



# The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY

(Revised January 1, 2004)

The United States Pony Clubs has established Standards of Proficiency within the framework of the international Pony Club movement as the curriculum for a program of instruction and testing of its members.

## D Rating

The D ratings are an introduction to the fun and challenge of riding, establishing a foundation of safety habits and knowledge of the daily care of a pony and tack. The D-1 through D-3 Pony Club member learns to ride independently and with control, maintaining a reasonably secure position at the walk, trot, and canter and over low fences. All D ratings are awarded at the club level.

B, H/H-A, and A ratings are scheduled on a national basis and require a greater depth of knowledge and proficiency than the earlier ratings. Successful candidates are competent, all-around horsemen, active and contributing members of USPC, who participate in a variety of Pony Club activities. They are also thoughtful leaders who set an example for all levels.

## B Rating

The B rating is for the active horseman and Pony Club member who is interested in acquiring further knowledge and proficiency in all phases of riding and horse care. The B is able to ride experienced mounts with confidence and control on the flat, over fences, and in the open. The B should be able to ride and care for another person's experienced mount, maintaining proper mental and physical condition without undoing any of the mount's education. The B understands and is able to explain the reasons for what he or she is doing and to contribute to the education of younger Pony Club members.

## C Rating

The C is a Pony Club member learning to become an active horseman, to care independently for pony and tack, and to understand the reasons for what he or she is doing. The C shows development towards a secure, independent seat, and increasing control and confidence in all phases of riding. The C-1 and C-2 ratings are awarded at the club level. The C-3 is a regional rating and reflects a basis of competence in riding and horse care that will make possible a lifetime of pleasure with horses.

## A Rating

The A, the highest rating, is divided into two parts: the H/H-A, which covers horse management, teaching, and training, and the A, which tests the riding phase. The H/H-A has the knowledge, experience, and maturity to evaluate and care for a mount's needs efficiently and in a variety of circumstances, and to teach riding and horse care to others. The A is able to ride mounts at various levels of schooling with judgment, tact, and effectiveness; to train young mounts; and to retrain spoiled mounts.

In addition to its instructional programs, USPC offers a variety of activities at club, regional, inter-regional and national levels for team and individual participation. These activities include Eventing, Dressage, Foxhunting, Quiz, Mounted Games, Show Jumping, Tetrathlon, Polocrosse, and Vaulting.

**Achieving a rating does not necessarily qualify the Pony Club member for competition in any horse sport.**

Further study and preparation for a particular activity, including working as a team member, may be necessary.

Dimensions of Fences D to A\*

Rating	Height	Width at Top		Width at Base	
		CC	SJ	CC	SJ
D-2	18"	1'	1'	1'6"	1'6"
D-3	2'6"	2'6"	2'6"	4'3"	4'3"
C-1	2'9"	2'9"	2'9"	4'3"	4'3"
C-2	3'0"	3'3"	3'3"	4'7"	4'11"
C-3	3'3"	3'11"	3'9"	5'3"	5'7"
B	3'7"	4'7"	4'3"	6'7"	6'3"
A	3'9"	5'3"	4'9"	7'10"	6'11"

\*Based on USPC Eventing Rules and US Equestrian Eventing Rules. When a second height is required at any one level, use appropriate dimensions shown on the chart above.

## 'A' STANDARD

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## H/H-A STANDARD HORSE MANAGEMENT

Candidates must demonstrate a sound knowledge of horses, their care, equipment, and training requirements. They must be able to teach stable management and conduct mounted lessons, showing an understanding of safety practices and teaching techniques appropriate to different age levels. They must demonstrate the ability to make informed decisions about all aspects of running a barn, including daily routine and emergency procedures.

### PART 1 - Stable and Pasture Management

#### Presentation

Show a mount in hand as if for sale. Show the mount to its best advantage, according to its suitability for the breed. The mount should be shown in a correctly fitted bridle and the candidate should show control of the mount while at the halt, walk, and trot. The candidate should dress appropriately, i.e., riding attire, including gloves and a whip, as if prepared to show how the mount performs.

Discuss general condition of the mount, giving an evaluation of age, breeding, and shoeing. Discuss the mount's conformation, way of going and disposition related to the suitability for a specific activity and performance level.

When aging by mount's teeth, be familiar with the foal's mouth, the maturing and aging of incisors and molars, the incisors' shapes as wear progresses, tooth angles, wolf teeth, Galvayne's groove, and molar wear.

