



# **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Equestrians Institute  
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**[www.einw.org](http://www.einw.org)**

*Approved by EI Board of Directors*

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## 1- Introduction and Overview

Equestrians Institute (EI) is a nonprofit member organization with almost 40 years of managing equestrian events in the Pacific Northwest. EI provides educational and competitive opportunities in the sports of Dressage, Eventing, and Driving and in Sport Horse Breeding. As a volunteer-run organization, EI encourages camaraderie, support, and skill development.

During the calendar year, EI runs 20-25 events. For dressage, EI offers USDF recognized dressage show competitions and educational opportunities like schooling shows and scribing clinics. For eventing, EI runs USEA-sanctioned Horse Trials, Hunter-Pace clinics, and cross-country clinics. For driving, EI holds beginning driving clinics, CDE schooling weekends, TREC events, and Driving Trials.

EI also offers programs of general appeal, including cross-discipline clinics, educational Grants, social events, and fundraisers. Volunteers are honored and celebrated with gifts and prizes, and competition riders vie for trophies, ribbons, and certificates through demonstrated achievement in their sport.

EI is governed by an elected Board of Directors, and work is coordinated across multiple committees. The Dressage, Eventing, Driving, and Sport Horse Breeding Divisions are independently responsible for deciding and managing activities to promote their respective sports. Core administrative duties of the organization including bookkeeping, membership, insurance, information technology, and grants are managed centrally, overseen by the Board which always includes representation from each Division.

Alliance Partner #200 United States Equestrian Federation (USEF).  
Group Member Organization (GMO) #601 United States Dressage Federation (USDF).  
Affiliate Member of the United States Eventing Association (USEA).  
Club Member of the American Driving Society (ADS).

Equestrians Institute was incorporated as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization in the State of Washington in 1974. Donations to EI are tax-deductible.

All Policies and Procedures delineated below are consistent with EI's Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation.

Current versions of EI documents are located on the EI website **[www.einw.org](http://www.einw.org)**

## 2- Membership

EI is a member organization whose members pay dues, vote on corporate matters, serve on the Board of Directors, and volunteer to run and manage all aspects of EI's activities.

EI's membership year is December 1st to November 30th. Membership applications are accepted all year. Fees are not pro-rated based on date.

Member categories are Adult, Youth, and Life. Adult and Youth memberships expire November 30th each year. Life memberships are perpetual. Adult and Life memberships are for persons 18 years of age and older.

Membership dues are set by the Board of Directors.

Members over the age of 18 have voting rights in the corporation.

Membership data is handled in accordance with best practices to protect privacy. Personal information on members is never used commercially or sold.

Membership may be terminated for actions detrimental to the organization, including but not limited to cruelty or misuse of an animal.

Whenever possible, EI members receive discounts on EI events.

### **2.1 Membership - Meetings**

Member meetings are advertised to members in a timely fashion and run according to Robert's Rules of Order.

Notice of meetings may take the form of physical mailings or electronic transmission with at least ten (10) days' notice.

The members present at any annual or special meeting constitute a quorum. A majority vote cast by members present is necessary for approval of any vote.

The Annual Business meeting shall be held yearly at a time, date, and location determined by the President of the Board of Directors. Minutes are taken and published on the EI website.

At the Annual Business Meeting members vote to approve the previous annual meeting minutes and the upcoming year's nominated Board of Directors.

Special meetings of the members may be called by the President or the Board of Directors with at least ten (10) days' notice.

### 3-Organizational Structure

EI has four Divisions: a General Division and separate discipline Divisions for each equestrian discipline promoted by the organization. Each discipline Division has representation on the Board of Directors.

The General Division is responsible for events and activities relevant to all members and for overseeing core administrative duties of the organization including bookkeeping, membership, insurance, information technology, Flying Changes, grants, and the Annual meeting and awards party.

The discipline Divisions are Dressage, Eventing, Driving, and Sport Horse Breeding. Each Division is independently responsible for deciding and managing events and activities that promote the sport by establishing permanent or temporary committees.

All Divisions cooperate in keeping a master calendar of events updated and accurate. This calendar is used and shared throughout the organization to coordinate scheduling, update advertising, and ensure proper insurance coverage.

