



Safety Coordinator Job Summary

A Guide to Help Safety Coordinators Understand Their Duties

The Safety Coordinator provides an important function at an event. This job description is intended to help Organizers facilitate assigning effective Safety Coordinators for their event and to help them understand their duties. Although the Safety Coordinator does not necessarily have to be a medically trained person, the person who occupies this position should be able to coordinate an emergency response, should an accident occur. It is important to remember that if the Safety Coordinator is medically trained, they should at all costs try to remain in a supervisory role and avoid being involved in direct patient care.

The *USEA Safety Coordinators' Manual* is designed as a reference and contains recommendations for the Organizer and Safety Coordinator to facilitate their tasks. In no way should this manual be considered as regulatory or absolute in nature. Local EMS laws, protocols, and procedures dictate what procedures and equipment can be used by emergency medical personnel at the event. The manual merely suggests what might be needed. Each event is unique and the diversity of EMS systems throughout the country makes it impossible to have an absolute "right way" of handling response to a medical situation.

The USA Equestrian rules state that the event must be staffed with a trauma trained EMT-Paramedic. They should have the necessary equipment to perform procedures they are qualified to perform within their local EMS region or state. An ambulance is not specifically required. However, if the circumstances of an event make longer transport times likely (i.e. a remote location, large numbers of spectators or riders, a three-day competition), then an on-site ambulance is **strongly recommended**.

RESOURCES

An effective Safety Coordinator knows his resources and can delegate duties to the appropriate person(s). The following can be used as valuable resources:

• **Organizer:** Typically the Organizer(s) of the event know all of the particulars of the event including cross-country course

design, hazards, competitors, weather patterns and their effects on the event. The Safety Coordinator should be an arm of the Organizer.

• **Technical Delegate (TD):** The TD is the best resource for rules and regulations. The Safety Coordinator should meet with the TD prior to the event and present his plan and make adjustments as suggested by the TD. It is the TD's responsibility to maintain a safe event and ensure that all rules are followed.

• **Local EMS Provider:** The local EMS providers are the true resource for coverage of your event. There is tremendous diversity within EMS systems in the United States. Some are paid, some are volunteers. Contact the local EMS system and determine their capabilities (ALS vs. BLS) and regulations. Some will provide coverage at no cost. Some charge for coverage. Is the system able to dedicate a unit to stand-by? This information should be obtained months prior to the event and shared with the Organizer.

• **Local EMS Helicopter Service:** Helicopters are good resources for transport should a serious injury occur. Your local EMS personnel can refer you to the helicopter service and determine if helicopter transport from your event is feasible. Local protocols usually dictate helicopter usage.

• **Local Hospital:** Is the local hospital a trauma center? Local EMS personnel can assist in recognizing the capabilities of local hospitals and their protocols for transport.

• **USEA Safety Committee:** Any questions or concerns regarding the Safety Coordinator and duties, compliance, etc. can be addressed by the Safety Committee. A reference list is kept by the committee of people who are willing to assist events in establishing a good plan along with coordination of local EMS providers.

It is impossible to list all of the resources of a Safety Coordinator. Good communication, a calm manner and a good rapport with all of the above should ease the duties. Also, once a good plan is in place, the duties become easier. If those in charge know what to do, when to do it and how, things go much more smoothly and can be relayed to medical crews.

IMPLEMENTATION

Once the Safety Coordinator has gathered the necessary information and resources, a plan should be developed. Dressage and show jumping phases do not usually present many logistical problems. Cross-country requires a more sophisticated plan. A small event with a readily accessible cross-country course can implement a simple plan of action. If the event is larger with a “not so easy to access” cross-country course, things become more complicated. Common sense should prevail! Strategically placed, equipped first response personnel for access to all jumps within 1-2 minutes can facilitate the plan. If an accident occurs, these persons can evaluate the rider and request further assistance as needed. The plan should take into account if the ambulance can directly access all jumps, or does a four-wheel drive vehicle need to be available for medical personnel to move the victim to a more accessible location. Physicians and nurses can be helpful, but EMTs and Paramedics are the ideal primary responders.

Effective radio communication is essential. The Organizer and whoever is responsible for communication at the event should be made to understand the need for adequate communication for medical purposes. It should be pre-determined who deploys medical personnel to avoid confusion. Ensure that cell phones work in areas of the competition and note which hard phone line will be available for emergency communications.

A designated landing zone should be determined prior to the event should a helicopter be needed. It is usually best at an event to move the victim to the landing zone and not land the helicopter close to the accident. The safety of horses and bystanders must be strongly considered.

Also, how does rain or adverse weather affect terrain? Have a bad weather plan or alternative.

Make sure all responders have a good understanding of eventing and rules affecting their interaction with the riders. Make them aware of the Medical Information Card worn by the riders and safety equipment worn. The TD and Organizer can help all understand these rules. Also, remember that the event **cannot continue without adequate coverage**. Hopefully, all resources will not be committed and back up is available. Interaction with the TD is very important in this situation. (USA Equestrian rules specific to safety are on insert.)

