



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

(Revised November 10, 2006)

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.

**C-1 and C-2 Ratings:** The C-1 and C-2 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-1 and C-2 show 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 H-B, C-3, B, H/H-A and A Ratings** are facilitated 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.

**The H-B Rating** covers Horse Management knowledge that demonstrates increasing knowledge and competence in the care and handling of horses.

Pony Club members may choose to follow one or all of three riding tracks. They are: Traditional Eventing, Show Jumping or Dressage.

**The C-3 Rating** reflects a basis of competence in riding and horse care that will make possible a lifetime of pleasure with horses. If the C-3 riding test is passed before the H-B, the member becomes a C+.

**The B Rating** is for the active horseman and Pony Club member who is interested in acquiring further knowledge and proficiency in riding. The B is able to ride experienced mounts with confidence and control. 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.

**The A Rating**, 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/HA 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 judgement, tact and effectiveness; to train young mounts; and to retrain spoiled mounts.

**NOTE:** 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\* for Traditional Eventing

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.

### Dressage Specialty Levels:

C-3 = First Level\*\*  
B = Second Level\*\*  
A = Third Level\*\*

### Dimensions of Fences for Show Jumping Specialty Levels:

Rating	Height up to	Width at Top up to	Triple Bar up to
C-3	3'6"	3'9"	4'3"
B	3'9"	4'3"	4'6"
A	4'3"	4'9"	5'3"

C-3=Level II-III\*\*      B=Level III-IV\*\*      A=Level V-VI\*\*

\*\*See USEF Level Descriptions

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# TRADITIONAL C-3 RIDING STANDARD

**Riding Test Expectations:** *The candidate should maintain a basic balanced position that is developed through an independent seat, and is demonstrated by the coordinated use of the aids on the flat, over fences, and in the open. The candidate should initiate and maintain free forward movement with smooth transitions and a steady, light feel of the mount's mouth. The candidate should discuss and evaluate the aids used. The candidate should show confidence and control at all gaits on the flat, over fences, and in the open.*

## **Presentation of Horse and Rider**

Correct formal or informal attire.

Candidate should demonstrate effective presentation and control while standing facing and slightly to the side of, rather than directly in front of, the mount. The candidate will hold the reins, one in each hand, close to the bit. Thumbs should not be hooked into bit rings.

Mount should be well-groomed, reflecting daily care, including ears, nose, eyes, dock, sheath or udder, mane and tail (no dandruff).

Tack to be safe, clean, metal polished, reflecting consistent daily care.

Discuss the purpose and correct fit of mount's equipment.

## **Riding on the Flat**

Ride on flat using Riding Test Expectations.

Demonstrate warm-up for flat work.

Ride schooling figures to include circles, half circles, and straight lines at each gait.

Discuss performance with Examiner, including accuracy of transitions and whether or not mount maintained forward motion and was bent correctly on circles.

Discuss difference between increase of speed and lengthening of stride.

Demonstrate ability to ride a different mount, initiating free forward movement at each gait, showing confidence and control.

Discuss performance with Examiner, including ways in which the mount was different from own mount.

Demonstrate: moving mount away from leg at walk or trot in sideways movement; knowledge of aids for reinback; increase and decrease of speed at each gait.

## **Riding Over Fences**

Ride over fences using Riding Test Expectations

Discuss reasons for different lengths of stirrups and the affect on position for different types of work.

Demonstrate warmup for jumping, using exercises appropriate for mount including simple gymnastic grid on own mount.

Evaluate exercises used, including distances in simple gymnastic grid.

Ride over stadium fences, not to exceed 3'3". Fences to include oxers, verticals, bending lines and related distances.

Discuss performance and ways ride could be improved, including distances of any combinations used.

Ride without stirrups over fences or simple gymnastic grid on own mount (not to exceed 2'6").

Demonstrate ability to ride a different mount over stadium fences, showing confidence and control, not to exceed 2'9".

Evaluate performance and how mount differs from own.

## **Riding in the Open**

Demonstrate a knowledge of pace while riding in a galloping position. Ride at 240 meters per minute, developing to 350-400 mpm, using a large circle in an open field.

Ride at a gallop in the open, alone, and in a group.

Ride over several cross-country obstacles at height and pace (350-400 mpm) appropriate to terrain, not to exceed 3'3".

Discuss performance, pace, and reasons for any disobediences.

Evaluate mount's condition (i.e., vital signs).

## **Longeing**

Supervision is required in the testing of longeing.

Demonstrate proper fit and use of equipment, including bridle or cavesson, saddle or surcingle. (Side reins are allowed if appropriate).

