

Montcalm County 4-H Equine Policies and Procedures

Montcalm County 4-H Horse Leaders (MC4-HHL)

I. Registration

1. Equine: Complete Montcalm Equine Registration Form by May 1st.
2. Registrations will be reviewed by the MC4-HHL Executive Board at the May meeting.
3. Equines may only be shown by one exhibitor with the exception of Cloverbud, Walk/Trot (WT), and Equestrians with Disabilities (EWD) who may share an equine with an exhibitor of a differing level.
4. Cloverbuds may bring 1 equine to be stalled all week, haul in for Monday show only, or use borrowed equine.
4. EWD Exhibitors: A medical diagnosis form or letter from a medical professional must be completed and turned in with Registration. See below

II. Substitute Equine Procedure

1. Pick up or download online, complete and return a substitution form from the MSU Montcalm Extension Office. *Substitute equine is not eligible to qualify for state or overall highpoint awards.
2. The substitution form will be turned over to the MC4-HHL Executive Board for approval or disapproval.
3. Substitution requests may be brought to any Horse Leaders Meeting, the second Tuesday of the month, but the final submission date is the last Friday before the fair begins.

III. Junior Superintendents and Teen Leaders

1. Members 13 or older who have a desire to take on more leadership responsibility and learn about the function of MC4-HHL.
2. Potential Jr. Superintendents are required to submit a Montcalm County Junior Superintendent Application to the 4-H Program Coordinator. There are limited positions available.
 - a. Responsibilities:
 - i. attend MC4-HHL meetings
 - ii. mentor to younger members
 - iii. serve on Boards with adult volunteers
 - iv. organize the Saturday Team event (Jr. only)
 - v. assist Superintendents with check in (Jr. only)
 - vi. assist with barn checks and report issues to Mentor Superintendent (Jr. only)
 - b. Limitations:
 - i. are not to act as an authority and need to report issues to Superintendents
 - ii. are not eligible to vote on motions, elections, etc.
 - iii. a Gold Level Volunteer must oversee any event Juniors and/or teen leaders want to organize
 - iv. are not to be responsible for monies on behalf of any event, fundraiser, etc.

IV. Equestrians with Disabilities (EWD)

EWD riders are exhibitors with physical and/or cognitive disabilities. They may be independent and or supported individuals/exhibitors.

A. Requirements to participate in EWD classes

1. a medical diagnosis form or letter from a medical professional must be completed and turned in with registration.

2. must have a physical and or cognitive medically diagnosed condition.
3. Examples of conditions are as follows but not limited to: amputation, arthrogryposis, Asperger syndrome, autism spectrum disorder, Batten disease, cerebrovascular accident (stroke), cerebellar ataxia, cerebral palsy, Coffin-Lowry syndrome, cystic fibrosis, Down syndrome, dwarfism, fragile X syndrome, Friedreich's ataxia, Guillain-Barre syndrome, hearing impairment, Hunter syndrome, microcephaly, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, post-polio syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, Rett syndrome, spina bifida, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, trisomy disorders and visual impairment.
4. A parent or guardian needs to fill out an EWD Accommodation(s) Form daily (see your leader) and turn it in to the Announcer's Booth each morning before showing begins. This will be shared with the judge.

B. Accommodations

1. EWD exhibitors are allowed to have spotters, side walkers, and handlers as needed. These individuals are there for safety; they must be 18 or older and wear proper attire per the fairbook. Anyone assisting the EWD rider while in the ring needs to try not to obscure the judges line of vision.
2. Coaching from the center is not permissible.
3. EWD exhibitors are allowed to hold the saddle without penalty and use adaptive equipment that includes but not limited to:
 - a. SADDLE
 - i. Raised pommel, Raised cantle, Hard hand holds, Soft hand holds, Seat saver, Knee rolls/blocks, Thigh rolls/blocks, Padded saddle flaps
 - b. STIRRUPS
 - i. Enclosed stirrups, Strap from stirrup leather to girth/cinch, Strap from stirrup to girth/cinch, No stirrups, One stirrup
 - c. BRIDLE/REINS
 - i. Looped rein(s), Connecting bar reins, Bridging rein, Ladder reins, Rein guides (rein through ring on saddle), Elastic insert in reins, Side pulls
 - d. RIDING ATTIRE
 - i. Modified riding boots, Half chaps, Off set spurs, Safety vest, POSTURE, POSTURAL SUPPORTS & ORTHOSES, L or R Arm sling, Neck collar, Ankle foot orthoses, Prosthesis, Wrist brace, Back support, Trunk support, Gait belt
 - e. OTHER AIDS
 - i. Commander using sign language, Enlarged arena letters, Audio Communications (for hearing impaired), Voice, Other equipment will be considered upon request

V. General Rules

A. Before the 4-H Fair

1. THE MC4-HHL Executive Board HAS THE RIGHT TO NOT ALLOW ANY UNFIT, ILL OR UNRULY EQUINE TO ATTEND THE FAIR. The Executive Board may be called on for opinions/expertise in helping leaders to make a fair decision. Includes but not limited to: underweight, rain rot, fungus, open wounds, and lameness.
2. Equine Record Books are due at the Ash Building on the second Tuesday of June at the MC4-H Horse Leaders's meeting between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.
3. Barn assignments will be made by the Executive Board, with club attendance at horse leaders meetings to be taken into consideration for special requests.

