

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. There are unintended consequences if Electronic Communications are used inappropriately. With the expectation of being held to a high standard, 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 use Electronic Communications.

1. Consider Electronic Communications as public at all times—even if created with private intentions. With use of social media in any form, assume communication may be read by anyone, including other judges, exhibitors, owners and trainers, at any time.
2. As an AQHA-approved judge, Judge’s represent the equine judging industry, AQHA, fellow judges and show event officials. Always 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 there are questions and/or to 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 there is concern for AQHA, please contact AQHA directly to discuss before resorting to Electronic Communications to voice concerns. Again, as a judge, Judges 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 other judges and/or their horse(s) at a show will see post(s) and judges 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 post(s).
10. Do not post anything relating to the shows judged or will be judging that calls a judge’s 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 that have been judged.
12. Remember, accountability and integrity should always be a Judges guiding principles. Jeopardizing impartiality or professionalism should never be a part of a Judge’s actions or post(s). 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.

Always keep this policy in mind to fulfill a Judge’s commitment and agreement to adhere to the high standards expected of an AQHA-approved judge.

AGREED:

Judge’s Printed Name AQHA Membership Number

Judge’s Signature Date