

## **Safety - communications protocol in case of serious injury/athlete fatality**

OC and/or NF media lead should contact the FEI discipline Director immediately.

The FEI can advise on how the situation is handled and coordinate what information should be issued and when. The discipline Director will refer to the FEI Comms team if the incident is serious.

Social media activity needs to be carefully considered – if you are only doing a few updates then suggest these cease across all platforms until full information of the incident is known.

If you are live covering an event then you will need to put out a holding message, along the lines of *“the course is being held following a fall and we will bring you more information as soon as we can”*.

In any follow-up social media posts, such as when the course is reopened and competition re-starts, be very careful not to speculate or confirm any unknown information.

This can be followed, when appropriate, by *‘the course is reopened, the horse is on its feet and the athlete receiving medical attention’* or along those lines.

As soon as possible once the incident is fully understood/resolved, a statement should be prepared for the media, giving brief details of the incident and distributed to the press room media.

### **Examples from previous events:**

#### **Athlete accident**

*Cecilie Ericksen (DEN)*

*The Danish athlete Cecilie Ericksen, who fell at fence 13a, the first element at the water complex, has a suspected dislocated shoulder and has been taken to hospital for further evaluation. Her horse, Calvin (no 21) was uninjured in the fall.*

#### **Horse fatality**

*Statement regarding Bob The Builder*

*The Polish horse, Bob The Builder (no 37), which fell at fence 15 in the main arena with his rider Michal Knap, received immediate treatment at the fence and was taken to the on-site veterinary clinic for further assessment. Sadly x-rays revealed an irreparable fracture of the horse’s front right long pastern bone (lower leg) and, on humane grounds and with the agreement of the owners and rider, the decision was taken to put the horse to sleep. A post mortem will be carried out at the on-site veterinary clinic.*

#### **Athlete fatality**

Should the worst scenario occur and the accident result in a rider fatality, the FEI will prepare a statement with facts about the incident as per the template at the end of this document. The statement will include a quote from the OC and potentially also the NF, depending on the situation.

The NF can also issue a statement of its own, provided they have the same facts and messaging.

**Statement on fatal accident at name of event level of event (country)**

It is with the deepest regret that we confirm that athlete (country) suffered a fatal accident today (date) while competing at the name of event (country).

Name of athlete and his/her horse add name suffered (a fall, at fence or on the course – brief details of incident).

On-site medical specialists were at the scene immediately after the accident, but sadly the athlete could not be saved – information on whether the rider was taken to hospital or treated at the scene. The horse was examined by an official veterinarian and treated for a minor injury to its left hind leg – information on the state of the horse.

Brief biographical information on the athlete and the circumstances of the accident will be fully reviewed.

"I know I speak on behalf of the entire global equestrian community in expressing our sorrow at this tragic news." FEI Secretary General Sabrina Ibáñez said. "Any loss of an athlete in such circumstances greatly affects us all."

"On behalf of the FEI and everyone in the (add discipline) community around the world, I extend our sincere condolences to xxxxxxx family and friends in the sport, and to the xxxxx Equestrian Federation."

**Quote from the event/National Federation**

All communications must be cleared with FEI Comms and everything should be issued in a coordinated fashion.

The FEI Comms team are always available to help, advise and support should you need help dealing with what can be a very tough and emotionally challenging situation.