

USEF MICROCHIPPING RULE

EFFECTIVE 12/1/2025

GR 1101.10, all horses competing in USEF-licensed or -endorsed competitions must be microchipped with a 15-digit ISO compliant 11784/11785 chip.

Rule Overview

As a reminder, this rule will require **all** horses to have a microchip to be eligible to compete at a USEF licensed competition, including dressage competitions. This microchip number must be on file with USEF and, once recorded, will remain with the horse's record. Microchip numbers do not need to be collected by the competition. It is the participant's responsibility to report the microchip to USEF, but we will ask competitions to verify that a chip number is on file before accepting the entry.

Reporting Tool

USEF has an online [microchip reporting tool](#) which can be used to report a microchip for a horse by anyone (i.e. owner, trainer, barn manager, secretary). Once reported, the microchip will be instantly added to the horse's account and the records will update to show the horse is compliant.

Microchip Resources

USEF has developed a [microchip resource webpage](#) which has many useful resources, including:

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Microchip 101](#)
- [Microchip Mythbusters](#)

How to Report a Microchip if you as owner are a USEF member of any kind

Go to your [USEF Member Dashboard](#) to report a microchip for your horse.

- **New** horses/ponies - Submit a New Horse Recording Application.
- **Recorded** horses/ponies - Use the [Horse Microchip Update](#) page to update your horse. To update the microchip of a horse not listed, please use the [Update Microchips Search](#).

For current Non-Members -

For Owners of a horse entered in Opportunity or USDF Introductory classes (A, B, C) these horses are no longer exempt from the USEF Horse Registration requirement. **All horses** must have, at minimum, a USEF horse ID. Please see steps below to follow if you are in this category.

Owners will be able to get a free fan account which can remain inactive, then they will apply for a horse ID which is also free. They can follow these steps:

- To complete a new horse recording/horse ID, log into your account at www.usef.org. Navigate to your dashboard, found by hovering over "Account" in the top right corner of the page, and select "My USEF Dashboard." Once you are on your dashboard, scroll halfway down the page until you see a section titled "Horse Options." Select the tile "Create New Horse" with the '+' symbol on it. The first question asks if this application is related to a show; select yes or no. Then you will begin the application process. Once you have submitted the application, it will move to your online shopping cart which will be accessible from the "Account" menu, this time with a red dot indicating you've moved the application to your cart. Once you check out the recording/horse ID from your cart, the application will be submitted to our office for processing.

When creating the USEF Horse ID it will allow the owners to input the microchip number and should be good to go! The fan account is sufficient to obtain an ID and they will not need to upgrade to competing unless the horse is competing in a section that is not member exempt.

EQUINE MICROCHIPS 101

September 1, 2023



EQUINE MICROCHIP BASICS

A microchip is an electronic circuit that uses radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology, specifically a wireless electromagnetic signal, as a form of communication. Each microchip has a unique number which is encoded into the chip at the time of manufacturing and cannot be altered or deleted after manufacturing. It is a read-only chip. The microchip remains inactive in the horse and is only activated when a reader sends a signal to the microchip. The microchip reader emits radiowaves at the international standard frequency of 134.2 kHz which stimulates the chip to respond back to the reader with the unique identification number.



ADVANCES IN MICROCHIP TECHNOLOGY

In the early days of microchipping animals, there were issues with microchip and reader compatibility, as both were developed at various frequencies. However, global standards have addressed this issue. Many companies follow the international standards (ISO 11784 and 11785) of 134.2kHz, which resulted in the use of a universal scanner that can read any ISO compliant microchip. Additionally, in 2007, a registration authority was established to register manufacturer codes for the microchips. These manufacturer codes include the country code prefix or specific manufacturing code. The registry ensures ISO compliant microchips meeting the standards have a unique number to prevent duplicative microchip numbers. Based on these advances, the ISO compliant microchip have become the primary microchip used in horses.

Currently, equine microchips are read-only, meaning no information can be uploaded or stored on the chip. However, research is ongoing on microchips that could store health data, such as vaccinations records and Coggins test results.



BIO_THERMAL_MICROCHIPS

One additional advancement in microchip technology was the development of a biothermal microchip. This microchip contains a built-in temperature biosensor that measures the horse's temperature at the implantation site. The microchip can be read by a universal reader for just the identification number or by a designated reader which captures and displays the temperature. This is an easy, safe and quick alternative to taking multiple rectal temperatures.



MICROCHIP IMPLANTATION

In horses, microchips are typically implanted with a syringe in the left nuchal ligament at a point halfway between the poll and the withers. Recent studies have evaluated implanting microchips in the pectoral or splenius muscle, however the internationally recognized location for microchip implantation in the horse is the nuchal ligament. Many newer microchips, contain an outer polymer coating that helps keep the microchip from migrating by favoring tissue adhesion. Several publications have shown that properly implanted microchips generally do not migrate after implantation in horses (Stein et al. 2003; Gerber et al. 2012). Horses may exhibit a local inflammatory response characterized by swelling and sensitivity to pressure at the insertion site which typically resolves in one day (Gerber et al. 2012).

Although anesthesia is not required for microchip implantation, some states considered the process a veterinary procedure, and thus require the implantation to be performed (or at least supervised) by a licensed veterinarian.



BENEFITS OF MICROCHIPS

Microchips are a safe, reliable and cost-effective means of permanently identifying horses. The additional benefits to the horse owner include:

- Theft Recovery - A permanent unalterable identification that can be used to prove ownership.
- Fraud Prevention - When utilized at competitions, it confirms identification assuring credibility.
- Emergency Response – A quick horse identification system that reunites horses with owners.
- Health Monitoring – Biothermal chips allow for a consistent, quick method of horse health monitoring.

Several concerns with microchipping, such as their potential to cause cancer, to negatively impact horse health, or to significantly migrate, have been thoroughly researched over the last decade and been proven false or non-existent. When considering the costs of a stolen horse, a displaced unrecoverable horse or sick horse, the one-time cost of microchipping becomes irrelevant. Thus, there are no disadvantages to microchipping a horse and significant advantages to the horse and its owner and the national horse industry.