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Sensory Hairs

FOR ALL EQUESTRIAN AUSTRALIA DISCIPLINES



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JANUARY 2025

SENSORY HAIR INFORMATION

Since July 2022, The clipping/ shaving or otherwise modifying sensory hairs (Whiskers) has been prohibited unless for veterinary reasons.

Following a decision at the FEI General Assembly in November 2024 to modify the Veterinary Regulations From January 2025. A similar prohibition will apply to removing or shortening the hair within the rims of the auricle

From 1st January 2025, horses found competing with hair in the auricles removed or shortened within the rims of the auricle will be issued a recorded warning and from 1st July 2025 will be eliminated from the event.

EA General Regulations
Chapter VI Protection of Athletes and Horses Article 141 -
Protection of Horses



What are Sensory Hairs?

Horses have special tactile sensory hairs, known as their whiskers. The whiskers on a horse play an important role in their sensory awareness system. These amazing sensory hairs have their own nerve and blood supply and help horses navigate their surroundings.



The Auricle

What is an Auricle?

The Auricle is the outer ear (the part that is visible) It is made out of cartilage. It is covered with a thin layer of skin and muscles.

Who must abide by this rule? The EA GRs, Sport Rules and Special Regulations apply to equestrian Events and/or Competitions organised by persons or bodies affiliated to EA, or otherwise under the jurisdiction of EA. By entering in a competition that is governed under EA rules, the participant is accepting to abide by these rules regardless of whether they are an EA member or not.

What is a Recorded Warning Card and how do I issue one? Dressage, Eventing and Show Horse have a Recorded Warning Card template annexed in the corresponding Sport Rules which outlines the offences that a Recorded Warning Card can be issued for in each discipline and the process that an Official will need to follow when issuing one.

Who can eliminate a horse or issue a recorded warning? Officials recognised by EA are responsible for the implementation of all GRs and Rules. Different disciplines have different Officials that hold this responsibility. Refer to the National Sport Rules for further information on which Officials are recognised by EA for the implementation of GRs and Rules which includes the elimination or issuing of a Recorded Warning Card to Athletes.

What can a Veterinary Exemption cover? As per the EA GRs Article 141, individual sensory hairs may be removed by a veterinarian to prevent pain or discomfort for the Horse. Areas of hair that must be clipped, shaven or removed to allow veterinary treatment are exempt from this rule. Horses that have a veterinary exemption must provide proof in the form of a Veterinary Certificate to the Organising Committee and Event Officials on request.

Is there a certain length or number of Sensory Hairs that must remain on the horse? No, there is no specified length or number of hairs that must remain on the horse. The spirit of the rule is that the Sensory Hairs of the horse are not purposely altered or modified in any way.