Each Division submits an annual budget for approval to the Board of Directors. Adjustments to the approved budget are handled on a case-by-case basis throughout the year. The Director of each discipline Division is responsible for overseeing the annual Division budget.

## 4-Board of Directors

### 4.1 Board of Directors - Bylaws Requirements

The Bylaws describe the legal parameters of how the Board of Directors is elected, votes, and conducts business for the organization.

The Board includes representation from each equestrian discipline which the corporation has identified an interest in promoting. These equestrian disciplines are Dressage, Eventing, -Driving and Sport Horse Breeding.

The Board of Directors has four officers; President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The President presides over Board and membership meetings. The Vice President assumes the role of President in the absence or disability of the President. The Secretary takes minutes. The Treasurer oversees funds and investments. The Board of Directors also has multiple At-Large directors who represent the ongoing interests of the organization.

The Board of Directors will be no fewer than five (5) persons at any time, with a target size of between seven and eleven directors. Each director serves a two-year term. There are no term limits, so any director may serve multiple two-year terms if nominated and elected.

A nominating committee of the Board will select and present candidates for election to the Board of the Directors at the annual meeting. Members over age 18 present at the annual business meeting vote to approve the new Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors fills vacancies occurring on the Board due to resignation, removal, or incapacity of a director.

Each person serving on the Board of Directors is a current EI member.

A majority of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum. At any meeting of the board of directors at which a quorum is present, any business may be transacted, and the board may exercise all of its powers.

Meetings of the Board of Directors are open to all EI members to the extent possible except during executive session when called by an Officer of the Board. Minutes from the meetings are made available to all EI members by posting them on the EI website.

Any member of the Board of Directors may be removed with a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the voting membership present at a special meeting of the members called for that purpose.

#### **4.2 Board of Directors -- Duties for EI**

The Board of Directors is responsible for overseeing legal, tax, financial, and strategic vision of the organization.

Each Board member has a legal and fiduciary obligation to EI and pledges to support the organizational mission and purposes with the highest ethical standards of care, duty, and loyalty to the organization.

Each Board member signs a Code of Conduct and a Conflict of Interest statement immediately upon initial election to the Board of Directors.

The Board holds regular Board meetings and one annual business meeting for members. In between Board meetings, the Board communicates internally year-round via electronic mail or telephone conference and discusses or votes on any issues needing attention.

The Board approves the entire annual budget for the organization including the separate Division budgets and reviews any variances throughout the year including new proposed events.

The Board of Directors reviews and approves the IRS Tax Form 990 prior to the May 15th due date, and reviews all other financial documents as necessary.

The Board of Directors approves the master calendar of events for the year.

The President or Secretary of the Board signs contracts for paid consultant services and for arrangements with external organizations such as Flying Changes magazine.

The Board renews EI's corporate and nonprofit status with the Washington Secretary of State by the October 31st deadline each year.

The Board conducts regular reviews of nonprofit laws and regulations to monitor EI's compliance with nonprofit best practices.

The Board continuously engages in strategic planning and broad oversight of the organization with input from members and from the greater equestrian community.

To ensure smooth transition to new leadership, the Board follows timely succession procedures and full orientation of incoming Board members.

## 5-Governance Documents

To safeguard EI's nonprofit status, the Board of Directors continuously monitors nonprofit laws and regulations to ensure that EI is in compliance and following best practices for nonprofit governance.

The Policies and Procedures document is maintained by the corporation and made accessible to members in electronic form. The Board of Directors, or a committee designated by the Board of Directors, will from time to time update the Policies and Procedures. All updates are advertised on the EI website and by electronic mail to members with a 30-day comment period and the Board of Directors will then approve, reject, or amend proposed changes.

Changes to Bylaws are recommended by the Board of Directors when necessary to keep the organization in compliance with current nonprofit laws and regulations.

Bylaws may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at any annual or special meeting of the membership called for that purpose.

The Articles of Incorporation are from the original 1974 filing and are not typically amended.

The Board of Directors will update all governance documents for the organization as needed, with input from professional advisors if necessary.



## 6-Financial & Taxes

EI is committed to maintaining accurate, complete, and detailed financial records at all times. All expenditures using EI funds are authorized and tracked to ensure compliance with legal and tax requirements.