When identifying mount's shoeing, be familiar with: keg, feathered edge shoe, polo, fullered, eggbar, heart bar, rocking toe, aluminum wide web, aluminum race plates, clips, caulks, studs (tapped shoes).

Discuss suitability and fit of tack used on the presented mount.

#### Tack

Describe inspection of saddlery for safety and fit, to determine need for adjustment, repairs and/or padding.

Describe procedures for reclaiming neglected tack and for storing tack. Know how to make temporary adjustments in ill-fitting tack, such as saddle on withers, cantle too low, leathers too long, bridle too large, reins too long, bit too large or small, broken tree.

Recognize types of bits and saddles, their fit, actions, and applications for various mounts. Indicate which discipline and/or rider the equipment is appropriate for. Bits: English snaffles, double bridle, curb, pelham, kimberwick, gag, elevator, and hackamores. Saddles: all purpose, dressage, jumping, close contact, etc.

Discuss correct fitting, uses and misuses, of different types of bits, saddles, girths, martingales, overgirths, draw reins, side reins, boots, cruppers, and breast plates.

#### Record Book

Purpose: To supply an accurate and detailed outline of candidate's (or borrowed) mount's health care, feed schedule, hoof care, conditioning and competitive schedule so, in case the candidate were laid up or called away for a prolonged period, the mount could be properly maintained. The candidate needs to present a written outline supplying the above information. Candidates may use the USPC Pony Health & Maintenance Record Book or, preferably, their own record system. Records should reflect the appropriate depth of knowledge for this level. Must have records for at least 1 year prior to test.

#### Stable Management

Outline a complete parasite control program for a stable; give reasons for this program, including deworming drug classifications relative to parasite cycles.

Discuss a program for yearly inoculation and for tooth care.

Describe ways to prevent spread of contagious diseases throughout a stable.

Describe procedure for morning and evening inspection of horses for health and safety in stable and in pasture.

Describe ways to aid a mount that is cast in its stall.

Describe a mount in poor condition and suggest several possible causes.

#### Stable Construction/Pasture Management

Discuss good stable construction for safety and health, with attention to ventilation, drafts, light, drainage, protection of pipes in freezing weather, manure management, refuse disposal, rodent and insect control, and storage of feed, bedding, stable equipment and tack.

Discuss proper grazing and paddock management, including watering systems, fencing, mowing, shelter, and poisonous plants in your area.

Discuss the importance of soil testing, fertilizers, and seeding for proper soil management.

#### Nutrition

Demonstrate ability to purchase feed responsibly by discussing the characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages of different types of grains, pellets, sweet and mixed feeds, bran, and extruded feeds.

Discuss common sources of protein, fat, and carbohydrates in typical equine rations.

Discuss interpretation of the nutritional value of feed available from label information and know resources to expand this information.

Discuss minerals, vitamins, electrolytes and some of their sources and possible dangers involved in misuse.

Discuss appropriate rations, including percentage of protein for mounts: aged, growing, working, idle, and breeding.

Discuss cost of and safe storage methods for different varieties and quantities of feed.

Discuss criteria used to determine whether or not feed supplements are needed, benefits and dangers of use.

Discuss differences in care, as related to seasonal weather changes for mounts at grass.

### PART 2 - Veterinary Knowledge

#### Health/Systems/Diseases

Identify major anatomical parts and describe basic functions of the following systems: respiratory, urinary, circulatory/lymphatic, nervous, digestive, reproductive, and skeletal.

Locate and discuss the following disorders/diseases according to the anatomical system involved, causative agent, signs, and care: colic, choking, heaves, laminitis, azoturia, periodic ophthalmia, rhinopneumonitis, influenza, encephalomyelitis, tetanus, strangles, equine infectious anemia, rabies, Potomac horse fever, equine venereal (viral) arteritis, EPM, and botulism.

Discuss predisposing factors, including symptoms and care of mount for the following: fever, inflammation, edema, arthritis, shock, and dehydration.

Discuss diseases associated with travel and exposure to strange mounts.

#### Bandaging

Discuss and demonstrate proper application of shipping and stable bandages. (Sheet cottons and flannels are recommended, and candidates may be asked to demonstrate with these as well as with other materials brought.)

