



Requirements and Recommendations for Hosting USPC National Testings in the COVID-19 Environment

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Purpose and Things to Consider

The United States Pony Clubs Inc. has a long-standing commitment to ensuring the safety and welfare of members, mounts, and volunteers. This document is intended for National Testing organizers, candidates, parents, volunteers, and National Examiners (NE) to review and follow to make informed decisions about participation in a national testing at this time.

As regions begin to consider the possibility of hosting national testings, the organization has enacted requirements, and gathered best practices to help minimize the potential spread of viruses and diseases. While there is no way to eliminate all risks related to COVID-19, the following requirements and recommendations are aimed toward decreasing the spread and risk of the spread of COVID-19. ***These requirements and recommendations are a supplement to the most recent guidelines from federal, state, local and other public health officials. Applicable government guidelines and requirements will always supersede USPC requirements and recommendations to the extent they conflict.*** The appendix includes definitions of terminology and numerous resources. As the situation continues to change, this document may be updated, and you should check back for updates.

While USPC put in place some parameters around hosting national testings during the COVID-19 pandemic, the ultimate decision whether to host a national testing is one that must be made locally by region/club/center leadership. Actively polling your members, parents, leaders and volunteers on their interest and ability to attend a national testing currently is a great first step to determining whether to host a national testing. Facilities where you normally host national testings should also be consulted, as they may have additional requirements and waivers necessary for testings to proceed.

If, after reviewing the information in this document, your region and leadership decides to move forward with hosting a national testing, please remember that each individual participating in the national testing must take personal responsibility for their own health, safety, and welfare. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this may mean that individuals choose not to participate in the national testing as a candidate, volunteer, or organizer. Whether a candidate, parent, volunteer, or leader, all need to exercise caution, take precautionary measures, be accountable, and always utilize good judgement while interacting with one another at a national testing.

For the latest information regarding the outbreak, please visit the [USPC COVID-19 webpage](#), [CDC website](#), and your state and local resources.

Mandatory Requirements for National Testing Organizers

All USPC national testings must be held and comply with all applicable federal, state and local regulations, guidelines, requirements, and orders as well as [CDC guidelines](#) as they relate to mass gatherings and sporting events. Additionally, testing organizers must implement the USPC requirements included in this document and are very strongly encouraged to implement all recommendations for mitigating risks related to the COVID-19 virus.

These requirements are in effect immediately and until further notice; however, they are subject to revisions as the COVID-19 virus environment changes.

- Create a plan to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local guidance, regulations, requirements, and orders as well as the CDC guidelines as they relate to mass gatherings and sporting events and disseminate a copy of the plan to all applicable testing participants, volunteers, and National Examiners.
- Inform all national testing participants of protocols and safeguards implemented for their protection against spreading COVID-19.
- Inform all national testing participants of their requirements prior to their arrival on the testing grounds.
- Educate national testing organizers, volunteers and national examiners regarding all procedures and requirements associated with the plan.
- Ensure facility owner, facility employees, and service providers are included in the communication and knowledgeable requirements associated with the plan.

Testing Facility Access

- Require temperature and symptom monitoring for testing organizers, volunteers, national examiners, and service providers at least once daily prior to entering the testing grounds. Remind participants that they must be self-monitoring temperatures and symptoms. Anyone with a temperature below 100.4° F (38° C) may enter the facility.
- The following individuals are not allowed to enter the testing grounds:
 - Anyone who exhibits [COVID-19 symptoms](#),
 - Anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within last 10 days,
 - Anyone who has tested positive outside of the past 10 days, but is still symptomatic, or
 - *Anyone who has been exposed to or has been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19 within either the last 7 or 10 days (dependent upon certain criteria - refer to [CDC Quarantine Options](#)).

**Exception: Healthcare personnel who have treated patients using appropriate medical-grade PPE while performing professional duties and those individuals who are fully vaccinated are exempted from this quarantine restriction.*
- Face Coverings/Masks – Fully vaccinated individuals are not required to wear face coverings/masks at USPC National Tests in accordance with the current [CDC guidelines](#). Individuals who have not been vaccinated shall wear face coverings/masks unless mounted. To mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19, state and local officials, National Testing organizers, testing facilities,

etc. can impose requirements more restrictive than those imposed by CDC or USPC, if they so choose.

