

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Feb. 23, 2009

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
Department of State  
Commonwealth News Bureau  
Room 308, Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

**CONTACT:** Leslie Amorós  
K. Kevin Murphy  
(717) 783-1621

**PENNSYLVANIA TO ALLOW MIXED MARTIAL ARTS**  
*State Athletic Commission's Newly-Approved Regulations Take Effect Feb. 27*

**HARRISBURG** – Pennsylvania has joined the growing number of states to allow Mixed Martial Arts, or MMA, events, now that the State Athletic Commission has approved final regulations for the sport, Secretary of the Commonwealth Pedro A. Cortés announced today. The new regulations take effect Feb. 27, 2009.

“I commend the work of the State Athletic Commission on the regulations, which were crafted to ensure participant and spectator safety,” Cortés said. “These efforts will assure licensure and testing of participants for communicable diseases, as well as require emergency medical care and insurance for participants. Regulation of the sport also will help ensure that events are orderly and crowd control is maintained.”

Cortés noted that MMA has actively sought regulation. Pennsylvania joins a growing number of states, including New Jersey, Ohio, Maryland, California, Nevada and Florida that permit Mixed Martial Arts.

The State Athletic Commission anticipates regulating four to five MMA events per month, which may generate as much as \$80,000 per year in revenue for the commission. As a self-supporting entity, the State Athletic Commission receives no taxpayer dollars from the state's General Fund.

The commission and staff worked for more than a year to prepare the final regulations, which are commensurate with current boxing rules. Health and safety of the fighters and public protection are key themes of the regulations. Many facets of the sport were addressed, including age and medical requirements, fees, promoter activity, and ring requirements.

The regulations require that all professional (\$22 fee) and amateur (\$10 fee) MMA fighters must be licensed and take a pre-fight physical exam by a commission-approved doctor. All fighters must be at least 18 years old. Other exams may also be required, particularly for boxers over the age of 36. All female fighters will be required to take a pregnancy test before each event. All fighters also must provide an annual physical (on a commission form) as well as a negative HIV, Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B exam at the time of licensing, and exams cannot be more than six months old. Insurance is required for all fighters and referees, and an ambulance and emergency personnel with emergency equipment must be at ringside at all times.

Highlights of the promoter regulations require that all promoters must have a valid promoter's license from the commission, which costs \$100 per year. All promoters must also complete a criminal background check on a form supplied by the commission (fee is \$10). A surety bond of not less than \$15,000 must be on file with the commission before an MMA event takes place.

As safety and fairness are primary concerns, specific requirements are also outlined for the ring. The ring must be at least 20 feet square and no larger than 32 feet square within the five-ring ropes. The ring floor must extend at least 18 inches beyond the ropes and must be padded with Ensolite, vinyl or similar closed-cell foam, with at least a one-inch layer of foam padding. Padding must extend beyond the ring ropes and over the edge of the platform, with a top

covering of canvas, duck or similar material tightly stretched and laced to the ring platform.

Material that gathers in lumps or ridges may not be used.

For cage events, the enclosed area must be circular or have at least six equal sides and be at least 20 feet wide and no larger than 32 feet wide. The floor of the caged area must be padded with Ensolite, vinyl or similar closed-cell foam, with at least a one-inch layer of foam padding.

Foam padding must have a top covering of canvas, duck or similar material tightly stretched and laced to the platform of the caged area. Material that gathers in lumps or ridges may not be used.

To learn more about the State Athletic Commission, visit the Department of State's Web site at [www.dos.state.pa.us](http://www.dos.state.pa.us) and select "State Athletic Commission" on the left navigation bar.

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