Longe own mount, demonstrating safe longeing techniques and proper use of aids (voice, body position, etc.) at the walk, trot and/or canter, while initiating free forward movement and smooth transitions, making horse appropriate for the C-3 rider.

## **Bandaging**

Independently apply a shipping bandage and a stable bandage.

Discuss purposes and dangers involved with shipping and bandages.

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# TRADITIONAL B RIDING STANDARD

**Riding Test Expectations:** *Candidates should demonstrate an independent seat and effective tactful use of aids on the flat and over fences. Candidates should ride each mount forward while establishing and maintaining a regular pace with the mount accepting the aids; be confident in coping with disobedience; be able to explain the application and reasons for aids and to discuss the basic principles of dressage.*

## **Riding On The Flat**

Demonstrate warm-up for work on the flat.

Discuss the reasons for warm-up, the amount of time required for the mount being ridden, and why.

Be prepared to ride the following movements, demonstrating accurate and smooth transitions and correct use of aids:

Serpentine, 3 loops, sitting and/or posting at trot

Change of rein across diagonal

10-meter half circle, walk and/or trot

20-meter circle, sitting trot and/or canter

Canter change of lead through walk and/or trot

Lengthening of stride, at trot and/or canter

Leg-yielding, walk and/or trot

Reinback

Evaluate and discuss performance with Examiner, including strong and weak points of the mount being ridden.

Ride on the flat without stirrups at all gaits.

Demonstrate ability to ride different mount with confidence and tact at all gaits while performing basic schooling figures

Discuss performance, including whether or not each mount was balanced, supple, and moving forward with rhythm and impulsion

## **Riding Over Fences**

Discuss the benefits of cavaletti/trotting poles and know how to adjust distances for own mount.

Demonstrate warm-up for jumping, including work over cavaletti.

Demonstrate ability to ride over fences at height not to exceed 3'7". Course to include combination fences.

Critique performance in relation to the effectiveness of the riding plan.

Ride without stirrups over a grid while showing a secure and independent seat.

Ride without stirrups over 2 or 3 fences.

Demonstrate ability to ride different mount over fences with tact and confidence.

Critique performance, showing understanding of causes of any disobediences.

## **Riding In The Open**

Demonstrate a knowledge of pace, and galloping position when appropriate, for an estimated 240 m/m, developing to 350 m/m and 450 m/m.

Ride own mount over a variety of cross country fences at height not to exceed 3'7".

Candidates may be asked to demonstrate ability on a different mount over several natural fences.

Critique performances, showing understanding of causes of any disobediences.

Time allowing and terrain suitable, ride safely in a group at a controlled trot and canter to include several natural fences if available.

## **Longeing**

Discuss how to teach a mount to longe.

Discuss benefits and dangers of longeing the mount.

Discuss benefits and dangers of longeing the rider.

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

Longe own mount, appropriate to mount's ability, at the walk, trot and/or canter, at the discretion of the examiner; to include free forward movement and to establish regular rhythm. Be prepared to use side reins.

## **Bandaging**

Demonstrate shipping, stable, and tail bandages; discuss materials used, reasons for wrapping, potential dangers.

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# TRADITIONAL A RIDING STANDARD

**Riding Test Expectations:** *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.

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## TESTING INFORMATION FOR NATIONAL TESTINGS

### 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 13 years of age prior to January 1 of the year of application for the H-B and C-3, 14 for the B, 16 for the H/H-A and A.
- Be recommended by the District Commissioner and Regional Supervisor.
- Candidates may take the H-B or C-3 Riding test in whichever order they choose. If the C-3 Riding test is taken first, the C-3 Certificate is not awarded until completion of the H-B; candidate is recognized as a C+ until that time.
- 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 ratings and be able to discuss and/or demonstrate any requirements from all previously attained standards.

### Attire

Safe, working attire, including proper footwear, must be worn in the barn area and when working around mounts. Proper informal attire (boots and breeches) is required for teaching mounted lessons, 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. Be able to discuss equipment used on own mount. Whips, no longer than 43 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.

### General

There are no waiting periods between the H-B/C-3 through A ratings, as long as all applications are submitted by the Application Deadline (see below). However, candidates must successfully pass all sections of the H-B before obtaining the C-3 (if they pass the riding test first, they are called C+ members until they pass the H-B) and all sections of the H-A before taking the A.

Test dates are established by the National Testing Committee in response to Regional\* requests. Candidate 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, the USPC Web site, or the National Office.

