



## 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 mount 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 mount 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.

## ‘D’ STANDARD

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## THE D-1 STANDARD

### Riding Test Expectations

*Candidate should ride without lead line, demonstrating basic balanced position in an enclosed area at the halt and walk, and control at the walk and trot.*

#### Riding on the Flat

Ride on flat using Riding Test Expectations.  
Mount and dismount, with assistance if necessary.  
Hold reins correctly at the halt.  
Shorten and lengthen reins correctly at the halt.  
Demonstrate basic correct position at the halt and walk.  
Ride at the walk and trot, with control, keeping mount on rail.  
Demonstrate simple change of direction at the walk and trot.  
Perform gradual transitions from walk to trot and walk to halt.

#### Riding Over Fences

Ride over fences using Riding Test Expectations.  
Walk over poles on the ground in jumping position.  
Discuss with Examiner the reason for different positions when riding on the flat and over fences.

#### Riding in the Open

Not applicable.

#### Horse Management Expectations

*The candidate is a beginning-level horse manager, willing to learn the simple routines necessary for safe handling of quiet, well-trained mounts. Knowledge will vary widely depending on age, educational level, and experience.*

#### Turn Out/Tack

Rider in safe and neat attire.  
Mount neatly brushed; feet picked out (with assistance); showing farrier care.  
Tack safe and neat (properly adjusted with assistance if necessary).

#### Conditioning

Know one reason for cooling out mount after exercise.

#### Nutrition

Know how to give water, grain, hay, and tidbit to a mount safely.

#### Stable Management

Groom mount with brush and curry comb, pick out feet, with assistance.  
Tack up and untack mount, with assistance.  
Name 10 parts of saddle and bridle (any).  
Know two reasons for cleaning tack.

#### Pony Parts, Conformation & Lameness

Name any 10 parts of the mount (such as mane, tail, leg, eye, etc.).

#### Travel Safety

Know basic rules of safe riding in a group, in an enclosed area.

#### Record Book

Not applicable.

#### Health Care & Veterinary Knowledge

Discuss what a veterinarian is.  
Give one reason the vet might treat your mount.

#### Teaching

Not applicable. (See D-3 Teaching.)

#### Leading & Longeing

Approach mount safely, put on halter, lead and turn correctly and safely.

#### Foot & Shoeing

Give one reason to pick out feet.

#### Bandaging

Not applicable.

## THE D-2 STANDARD

### Riding Test Expectations

*Candidate should ride without lead line, demonstrating control, while maintaining a safe, basic balanced position at the walk and trot and should begin to develop the canter and jumping position. No need to canter over fences.*

#### Riding on the Flat

Ride on flat using Riding Test Expectations.  
Mount and dismount independently (using mounting block if necessary).  
Shorten and lengthen reins at halt and walk.  
Perform balancing and suppling exercises for rider at walk and halt and discuss 1 or 2 reasons for doing this.  
Ride at the walk, performing simple turns and large circles.  
Ride without stirrups at the walk.  
Ride at the trot on correct diagonal, performing simple turns and large circles.  
Ride at the canter in both directions in an enclosed area and be aware of leads.  
Discuss performance with Examiner, indicating whether or not mount was on correct lead.

#### Riding Over Fences

Ride over fences using Riding Test Expectations.  
Maintain jumping position at the trot on the flat and over ground poles.  
In an enclosed area, ride a simple stadium course of four to five obstacles not to exceed 18".  
Discuss with Examiner ways to improve ride.

#### Riding In The Open

Ride safely and considerately on public and private property, in a group, at the walk and trot.  
Ride with control, up and down hills, at the walk and trot.  
Jump simple and natural obstacles, not to exceed 18" (no ditches or banks).

#### Horse Management Expectations

*The candidate should be able to demonstrate simple skills, with assistance if necessary, and should understand the basic reasons for the everyday routines of caring for own mount.*

#### Turn Out/Tack

Rider in safe and neat attire.  
Mount clean and neatly groomed, feet picked out, showing farrier care.  
Tack safe and clean, with attention to stitching, girth, stirrups (properly adjusted by Examiner if necessary).  
Apply (with assistance of examiner if needed) protective boots and bell boots, if appropriate, to mount's leg.

#### Conditioning

Know basic condition of own mount.  
Describe ways to know if mount is properly cooled out.

#### Nutrition

Know 3-5 basic rules for feeding and explain feeding schedule for own mount.

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**Stable Management**

Groom mount, pick out feet with assistance if needed.  
Name five grooming tools and explain how to use them.  
Tack up and untack independently.  
List three examples of unsafe equipment.  
Name three common stable vices.

**Pony Parts, Conformation & Lameness**

Name and locate any 15 parts of the mount.  
Name and describe six colors of mounts.  
Name and describe five markings of ponies.  
Name four horse or pony breeds.

