



PASO FINO HORSE ASSOCIATION OPERATING PRINCIPLES

INTRODUCTION: The manner in which the Paso Fino Horse Association Board and Administration conduct their business becomes a model throughout the association. Successful organizations are the result of effective, responsive and dynamic leadership. Organizations and their members must agree on basic ways of working together and solving problems commonly called "Operating Principles."

The following principles outline a philosophy of cooperative behavior that is essential to the effectiveness and productivity of PFHA.

I. JUDGMENT AND TRUST

The complexities of PFHA operations cannot (and should not necessarily) be addressed by policies, procedures, or operating principles. Controversial issues and difficulties which arise require good judgment, common sense and trust among Board Members, Executive Committee including Board Officers, Regions, Committees, Association Members and Administration. *Every complaint cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved.*

Every issue or concern cannot be foreseen.

For those very reasons, **trust in each other, allowance for error and team efforts** to address problems are key components of these Operating Principles.

II. COMMUNICATIONS, COOPERATION AND SUPPORT

To operate successfully and with organizational and personal integrity, Board Members, Executive Committee including Board Officers, Regions, Committees, Association Members and Administration must:

- Recognize that open communication requires respect, trust, and courage.
- *If you have an issue with someone, go to that person and share your concerns first with them and not someone else.*
- *If someone comes to you to complain about someone else, let them know you care but still refer them to that person.*
- Work to minimize misunderstandings and reduce conflict.
- Address disagreements appropriately.
- Support and practice PFHA rules, policies and Operating Principles.
- Support each other constructively and courteously.
- Maintain confidentiality when required or appropriate.
- Allow others and ourselves the freedom to admit mistakes.

- Focus our discussions on issues, not personalities.
- Encourage constructive dialogue.
- Put egos and special interests on hold.
- Balance our honesty with sensitivity toward others.
- Uphold the integrity of the PFHA and its members.
- Pursue through understanding.
- Involve those parties who are affected by the decision and solution.
- Commit to getting to know one another and the ideas and issues that are important to that individual.

III. DEVELOPMENT, ADMINISTRATION AND REVIEW OF BOARD POLICY

A. Policies: The Board reviews policies and their effectiveness both on a preset timetable and as needed. Once policies are amended or approved by the Board, members must support them even though they may have initially spoken against them.

B. Committees: Committees assist and advise the Board in developing policy for their particular areas. Committees inform the Board of the manner in which policies are being administered and if they may need to be revised. Committees need to share concerns about ideas that may not work. Once policies are in place, however, committees support the policies whether or not committee members were in full agreement.

C. **Staff:** Staff shares with the Executive Director ideas for policy improvement as well as concerns about ideas that may not work. The Executive Director shares this information with the Executive Committee, as well as any ideas or concerns s/he has. Executive Director and staff support all policies once they are in place.

IV. ISSUES THAT COME BEFORE THE BOARD

A. **Appropriateness:** The Board communicates to members what types of issues are appropriate to bring before the Board. In addition to goals and major program issues, the Board may wish to consider plans, programs or issues that are:

- Likely to be sensitive in the internal or external community
- Major changes in program thrust or direction
- Major cost items
- Major deployment of staff

B. **Board Response:** A reasonable time frame is outlined for Board assessment, deliberation and response to issues. Once an issue has reached the Board level, the Board makes certain that all organizational levels involved are informed of the issue before it, and of any proposed actions. This is handled with respect for everyone concerned, and it is the Board's job to determine which issues are "Board level" and which should be handled at another level. Guidelines for Board responses are:

- Establish a rationale for each decision.

- Make decisions consistent with Board's expressed goals.
- Communicate the Board's rationale for making a decision.

C. **Board Tenor:** The Board needs to foster an open, honest exchange of ideas so that the best thinking is stimulated. However, once a final decision is made, it is both an individual and collective responsibility to give full support to successful implementation.

V. EFFECTIVE BOARD MEETINGS

A. Remember these three rules:

1. **Be prepared!**
2. **No Surprises!**
3. **Disagree without Being Disagreeable!**

B. Handling controversy:

1. Board members agree to disagree with each other in a positive and constructive fashion which can oftentimes spell the difference between discussion, debate, and argument.
2. The Board does not hear specific complaints related to individuals, committees or staff members during open session.
3. The board does not allow non-agenda items to dominate.
4. Large groups are represented by one spokesperson.
5. Time limits are established when significant numbers of people wish to speak.
6. If the issue becomes too emotional, a recess may

be called or a special meeting scheduled.

C. Possible responses for controversial subjects:

1. Refer the matter back to the appropriate organizational level.
2. Acknowledge the importance of the issue to those bringing it up and reassure those individuals by telling them to whom you are referring the issue.
3. Remind complainants of the difference between Board level and administrative issues.

VI. DECISION MAKING COMPONENTS:

A. Essentials of the Decision Making Process:

1. Identification and evaluation of alternatives
2. Awareness of short and long term consequences
3. Appreciation for the needs of the group, as well as individuals
4. and sensitivity toward collective action

B. Decision Making Code:

To formulate and execute sound decisions, we agree to the following:

1. Clearly communicate decisions.
2. Build into major decisions a point of reevaluation.
3. Provide the opportunity for input from those impacted by the decision.