Testing applications, USPC medical release, and club check for the test fee, must be mailed by the DC to the RS. Except in the case of H-B/C-3 tests being facilitated by a Region (*see below*), the RS must forward all completed application materials (with required signatures) to USPC National Office postmarked by the Application Deadline (see below). Applications for the H/H-A must include proof of compliance with the First Aid requirement.

*\*The RS of a Region hosting a Regional H-B/C-3 test will submit date to the National Office for posting to the Testing Schedule, set Regional application deadlines, and will receive candidate testing application, USPC medical release, and club check for test fee from the DC for candidates.*

### Application Deadlines

Applications for testings from January through May 31st must be postmarked by January 15th, or 8 weeks prior to the test date, whichever is earlier. Applications for testings from June through October 31st must be postmarked by April 15th. Applications for testings in November or December must be postmarked by the deadline stated on the National Testing Schedule (*which will be 8 weeks prior to the test date*). Late applications will be accepted up to 2 weeks after the stated deadlines but will require a \$100 late application fee. No late applications will be accepted after this point.

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 application deadline in case their class is canceled or rescheduled. A copy (both sides) of their current First Aid card **MUST** accompany application or it will be considered incomplete and returned to their RS. Proof of enrollment in a course is **not** acceptable; candidate must have completed the course by the application deadline, and include a copy of the First Aid card with the H/H-A application. There are many different organizations offering first aid certification and any basic first aid course is acceptable. Candidates may bring their own or a borrowed or rented mount to a testing.

Candidates who DNMS on no more than four sections of the H-B or two sections of the H/H-A can retest only those sections not passed. It will be the candidate's choice whether to retest at another scheduled H-B or H/H-A testing or arrange for a retest outside of a testing. If they choose the second option, it is the responsibility of the candidates to check the Examiners List provided by the National Office to find a qualified examiner who can retest them on the necessary section(s). If they wish to retest at another scheduled testing, they must contact the National Office within 4 weeks of their testing to make arrangements. Retests must take place within the calendar year. Any exceptions to that deadline must be approved by the National Office and the National Testing Committee. There is no charge for retesting. To achieve the C-3, B and A ratings, candidates must pass all phases of the test.

### Appropriate Horse

It is the responsibility of the candidate and his/her parent(s) or guardian to bring an appropriate horse(s) to the testing. The conditioned mount(s) must be capable of completing all required phases of the test. 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 should do outside reading and independent study in an effort to expand knowledge and understanding of all aspects of horsemastership. For the appropriate testing level, 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."

The testing shall be a constructive working session. The candidate shall be required to demonstrate and maintain adequate ability in performance and knowledge for the level tested.

Candidates should discuss with the Examiner any problems with the mount being used, should ask questions, and request permission to repeat any performance if so desired.

The attitude and maturity of the candidate shall be considered throughout the testing. Respect for other people and handling of the mounts shall be considered a direct reflection of the candidate's maturity level.

**READING LISTS: \*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.**

**READING LIST FOR C CANDIDATES**

**Recommended / C-1 and C-2 Ratings**

- No. Title**  
 1330 USPC Manual of Horsemanship, Volume I  
 1340 USPC Manual of Horsemanship, Volume II  
 9010 Every Time – Every Ride Video  
 2000 USPC Horse Management Handbook  
 2158 The Classical Seat  
 2180 Safe Horse – Safe Rider  
 2119 Centered Riding  
 1030 USPC Standards of Proficiency D Standard  
 1020 USPC Standards of Proficiency C Standard  
 2215 Pony Club Information Safety Packet  
 2277 An Introduction to USPC Horse Sports

**Enrichment / C-1 and C-2 Ratings**

- No. Title**  
 2182 BHS Manual of Horsemanship, 10 edition  
 9032 USPC Video Guide to the C-3 Standard  
 9033 D Level Video  
 9070 USPC Guide to Successful Longeing Video  
 2153 Riding to Hounds in America  
 2123 Grooming to Win  
 2181 Teaching Safe Horsemanship  
 8121 Teaching the Child Rider  
 6073 Progressive School Exercises

**Recommended / C-3 Rating (In addition to C-2 Recommended and Enrichment)**

- No. Title**  
 2129 Horse Gaits, Balance & Movement  
 2162 Thinking Riding, Vol. 1  
 2180 Safe Horse - Safe Rider  
 9032 USPC Video Guide to the C-3 Standard Video

- 9070 USPC Guide to Successful Longeing Video  
 2181 Teaching Safe Horsemanship

**Enrichment/ C-3 Rating**

- No. Title**  
 6060 Practical Dressage Manual  
 2153 Riding to Hounds in America  
 1000 USPC Standards of Proficiency B, H/H-A, A  
 2256 Horse Owners Field Guide to Toxic Plants  
 7062 Understanding Equine Medications