B. At the Fair

1. ALL LEADERS OR THEIR ADULT REPRESENTATIVES HAVE THE AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO SEE THAT THE RULES ARE FOLLOWED. ANY PROBLEMS THAT ARISE SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH THE LEADER OF THE CLUB INVOLVED, not the youth. (Also, see Fair book General Rules and Regulations pertaining to conduct).
2. Equestrians With Disabilities(EWD) are 4-H'ers who have a physical or mental limitation. An EWD Accommodations form will be made available the Sunday before shows begin that will give parents the opportunity to explain the disability and will be shared with the judge each day.
3. EQUINES CONSIDERED TO BE A RISK TO THE PUBLIC WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE EXHIBITED. The Executive Board may make a determination.
4. Equines should NOT be taken through the barn when it is possible to walk on the outside. If an animal must be taken through the barn, it is the responsibility of the 4-H'er to clean up after his/her animal. A mess must not be left behind for another club to clean up.
5. Equines will be allowed ONLY in the equine barn and equine arena area.
6. Each exhibitor is guaranteed one stall for equine 1 OR 2 **and** one stall for a registered miniature horse. As space allows, Equine 1 OR 2, Cloverbud Equine, tack stalls and club stalls will be assigned after registrations are collected and processed at the May MC4-HHL meeting. Your leader will notify you if space is available.
7. Once an equine leaves the grounds it is finished showing for that day. A superintendent must be notified when equines are to be exchanged & returning equine is not to be unloaded until it is checked in.
8. No stallions born before January 1, of the current year, will be shown. (Stallions may be shown only during the year in which they were foaled).
9. Any equine that is to be shown in pony classes must be measured by a superintendent at check in or on Sunday of fair week. Ponies are 56" and under. Miniature horses must measure 38" and under. One-half inch will be deducted from the measured height of equines with shoes.
10. Only currently enrolled Montcalm County equine exhibitors will be allowed to ride/work equines during fair week. An exception to this rule is riders participating in the Pro-Am event. *In special circumstances, a parent/leader is allowed to lunge an equine.

C. Barns

1. Quiet hours on the grounds and in the barns are from 11 p.m. to 06 a.m. Exhibitors may only be present in the barns during these hours with a parent or leader. Superintendents/Leaders will turn off lights.
2. It's expected that each exhibitor maintains their stall(s) area and keeps the aisleway clear.

D. Arenas The arenas may be used for practice with mandatory adult supervision.

1. At least one arena will be open 06 a.m. - 10 p.m. daily depending on the daily show schedule and arena set up.
2. Equines shall be led to and from the arena, please mount and dismount in the center of the arena ONLY. It is expected that riders not stop on the rail and refrain from gathering on the rail for social time.
3. Bareback riding in the arena is permitted.
4. Riding double is NOT permitted.
5. Equines MUST BE BRIDLED when being ridden.
6. Halter practice is to be done in the center of the arena.
7. Pleasure gaits ONLY are to be used during all exercise times, EXCEPT pre-arranged contesting practice in the main arena on Thursday night.

E. Clothing

1. Follow Montcalm Co Fair Association dress code at all times. No tank tops, midriff, or offensive wording.
2. When riding, riding boots, long pants, and appropriate tops are required.
3. Closed toed footwear is required for anyone involved with an equine related activity. 4. Helmets are mandatory except if riding in western tack, although highly recommended then too.

F. Showing

1. **All equine exhibitors must show in a showmanship class.** Showmanship Champion in the equine division will compete in the Showmanship Sweepstakes.
2. Leaders are to supply their 4-H'ers with exhibitor numbers as assigned by the Fair Association. These should be displayed in the middle of the exhibitor's back, held with two safety pins or on BOTH sides of the saddle blanket. These should be printed in BLACK or DARK GREEN.
3. EWD riders are allowed to have assistance in the show ring, if needed. EWD riders entered in the Walk/Trot class will be judged separately, based on the rider's ability. (See rule III, B, 2, for correct definition of a EWD rider).
4. **Walk/Trot classes are for first and second year exhibitors and EWD.** Special permission must be obtained from the MC4-HHL Executive Board if a rider needs more than 2 years at the walk/trot level. EWD riders are exempt from the 2 year rule.
5. When showing, approved safety helmets are required per Michigan 4-H State Rule Book, 4-H 1145, page 2, number 15. Approved safety helmets are allowed in any class.
6. Exhibitors must be at the designated gate on time, or risk missing the class.
7. All placings are at the discretion of the judge and the judge's decision is final, including Grand and Reserve Championships.
8. Classes with 5 or fewer exhibitors may be combined, with the exception of EWD, and will be divided if there are 14/15 or more exhibitors in the class. If less than 14 in a class splits are at the discretion of the show manager and/or Executive Board. When needed, splits will be done by the number of years at the level first and then by age.
9. Showmanship classes will be split in sets no more than 9.

