



In Armand Leone's latest opinion piece for *The Chronicle of the Horse*, he reasons that the use of smartphones in all warm-up rings at competitions should be banned rather than their use being at the discretion of the ring steward.

Distracted Riding Is as Dangerous as Distracted Driving

By Armand Leone

At a recent show, I noticed that many riders in the warm-up ring were paying more attention to their phones than to their horses.

Smartphones have become an unavoidable part of modern life. Many people spend hours each day on their phones. Leaving aside the broader social and psychological impacts, there is one place where cell phones simply do not belong: the competition schooling ring.



Riders should focus their full attention on their horse and their surroundings when mounted, argues Armand Leone. **Photo by Shutterstock**

Talking on or looking at a cell phone while riding a horse in a competition schooling area creates a substantial and unnecessary risk of injury to other riders and horses. Distracted riding is every bit as dangerous in a crowded warm-up ring as distracted driving is on a busy highway.

Riding a horse requires attention, awareness and communication. A horse constantly responds to the rider's body language, balance and focus. As prey animals, horses continuously assess their surroundings and react to potential threats. Riders owe their horses the same level of attentiveness. Good horsemanship requires being mentally present and engaged with the horse.

Many riders, including experienced professionals, seem to believe they can ride safely while talking on a phone or glancing at a screen. Some probably can. But that misses the point. The issue is not whether a rider can stay mounted while using a phone. The issue is whether that rider's distraction puts others at risk.

If someone wants to use a phone while walking back to the barn or riding around the show grounds, the primary risk is to the individual. The risk calculation changes significantly in a schooling ring, where multiple horses and riders work in close proximity.

Like pilots operating in controlled airspace or captains navigating a crowded harbor, riders in a warm-up ring must maintain constant situational awareness. They need to know where other horses are, how fast they are moving, which direction they are traveling, how they are behaving, and what lines they are likely to take through turns and around jumps. Riders must continually anticipate traffic patterns and maintain safe distances from others.

[Read the Full Article on The Chronicle of the Horse](#)

Q&A: Should I Offer Boarding at My Farm To Make Extra Income?

By Armand Leone and Jessica E. Choper

Q: I have a beautiful four-stall barn, an outdoor ring, and several spacious paddocks at my home where I've kept my two horses for the past few years. I would love to make a little extra income by boarding an additional horse or two. Plus, I'd appreciate having someone to ride with. What are some legal considerations I need to keep in mind before I begin to offer boarding services?



Consider whether the extra effort and cost involved makes offering boarding a worthwhile endeavor. **Photo by Jump Media**

A: Boarding horses is not something that should be taken lightly and requires a good deal of planning. Even though you have the potential to earn a bit of extra income on the side, it is still considered operating a business, and appropriate measures should be taken before you begin this venture.

Here are five necessities you should make sure you have in place before you begin boarding.

1. Adequate Insurance
2. Liability Release
3. Boarding Contract
4. Barn Rules
5. Limiting Personal Liability

After considering the recommended checklist identified above and taking into account the extra cost and effort involved, are you still prepared to tackle this new venture? If so, you can begin to board horses knowing that you have taken some reasonable measures to protect your interests should issues arise.

[Read the Full Article](#)

For advice and counsel related to the equestrian industry, contact Leone Equestrian Law at info@equestriancounsel.com.

Led by Armand Leone, Jr., MD, JD, MBA, Leone Equestrian Law LLC provides legal services and consultation for equestrian professionals ranging from riders and trainers to owners and show managers in the FEI disciplines on a wide variety of issues.

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