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## **Ky. committee moves forward on safety vest issue**

by [Frank Angst](#)

A Kentucky committee will recommend that regulators update current safety vest rules to include assistant starters at the state's tracks.

While acknowledging all Kentucky tracks currently require the gate crew to wear safety vests, the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission Safety and Welfare Committee passed new safety vest requirements at its Wednesday meeting in Lexington. The committee now will take its recommendation to the commission for consideration. It calls for any person riding a horse on the track as well as assistant starters to wear safety vests.

With input from the Jockeys' Guild, the safety committee approved vests of at least British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) Level 1 safety, or the equivalent from other testing groups for riders. Committee Chairperson Betsy Lavin said the vests provide added safety while allowing riders and workers to determine if they want to select a higher level vest.

"I'd like to see us set a minimum standard," Lavin said before the rule passed the committee. "If someone wants to do more, they can."

Lavin noted that most assistant starters typically select vests with added protection.

Jeff Johnston, a Guild regional representative, noted that the BETA 1 vests as well as other vests determined to meet that safety level, are an improvement over the previous minimum requirements but still allow jockeys needed flexibility.

*Frank Angst is senior writer of THOROUGHBRED TIMES*

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