



Racing Commissioner
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Michigan Office of Racing Commissioner **USE OF WHIP POLICY HIGHLIGHTS** As of March 30, 2009

The ORC Administrative Rule R 431.4265, Sections (1) (l), (11), (12) and (13) regulate the use of whips during races on any of Michigan's licensed pari-mutuel harness race tracks. The following points are intended as guidelines that ORC Stewards will use in interpreting and applying this Administrative Rule.

ALL PENALTIES (SUSPENSIONS AND FINES) ARE MAINTAINED FOR LIFETIME. ANY DAY AWARDED AS A SUSPENSION IS A SCHEDULED LIVE HARNESS RACE DAY.

- Any whip may be inspected, at any time by ORC stewards, any other ORC personnel or the paddock judge.
- Drivers are NOT allowed to kick, jab or punch a horse.
- Encouragement of the horse with the whip is allowed only when the horse appears to be advancing through the field.
- The whip can only strike the number pad of the horse between, inside and above the level of the shafts.
- Excessive or indiscriminate use of the whip will be determined by: a) more than three (3) consecutive strikes without a change in action, b) causing visible injury to a horse, and/or c) whipping a horse after a race.
- Drivers must keep a line in each hand from the start of the race until the top of the stretch (whipping pole).
- Simulated one hand whipping is NOT allowed.
- Once a driver reaches the whipping pole, he/she may put the lines into one hand and encourage the horse using the whip with his/her other hand, within the guidelines established above for excessive use of the whip.
- Blatant or exaggerated movements of the whipping arm – when the elbow is raised above the driver's shoulder height and/or allowing the hand holding the whip to reach behind the driver during the encouragement of the horse with the whip – is NOT allowed.
- Drivers are NOT allowed to whip a horse under the sulky shafts or seat or use the whip between the legs of the horse and are NOT allowed to strike a wheel disc with a whip.
- Drivers are NOT allowed to use the whip to interfere with another horse or driver.
- Drivers are NOT allowed to whip a horse that is exhausted or no longer in contention.
- Trainers are responsible to report to the ORC veterinarian for an examination of their horse, if the stewards deem that the horse is suspected of being injured as a result of excessive whipping.
- Any licensee found to be in violation of excessive whipping shall be subject to a fine and or suspension.

THIS POLICY IS EFFECTIVE MAY 1, 2009.