

AQHA RULE CHANGES
As they appear in the 2013 Handbook

SHW129.4 allow exhibitors to roll over times in speed events. If an exhibitor is eligible to show in multiple classes, they may make one run and declare in advance that particular run will carry over or roll over to the other class(es) entered. This applies to novice youth, youth, novice amateur, amateur, and select amateur exhibitors. The exhibitor must declare at time of entry if any times are to be rolled over and to which particular class(es). An entry fee and any additional charges will be paid for each class entered. An exhibitor may not declare to roll over a time once the classes have begun or have a time rolled over to any class that has already been held. They will make their run in the first class that they are entered according to the show schedule. They will be included in the draw for that class but are not to be placed in the draw for the upcoming class(es) they have declared so as not to affect the draw for those particular class(es). The announcer should also announce on the initial run whether or not the time is going to be rolled over to any subsequent class. If a show is being held where there are multiple judges, and the class is held one time then the time will be noted for each judge in the appropriate class(es) entered and declared. If the show is a circuit with multiple days, then an entry and declaration must be made for the separate show days. Once the class has started an exhibitor declaring a time will carryover cannot decide to run independently.

SHW305.7 Junior horses competing in junior western pleasure, western horsemanship, reining, working cow horse, western riding and trail that are shown with a hackamore or snaffle bit may be ridden with one or two hands on the reins. The tails of the reins must be crossed on the opposite side of the neck when riding with two hands on split reins except in working cow horse and reining. Closed reins (example mecate) may not be used with a snaffle bit, except in **versatility ranch horses**, working cow horse and reining, where a mecate is permitted.

SHW305.8 In all western classes, horses will be shown in a western saddle and appropriate bridle, snaffle bit or hackamore for the duration of the class. A western saddle is a common type of saddle distinguished by a large noticeable fork on which there is some form of horn, a high cantle and large skirts. Silver equipment will not count over a good working outfit. Horses 5-years-old and younger may be shown in a snaffle bit, hackamore, curb bit, half-breed or spade bit. Horses 6-years-old and older may only be shown in a curb bit, half-breed or spade bit. Any horse of any age shown in any rookie/novice youth or rookie/novice amateur class may be shown two handed with a snaffle bit/**hackamore**. When a curb bit is used, a curb strap or curb chain is required, but must meet the approval of the judge, be at least one-half inch in width and lie flat against the jaw of the horse. Curb chains cannot be tied to the bit with string or cord. A broken strap or chain is not necessarily cause for disqualification.

SHW305.9 In roping, speed events, team penning and ranch sorting western type equipment must be used. Use of **rawhide** or mechanical hackamores or other type of bridles is the optional choice of the contestant. However, **the diameter of mouthpieces, length of shanks and use of curb straps or chains must comply with AQHA rules.** The judge or steward may prohibit the use of any bit or equipment they consider inhumane **or would tend to give a horse/rider an unfair advantage.**

WESTERN OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

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SHW306.4 Protective boots, leg wraps and bandages are allowed in reining, working cow horse, team penning, barrel racing, pole bending, stake racing, jumping, tie-down roping, breakaway roping, dally team roping - heading, dally team roping - heeling, cutting, western horsemanship, ranch pleasure, ranch riding and ranch trail. The use of slip on (easy care) horse boots or related footwear are not considered as protective boots and are permissible to be worn in all classes.

SHW332. GAITS - ENGLISH CLASSES. The following terminology shall apply:

SHW332.1 The Walk

SHW332.1.1 Poor Walk - This horse may have an uneven pace that lacks a four beat cadence or have a stop and start or robotic appearance that resembles a march. He may appear nervous and on the muscle or intimidated and fearful of going forward. He may anticipate or try to jog or break or he may appear dull, bored and listless dragging his legs and losing rhythm and flow.

SHW332.1.2 Average Walk - The horse will walk with a four beat gait, a balanced top line and a relaxed appearance. He may slow down some but still maintains forward motion. He keeps his body straight and has cadence and rhythm. All of this done correctly and with manners is average.

SHW332.1.3 Good Walk - This horse has a four beat, a balanced and comfortable top line, relaxed demeanor and appears bright and attentive. He maintains rhythm, flow and cadence and travels straight with light contact from the reins. He reaches from his shoulder and tracks up from behind with his reaching legs staying close to the ground. His feet enter the ground softly and maintain the same pace coming out of the ground as he has going into it.

SHW332.2 The Trot

SHW332.2.1 Extremely Poor Trot - This is a horse that cannot seem to do a two beat gait and appears very uncomfortable in his attempt to accomplish it. He does not have any flow or balance in his motion and appears uncomfortable to ride. He may be weak and sloppy in his hocks causing a loss of forward motion or use his hocks loosely or too far back causing a loss of cadence and rhythm. This also could be a horse that is misbehaving and is unwilling to perform the gait properly and therefore is not exhibiting acceptable motion.

