



# *Working Equitation East's "How To" Show Manual*

A Step-by-Step Guide to  
Putting on Your Own Show

Working Equitation East often gets asked “How do we put on a licensed show?”. So, we’ve decided to put together a step-by-step account of just that. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us at [workingequitationeast@gmail.com](mailto:workingequitationeast@gmail.com).

### How WE East Runs a Show

#### Step 1

First you need to ask yourself (or selves) – Do you have the start up funds needed? Where would you hold the show? Is there a facility available that is reasonably priced? Are there hotels nearby? Restaurants nearby? Do you have access to obstacles and a dressage court? You need to be able to answer yes to all of these before you start planning. If you can answer yes, then the first and most important step is to create a Show Committee. Ours consists of 8 people, 4 of which are seasoned show personnel. We start our organizing once the previous show year has ended and we meet at least monthly.

#### Step 2

A budget needs to be determined for your show. Many of the bills will not need to be paid upfront, but the facility retainer, ribbons (discussed in Step 7), liability insurance, and sometimes the Judge’s airplane tickets will have to be covered before any revenue starts coming in. So, you need to have a cushion in your committee’s treasury. The amount is all dependent on the costs for flights, insurance in your area, how many ribbons you’ll want to provide, and what the facility requires for a retainer, but we like to have upwards of \$3000 in our bank to start.

#### Step 3

Your next step is to pick a date and find a venue/facility. Sometimes the date is dependent on the facility’s availability, but you should at least pick a month. Then you need to ask – Where is the best place to hold the show? Do we want an indoor/outdoor or just an outdoor? How many stalls will be needed? Do they have a sound system? Do they have a show office? If they do, what is in the office – copy machine, tables, chairs, refrigerator, WIFI, etc.? What does the rental cost? What does it include – drags, ring watering, grounds person, etc.? Do they have a Dressage court to rent? If not, where can you get one to rent? And where are you getting the obstacles from?

#### Step 4

Once a facility and date are selected, you need to get a Judge, Technical Delegate, Show Manager, and Show Secretary. The list of approved Judges and TDs can be found on the USAWE website at <https://usawe.org/competitions/licensed-officials-list/>. Your level of classes (L1 – L3, L1 – L5, L1 – L7) will determine what type of Judge you will need, (L, r, R, and S). The Judge is the first member of the Protest Committee.

#### Step 5

Once you have your date, facility, judge, TD, Show Manager, and Show Secretary, you need to purchase Liability Insurance for your show. We use Hallmark Equine Insurance Agency, Inc. The

requirements for insurance are covered in the U.S. Rules for Working Equitation which may be found on the USAWE's website at <https://usawe.org/competitions/rules/>. Now, you are ready to apply for a Show License with USAWE. The online application for the license may be found at <https://usawe.org/competitions/resources/>. Once you receive your Show License from USAWE, you are ready to get down to the nitty gritty of the show!

### Step 6

Now you need to put together a Prize List for the show. Here is a list, quoted from the USAWE Competition Manual (4.2), of the items that should be included in a Prize List:

- *Title page to include the show name, competition level, location, date(s) of competition, opening and closing dates for entries, and USAWE name and logo.*
- *List of show officials (e.g., Show Manager, Secretary, Judge, TD, Safety Coordinator, Veterinarian, Farrier) and contact information, as appropriate.*
- *Notice that the show is run in accordance with the U.S. Rules for Working Equitation, and USAWE's website address for the most recent version.*
- *Competitor membership requirements.*
- *Horse recording requirements.*
- *List of classes and divisions offered.*
- *Cash prizes/awards offered.*
- *Entry procedures.*
- *Entry fees and other show fees.*
- *Refund policy. Clearly state refund requirements, the timeline, and which fees are refundable.*
- *Entry form. The first page can be modified as needed to accommodate specific show requirements. The second page must be included in its entirety, with no changes. Signatures are mandatory.*
- *General show rules (e.g., smoking restrictions, sharps container placement, use of protective head gear, dogs on leash, etc.).*
- *Facility requirements, stabling availability.*

The Word version of the Entry Form and the template for the PL may be found on the USAWE website under Competition Resources at <https://usawe.org/competitions/resources/>.

### Step 7

Next, you need to plan out what kind and how many ribbons you will need. We would highly suggest that you do not put any date on your ribbons so that you can use them from year to year. We use Hodges Badge and they offer a discount if you order your ribbons by February. So, we always get ours ordered early.

### Step 8

For a show to run smoothly and successfully, you need to have a lot of staff and volunteers at your ready. This is the list of all the positions we look for and their job descriptions:

1. Show Manager – This position is a critical position and **should not be held** by someone who isn't already experienced. The manager oversees the entire operation of the show from start to finish.