Communication with the press should only be done under the direction of the TD and/or Organizer. Patient confidentiality and details of the accident are sensitive and should be respected at all times, including during radio communications. Post-incident debriefing should be considered with all concerned.

The ***USEA Incident Report*** should be completed along with all local EMS provider reports. The EMS provider should understand that any shared information will be kept confidential, but that it is important to maintain the proper documentation of accidents within our sport and to maintain statistics. This should be understood prior to the start of the event.

SUMMARY

Even though the Safety Coordinator’s role can seem complex, it should not be. A knowledgeable volunteer can develop a good, workable emergency plan that can be used for the event. After the competition is over, hold a debriefing to go over and correct any problems with your plan. Does anything need to be changed to make it better? If so, discuss with all involved and implement the changes for the future.

A good relationship between the Safety Coordinator, Organizer, TD and event medical personnel should result in a safe event with a good plan of action. Since the development of the Safety Coordinator’s position, it has become evident that events are more proactive rather than reactive with regard to medical response.

At any time should anyone wish to have their plan reviewed by the USEA Safety Committee or have questions, please contact any member of the committee through the USEA office. Also, as mentioned previously, the Safety Committee is a resource group for Organizers, Safety Coordinators or anyone wanting help with their plan.

This job description is not intended to supersede any local EMS protocols. Typically, most local EMS providers are willing to interact with the Safety Coordinator and develop a plan. They are dedicated, hard working individuals who have the public’s safety in mind. Please thank them for their dedication to making our sport safer.

Remember the Acronym P-O-L-I-C-E!

P: PREPARE a plan for emergencies.

Consider medical emergencies, fire, and inclement weather.

O: ORGANIZE the plan.

Meet with all concerned and make sure they understand their roles.

L: LOOK FOR HAZARDS and how to overcome them.

Accessibility to jumps on cross-country course, access to the farm, effect of inclement weather on accessibility should be considered. Alternate routes of travel should be coordinated with the Organizer.

I: IDENTIFY NEEDS during the event.

Number of persons required, ambulance on-site or on-call. Minimum of one EMT- Paramedic or equivalent with trauma training required. First responders, nurses, or physicians should be considered.

C: COORDINATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE.

Response, transportation, and coordination with TD and Organizer are important.

E: EVALUATE and make necessary changes to plan before, during, and after.

This job description was prepared to simplify the functions of the Safety Coordinator at an event. As previously mentioned, this job description is not absolute and does not supersede local EMS protocols, state or any law governing EMS. This job description is intended to help Organizers, TDs and Safety Coordinators better understand the important duties of the Safety Coordinator. The USEA Safety Coordinators' Manual is an in-depth reference to further assist in making your event as safe as possible.

Without the assistance of the following persons, this job description would not be possible:

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Rusty Lowe, EMT-P

USA Equestrian Rules Pertaining to the Safety Coordinator and Medical Personnel

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Article 1711. Medical Requirements *BOD 1/14/01 Effective 12/1/01*

1.1 ACCIDENTS INVOLVING COMPETITORS. In the event of an accident in which a competitor is apparently injured or concussed, they must be examined by designated medical personnel to determine if they may resume riding or if they are capable of leaving the grounds. Refusal to be examined shall be penalized by a fine of \$100. (Payable to the Organizing Committee) at the discretion of the Ground Jury.

1.2 If such a fall occurs during the cross-country test, the time during which the competitor is held and examined shall be recorded and deducted from his total time if he is permitted to continue.

2. MEDICAL CARDS. An approved and completed medical card is required any time while jumping. It must be enclosed in a transparent, waterproof carrier. It must be securely attached to the competitor's upper arm on the outside of the competitor's clothing. Failure to wear one's own medical card shall be penalized by a fine of \$100. (Payable to the Organizing Committee)

3. SAFETY COORDINATOR. All competitions shall furnish a Safety Coordinator, who shall be responsible for the establishment and coordination of medical services. As this shall include the transportation of injured competitors, the Safety Coordinator should not have any other duties during any cross-country or jumping tests.

4. MEDICAL PERSONNEL. Qualified medical personnel, with suitable medical equipment and with no other duties, must be present during scheduled schooling sessions over fences and during all scheduled competitions. Qualified Medical personnel is defined as a person who is currently certified or licensed in the profession and trained in pre-hospital trauma care. The minimum requirement is an EMT/Paramedic who is pre-hospital trauma trained.

5. ACCESS. The designated medical personal should have the capability of rapid deployment to any part of the arenas or courses in adverse conditions. Should this access not be available, the Ground Jury, on the advise of the Technical Delegate and the Course Designer, must consider alternatives including removal of the inaccessible portion.