SHW332.2.2 Very Poor Trot - This is a horse that may have an uneven cadence or be unwilling to go forward. He may not keep an even and balanced motion with a level top line. This horse may appear quick legged or seem to move in an up and down fashion or may be on the muscle looking nervous and tense or he may be on

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a loose and sloppy rein causing a lack of collection or to travel heavy on the forehand. He may cover the ground by taking more frequent steps instead of correctly increasing the length of the strides.

SHW332.2.3 Poor Trot - This is a horse with an average motion, exhibiting negative characteristics in their performance. For example, this horse may have an average trot gait but have a dull, unhappy or resentful expression.

SHW332.2.4 Correct or Average Trot - This horse has a two beat diagonal gait in which the left front and right hind foot touch the ground simultaneously and the right front and left hind do so also. This is the standard trot and a horse MUST have a true two beat gait to be "average" or any of the levels higher than "average". He has a level top line, with a relaxed appearance and pleasant expression, is shown on light contact and appears to go in a forward, obedient manner.

SHW332.2.5 Good Trot - This is a horse with an average motion, exhibiting positive characteristics in their performance. For example this horse may have an average trot gait but have excellent manners and expression with ears forward and appearing bright but relaxed and calm.

SHW332.2.6 Very Good Trot - This is a horse that appears very comfortable to ride, always has a consistent rhythmic cadenced two beat gait, is guiding well and has a relaxed and level top line. He has a good forward stride with balance and impulsion. Compared to the excellent horse he may not have as much stride as he may not have the degree of drive off the hindquarters or as much reach with his shoulders. He may bend his knees or flex his pasterns a little but he is still obviously soft, smooth and relaxed. He has an attentive and calm appearance with a pleasant expression and maintains light bit contact.

SHW332.2.7 Excellent Trot - This horse's motions seem effortless and efficient. He utilizes his top line by rounding his back and driving evenly off his hind legs creating impulsion and suspension while still remaining soft and controlled. He takes long ground covering steps with deliberate full strides and stays close to the ground. He reaches from his shoulder and is flat with his knee and extends his leg forward and seems to enter the ground toe first, even though it actually lands flat. His drive from his hocks allows his hind leg to step into or in front of where his front foot left the ground using full extension of the stride. This horse is balanced, has a level top line and has an even rhythm and cadence. He has excellent manners and great expression appearing relaxed and happy, soft in his poll, jaw and mouth and is shown on light contact.

SHW332.3 The Extended Trot

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SHW332.3.1 Poor Extended Trot - This horse never appears to lengthen his stride but just trots faster. He may also appear to be jarring and rough to ride.

SHW332.3.2 Average Extended Trot - Is a horse who when asked to extend, moves up in his pace and still appears smooth to post on.

SH2332.3.3 Good Extended Trot - Is a horse who when asked to extend has an obvious lengthening in his stride with a slight increase in his pace making him more versatile. This horse is still smooth but appears to have more length with less effort being exerted.

SHW332.4 The Canter

SHW332.4.1 Extremely Poor Canter - This is a horse that does not have a true three beat gait. He has no cadence, no rhythm, and no balance, appears out of sync and obviously is not comfortable to ride. This may also be a horse that is misbehaving and is unwilling to perform the gait properly and therefore is not exhibiting acceptable motion.

SHW332.4.2 Very Poor Canter - This is a horse that may appear to have a three beat gait but lacks self carriage. He may be flat in that he has either not rounded his back, or failed to engage his hindquarters and therefore lacks drive, impulsion and suspension. He may be weak hocked causing him to pull himself forward with his front end or he may not be balancing off his hindquarters causing him to be heavy on his forehead. This horse may lack forward motion, smoothness of gait, or consistency of speed. He may not use his shoulders properly causing excessive knee action. He may be showing on loose reins and be strung out and lacking collection or be nervous and on the muscle causing a shortening or quickening of stride.

SW332.4.3 Poor Canter - This is a horse with an average motion, exhibiting negative characteristics in his performance. For example, this horse may have an average canter but be lacking in expression or lack consistency in his top line.

SHW332.4.4 Correct Or Average Canter - This horse has a true three beat gait with a level top line, and a comfortable motion. This is the standard canter and a horse MUST have a true three beat gait to be considered "average" or any of the levels higher than "average". He is shown on light contact and is responsive to his rider and has a relaxed appearance with a pleasant expression.

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SHW332.4.5 Good Canter - This is a horse with an average motion, exhibiting positive characteristics in his performance. For example, this may be a horse with an average canter gait but has great expression, consistency and lovely manners.

SHW332.4.6 Very Good Canter - This is a horse that has more style, drive, impulsion and suspension than the average horse. He has a strong but smooth drive from behind. He may bend his knee a little or not have quite the length of stride of the excellent horse, yet he still has a level top line and relaxed appearance, is correct and appears to be comfortable to ride. He has a pleasant expression and is responsive to his rider and shown with light bit contact.