EI's fiscal year is January 1st to December 31st.

EI is a legal 501(c) (3) nonprofit member organization incorporated in the state of Washington in 1974. EI's tax id number is 23-7420540. Donations to EI are tax deductible as allowed by law.

EI submits a complete and accurate IRS Form 990 yearly detailing all financial information as required by law. The Board of Directors reviews and approves the completed Form 990 before it is sent. The Form 990 is due May 15th.

Any person paid \$600 or more in fees from Equestrians Institute for any work performed receives the appropriate completed tax form MISC-1099 from EI by February 15th by EI's bookkeeper.

## 7-Budgets

Through budgets approved annually and as needed by the Board of Directors, EI authorizes and oversees how all money is spent in the course of EI's activities.

Each Division has a related budget. Budgets are submitted for review to the Board of Directors early in the fiscal year. Budget expenditures are not allowed prior to budget approval by the Board of Directors.

Budget items and amounts are recommended to the Board by the appropriate Division, committee, or group within EI most familiar with the activities. All budgets are reviewed annually by the Board of Directors as part of EI's overall financial strategy for the year.

EI events must generally either break even or make a profit. Events that are predicted to lose money must substantially fulfill EI's core mission and receive special approval as an understood, planned, and acceptable loss by the Board of Directors.

Minor budget revisions or updates are submitted directly to the bookkeeper during the year. Major budget revisions and updates (a change of 20% or more to overall budget, a single new budget item over \$2000, or predicted profitable event unexpectedly showing a loss) are submitted to the Board of Directors when they occur.

Actual income and expenditures for each event must be submitted to the bookkeeper within six weeks of the event's ending date, and prior to December 31st each year. This allows for updating of figures from predicted budgets to actual numbers. Generally the event Organizer is responsible for this function, but it may also be handled by the Division Director.

Donations from EI to outside organizations or causes are handled as budget line items per Division.

## 8- Bank Accounts & Cash Management

EI follows best practices for money handling in all banking transactions.

Persons authorized to disburse funds from EI accounts are closely monitored by the bookkeeper and the Board of Directors. Disbursed funds must be in accordance with approved budgets and with EI's Policies and Procedures (this document). Any unauthorized transactions will freeze accounts and result in termination of privileges.

Any person in EI with check-writing privileges must have a valid signature card on file with the main bank branch. The bookkeeper coordinates this function.

Every banking transaction must be recorded properly to follow appropriate money management procedures. Event Organizers needing petty cash for an EI event must write a check to themselves, and submit receipts to the bookkeeper. Withdrawing cash directly from an EI account, or writing a check to "cash", is not allowed.

All banking transactions must be tied back to that Divisions budgets for the year, with all supporting documentation submitted to the bookkeeper in a timely fashion and prior to December 31st.

EI has a PayPal account used primarily for registration fees for events. The bookkeeper is responsible for moving any funds in the PayPal account to EI's appropriate bank account as needed.

## 9- Bookkeeper Duties

EI's bookkeeper keeps main administrative records, pays general bills, and performs any necessary financial transactions with EI's bank accounts. Below are duties for EI's bookkeeper.

The bookkeeper keeps a current copy of the membership database on file. The bookkeeper maintains USDF GMO status by paying the USDF GMO member fees as members join.

The bookkeeper writes checks for any items funded from the General Account. The bookkeeper renews & pays for PO Box, bulk mailing permit, Flying Changes, and storage units. The bookkeeper renews & pays for annual insurance coverage and keeps insurance certificates updated.

The bookkeeper reconciles banking statements with approved budgets for all EI accounts. When an audit of the banking accounts reveals unauthorized activities, the bookkeeper limits access to funds and immediately notifies the Board of Directors. The bookkeeper keeps signature cards updated at bank. The bookkeeper manages PayPal account and moves money between PayPal and EI bank accounts.

The bookkeeper records actual budget adjustments over the year. The bookkeeper distributes financial reports to Board members quarterly.

The bookkeeper sends out MISC-1099 tax forms to outside consultants paid over \$600 in year. The bookkeeper submits IRS tax form 990 due May each year.

