Regulatory Analysis

Notice of Intended Action to be published: Iowa Administrative Code 875—Chapter 173
"Professional Boxing"

Iowa Code section(s) or chapter(s) authorizing rulemaking: 90A.7
State or federal law(s) implemented by the rulemaking: Executive Order 10

Public Hearing

A public hearing at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

October 24, 2024 10 to 10:30 a.m.	Lake Conference Room 6200 Park Avenue, Suite 100 Des Moines, Iowa

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this Regulatory Analysis. Written or oral comments in response to this Regulatory Analysis must be received by of Labor Services Division no later than 4:30 p.m. on the date of the public hearing. Comments should be directed to:

Mitchell Mahan
Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing
6200 Park Avenue, Suite 100
Des Moines, Iowa 50321-1270
Phone: 515.443.1051
Email: mitchell.mahan@dia.iowa.gov

Purpose and Summary

This proposed rulemaking repromulgates Chapter 173 in accordance with the goals and directives of Executive Order 10. Proposed Chapter 173 regulates professional boxing by requiring certain conduct within contests, contest rules, equipment standards, personnel related to contests, and boxer registration.

Analysis of Impact

1. Persons affected by the proposed rulemaking:

- Classes of persons that will bear the costs of the proposed rulemaking:

Promoters of professional boxing bear the costs.

- Classes of persons that will benefit from the proposed rulemaking:

Participants and spectators of the covered contests benefit.

2. Impact of the proposed rulemaking, economic or otherwise, including the nature and amount of all the different kinds of costs that would be incurred:

- Quantitative description of impact:

No quantitative impact is discerned.

- Qualitative description of impact:

No qualitative impact is discerned.

3. Costs to the State:

- Implementation and enforcement costs borne by the agency or any other agency:

There are no specific financial costs to implement or enforce this rulemaking outside of any costs associated with the Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing's statutory duties. This rulemaking does not add to the costs of the Department beyond existing personnel assigned to implement this chapter.

- Anticipated effect on state revenues:

There is no anticipated effect on state revenues.

4. Comparison of the costs and benefits of the proposed rulemaking to the costs and benefits of inaction:

Inaction would result in less safety in the covered events.

5. Determination whether less costly methods or less intrusive methods exist for achieving the purpose of the proposed rulemaking:

No less costly or less intrusive methods are known.

6. Alternative methods considered by the agency:

- Description of any alternative methods that were seriously considered by the agency:

No alternative methods were seriously considered.

- Reasons why alternative methods were rejected in favor of the proposed rulemaking:

Not applicable.

Small Business Impact

If the rulemaking will have a substantial impact on small business, include a discussion of whether it would be feasible and practicable to do any of the following to reduce the impact of the rulemaking on small business:

- Establish less stringent compliance or reporting requirements in the rulemaking for small business.
- Establish less stringent schedules or deadlines in the rulemaking for compliance or reporting requirements for small business.
- Consolidate or simplify the rulemaking's compliance or reporting requirements for small business.
- Establish performance standards to replace design or operational standards in the rulemaking for small business.
- Exempt small business from any or all requirements of the rulemaking.

If legal and feasible, how does the rulemaking use a method discussed above to reduce the substantial impact on small business?

There is no special allowance for small businesses.

Text of Proposed Rulemaking

ITEM 1. Rescind 875—Chapter 173 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 173
PROFESSIONAL BOXING

875—173.1(90A) Limitation of rounds. Ten rounds is the maximum number of rounds for a boxing bout, except for a championship match that may not exceed 15 rounds. Three minutes of boxing will constitute a round, or, by special permission of the commissioner, two minutes. There will be a rest period of one minute between rounds.

875—173.2(90A) Weight restrictions. Permission must be received from the commissioner before a contestant will be permitted to box an opponent 18 pounds heavier than the boxer in the welterweight or middleweight classes or 6 pounds heavier than the boxer in or under the lightweight class.

875—173.3(90A) Injury. If a contestant claims to be injured during the bout, the referee shall stop the bout and request that the attending physician make an examination. If the physician decides that the contestant has been injured as the result of a foul, the physician shall advise the referee of the injury. If the physician is of the opinion that the injured contestant may be able to continue, the physician shall order a five-minute intermission, after which the physician shall make another examination and again advise the referee of the injured contestant's condition. It is the duty of the promoter to have an approved physician in attendance during the entire duration of all bouts.