Before the show, our manager is responsible for:

- a. Being present at the show committee meetings
- b. Contacting/procuring the Judge and TD
- c. Obtaining the show license
- d. Making sure all positions (staff and volunteers) are filled and that each person knows what their responsibilities are before the show starts
- e. Making sure the course maps are designed by the Judge and sent to the TD to verify at least 10 days - 2 weeks before the show
- f. Making sure the obstacle list is sent to the Secretary for GIRA and to whoever is in charge of bringing them to the show

During the show, our manager is responsible for:

- a. Being present during the actual show to make sure everything is running smoothly
- b. Managing the obstacle set up
- c. Answer any questions with regards to the running of the show
- d. Being part of the Protest Committee

After the show, our manager is responsible for:

- a. Filling out both the Judge Evaluation Form for Show Managers and the TD Evaluation Form for Show Managers. These forms may be found under Competition Resources on the USAWE website at <https://usawe.org/competitions/resources/>.
- b. Ensuring that the results are correct and submitted in time
- c. Participating in the debrief meeting

2. Show Secretary – WE East uses GIRA, an online scoring program, for our shows, so our secretary needed to develop a thorough knowledge of this program before our first show. The manual for GIRA may be found on the USAWE website under Competition Resources at <https://usawe.org/competitions/resources/>.

Before the show, our secretary is responsible for:

- a. Receiving all the entries for the show and making sure payment and other documents (Coggins, Health Certs, Shot Certs, etc.) are received for each of those entries.
- b. Communicating with the competitors.
- c. Verifying that each rider and horse have valid USAWE membership and recording numbers.
- d. Keeping track of all the stabling and camper requests and their payments, which is then given to the Stable Manager to organize.
- e. Entering the entry information for each competitor in the GIRA database and assigning bridle numbers for each. Entering the bridle number assures that that number will appear on the order of go sheets.

- f. Making up competitor packets for each entry - a manila envelope with the bridle number and a couple of giveaways in it. Later a copy of the course maps, orders of go, and day sheets will go in the packets, as well.
- g. Creating a Day Sheet for each day with the tentative order of how the day should run. For example – Show start time, Trial Order, Judge’s Breaks, Lunch Break, Course Walks, etc.
- h. Developing an Order of Go for each trial through GIRA and making copies for the staff and volunteers.
- i. Printing up all the score sheets for each trial before the show starts.
- j. Making sure that all office supplies needed are gathered (copier w/extra ink cartridges, clip boards, pens (red, black, blue), copy paper, stapler, scissors, tape, paper clips, rubber bands, markers, push pins, bell or whistle for judge, stopwatches, adding machine w/paper rolls (in case GIRA is down).
- k. Making copies of the course maps, order of go, and day sheets - enough to go in each competitor packet, be given to the staff and volunteers that need them, and extra to hand out if asked for.

During the show, our secretary is responsible for:

- a. Handing out the competitor packets and collecting any monies that might still be due.
- b. Making up the clip boards for the Judge, Scribe, TD, Gate Steward, and Show Manager which have the day sheets, order of go, course maps on them. The Scribe will also need the score sheets to hand to the judge for each ride.
- c. Assisting the scorer (if the Secretary isn’t the Scorer for your show).

After the show, our secretary is responsible for keeping all the records for and from the show and submitting the Final Results to the USAWE Competition Committee.

3. Scribe (Volunteer) – We look for Scribes that have had experience. The Scribe should:
  - a. Be a quick, but neat writer and preferably know scribing shorthand symbols.
  - b. Write down only what the Judge says. Do not add your own interpretation.
  - c. Be polite. Do not interrupt the Judge, except to ask to repeat what was said.
  - d. Not offer any comments or question the Judge’s judging technique.
4. Gate Steward (Volunteer) – The Gate Steward coordinates the entry of each rider based on the order of go. She also:
  - a. Checks the horse’s condition before and after each ride. If any blood is seen, she/he needs to inform the TD and Judge immediately.
  - b. Checks the bit, noseband, curb chain, fly bonnets, and whip. If there are any questions as to their size, length, tightness, etc., she/he needs to inform the TD.
  - c. May need to perform the Paddock Steward responsibilities if the facility doesn’t warrant the need for one.
5. Paddock Steward (Volunteer) – If the facility’s warm-up ring is not easily seen from the ingate of the show ring, a paddock steward is required. The Paddock Steward is

responsible for controlling the number of riders in the ring at any given time. She/he should:

- a. Keep overcrowding from happening.
  - b. Ensure a safe riding environment.
  - c. Make sure no abusive behavior is used on the horses.
  - d. Make sure there is a minimum of three obstacles for schooling present for the EOH and Speed trials.
  - e. Notify the Gate Steward or TD if any irregularities occur.
6. Scorer (Volunteer) – The Scorer tallies the score sheets and verifies them for accuracy. The scorer should also know how to manually work the score sheets just in case the WIFI is down during the show. Our Show Secretary usually is our Scorer, but it is very important to have another person in your group who can also perform these duties.
  7. Ground Crew (Volunteers) – We usually have 2 or 3 people serving as our ground crew. They help in the course set up and take down. They need to stand by during the EOH and Speed trials to replace/re-adjust the pole, the ring, reset rails, adjust the pitcher, and fix any obstacle that may have gotten displaced. They may be asked to assist L1 riders who may have dropped an item during their trial.
  8. Runner (Volunteer) – A runner brings the completed score sheets from the Scribe to the Show Secretary or Scorer throughout the show.
  9. Office Assistant (Volunteer) – We have discovered over time that the Show Secretary/Scorer needs to have an Office Assistant during the show. The Office Assistant is responsible for:
    - a. Making photocopies of all the score sheets and results reports.
    - b. Organizing the ribbons needed for each class/division.
    - c. Taking the score sheets and results reports to the TD for approval.
    - d. Once approved, she needs to put out the ribbons with the score sheets and post the results reports for the competitors to see.
  10. Stable Manager (Volunteer) – The Stable Manager is responsible for assigning stalls to the competitors before the show, checking the horses in on the first day, and seeing that the stable area is running well with no hazards and/or complaints.
  11. Announcer (Volunteer) – At our shows, the Announcer is often the Gate Steward. She announces the name of the rider and horse as they enter the arena, as well as keeping everyone informed of the show's progress and any other important information throughout the day.
  12. Treasurer – The person handling all the money for your show will need to be present at the show. If he/she cannot be there, they need to make arrangements to have several signed checks given to a responsible person to pay the Judge, facility, and anyone else that may need to be paid.
  13. Volunteer Coordinator – We highly recommend you have someone in your group be responsible for collecting, coordinating, and overseeing all the volunteers listed above. It is a big enough job that having anyone else like the Manager or Secretary, who are already busy with their own responsibilities, to take on. He/she will need to:
    - a. Solicit people for each of the above volunteer positions

- b. Make up the schedule of who is doing what at the show
- c. Having a meeting with them before the show to go over their jobs and when they need to be present
- d. Be available throughout the show to assist them and answer any questions they might have

14. On Call Personnel –

- a. EMT – Some facilities provide EMTs, others require you hire your own. Either way, they should be at least on call if not on site.
- b. Farrier – On call is usually enough for a farrier.
- c. Veterinarian - On call is usually enough for a vet.

Step 9

At least a month or more before the show, the Volunteer Coordinator (usually someone on your show committee) recruits all the volunteers needed. These can be people you have worked with in the past, or have come in contact with through other people, or you can put out request for volunteers through the online media you use.

The important thing is to make sure that your volunteers either have experience in the areas they are being assigned or can be easily taught beforehand. The Scribe, Gate Steward, Paddock Steward, and Scorer should have previous experience!

It is also extremely important that your volunteers conduct their positions in a professional manner. We have encountered, in the past, issues with volunteers stepping into roles that were not in their job descriptions and this just causes a tense atmosphere for all involved. Always remember to be polite, kind, and stick to your assigned job!

WE East always holds a Competitors Briefing the night before the show starts. The briefing includes a light meal for the competitors, staff, and volunteers who are on hand at the time; this must be arranged in advance. Also, you need to provide lunches for all your staff and volunteers. If the facility doesn't have an onsite food vendor, you'll need to arrange for lunches to be brought in each day. We also arrange to take the Judge out for dinner the one night as well.

Step 10

Ok, so now the show is upon you! What now? Well, this is what we do:

1. During the Competitor's Briefing the night before classes start, we hand out any information that hasn't already been distributed and have a time of questions and answers (preferably with the Judge present). This helps develop comradery and lets the competitors know that we are here to help.
2. If the facility is able to accommodate a separate Dressage ring and EOH/Speed ring, you want to make sure that the Dressage court is set up in the one ring and the obstacles up in the other. If you are using the same ring for all trials then you need to make sure the Dressage court is set up for the first ride of the morning.
3. Let the facility personnel know when you want ring drags and/or ring watering and make sure they are done well before the first ride.
4. Have a brief meeting with all the volunteers to make sure everyone knows what their jobs are and when and where you need them.

5. Confirm that the Judge and Scribe have all the papers, pens, bell/whistle, water, and snacks they need.
6. Then once classes start, just make sure that everyone is doing what they're supposed to be doing and that the competitors are informed about the day's progress.
7. If you only have one ring to work with, once Dressage is over, you will need to arrange for the Dressage court to be taken down, the ring dragged, and the obstacles brought in and put up. This is the start of your Ground Crews work. You will need to allow 2 hours or so for this whole process, so make sure you have allotted for it in your schedule.
8. If a competitor feels that something in their ride (EOH/Speed) was not judged correctly and decides to file a protest, the show is put on hold while the Protest Committee and Competitor meet and discuss the issue. Once the issue is resolved, the show may proceed. Hopefully, this won't happen!

### Step 11

Ok, now the show is done! What do you do next?

1. Pay all the staff that need to be paid as well as the facility. If the person who handles the checkbook isn't at the show, you need to make sure that blank, signed checks are given to the Secretary or Show Manager ahead of time.
2. The Judge and TD are required by USAWE rules to file reports within one week of the show.
3. The Show Secretary needs to make sure all the scores are sent to the USAWE Results coordinator at [results@usawe.org](mailto:results@usawe.org) to go on their leaderboard.
4. And lastly, the Show Committee should have a debrief meeting within a week of the show to go over what went well and what needs to be improved for the next time. We have found this to be a very valuable thing to do. We keep a list of areas that need improving in our minutes so that we can address them for the next show. No matter how "seasoned" our show personnel are, we always learn something new at each show!

Congratulations! You have survived your first show!!!