**All USPC Discipline Rulebooks (7)**

Local Resources: Veterinarian, farrier, feed stores, local professionals and Cooperative Extension

**READING LIST FOR B CANDIDATES**

**Recommended for B Candidates**

- No. Title**  
 1330 United States Pony Clubs Manual of Horsemanship, Volume I  
 1340 United States Pony Clubs Manual of Horsemanship, Volume II  
 1350 United States Pony Clubs Manual of Horsemanship, Volume III  
 1040 United States Pony Clubs Standards of Proficiency  
 2000 Horse Management Handbook & Rules for Competition  
 9070 USPC Guide to Longeing Video  
 9032 USPC Guide to the C3 Standard Video  
 2123 Grooming to Win  
 2129 Horse Gaits, Balance & Movement  
 2180 Safe Horse - Safe Rider

- 9010 Every Time - Every Ride Video  
 1030 USPC Guide to the D Standard  
 2010 USPC Guide to the Health & Maintenance Record Book  
 7042 Horse Owner's Veterinary Handbook  
 7062 Understanding Equine Medications  
 2215 Pony Club Safety Information Packet  
 7084 Veterinary Notes for Horse Owners  
 3046 Solo Schooling

**Enrichment for B Candidates**

- No. Title**  
 7041 Horse Foot Care by Butler  
 2124 Determining the Age of the Horse  
 2126 Handbook of Riding Essentials  
 2160 Feeding and Care of the Horse, 2nd Edition  
 2162 Thinking Riding Volume I  
 2163 Thinking Riding Volume II  
 7010 Coloring Atlas of Horse Anatomy

- 2141 Maximum Hoof Power  
 7043 Practical Guide to Lameness in Horses  
 5530 School Exercises for Flatwork & Jumping  
 2199 Horsefeathers: Facts Versus Myths About Your Horse's Health  
 7083 The Equine Body  
 2256 Horse Owners Field Guide to Toxic Plants  
 2257 No Foot, No Horse  
 6073 Progressive School Exercises  
 8121 Teaching the Child Rider  
 2038 Conformation and Performance

**All USPC Discipline Rulebooks (7)**

Local Resources: Veterinarian, farrier, feed stores, local professionals and Cooperative Extension

**READING LIST FOR A CANDIDATES**

**Recommended**

- No. Title**  
 1330 United States Pony Clubs Manual of Horsemanship, Volume I  
 1340 United States Pony Clubs Manual of Horsemanship, Volume II  
 1350 United States Pony Clubs Manual of Horsemanship, Volume III  
 1040 United States Pony Clubs Standards of Proficiency  
 2000 Horse Management Handbook & Rules for Competition  
 1010 USPC Guide to the B Standard  
 1370 USPC Guide to Longeing  
 1000 USPC Guide to the A Standard  
 1020 USPC Guide to the C3 Standard  
 2123 Grooming to Win  
 2129 Horse Gaits, Balance & Movement

- 2180 Safe Horse - Safe Rider  
 9010 Every Time Every Ride Video  
 9033 USPC Guide to the D Standard Video  
 5071 Blythe Tait's Cross-Country Clinic  
 2010 USPC Guide to the Health and Maintenance Record Book  
 7083 The Equine Body  
 7084 Veterinary Notes for Horse Owners  
 2215 Pony Club Safety Information Packet  
 7042 Horse Owner's Veterinary Handbook  
 3046 Solo Schooling

**Enrichment for A Candidates**

- No. Title**  
 7041 Horse Foot Care by Butler  
 2124 Determining the Age of the Horse  
 2126 Handbook of Riding Essentials  
 2160 Feeding and Care of the Horse, 2nd Edition  
 2162 Thinking Riding Volume I  
 2163 Thinking Riding Volume II

- 7010 Coloring Atlas of Horse Anatomy  
 2141 Maximum Hoof Power  
 7043 Practical Guide to Lameness in Horses  
 5530 School Exercises for Flatwork & Jumping  
 2199 Horsefeathers: Facts Versus Myths About Your Horse's Health  
 2256 Horse Owner's Field Guide to Toxic Plants  
 2257 No Foot, No Horse  
 6073 Progressive School Exercises  
 The Horse Magazine  
 2223 A Photographic Guide to Conformation  
 2038 Conformation and Performance

**All USPC Discipline Rulebooks (7)**

Local Resources: Veterinarian, farrier, feed stores, local professionals and Cooperative Extension