Communications to criticize the policies of AQHA or its affiliates, assigning practices, etc. If you have a concern for AQHA, please contact AQHA directly to discuss before resorting to Electronic Communications to voice concerns. Again, as a judge, you should always be a positive representative of AQHA.
5. Do not make negative comments regarding the performance or ability of other AQHA judges, exhibitors, trainers, owners or show management.
6. Do not post comments regarding judging decisions made by other judges.
7. Always be cognizant of your posts in that your colleagues who have judged you and/or your horse at a show will see your post and you may be judging and/or working with them at a subsequent horse show.
8. Never use social media to solicit shows to judge.
9. Do not post details about your judging assignments or those of other judges. If someone wants to find out who is going to be judging at a show, they should do so through official channels, not your post.
10. Do not post anything relating to the shows you have judged or will judge that calls your objectivity into question.
11. While judging an AQHA-approved show, never be on any social media or electronically communicating with exhibitors the day prior to or during the event. During this time period, do not make posts or even “like” posts, especially of horses or exhibitors you have been judging.
12. Remember, accountability and integrity should always be your guiding principles. Jeopardizing your impartiality or professionalism should never be a part of your actions or posts.

Consequences for violating this policy may range from a reprimand from the AQHA Judges Committee to suspension of judging privileges for such time as decided by the AQHA Judges Committee. This decision shall be based on the severity of the action and/or the frequency of violations.

Thank you for keeping this policy in mind and for your commitment and agreement to adhere to the high standards expected of you as an AQHA-approved judge.

AGREED:

Judge's Printed Name

AQHA Membership Number

Judge's Signature

Date