875—173.4(90A) Knockdown. If a contestant falls due to fatigue or is knocked down by the opponent, the contestant shall be allowed ten seconds in which to rise unassisted. When a contestant falls, the opponent shall go to the farthest neutral corner and remain there during the ten-second count. The referee shall stop counting should the opponent fail to go to a neutral corner.

875—173.5(90A) Limitation on number of bouts. Any boxing contestant who has agreed to take part in a bout of five rounds or more is not permitted to participate in any other bout in Iowa or elsewhere five days prior to the date of the bout unless given permission by the commissioner.

875—173.6(90A) Contestants' arrival. All main event contestants shall be in the city or locale at least 24 hours before the scheduled time of the bout or contest. The promoter shall advise the commissioner of the arrival time. Any exception to this rule shall be approved by the commissioner.

875—173.7(90A) Persons allowed in the ring. No person other than the contestants and the referee may enter the ring during the bout, excepting the seconds between the rounds or the attending physician if asked by the referee to examine an injury to a contestant.

875—173.8(90A) Protection of hands. Only one roll of cotton gauze surgical bandage, not to exceed 2 inches in width and 10 yards in length, shall be used for the protection of each hand. Only one winding of surgeons' adhesive tape not more than 1½ inches in width may be placed directly on the hand to protect that part of the hand near the wrist. Said tape may cross the back of the hand twice, but not extend within 1 inch of the knuckles when the hand is clenched to make a fist.

875—173.9(90A) Scoring. Twenty points will be the maximum number to be scored in any round. The contestant winning the round will receive ten points and the opponent proportionately less. If the round is even, each contestant will receive ten points.

875—173.10(90A) Gloves. The gloves must not be twisted or manipulated in any way by the contestants or their handlers. If a glove breaks or a string becomes untied during the bout, the referee will instruct the timekeeper to take time out while the glove is being adjusted.

875—173.11(90A) Proper attire. Contestants must wear proper athletic attire. Athletic attire of opposing contestants shall be of contrasting colors. Male contestants shall wear a foul proof protective cup. Female contestants shall wear foul proof pelvic area protection and breast protection.

875—173.12(90A) Use of substances. Excessive use of cocoa butter, petroleum jelly, grease, ointments or strong-smelling liniment by a contestant in a bout will not be permitted.

875—173.13(90A) "Down." A boxer will be deemed down when:

1. Any part of the boxer's body other than the boxer's feet is on the ring floor or while rising from a down position.
2. The boxer is hanging helplessly over the ring ropes, but then is not officially down until so pronounced by the referee, who may count the boxer out either on the ropes or on the floor.

875—173.14(90A) Foul. The following activities will be deemed a foul:

1. Hitting below the belt or after the bell has ended the round.
2. Hitting an opponent who is down or who is getting up after being down.
3. Holding an opponent or deliberately maintaining a clinch.
4. Holding an opponent with one hand and hitting with the other hand.
5. Butting with head or shoulders or using the knee.
6. Hitting with inside or butt of the hand, the wrist or the elbow and all backhand blows.
7. Hitting or "flicking" with the open glove or thumbing.
8. Wrestling or roughing at the ropes.
9. Purposely going down without being hit.
10. Striking deliberately at that part of the body over the kidneys.
11. Use of the pivot blow or rabbit punch.
12. Use of abusive or profane language.
13. Failure to obey the referee, or any physical actions that may injure a contestant, except by fair sportsmanlike boxing.

875—173.15(90A) Penalties. The referee will penalize a contestant who commits any foul by deducting points from the contestant's score for the round in which the foul is committed. If, in the referee's judgment, the foul is of a serious nature or intentionally inflicted, the referee may award the bout to the contestant who was fouled.

875—173.16(90A) Weight classes. Scale of weights:

	[Pounds]
Flyweight	112
Bantamweight	118
Featherweight	126
Lightweight	135
Welterweight	147
Middleweight	160
Light heavyweight	175
Heavyweight	Over 175

875—173.17(90A) Attendance of commissioner. At each boxing card, the commissioner or the commissioner's designee shall be in attendance.