## 10-Donors

Individuals or businesses are always welcome to donate money, goods, or services to Equestrians Institute. EI is a legal 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated in the state of Washington. EI's tax id number is 23-7420540. Donations to EI are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Donors who donate \$250 or more worth of money, goods, or services to EI during the calendar year, and who provide the relevant identifying information including name and mailing address, will receive a donor thank you letter that serves as the receipt for tax purposes.

## 11-Grants

Each Division of EI (Dressage, Eventing, Driving, and Sport Horse Breeding) offers annual educational grants to EI members. The maximum dollar amount for each grant to an individual is \$500.

Grant money must be used for educational purposes such as clinics, seminars, symposia, and lectures. Grant money may also be used for travel costs to attend the Annual Meetings of equestrian organizations such as USDF, USEA, USEF, or ADS. Grant money shall not be used to fund competitive endeavors.

The applicant must be a current member of EI when the application is filed. Only one grant will be awarded to any one individual per year. Past recipients may apply for another grant, but if there is an equally qualified applicant, the grant will be awarded to a new applicant.

In the case of equally qualified applicants, preference will be given to applicants under 18 years old.

## 12-Whistleblower Policy

It is the intent of Equestrians Institute to adhere to all laws and regulations that apply to the organization. The support of all EI community members is necessary to achieve continuous compliance with various laws and regulations.

EI will not engage in unfair retaliation against a community member who, in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint against a practice of EI on the basis of a reasonable belief that the practice is in violation of the law.

At all times EI provides channels of communication via website feedback forms, email addresses, telephone numbers, and/or US postal addresses by which community members may raise issues of concern.

### 13-Records Retention Policy

Equestrians Institute follows all federal and state guidelines on document retention for nonprofit organizations. Annual financial statements, legal correspondence, insurance policies, contracts still in effect, tax returns, Board of Director minutes, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation are retained permanently. Other documents are retained from 3-10 years as dictated by Washington State regulations.

### 14-Privacy Policy

Equestrians Institute holds personal information in strict confidence and at all times actively protects the privacy of EI community members from whom EI has gathered or retained information. EI will strive to keep personal information accurate, complete, and up to date.

EI will not sell or trade personal information to other organizations or to individuals.

Our privacy policy extends online to our Internet website.

Upon request in writing, EI will remove specified personal information from all databases, except where legislation or regulation requires retention of the information (for example, charitable giving history tied to income tax receipts).

## 15-Insurance

All EI events are covered by an annual insurance policy with appropriate levels of coverage.

Insurance policies are maintained yearly and updated as the master calendar of events changes.

Insurance information on an event must be received by the bookkeeper six (6) weeks prior to that event.

Venues and other organizations often need Additional Insured certificates showing information on EI's insurance policy. It is the job of the event Organizer to ensure that all Additional Insured certificates are created and distributed to interested parties.

The Board of Directors is covered by Directors & Officers (D&O) insurance annually.

Events with horses present are covered at a higher insurance coverage than meetings, lectures, and other events without horses on site.

EI volunteers are covered by EI's insurance policy.

Vendors at EI events are not covered by EI's insurance policy and must provide proof of appropriate insurance coverage.

Paid independent contractors working for hire for EI are not covered by EI's insurance policy and are strongly advised to pursue their own insurance coverage.

## 16-Public Relations

EI strives to keep members informed with accurate and timely information about equestrian events, activities, and news. EI maintains an active website (einw.org), a Facebook page, and a Twitter account.

As part of the 'Go Green' initiative launched in 2007, EI has dramatically reduced paper use and mailing costs by using electronic communication whenever feasible.

Each Division is responsible for advertising and promoting its events and activities via the website, Facebook, e-Flashes, flyers, phone calls, Flying Changes, online postings, and so on.

### 16.1 Website

The EI website is the central point for information about EI. The URL is [www.einw.org](http://www.einw.org)

### 16.2 Facebook

Facebook is being used as a publication mechanism and for wide-flung community outreach. Facebook fans do not have to be EI members. Anyone can post on the EI Facebook wall.

EI Facebook pages are monitored by the EI Facebook admins. Inappropriate posts are removed.

