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## Ohio State Racing Commission

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## OSRC invites OHHA to assist in educating Drivers on new rule

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 23, 2015

The Ohio State Racing Commission (OSRC) invited the Ohio Harness Horsemen's Association (OHHA) to help create an informational forum that will educate Ohio harness drivers on a new "Use of the Whip" rule (3769-17-17) at their monthly meeting, June 23, 77 S. High St., Columbus, Ohio.

"We asked the OHHA at our meeting this morning to participate with the OSRC in educating harness drivers on the new rule which goes into the effect July 19 and they enthusiastically agreed," said OSRC Chairman Robert K. Schmitz. "I don't believe this will be a revolutionary change for most drivers except they will now have to keep the lines in both hands for the entire mile."

Steve Bateson, OHHA Vice President and Renee Mancino, OHHA Executive Director both agreed to help participate in the education of Ohio harness drivers on the "Use of the Whip" rule, which had passed through the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) on June 22.

The OSRC will file the rule on July 9, and it will become effective ten days later on July 19.

"The Ohio Fair Conference has 20 fairs (in their circuit) and drivers need to know how each judge is going to interpret these rules," Bateson said. "If I were a professional driver I would ask for clarification so there would be no misunderstanding of these rules."

The "Use of Whip" rule outlines where on a horse's body a whip may be used and specifies types of whips and the amount of force a driver can deliver when utilizing a whip in a race.

*Rule 3769-17-17, "Use of the Whip," is found in whole, below:*

(A) All drivers must keep a line in each hand beginning when the horse is behind the starting gate and continuing through the finish of the race.

(B) Whipping shall be restricted to elbow and wrist action only and the whipping arm shall not be raised above the driver's shoulder height.

(C) Drivers shall not move their whipping arm in an exaggerated manner and the lines shall remain reasonably taut during the race.

(D) Drivers shall not use the whip below the level of the shaft, forward of the race bike's wheels.

(E) Drivers shall not place the whip between the horse's legs.

(F) Drivers shall not strike another horse or driver with the whip.

(G) Drivers shall not use the handle of a whip on a horse.

(H) Drivers are permitted to use their hand or the whip in a sliding or gliding manner above the level of the shaft.

- (I) Drivers shall not use the whip on a tired horse, on a horse that is not visibly responding, or when a horse is not in contention in a race.
- (J) Drivers shall not use the whip without giving the horse time to respond to a previous application of the whip.
- (K) Whips shall be no longer than 48 inches with the cracker no longer than 6 inches in length. Only a conventional cracker shall be permitted. No leather or unusual materials may be used. The conventional cracker shall not be knotted and tape is only permitted on the handle of the whip. All other modifications of the whip are prohibited.
- (L) Excessive, indiscriminate, visibly injurious, or abusive use of the whip is prohibited.
- (M) In addition to the penalties provided in Rule 3769-17-99, the violation of any of the provisions in this rule may result in loss of placement or disqualification.