Demonstrate application and know how to maintain any of the following bandages: sweat, poultice, pressure, spider, figure eight, knee, hock, cold water, and ice. Discuss values and potential dangers when any of them are prescribed.

#### Special Care

Discuss common tranquilizers, sedatives, anti-inflammatories and analgesics, using "trade" names, specifically: Ace (Prom-Ace), Rompum (Xylazine), Banamine, Azium, Butazolidin, Torbugesic, Ketoprofen, Dormosedan, and Dipyron, plus aspirin. Know why above listed drugs are used and possible hazards involved.

Discuss specific precautions when shipping, feeding and restraining a sedated mount.

Discuss both benefits and dangers of using twitches.

Describe other methods of physical restraint, from mild to aggressive.

#### Travel Safety

Discuss techniques for loading and unloading difficult mounts.

Discuss possible causes for loading problems.

Discuss a year's overall maintenance program for keeping a trailer/van operationally safe.

Discuss ways to transport mares and foals.

## Conformation and Lameness

Discuss lameness which might be associated with conformation faults, to include:

base wide	straight upright pasterns
base narrow	standing under
cow hocks	bench knees
sickle hocks	knock knees
toe-in	calf knees
toe-out	over at the knee
contracted heels	bow leg
camped out in front	straight stifle
long sloping pasterns	

Observe a mount in action and assess his athletic ability as it may be affected by any of the conformation faults listed above and below:

straight shoulder	various slopes of croup
long back	slab sided
parrot mouth	overshot jaw
too long or short neck	ewe neck
mutton/high withers	shortness of stride

Observe a mount's motion and identify front and hind leg soundness and unsoundness.

Discuss the anatomy of the leg, including bones, joints, principal tendons, and ligaments from the shoulder and hip down.

Choose the best mount of a selection of mounts for a specific purpose.

## PART 3 - Teaching & Training

### Teaching Techniques

Know techniques included in USPC Manual of Horsemanship, Vol. III and be able to demonstrate knowledge of those skills as acquired through teaching experience.

Discuss ways to handle the following lesson situations:

mixed age or skill group	disobedient mount
effective use of assistant	fall of rider
interfering coach or parent	arguing student
unsuitable mount	uninterested student
runaway mount	fearful student

Discuss techniques to discover if students have:

physical handicaps	problems beyond teacher's
visual handicaps	ability or training to solve
learning disabilities	hearing handicaps

Discuss skills that would be covered in teaching a C Pony Club member to longe a mount safely and effectively.

Demonstrate knowledge of D, C, and B Standards requirements.

Discuss first aid equipment and emergency preparedness suitable for a teaching situation.

### Teaching a Class

Prepare a lesson plan for assigned lesson. Topics will be assigned by examiners.

Demonstrate teaching a safe, informative 15-to-20-minute lesson to a group of 3 to 5 riders (D-1 to B or adult volunteers) on the flat and/or over fences.

Evaluate the lesson plan used. Was teaching objective achieved? How could the lesson be improved?

Discuss a student's riding position and suggest three exercises to help solve any problem, including exercises on the longe.

Discuss safety considerations when setting up a jumping lesson, including use and spacing of cavaletti/trotting poles.

### Training/Longeing

Discuss and demonstrate proper fit and use of equipment, including side reins.

Discuss and demonstrate safe, confident, effective longeing techniques. Demonstrate techniques for longeing appropriate to the mount's level for exercise, training, and/or warm-up to include free forward movement and to establish regular rhythm

Discuss additional safety precautions to be considered when longeing with a rider.

Evaluate performance and level of mount before, during, and after longeing session.

## A STANDARD RIDING

*Candidates must be able to ride different mounts at various stages of training, displaying a confident, consistent, and effective performance on each. Candidates must demonstrate competence and tact on a school, green, or spoiled mount, discuss and/or demonstrate schooling techniques required for each mount, and display a knowledge of the proper use of natural and artificial aids.*

*Candidates are expected to assess each mount's level of schooling and to ride with tact and empathy for its capabilities. After each performance, the candidate will evaluate and discuss the stage of schooling, strengths, and weaknesses of each mount.*

### Riding on the Flat

Demonstrate efficient warm-up appropriate for level of the mount.

Perform exercises to improve each mount's relaxation, free forward movement, impulsion, rhythm, lightness, engagement, and ride the mount "on the bit."