875—173.18(90A) Weighing of contestants. Contestants shall be weighed and examined on the day of the scheduled match by the attending ring physician, at a time and place as allowed by the commissioner. Preliminary boxers may be allowed to weigh in and be examined not later than one hour before the scheduled time of the first match on the card. All weigh-ins will be conducted with the boxer stripped.

875—173.19(90A) General requirements. The commissioner will not approve bout permits for bouts on Christmas Day. "Battles royal" or bouts in which more than two boxing contestants are to appear in the ring at the same time will not be approved. In programs where both amateur and professional contestants appear on the same card, there shall be no more than four amateur bouts of three rounds each. The amateur contests will be under the complete control and supervision of the United States of America Amateur Boxing Federation authority. On each card containing amateur and professional contests, there shall be at least an equal or greater number of bouts of professional boxing. The amateur section of the card shall be held first with at least a 15-minute intermission between the amateur and professional events.

875—173.20(90A) Excessive coaching. Excessive coaching and other detracting activities by seconds, managers or trainers while the bouts are in progress are prohibited. Offenders will be warned and if the violation continues, the offending contestant may be charged with a foul and a loss of points.

875—173.21(90A) Abusive language. The use of foul or abusive language or mannerisms by any person associated with any bout will not be tolerated.

875—173.22 to **173.24** Reserved.

875—173.25(90A) Ring requirements. The ring is not less than 16 nor more than 22 feet square within the ropes, elevated 3½ feet above the floor and has suitable access by steps.

875—173.26(90A) Ring posts. The ring posts will be constructed of metal not more than 4 inches in diameter, extend from the floor of the building to the height of 58 inches above the ring floor and be fastened securely to the floor or to the other posts.

875—173.27(90A) Ropes. The ropes will be a minimum of 3 in number, extending in a triple line 18 inches, 35 inches and 52 inches from the floor of the ring; at least 1 inch in diameter; and wrapped in soft materials. The ropes may not be closer to the ring posts than 18 inches. If 4 ropes are used, they will be proportionately spaced.

875—173.28(90A) Ring floor. The ring floor will extend beyond the lower rope for a distance of at least 18 inches. The entire floor will be padded to the thickness of at least 1 inch with felt, corrugated paper, matting or other soft materials to be approved by the commissioner. A canvas covering stretched tightly and laced to the ring platform will cover the padding.

875—173.29(90A) Bell. A suitable bell or gong shall be provided and used.

875—173.30(90A) Gloves. Gloves shall not weigh less than 8 ounces for professional bouts and must be new for all main events and bouts of ten rounds or greater. All gloves shall be furnished by the promoter.

875—173.31(90A) Referee's duties. The referee is charged with the enforcement of all rules of the commissioner that apply to the performance and conduct of contestants and their seconds while in the ring.

875—173.32(90A) Chief second. Before starting each bout the referee shall ascertain the name of the chief second in each corner and will hold the chief second responsible for all conduct in the corner.

875—173.33(90A) Naming referee. The promoters will be permitted to name a referee subject to approval by the commissioner.

875—173.34(90A) Reasons for stopping bout. The referee shall stop a bout when the referee deems it advisable because of the physical condition of one or both of the contestants, when one of the contestants is clearly outclassed by an opponent, when the referee decides that the best effort is not being made by a contestant, or for any other reason the referee deems sufficient.

875—173.35(90A) Forfeit of purse. The referee has the power to declare forfeited all or any part of a contestant's purse whenever in the referee's judgment the contestant is not performing in good faith.

875—173.36(90A) Shaking hands. The contestants in all boxing bouts will be instructed by the referee to shake hands after the referee's final instructions and not to do so again until the start of the last scheduled round.

875—173.37(90A) Assessing fouls. The referee will instruct the judges to mark their scorecards accordingly when the referee has assessed a foul and deduct a point from one of the contestants.

875—173.38(90A) Delaying prohibited. The referee shall ensure that a bout is not delayed except to handle damaging fouls. A contestant who employs delay and avoiding tactics will be penalized in the scoring.