SHW332.4.7 Excellent Canter - This is a horse that utilizes his top line by rounding his back, engaging his hindquarters to drive his hind legs deep underneath him creating impulsion and suspension in his motion. He has a strong, deep, forward stride behind and an equally forward, flat-kneed reach with his front legs. He appears effortless and totally in control of his motion with great self carriage. He creates energy yet stays soft and responsive to his rider. His weight is distributed properly onto his hindquarters and he moves with long, slow strides. He gives the appearance that, if asked, he could easily lengthen his stride and correctly perform a hand gallop. This horse has a great degree of suspension, impulsion and elasticity to his movement. He has great expression with ears forward and is consistent, relaxed and confident with light bit contact.

SHW332.4.8 Hand Gallop - should be a definite lengthening of stride with noticeable difference in speed. Horses should be under control at all times and be able to pull-up (not a sliding stop). If asked to pull-up, after the halt, riders must relax the reins and the horse must stand quietly.

SHOWMANSHIP

SHW371. CLASS PROCEDURES: All exhibitors may enter the ring and then work individually or each exhibitor may be worked from the gate individually. When exhibitors are worked individually from the gate, a working order is required. The following maneuvers are considered acceptable: lead the horse at a walk, jog, trot or extended trot, or back in a straight or curved line, or a combination of straight and curved lines; stop; and turn 90 (1/4), 180 (1/2), 270 (3/4), 360 (full turn) degrees or any combination or multiple of these turns. **The pull turn is an unacceptable maneuver.** The judge must have exhibitors set the horse up squarely for inspection sometime during the class.

SHW378.2 Major faults include:

Not performing gait or not stopping within 10 feet of designated area

Break of gait at walk or jog/trot for more than 1 stride

Splitting the cone

Stepping out of or moving the hind end significantly during a pivot or turn

Failure to stay in set-up during presentation

Over/under turning 1/8 to ¼ of designated turn

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SHW378.3. Severe Faults (avoids disqualification but should be placed below other exhibitors that do not incur a severe fault) include:

Exhibitor is not in the required position during inspection

Exhibitor touching the horse or kicking or pointing their feet at the horse's feet during set up

Standing directly in front of the horse

Loss of lead shank or holding chain or two hands on shank.

Severe disobedience including rearing or pawing; horse kicking at other horses, exhibitors or judge; or horse continuously circling the exhibitor

PERFORMANCE CLASSES

SHW400.10 In youth, novice youth and open speed events, exhibitors 18 years of age or under may use a rubber band per foot (maximum width of 1/4 inch) during competition, but may not be tied, buckled or fastened by any other means during competition.

WORKING COW HORSE

SHW505.1 The approved pattern will be used and each contestant will cause his horse to travel at the gait indicated for each part of the pattern. When judging reined work, the judge should refer to the reining portion of the handbook for guidelines with the **addition of a one point penalty for scotching or anticipating a stop.**

ROPING EVENTS

SHW522. LEGAL CATCHES. Whether being judged or not, legal catches are required by both the header and heeler.

SHW522.1 Legal catches in heading are both horns, half-head and around the neck.

SHW522.2 Legal catches for heeling include a catch that holds from behind the steer's shoulders and back, around the flank, or on one or both heels.

SHW522.3 Any figure-eight, front leg, or the tip of a horn is not a legal heading catch.

SHW522.4 A tail only is not a legal heeling catch.

TIE-DOWN ROPING

SHW527. 5 Disqualified (0) -- Score

failure of calf to stay tied until roper has remounted and ridden forward to loosen rope.

excessive schooling at any time in the arena.

whipping or hitting the horse with the rope.

initiating the run with the rope on the opposite side of the horse's neck than exhibitors roping hand.

dragging the calf, while being tied or after the calf is tied, more than 12 feet.

any attempt by a contestant to position his horse behind the barrier enabling the contestant to rope the animal without attempting to leave the box.

inhumane treatment of the animal being worked, such as, but not limited to rider hitting or kicking the animal

VERSATILITY RANCH HORSE

RANCH TRAIL

SHW557.2 Six or more obstacles **may** be used. **Of the number used, three are mandatory and ten are optional.**

Combinations of two or more obstacles are permissible. If three combinations of two obstacles are used, there must be sufficient distance between one of the combinations to allow the horse to perform two gaits. All obstacles must meet the approval of the judge.

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BARREL RACING

SHW700.5 A whip may not exceed two feet in length excluding over and unders which must be attached to the saddle.

SHW700.7 It is recommended that drags be conducted before the start of a barrel race and after every seven head. Show management may drag more frequently.

SHW702. Electronic timers are recommended to be used along with two back up watches used by official timers. If electronic timer fails the average of the watches will be used to indicate the official time.

POLE BENDING

SHW703.5 A whip may not exceed two feet in length excluding over and unders which must be attached to the saddle.

SHW703.7 It is recommended that drags be conducted before the start of a pole bending and after every seven head. Show management may drag more frequently.

STAKE RACE

SHW710.6 A whip may not exceed two feet in length excluding over and unders which must be attached to the saddle.