### 16.3 Twitter

Twitter provides a convenient short burst of news for the community on their computers and mobile phones. The EI twitter account is connected to EI Facebook ; any notice posted on EI's Facebook pages will be tweeted to the EI Twitter account "[http://twitter.com/ei\\_tweets](http://twitter.com/ei_tweets)"

The EI Twitter login is "ei\_tweets" and the password is known to the IT manager.

### 16.4 E-Flashes

Mass email notifications to members ("e-Flashes") are periodically sent when needed. Typically only active members receive these notifications, although occasionally past members are also notified.

EI maintains a "do-not-email" list with people who have expressed a desire not to receive email from EI.

### 16.5 Flying Changes

EI has ongoing column space in the monthly printed publication Flying Changes. Each Division is responsible for providing written content for the column. A sidebar of contact information and an ongoing event calendar are regularly updated.

## 17-Event Management

Each Division will be responsible for deciding, managing, staffing, managing the approved funding for, documenting, and advertising the activities and events that best represent and promote their sport.

Recurring events are automatically included in yearly budgets for each Division. New events are evaluated by Divisions for fit with EI's mission and purpose, for filling a programmatic need, and for showing acceptable financial risk. The Board of Directors approves a new event by approving the Division budget which includes the new event and updating the master calendar.

Each Division creates and manages permanent or temporary committees needed to carry out the activities of that Division. Each Division recruits and trains volunteers, generates advertising, and handles all administrative duties including registration, event staffing, and obtaining accurate information for EI's insurance policy. Each Division manages inventory in the storage lockers, generates summary reports for Flying Changes as desired, and keeps records and documents organized.

Each Division hires Event Organizers and outside contractors as necessary and decides on pay rates if necessary.

Event Organizers authorized to disburse funds as part of their duties must sign a contract and a confidentiality form. The Division as a whole is responsible for managing the discipline-specific checking account but may delegate that responsibility to a particular Event Organizer as needed.

Each Division submits insurance-related details to the bookkeeper at least 6 weeks prior to the event and distributes required insurance certificates to venues or other organizations as needed.

Each Division is responsible for finding any necessary sponsors for events and maintaining accurate sponsor/donor information (dates, donation amount or type, sponsor name and address) to be transmitted to EI's bookkeeper within six weeks of the completion of the event or by December 31st, whichever comes first.

Event Organizers and related committees, and ultimately the Division Director, are responsible for ensuring that all budget updates and final figures, financial documents such as donor amounts, and tax-related information such as MISC-1099 forms, are transmitted to EI's bookkeeper, Treasurer, and Board of Directors within six weeks of the end date of the event or activity, and no later than December 31st.

All EI events will follow all applicable rules from governing, affiliated, or sanctioning organizations for the sport, including the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF), the United States Dressage Federation (USDF), the United States Eventing Association (USEA), the American Driving Society (ADS), or any other relevant organization.



## 18-Volunteers

EI is a volunteer-run organization and strives at all times to make volunteer contributions meaningful, fun, and productive.

Most work in EI is done by unpaid volunteers. Volunteers can be members or not.

The EI volunteer program is overseen by a Volunteer Director who participates across Divisions to help event Organizers and Division Directors manage and coordinate volunteer help. Each Division may also designate Volunteer Coordinators for particular events, and to ensure that each volunteer signs a waiver.

Volunteers may sign up on EI's website for duty shifts at EI events and activities. The website contains additional contact information for each event.

All volunteers receive thanks and tokens of appreciation, either immediately at the event or activity, or shortly thereafter. The most dedicated EI volunteers are honored at the annual Awards party.

## 19-Work for Hire

From time to time, EI may pay for services rendered, or conduct events which require paid organizers or clinicians. It is EI's long-standing practice that persons or businesses working for EI in a fee-for-services arrangement are acting as independent contractors, as defined by the IRS. Independent contractors are not considered employees of EI and are thus not covered by EI's insurance policy.

Independent contractors arrangements are typically governed by a signed services agreement contract, executed and signed by an appropriately authorized person in EI. The President and Secretary of the Board can always sign contracts on behalf of the organization.

## 20-Sponsors

Sponsors are individuals or businesses that support a particular EI event through purchase of advertising packages offered for that event.