875—173.39(90A) Count. When a fallen contestant rises and falls again, without being hit again, the referee shall continue the original count rather than starting a new count.

875—173.40(90A) Intentional foul. In assessing fouls, the referee will weigh the cause as well as the act. A contestant who intentionally receives a foul will be penalized as if they committed the foul.

875—173.41(90A) Use of the ropes. The referee shall penalize a contestant who uses the ropes to gain advantage. The penalty is the deduction of points, and a warning to the contestant against continued use of the ropes to gain advantage.

875—173.42(90A) Attending ring physician. When a boxer has been injured seriously, knocked out or technically knocked out, the referee shall immediately summon the attending ring physician to aid the stricken boxer. Managers, handlers and seconds shall not attend to the stricken boxer, except at the request of the physician.

875—173.43(90A) Technical knockout. Except for championship fights of national recognition, the referee shall stop the fight after a fighter is knocked down three times in one round and declare the opponent a winner on a technical knockout (TKO).

875—173.44(90A) Timekeeper. The timekeeper shall provide a stopwatch and maintain an accurate time of all bouts. The timekeeper will keep an exact record of time taken out at the request of a referee for an examination of a contestant by the physician, replacing a glove or adjusting any equipment during a round. The timekeeper shall provide a whistle and sound the whistle ten seconds before the start of each round of boxing bouts. The timekeeper shall be impartial.

875—173.45(90A) Seconds. Unless special permission is given by the commissioner, there will not be more than two seconds. Before the start of the bout, each corner shall notify the referee the of name of the chief second.

875—173.46(90A) Requirements for seconds. Seconds shall not enter the ring until the timekeeper indicates the end of the round and they must leave at the sound of the timekeeper's whistle before the beginning of each round. If the chief second or anyone for whom the promoter is responsible, such as a manager, enters the ring before the bell ending the round has sounded, the fight shall be ended and the decision awarded to the opponent. Seconds shall not smoke in the ring or corners.

875—173.47 to **173.49** Reserved.

875—173.50(90A) Use of water. Seconds shall not throw or splash water upon a contestant. A wet sponge may be used between rounds to refresh the contestant. Excess water on the floor of the ring shall be wiped up immediately by the seconds. Water discharged from the mouth of a contestant shall be caught in a bucket.

875—173.51(90A) Stopping the fight. The throwing of a towel into the ring to indicate the defeat of a contestant will not be recognized by the referee. The fight will be stopped when the second or manager appears on the ring apron.

875—173.52(90A) Removing objects from ring. Before leaving the ring at the start of each round the seconds shall remove all obstructions, buckets, stools, bottles, towels and robes from the ring floor and ropes.

875—173.53(90A) Decision. Each judge shall reach a decision without conferring in any manner with any other official or person. Each judge will make out a scorecard in accordance with the rules governing boxing. At the end of the bout the decision shall be written on the scorecard and the card shall be given to the commissioner or designee for verification who will then hand the cards to the referee who will then announce the decision. The winner is determined on the majority vote of the three judges and each judge selects a choice based on the highest number of points.

875—173.54(90A) Boxer registration. The commissioner participates in the Association of Boxing Commissions (ABC) national boxer registration system that allows authorities from different states to share information concerning boxers. The issuance of a registration card to a boxer does not guarantee the right to participate in a match.

173.54(1) *Application.* A boxer applies for registration in the state where the boxer resides, unless the state where the boxer resides does not participate in the ABC registration system. A person applying for a new or renewal boxer registration completes, signs, and submits to the commission the ABC Boxer's Federal Identification Card Application.

173.54(2) *Attachments.* With the application, the applicant submits a $25 fee, two 1″ × 1.5″ color photographs of the applicant's head, and a copy of a photo identification issued to the applicant by a governmental entity and containing the applicant's photograph and social security number or similar foreign identification number. The applicant must be recognizable in the photographs.

173.54(3) *Expiration.* The registration expires two years from the date of issuance.

173.54(4) *Changes.* The boxer shall notify the commission at the time any of the information on the form changes.

173.54(5) *Denials.* The commissioner may refuse to issue or renew a boxer registration for failure to complete an application package properly.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 90A.