Ride the following school figures and movements, maintaining rhythm and impulsion, as well as correct bend, carriage, and balance, to the mount's ability:

leg yielding	canter from walk
shoulder-in	change of lead through the walk
turn on haunches	10-meter canter circle

Working and lengthened stride at all three gaits

Ride on the flat without stirrups.

### Riding over Fences

Set up and ride effectively over cavaletti, gymnastic fences, and stadium fences at heights and distances appropriate for level of mount (height not to exceed 3'9").

Ride over fences without stirrups.

### Riding in The Open

Ride at the gallop up to 520 meters per minute, demonstrating effective galloping position, pace, and adaptation to varied terrain, over fences not to exceed 3'7", to include ditches, banks, drops, water, and combinations, when appropriate.

### Training

Ride one or more assigned mounts on the flat and over fences, demonstrating schooling techniques.

Evaluate the performance of each mount, with comments on the level of schooling, strong and weak points, resistances.

Handle difficult or refusing mount effectively and with understanding.

Discuss problems that were not apparent until candidate rode the mount and offer a long-term plan to improve schooling of the mount.

Discuss and /or demonstrate effectiveness of cavaletti, gymnastic exercises, shape of fences, and distances as training aids.

Discuss longeing techniques to improve the mount's way of going.

## TESTING INFORMATION — H/H-A/A

### Requirements for Candidates

- Be a Pony Club Member in Good Standing, as defined in club policy, having paid local, regional and National dues and fees for at least the current and preceding years.
- Have a record of regular attendance and participation.
- Be at least 16 years of age **prior to** January 1 of the year of application.
- Be recommended by the District Commissioner and Regional Supervisor.
- Have held the C-3 rating for at least 90 days before taking the H test.
- Fulfill the active participation criteria set by the region.
- Compete in at least one mounted rally on a mounted or unmounted basis.
- Have a thorough knowledge of requirements for the H, H-A and A ratings and be able to discuss and/or demonstrate any requirements from all previously attained standards.

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## Attire

Safe, workmanlike attire, including proper footwear, must be worn in the barn area and when working around mounts. Proper informal attire (boots and breeches) are required for teaching, longeing, and riding phases. Refer to USPC Horse Management Handbook, USPC Rules for Eventing, and USPC Manuals of Horsemanship, Volume I, II and III.

ASTM/SEI approved headgear with full harness and with chin strap in place must be worn.

## Equipment

Saddlery and biting for USPC Testings should comply with the Horse Management General Rule on Saddlery and Biting and with the USPC Eventing Rules for Saddlery and Biting. Whips, no longer than 48 inches including lash, will be allowed in the flat section of testings although they are not allowed at the C level and above at Eventing rallies. Any discipline rule change following publication of the current Horse Management Handbook will supersede these rules.

*All bits with more than one point of attachment (i.e. gag, Pessoa, elevators) must have one rein attached so that the snaffle action of the bit is in effect. If other bit actions are to be used, two reins will be required. All pelham bits will require two reins. If the Pessoa type bit is used, a single rein may be attached to the first or second ring. If a third or lower ring is used, a second rein must be attached higher so that the snaffle action can be in effect.*

## General

- Candidates may apply for the B and the H-A in the same year as long as both applications are mailed by the April 15th deadline.
- Candidates may apply for the H and the B in the same year as long as both applications are mailed by the April 15th deadline.
- Candidates may apply for the H-A and A in the same year as long as both applications are mailed by the April 15th deadline.
- **Those candidates who have obtained the H rating in a previous year may wish to take the B and the A rating in the same year. This request, along with any other special testing requests, must be submitted in writing to the USPC National Office, through the Regional Supervisor. These requests will be reviewed on an individual basis and the final decision for any exception will be the responsibility of the National Testing Committee Chair and the VP of Instruction.**

Test dates are established by the National Testing Committee in response to Regional requests. Applications must be made through the District Commissioner and Regional Supervisor. Candidates may apply for the date of their choice, but those living within the host Region will be given priority. Information on testing dates, sites and equipment needed may be obtained from the District Commissioner, Regional Supervisor, or the National Office.

Applications, with self-evaluation, medical release, code of conduct and club check for the test fee must be mailed by the DC to the RS.

The RS must forward all completed application materials (with all required signatures) to USPC National Office postmarked by April 15. Applications for the H/H-A must include proof of compliance with the First Aid requirement.

