



# **Animal Welfare and Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

## **Process and Procedure**

One of the missions of the GVHS is to ensure the welfare of any Gypsy Vanner Horse participating in GVHS sanctioned shows and events is safeguarded in every possible way. In accordance with the GVHS Rulebook these are the actions taken when an individual violates The Animal Welfare or Unsportsmanlike Conduct rules at or in regard to a GVHS event. The GVHS fines and penalties for inhumane treatment and unsportsmanlike conduct can be found in the GVHS Show Rules as well as the GVHS website. GVHS rules pertaining to any inhumane treatment of the horse provide for absolute responsibility for a horse's condition by an exhibitor, trainer, participant and/or the owner, thereby making the exhibitor, participant and/or the owner eligible for possible disciplinary action upon proof of the presence of any inhumane treatment of the horse.

For purposes of the rules defined in Section D of the GVHS Show Rules, a fines and penalty system has been established based on the severity of the offense. All offenses will be assigned a minimum level of offense (level 1 = mild; level 2 = moderate; level 3 = severe).

Warning cards will be issued based on the frequency and level of offense.

### **Should an exhibitor receive a warning card, this is the GVHS Violation/Adjudication Process:**

1. The process is initiated when a warning card is issued to a person by a steward or other member of show management, when the GVHS receives a Report of GVHS Rule Violation Complaint Form or when a judge disqualifies an exhibitor for inhumane treatment.

a. The rule(s) violated must be clearly defined.

b. A detailed account of the incident should be documented by the steward/show manager or the judge(s).

c. While not always possible, stewards/Show Management are encouraged to obtain photos or videos evidencing the violation as well as statements from witnesses to the violation. Such evidence should be sent to GVHS immediately after the steward completes his/her duties at the show.

d. In the case of a judge's disqualification, documentation should be sent in with the show results.

2. Once GVHS receives, reviews, and evaluates the evidence, a letter of inquiry is sent to the person receiving the warning/disqualification asking them to respond to the violation in question. A response is required within 30 days and not responding will result in suspension until a response is received.

3. Once the response is received, all documentation is reviewed at a hearing by the Animal Welfare and Unsportsmanlike Conduct Committee. The alleged violator may be asked to participate in the hearing.

4. After a hearing, the committee issues its determination regarding whether a violation occurred and, if so, makes a recommendation to the GVHS Board of Directors regarding what disciplinary action should be imposed.

5. If the GVHS determines that disciplinary action is appropriate after its initial review described in #4 above, an offer of penalty letter is sent to the violator giving them the opportunity to accept the disciplinary action or request a hearing before the Board.

6. If a Board hearing is held, the Board's final decision shall be immediately effective, and the matter shall not be subject to further referral or review.

**Any fines collected will go directly to the GVHS Member/Exhibitor Education Fund. These funds will be used to provide educational materials and opportunities for our members. The GVHS understands that it is through further education that we can help to reduce and/or prevent future incidence of inhumane treatment.**