

## Yellow Warning Card Procedure

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### Introduction

Recently National sport rules have changed to make a Yellow Warning Card the minimum required consequence for all cases of horse abuse-depending on the seriousness of the situation the warning may also be accompanied by a penalty such as elimination or disqualification.

Should an athlete receive two Yellow Warning Cards within 12 months they will be suspended for 2 months.

Cases that may incur a Yellow Warning Card can be stressful for riders and officials alike -the guidelines below may help in the process.

### Guidelines for Issuing a Yellow Warning Card

1. Authority to Issue
  - As described in the national sport rules\*
  - Should officials with the appropriate authority not be on the grounds the sport rules specify a process for reporting issues
2. Grounds for Issuing a Yellow Warning Card
  - Abuse of Horse.
  - Incorrect Behaviour by the Person Responsible or their entourage (e.g., family members, coach, trainer, groom, etc.)
  - Non-compliance with Sport Rules
  - Non-compliance with Protective Headgear Rules
3. Notification
  - The Yellow Warning Card can be delivered by hand or any other suitable means.
  - If the Person Responsible cannot be notified during the event, they must be notified in writing within 14 days of the event.

### The Process for issuing a yellow card Setting up the discussion

Contact the athlete to make a time to meet and discuss the situation-the athlete should be offered the opportunity to bring someone else for support. If the athlete is under 18, then the official must ensure the athlete has a parent or adult representative e.g. Coach or parent - approved adult who can be present for the meeting. If that is not possible the meeting should be rescheduled to a more suitable time where an adult can be present.

In the case of Para and Virtus athletes, an adult representative or supporter must be present in all cases to assist with clarity and understanding if necessary.

In cases where a power imbalance may exist e.g., junior official and a high-profile athlete or other potentially difficult or sensitive situations officials should consider asking a second official to be present in the discussions; always taking care not to be seen to be intimidating the athlete.

When setting up the meeting, if a clear and unambiguous breach of the rules is believed to have occurred, the official should identify the rule concerned so the athlete is aware prior to the discussion.

### Giving the athlete the opportunity to be heard

Asking the athlete for their input is the most important part of the process. It is crucial the athlete is given the opportunity to speak and that they feel heard in the process. It is sometimes helpful, to repeat back to them what they have said so they know that they have been heard and feel validated.

Saying things like 'So can I just confirm that what you are saying is.... Or 'I think what I heard you say is..... Is that correct?

Or I think I have this right could you just confirm for me are you saying that?

### Providing evidence

When issuing any card at an event, is essential that the officials involved come prepared with a clear description of what they believe to have occurred. In addition, they should provide any evidence they may have to verify the offence. For instance, photos, video and or evidence in the form of written statements.

### Identifying the exact rule that has been breached

The officials involved need to be able to identify, outline and show the athlete the rule that they have breached. Providing the athlete an iPad or hard copy of the rules, as well as explaining how they have breached the rule is helpful. Sometimes explaining to them, why the rule is important, is beneficial to them accepting responsibility.

### Below are the key elements of positive listening skills:

Using the skills below can reduce the chances of a negative outcome for both the athlete and the official.

#### Key elements of positive listening:

- **Paying attention:**  
Focus on the speaker without distractions, including your own thoughts and feelings.
- **Showing interest:**  
Use eye contact, body language (like nodding), and verbal cues to show that you're engaged.
- **Providing feedback:**  
Reflect what you've heard, ask clarifying questions, and paraphrase to ensure understanding.
- **Deferring judgment:**  
Avoid interrupting or making assumptions and allow the speaker to finish their points.
- **Responding appropriately:**  
Show empathy and understanding and avoid responding defensively or dismissively.

### This may not change the outcome

What the athlete has said to the officials may not change the outcome of the process. It will ensure they feel heard and validated and often that is enough for them not to need any further explanation.

If the conversation does change the decision of whether to issue a card, explain to the athlete why the decision has changed.

In both circumstances, it is now time to wrap up and finish the meeting. Provide the card to the athlete signed by the official, ask them if they have any questions and thank them for taking the time to come and speak with you.

It's important not to drag the process out longer than needed as this can lead to more unrest. Send a copy of the card to the relevant body and ensure one is kept by the official.

The athlete should be informed that the yellow card is not appealable

**Sport Rule references:**

Equestrian Australian **Dressage Rules - 1.6.3**

Equestrian Australian **Jumping Rules - Articles 260 & 265.2**