H/H-A applicants must provide proof of successful completion of a basic first aid certification course (typically a 4-hour course) with their testing application. Candidates planning to take their H/H-A should make plans early to get their certification done well before the testing deadline in case their class is canceled or rescheduled. A \$25 late fee will be assessed for any first aid card not received by the April 15 deadline and NO first aid cards will be accepted after May 1. There are many different organizations offering first aid certification and any basic first aid course is acceptable.

The H/H-A test is conducted over a period of 2 1/2 days.

The A test is usually conducted over a period of 2 days. Candidates may bring their own or a borrowed or rented mount to a testing.

## Appropriate Horse

**It is the responsibility of the candidate and his/her parent(s) or guardian to bring an appropriate horse to the testing. The conditioned mount(s) must be capable of completing the flat, longeing and jumping phases at the heights indicated at the appropriate levels, which would include a course at 3'9" (and 3'7" in the open). The mount(s) must also be available for change of riders. Embracing USPC's commitment to safety for all horses and riders is of utmost importance. Failing to follow these guidelines may make it difficult for the candidate to meet the standard on that given day.**

Candidates not passing an H/H-A or A test may be retested after 6 months if recommended by the District Commissioner and Regional Supervisor, and if age restrictions are met. B, H, H-A and A candidates may attempt each test only three times.

Candidates should do outside reading and independent study in an effort to expand knowledge and understanding of all aspects of horsemastership. This in-depth study should develop sophistication in riding, maturity in training a mount or rider, and flexibility to adapt to horsemastership techniques that vary according to geographic area.

Candidates should also prepare themselves through practical experience in all requirements and possess a thorough understanding of the level tested. However, it is at the discretion of National Examiners as to what is covered during a test.

No candidate shall be allowed to take the test "just for the experience."

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## STUDY MATERIALS FOR H/H-A/A CANDIDATES

*\*Note: Item numbers denoted are those found in the current USPC Catalog. For availability and pricing please contact the USPC National Office. Candidate is also responsible for knowledge of information contained in recommended sections of reading lists for all preceding levels.*

<b>Recommended</b>		<b>USPC Discipline Rule Books for:</b>		<b>Enrichment</b>	
<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
1330	United States Pony Clubs Manual of Horsemanship, Volume I	5000	Eventing	7041	Horse Foot Care by Butler
1340	United States Pony Clubs Manual of Horsemanship, Volume II	6000	Dressage	2124	Determining the Age of the Horse
1350	United States Pony Clubs Manual of Horsemanship, Volume III	3000	Games	2126	Handbook of Riding Essentials
1040	United States Pony Clubs Standards of Proficiency	2001	Quiz	2160	Feeding and Care of the Horse, 2nd Edition
2000	Horse Management Handbook & Rules for Competition	3500	Polocrosse	2162	Thinking Riding Volume I
1010	USPC Guide to the B Standard	5500	Show Jumping	2163	Thinking Riding Volume II
1370	USPC Guide to Longeing	4000	Tetrathlon	7010	Coloring Atlas of Horse Anatomy
1000	USPC Guide to the A Standard			2141	Maximum Hoof Power
1020	USPC Guide to the C3 Standard			7043	Practical Guide to Lameness in Horses
2123	Grooming to Win			5530	School Exercises for Flatwork & Jumping
2129	Horse Gaits, Balance & Movement			2199	Horsefeathers: Facts Versus Myths About Your Horse's Health
2180	Safe Horse - Safe Rider			<b>2256</b>	<b>Horse Owner's Field Guide to Toxic Plants</b>
9010	Every Time Every Ride Video			<b>2257</b>	<b>No Foot, No Horse</b>
9033	USPC Guide to the D Standard Video			<b>6073</b>	<b>Progressive School Exercises</b>
5071	Blythe Tait's Cross-Country Clinic				<i>The Horse Magazine</i>
2010	USPC Guide to the Health and Maintenance Record Book			<b>2223</b>	<b>A Photographic Guide to Conformation</b>
7083	The Equine Body			<b>2038</b>	<b>Conformation and Performance</b>
7084	Veterinary Notes for Horse Owners				<b>Local Resources: Veterinarian, farrier, feed stores, local professionals and Cooperative Extension</b>
<b>2215</b>	<b>Pony Club Safety Information Packet</b>				
<b>7042</b>	<b>Horse Owner's Veterinary Handbook</b>				

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