**Travel Safety**

Know the basic rules for riding on public roads in your state.  
Name two ways you can help your mount be safe in a trailer.

**Record Book**

Not applicable.

**Health Care & Veterinary Knowledge**

Give two reasons to have your mount routinely checked by a veterinarian.

**Teaching**

Not applicable. (See D-3 Teaching.)

**Leading & Longeing**

Lead mount correctly in hand and while tacked up.  
Do walk-halt-walk transitions in hand.  
Lead mount in and out of stall safely, tie up in appropriate place with quick-release knot.

**Foot & Shoeing**

Know reasons for daily foot care.  
Give two reasons why the farrier regularly checks your mount.

**Bandaging**

Give two reasons why you would bandage a mount's leg(s).

**THE D-3 STANDARD****Riding Test Expectations**

*Candidate should ride in a basic balanced position with control at the walk, trot, and canter. Candidate should maintain a secure base of support while developing balance and a steady position over fences.*

**Riding on the Flat**

Ride on flat using Riding Test Expectations.  
Demonstrate emergency dismount at the halt and walk.  
Adjust stirrups and girth with feet in the stirrups while mounted at the halt.  
Perform balancing and suppling exercises for rider at walk and trot.  
Ride without stirrups at the sitting trot.  
Demonstrate a simple step back.  
Perform round 20-meter circles in both directions, at walk, at sitting and rising trot with correct diagonals, and at canter with correct leads.  
Demonstrate increase and decrease of speed at the trot by passing riders on rail and taking the lead.  
Discuss performance with Examiner and whether or not circles were round and natural aids were used correctly.

**Riding Over Fences**

Ride over fences using 'Riding Test Expectations.'  
Trot over ground poles, followed by cross rail.

Jump a simple stadium course of five to seven obstacles, height not to exceed 2'6".

Discuss performance, reasons for any disobediences.

**Riding in the Open**

Ride safely with a group at the walk and trot, over varied terrain, through shallow water and small ditches as occur in natural terrain (ditches to be unrevetted).

Jump simple cross country obstacles, not to exceed 2'6".

D-3 speed should not exceed 240 meters per minute or 300 meters per minute appropriate for the size of mount.

Discuss ways to control a mount in the open.

Discuss performance with Examiners.

**Horse Management Expectations**

*The candidate should be able to demonstrate simple skills without assistance, and to discuss care of the mount, using common horse terms.*

**Turn Out/Tack**

Rider in safe and neat attire.

Mount to be neatly groomed, with feet picked out, showing farrier care.

Tack to be properly adjusted, safe, and clean.

Describe formal attire, informal attire.

**Conditioning/Nutrition**

Know 5-7 basic rules of feeding.

Describe care of mount after strenuous work, to include cooling out, inspection of legs, watering and feeding.

Discuss the amount of roughage and the amount of concentrates per ration for own mount.

**Stable Management**

Demonstrate how to clean and bed a stall giving reasons for each step.

Know use of hay net and the dangers of improper use.

**Pony Parts, Conformation & Lameness**

Describe how to measure height of mount.

Identify at least 20 parts of the mount, to include hock, gaskin, withers, croup, fetlock, pastern, etc.

Know common conformation faults of neck, back, shoulder, head and pasterns.

Describe the characteristics of a strange mount clearly enough for another person to recognize it within a group. Include: color, breed, markings, size, sex, and obvious conformation characteristics.

**Travel Safety**

Know rules for riding safely on public roads in your state.

Know procedure for mounted group crossing a public roadway.

Discuss the proper procedure for loading and unloading a mount.

**Record Book**

The D-3 is expected to keep careful records of veterinary visits, and general health of mount. Record Book must be brought to the test. A minimum of three months of records is required. Records should reflect appropriate depth of knowledge for this level.

**Health Care & Veterinary Knowledge**

Name some symptoms of a sick or injured mount that would cause you to seek help.

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## Introduction to Horse Sports

Name five horse sports that are offered in USPC.

### Teaching

D-3s are encouraged to assist D-1s and D-2s during unmounted Pony Club activities, not mounted activities.

**No child is responsible for the safety of another child.**

**There must always be adult supervision.**

### Leading & Longeing

Lead correctly, moving mount forward with whip or assistance (if necessary).

Do walk-trot-walk-halt transitions in hand.

Lead safely from both sides.

### Foot & Shoeing

Describe obvious signs of a foot needing shoeing or trimming.

### Bandaging

Describe critical areas protected by shipping bandages or boots, and give reasons for their use. Apply protective boots (with supervision) on own mount. Apply stable wrap with assistance.

