

Horse Protection Inspectors

In May 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) published new Horse Protection regulations that eliminate the role of Designated Qualified Persons. The new regulations also relieve Horse Industry Organizations of their regulatory responsibilities. Effective February 1, 2026, only Veterinary Medical Officers from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Horse Protection Inspectors (HPIs) may conduct inspections. Once trained and authorized by APHIS, HPIs will function as third-party inspectors who event managers may appoint to conduct inspections at their events.

Working as an HPI

Although HPIs are trained and authorized by APHIS to conduct inspections, they are not APHIS employees. Once an HPI candidate successfully completes training, APHIS will issue a certificate of authorization that is valid for one year. APHIS will then add the HPI's name and contact information to the APHIS website. Event managers can select an HPI from the list and contact them directly to negotiate coverage and fees. While event management may appoint an HPI to cover their event, neither event management nor APHIS can require an HPI to work a particular event. HPIs set their own rates and determine their schedule.

Contact Us

Send questions about the role of HPIs or the application process to horseprotection@usda.gov. Scan the QR code to learn more about the HPA and its regulations, the role of HPIs, or to apply.



You can also contact:

USDA, APHIS, Animal Care
2150 Centre Ave., Building B, Mailstop 3W11
Fort Collins, CO 80526-8117
(970) 494-7478
horseprotection@usda.gov

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Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Horse Protection Inspectors





HPI Duties and Responsibilities

Once an HPI has agreed to cover an event, they are responsible for ensuring compliance with the HPA and its regulations. This includes:

- Ensuring designated inspection areas are sufficient for all aspects of the inspection process
- Physically inspecting horses at an HPA-covered event
- Observing and/or examining action devices, pads, and other equipment
- Identifying horses that don't comply with the HPA or its regulations
- Making proper notifications for any horse allegedly found to be in violation
- Carrying out additional inspection procedures deemed necessary
- Completing and properly distributing APHIS-approved inspection reports



Scan the QR code to learn more about HPI duties and responsibilities.

HPI Qualification Requirements

- HPIs must be veterinarians, veterinary technicians, or State or local animal welfare or control officers.
- HPIs must demonstrate sufficient knowledge and experience in equine husbandry and science.
- HPIs must not have been found to have previously violated any provision of the HPA or its regulations and must not have been disqualified by the Secretary of Agriculture from diagnosing, detecting, or inspecting soreness under the HPA or its regulations.
- HPIs must not have acted in a manner that calls into question their honesty, integrity, reputation, practices, and reliability relative to possible authorization as an HPI.
- Prior to being authorized as an HPI, applicants must successfully complete APHIS HPA compliance and enforcement training.
- HPIs must sign and adhere to a Code of Conduct that includes recusal of events where there may be a conflict of interest, prohibition of betting or gambling activities on horses or participants, and discriminatory behavior.

Apply to Become an HPI

Interested candidates who meet the qualifications must complete the HPI application and Code of Conduct. APHIS will review all applications and notify applicants whether they are approved to continue with training or ineligible to be authorized as an HPI.



Apply Today!