VI. Grand and Reserve Speed Champions Determination Rules

A. Grand and Reserve Champion Speed Horse and Grand and Reserve Champion Speed Pony are determined according to the following:

1. For point purposes only, the horse age groups are combined on each event and the pony age groups are combined on each event.
2. The horse and pony with the fastest time will be the Champion for that event. The horse and pony with the second fastest time will be the Reserve Champion for that event.
3. In case of a tie, there will be a rerun and the fastest time determines the champion.

VII. State 4-H Horse Show Delegate

The State decides how many delegates and alternates Montcalm County will be allowed. Half of that total will be speed exhibitors and half will be pleasure exhibitors. In the event the quota has an odd number of delegates, we will alternate between speed and pleasure from year to year. Advanced and Intermediate exhibitors may qualify. Novice riders are not eligible for delegate selection, unless an exception is made by the Executive Board. Walk/Trot exhibitors are not eligible.

A. Overall Rules

1. Delegates are to be determined by ALL EB members at the closing of Friday's show day. The EB shall use the point totals as calculated by the Highpoint and Delegate Points Committee, however consideration may be given to those exhibitors in their final 2 eligible years or a high scoring novice. The EB decisions are FINAL.
2. The equine/exhibitor pair that is entered at state must be the same pair that qualified at the county level. No substitutions will be allowed.
3. Each club that has a delegate is required to provide one gold or silver level volunteer. Registrations will not be accepted until the volunteer quota is met as determined by the state each year.
4. Delegates must meet current State 4-H Horse Show requirements.

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/michigan-4-h-state-horse-show-2025>

B. Exhibitors

1. Must be 4-H age 12-19. Miniature division age is 11-19. EWD age is 12-26? 2. Must have signed the declaration requesting delegate consideration on the Equine Registration form on time.
3. Must have competed in one equitation class with each equine/exhibitor combo and in at least 4 state qualifying classes (as listed below).
4. Will be required to attend a meeting (or send an adult representative) on Saturday following the end of the show week. The state entry fee must be paid in full at the meeting. Check written out to: Montcalm County Horse Leaders
5. Must immediately decide and announce at the Saturday meeting which division they choose to represent at state if they qualify in both speed and pleasure.

C. Qualifying Classes by Discipline

1. Pleasure: (Western, Saddle Seat, Hunt Seat), Equitation: (English, Saddle Seat, Dressage Seat, Western Horsemanship), Hunter Hack, Showmanship, Dressage Tests, Pattern: (Ranch, Reining, Trail, Ranch Trail)
2. Speed: Down & Back, Pole Bending, Keyhole, Cloverleaf, Flag Race, Speed & Action
3. Miniature: Currently no maximum number of exhibitors has been set by the state, however a 10% of exhibitors rule is suggested. The EC should encourage and support competitive exhibitors to promote growth of mini divisions.
4. EWD riders: Currently the State Show only allows exhibitors that follow Proud Equestrian Program guidelines as delegates and there is no maximum. The EC should encourage and support any EWD rider that desires to compete as a qualified PEP exhibitor outlined by the state rules.

D. Scoring Points

1. Points are given for each exhibitor/equine requesting consideration with a max score of 24 points.
2. A sliding point system is used to determine points based on the number of exhibitors PLACING in the class with a maximum score of 6. First place in a class with fewer than 6 exhibitors will receive a score that corresponds to the number of exhibitors THAT PLACED in that class. (For example, a class with 4 exhibitors would compile points as written here: 1 st 4 points, 2 nd 3 points, 3 rd 2 points, and 4 th would receive 1 point) 3. Intermediate exhibitors will have their total points multiplied by a coefficient of 0.67. The skill level on an advanced exhibitor is weighed greater than the skill level of an intermediate as evidenced by Skill Level Placement signed by Leader.
4. In the event of a tie, the tie breaker will go to the exhibitor that scored the highest in their showmanship class. The EC may consider record book placings or provide a written test if there continues to be a tie.

5. A “sign” of some kind will be placed on each exhibitor’s stall who has qualified as a delegate and alternate after quiet hours on Friday night.

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