



South Carolina Equine Liability Immunity

Equine Liability Immunity

SECTION 47-9-710. Definitions.

As used in this chapter:

(1) "Engages in an equine activity" means riding, training, providing, or assisting in providing medical treatment of, driving, or being a passenger upon an equine, mounted or unmounted, or a person assisting a participant or show management. It does not include being a spectator at an equine activity, except in cases where the spectator places himself in an unauthorized area and in immediate proximity to the equine activity.

(2) "Equine" means a horse, pony, mule, donkey, or hinny.

(3) "Equine activity" means:

(a) an equine show, fair, competition, performance, parade, or trail riding that involves a breed of equine and an equine discipline, including, but not limited to, dressage, hunter and jumper horse shows, grand prix jumping, three-day events, combined training, rodeos, driving, pulling, cutting, polo, steeplechasing, English and Western performance riding, trail riding and Western games, and hunting.

(b) equine training or teaching activities, or both;

(c) boarding equines;

(d) riding, inspecting, or evaluating an equine belonging to another, whether the owner has received monetary consideration or another thing of value for the use of the equine or is permitting a prospective purchaser of the equine to ride, inspect, or evaluate the equine;

(e) a ride, trip, hunt, or other equine activity, however informal or impromptu, that is sponsored by an equine activity sponsor;

(f) placing or replacing a horseshoe on an equine;

(g) examining or administering medical treatment to an equine by a veterinarian.

(4) "Equine activity sponsor" means an individual, a group, a club, a partnership, or a corporation, whether the sponsor is operating for profit or nonprofit, which sponsors, organizes, or provides the facilities for an equine activity, including, but not limited to, a pony club, 4-H club, hunt club, riding club, school and college-sponsored class, program,

and activity, therapeutic riding program, and an operator, instructor, and promoter of an equine facility, including, but not limited to, a stable, clubhouse, ponyride string, fair, and an arena at which the activity is held or a landowner who has given permission for the use of his land in an equine activity either by easement or other means.

(5) "Equine professional" means a person engaged for compensation in:

- (a) instructing a participant or renting to a participant an equine for the purpose of riding, driving, or being a passenger upon the equine;
- (b) renting equipment or tack to a participant; or
- (c) examining or administering medical treatment to an equine as a veterinarian.

(6) "Inherent risk of equine activity" means those dangers or conditions which are an integral part of equine activities, including, but not limited to:

- (a) the propensity of an equine to behave in ways that may result in injury, harm, or death to a person on or around the equine;
- (b) the unpredictability of an equine's reaction to sound, sudden movement, an unfamiliar object, a person, or another animal;
- (c) certain hazards such as surface and subsurface conditions;
- (d) collisions with other equines or objects; and
- (e) the potential of a participant to act in a negligent manner that may contribute to injury to the participant or others, as failing to maintain control over the animal or not acting within the participant's ability.

(7) "Participant" means a person, amateur or professional, who engages in an equine activity, whether or not a fee is paid to participate in the equine activity.

HISTORY: 1993 Act No. 182, Section 1, eff July 1, 1993, and applies only to causes of action arising on or after this act's effective date; 2012 Act No. 142, Sections 1, 2, eff April 2, 2012.

Effect of Amendment

The 2012 amendment, in subsection (3)(a) substituted "parade, or trail riding" for "or parade", and removed "endurance" before "trail riding and Western games"; and in subsection (4) added "or a landowner who has given permission for the use of his land in an equine activity either by easement or other means".

SECTION 47-9-720. Equine liability immunity; exceptions to grant of immunity.

(A) Except as provided in subsection (B), an equine activity sponsor or an equine

professional is not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant resulting from an inherent risk of equine activity, and no participant or participant's representative may make a claim against, maintain an action against, or recover from an equine activity sponsor, or an equine professional, for injury, loss, damage, or death of the participant resulting from an inherent risk of equine activity.

(B) Nothing in subsection (A) prevents or limits the liability of an equine activity sponsor, or an equine professional, if the equine activity sponsor, or equine professional:

(1)(a) provided the equipment or tack and knew or should have known that the equipment or tack was faulty, and the equipment or tack was faulty to the extent that it caused the injury; or

(b) provided the equine and failed to make reasonable and prudent efforts to determine the ability of the participant to engage safely in the equine activity and to manage safely the particular equine based on the participant's representations of his ability;

(2) owns, leases, rents, or otherwise is in lawful possession and control of the land or facilities upon which the participant sustained injuries because of a dangerous latent condition which was known or should have been known to the equine activity sponsor, equine professional, or person and for which warning signs have not been conspicuously posted;

(3) committed an act or omission that constitutes wilful or wanton disregard for the safety of the participant and that act or omission caused the injury; or

(4) intentionally injured the participant.

(C) Nothing in subsection (A) prevents or limits the liability of an equine activity sponsor or an equine professional under liability provisions as set forth in the products liability laws.

(D) The provisions of this article shall not cover or apply to any liability arising from the ownership, maintenance, or use of any motor vehicle.

HISTORY: 1993 Act No. 182, Section 1, eff July 1, 1993, and applies only to causes of action arising on or after this act's effective date.

SECTION 47-9-730. Warning signs; contract to contain warning notice; immunity revoked for failure to comply.

(A) An equine professional and an equine activity sponsor shall post and maintain signs which contain the warning notice specified in subsection (B). These signs must be placed in a clearly visible location on or near stables, corrals, or arenas where the equine professional or the equine activity sponsor conducts equine activities or once at the primary entrance to any riding trail maintained or operated by the activity sponsor. The warning notice specified in subsection (B) must appear on the sign in black letters with each letter a minimum of one inch in height. A written contract entered into by an equine

professional or by an equine activity sponsor to provide professional services, instruction, or rental of equipment, tack, or an equine to a participant, whether or not the contract involves equine activities on or off the location or site of the business of the equine professional or the equine activity sponsor, must contain in clearly readable print the warning notice specified in subsection (B).

(B) A sign and contract described in subsection (A) must contain the following warning notice:

WARNING

Under South Carolina law, an equine activity sponsor or equine professional is not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant in an equine activity resulting from an inherent risk of equine activity, pursuant to Article 7, Chapter 9 of Title 47, Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976.

(C) Failure to comply with the requirements concerning warning signs and notices provided in this section prevents an equine activity sponsor or equine professional from invoking the privileges of immunity provided by this article.

HISTORY: 1993 Act No. 182, Section 1, eff July 1, 1993, and applies only to causes of action arising on or after this act's effective date; 2012 Act No. 142, Section 3, eff April 2, 2012.

Effect of Amendment

The 2012 amendment added "or once at the primary entrance to any riding trail maintained or operated by the activity sponsor" to subsection (A).