## Information for D Candidates

### Requirements for Candidates (D-1 through D-3)

- Be a Pony Club Member in Good Standing, as defined by club policy, having paid local, regional and national dues and fees.
- Have a record of regular attendance and participation.
- Be member of Pony Club for 1 month or more, no minimum age limit.
- Be recommended by the District Commissioner for each rating.
- Have a thorough knowledge of requirements of level being tested and be able to discuss and/or demonstrate any requirement for all previously attained Standards.
- Attain each rating before the next level is attempted.
- **Any special testing requests must be submitted to the USPC National Office, through the DC. These requests will be reviewed on an individual basis and the final decision for any exception will be the responsibility of the D-1 through C-2 Program Committee Chair and the Vice President of Instruction.**

### Attire

Safe, workmanlike attire, including proper footwear, must be worn in the barn area and when working around mounts. Refer to USPC HM Handbook, USPC Rules for Eventing, and the USPC Manual of Horsemanship I.

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

Correct formal or informal attire should be worn. Exceptions to meet local conditions may be designated by the DC.

Formal Dress: Black or dark-colored, uniform-colored coat; white stock tie with plain horizontal pin; white, canary, tan or buff breeches; black boots, Pony Club pin.

Informal Dress: Riding coat (other than solid black); plain color shirt; choker, necktie or turtle neck; breeches or jodhpurs of any color; appropriate boots as described in USPC Horse Management Handbook, Pony Club pin.

### 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. 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. At the D level, converters will be allowed on pelham bits. 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.

### Testing Information

Testing dates are determined by the DC.

Testings may be held every three months, or more often if practical for the Club, but they must be offered a minimum of twice a year.

A testing should be conducted in one day or all requirements tested within a one-month period.

A testing shall be an instructional working session, covering only requirements listed under the Standards.

Oral testing is required for all parts of the horse management phase. Written tests are not allowed.

On recommendation of the Examiner only, a candidate who fails not more than one-third of tested sections (including riding) may be re-tested within one month on only the requirements not passed.

There is no set time limit between taking any of the D- Level Tests, but each rating level must be attained in the proper order and no levels may be skipped.

Borrowing/sharing of suitable mounts for a D-level testing is allowed, but only if the rider is familiar with the mount and has ridden it prior to the testing both on the flat and over fences successfully and safely at the level being tested.

### 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 and jumping phases at the heights indicated at the appropriate levels. Embracing USPC's commitment to safety for all horses and riders is of utmost importance. Failing to follow these guidelines may make it difficult to meet the standard on that given day.**

### Presentation of Mount for Inspection (D-1 through D-3)

Stand by head of mount on near side with Examiner, facing towards rear, reins in left hand, below bit, slack in right, changing sides with Examiner.

Braiding is not allowed.

### Examiners

Examiners at the D-1 through C-2 level are to be chosen by the DC.

Examiners should be selected with care, should not only be knowledgeable, but sensitive to young people and able to conduct the test in an educational framework.

Examiners must be furnished a copy of all the USPC Standards, tests, and study guides prior to testing.

Examiners must be knowledgeable of Pony Club philosophy and the Standards, D-1 through A.

The Examiners must set the tone of the testing as a teaching situation, making every effort to draw the best from each candidate.

Care should be taken throughout a testing to encourage the candidates to express what they know, rather than what the Examiner knows.

Examiners should bear in mind that there may be a range from adequate to superior, and anyone within the range should pass.

Refer to the current D-1 through C-2 Testing Guidelines and the USPC Examiners Handbook, both available through the USPC Bookstore.

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## READING LIST FOR D CANDIDATES

*\*Note: Item numbers denoted are those found in the current USPC Catalog. For availability and pricing please contact the USPC National Office.*

### Recommended / D-1 and D-2

#### Ratings

**No. Title**  
1330 USPC Manual of  
Horsemanship, Vol. 1  
9010 Every Time - Every Ride Video  
1030 USPC Standards of Proficiency  
for D Ratings

#### 2215 Pony Club Safety Information Packet

2277 An Introduction to USPC  
Sports

#### Enrichment (for older Ds, 12 & up) / D-1 and D-2

**No. Title**  
9033 D Level Video

### Recommended / D-3

In addition to the D-1 & D-2  
Recommended and Enrichment  
Readings, the following material  
should be added:

**No. Title**  
2000 USPC Horse Management  
Handbook

#### USPC Discipline Rulebooks for:

**No. Title**  
6000 Dressage  
5000 Eventing  
5500 Show Jumping  
4000 Tetrathlon  
3500 Polocrosse  
3000 Games  
2001 Quiz

### Enrichment / D-3

**No. Title**  
2182 BHS Manual of Horsemanship  
1340 USPC Manual of  
Horsemanship, Vol. 2  
Local Resources: Veterinarian, farrier,  
**feed stores, local professionals  
and Cooperative Extension**

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