Advertising opportunities may be printed ads in show programs, sponsor name announcements over the loudspeaker at a show, banner displays, logos on the EI website, or other ways to feature the sponsor's name and business.

Sponsorship levels and options vary by sport, and by the particular event. Sponsors must contact the event Organizer to find out more, including information on being a vendor at a particular event.

## 21-Dressage Division

Please see the EI website ([www.einw.org](http://www.einw.org)) for a full list of the year's events run by this Division, as well as contact information for each event.

The main email contact for the Dressage Division is [dressage@einw.org](mailto:dressage@einw.org). This email alias is routed to the current Dressage Director on the Board.

The Board approves the annual budget for each Division and any amendments to the Division's budget that may become necessary or warranted during the year. Event organizing, management decisions, and expenditures from approved budgets are decided by the leadership in this Division and coordinated with the Board of Directors.

Events in this Division are governed by the rules of USEF and USDF, and show management protocols can be found in the organizer manuals available on the USEF website ([www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org)) and the USDF website ([www.usdf.org](http://www.usdf.org)). This region is Region 6 for USDF.

### **21.1 Dressage Division- USDF/ GMO Duties**

EI supports the sport of dressage by participating in regional and national activities run by USDF.

EI is a founding Charter Group Member Organization (GMO #601) of the United States Dressage Federation (USDF). EI is currently one of nine GMOs in Region 6 of USDF which covers the states of Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, and Alaska.

A portion of the EI membership fee is sent directly to USDF to support the sport of dressage through the activities of USDF.

EI's designated delegate is sent to vote in EI's interests at the annual USDF national convention held each year in early December. The President is the default delegate.

EI may periodically host the Region 6 mini-convention in late November to highlight and discuss those issues to be voted on at the national convention. This event is managed by EI's General Division.

EI may periodically manage or fund one or more USDF-sponsored events such as Adult Training clinics or L Judge training programs. These events are managed through EI's Dressage Division.

## 22-Eventing Division

Please see the EI website ([www.einw.org](http://www.einw.org)) for a full list of the year's events run by this Division, as well as contact information for each event.

The main email contact for the Eventing Division is [eventing@einw.org](mailto:eventing@einw.org). This email alias is routed to the current Eventing Director on the Board.

The Board approves the annual budget for each Division and any amendments to the Division's budget that may become necessary or warranted during the year. Event organizing, management decisions, and expenditures from approved budgets are decided by the leadership in this Division and coordinated with the Board of Directors.

Events in this Division are governed by the rules of USEA, and show management protocols can be found in the organizer manuals available on the USEA website ([www.useventing.com](http://www.useventing.com)). This region is Area VII for USEA.

## 23-Driving Division

Please see the EI website ([www.einw.org](http://www.einw.org)) for a full list of the year's events run by this Division, as well as contact information for each event.

The main email contact for the Driving Division is [driving@einw.org](mailto:driving@einw.org). This email alias is routed to the current Driving Director on the Board.

The Board approves the annual budget for each Division and any amendments to the Division's budget that may become necessary or warranted during the year. Event organizing, management decisions, and expenditures from approved budgets are decided by the leadership in this Division and coordinated with the Board of Directors.

Events in this Division are governed by the rules of ADS, and show management protocols can be found in the organizer manuals available on the ADS website ([www.americandrivingsociety.org](http://www.americandrivingsociety.org)). This region is the Northwest Region for ADS.

## 24-Sport Horse Breeding Division

Please see the EI website ([www.einw.org](http://www.einw.org)) for a full list of the year's events run by this Division, as well as contact information for each event.

The main email contact for the Sport Horse Breeding Division is [sporthorse@einw.org](mailto:sporthorse@einw.org). This email alias is routed to the current Sport Horse Breeding Director on the Board.

The Board approves the annual budget for each Division and any amendments to the Division's budget that may become necessary or warranted during the year. Event organizing, management decisions, and expenditures from approved budgets are decided by the leadership in this Division and coordinated with the Board of Directors.

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*9 September 2012      Approved by the Board of Directors*

*17 November 2012    Ratified by Equestrians Institute Member, Annual Meeting*

*8 October 2014       Revised and posted for comment*

*8 February 2015      Approved by the Board of Directors*

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