***Participants with health issues that preclude them from wearing a face covering are exempt from the requirement but are required to maintain a minimum 6' social distance at all times.*

***A candidate may choose to wear a face covering when mounted.*

Signage

- Post signage that displays all applicable federal, state and local regulations, requirements and orders as well as [CDC guidelines](#) as they relate to mass gatherings and sporting events in effect at the time of the national testing.
- Post signage at all entrances to the testing grounds which identifies the symptoms of COVID-19 and states the following:
 - To protect others from possible transmission of the virus, anyone who exhibits [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or has been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last two weeks, cannot enter the national testing grounds. These individuals are encouraged to contact their health care provider immediately for further medical advice and must obtain documented clearance from their health care provider before re-entering the testing grounds. *Sample poster:* [Symptoms of Coronavirus Disease](#)
- Post signage throughout the testing grounds (i.e. gathering areas, barns, arenas etc.) which includes recommendations about good hygiene along with informing national testing participants and others about ways to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. *Sample Poster:* [CDC – Stop the Spread of Germs](#)

Facility Cleaning and Disinfection

Create charts to track the following.

- Provide hand sanitization stations with access to soap, water, and paper towels, and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer at each testing area.
- Provide individual hand sanitizer to all testing staff, volunteers, and national examiners.
- Provide hand sanitization stations throughout the facility and request everyone to use frequently.
- Frequently disinfect surfaces touched by many: door handles, arena gates, wash racks and hoses, etc.
- Ensure frequent cleaning and disinfection of bathrooms, provide soap, water, and paper towels and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer in bathrooms, along with signage explaining appropriate hand washing procedures.
- Prohibit the use of public water fountains.

Social Distancing

Always enforce social distancing requirements throughout the testing grounds.

- Make available online as much testing information as possible including schedules, COVID-19 precaution prevention, stabling assignments, logistics for arrival, etc.
- Prohibit the public, spectators, and non-essential personnel such as guests from being on the testing grounds.

- Schedule horse arrivals and departures to minimize contact between people. Configure stabling to comply with social distancing requirements to manage concentration of horses and people.
- Arrange testing volunteer and national examiner areas to comply with applicable social distancing requirements and guidelines. Particularly the area for briefing and debriefing.

Enforcement Authority

The national testing organizer and national examiners have the authority to remove from the facility any person who does not comply with the regulations and requirements in effect at the testing. Removal of a person from the testing grounds must be documented and reported to USPC in the National Testing Organizer's Evaluation.

Mandatory Requirements for National Testing Participants

All USPC national testings must be held and comply with all applicable federal, state and local regulations, guidelines, requirements, and orders as well as [CDC guidelines](#) as they relate to mass gatherings and sporting events. National testing participants are required to comply with these and any additional national testing requirements at all times while present on national testing grounds. Failure to do so may result in expulsion from the grounds.

National Testing Access

- National testing participants, and/or their parents, are required to self-monitor their temperature and for COVID-19 symptoms at least once daily prior to arrival. Anyone with a temperature below 100.4° F (38° C) may enter the facility. Prior to the national testing participants should regularly have their temperatures checked and recorded to identify a personal normal temperature.
- The following individuals are not allowed to enter the testing grounds:
 - Anyone who exhibits [COVID-19 symptoms](#),
 - Anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within last 10 days,
 - Anyone who has tested positive outside of the past 10 days, but is still symptomatic, or
 - *Anyone who has been exposed to or has been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19 within either the last 7 or 10 days (dependent upon certain criteria - refer to [CDC Quarantine Options](#)).

**Exception: Healthcare personnel who have treated patients using appropriate medical-grade PPE during the course of performing professional duties.*

- Face Coverings/Masks – Fully vaccinated individuals are not required to wear face coverings/masks at USPC National Tests in accordance with the current [CDC guidelines](#). Individuals who have not been vaccinated shall wear face coverings/masks unless mounted. To mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19, state and local officials, national testing organizers, facilities, etc. can impose requirements more restrictive than those imposed by CDC or USPC, if they so choose.

***Participants with health issues that preclude them from wearing a face covering are exempt from the requirement but are required to maintain a 6' social distance at all times.*

***A rider may choose to wear a face covering while mounted.*

Social Distancing and Cleaning

- Always comply with social distancing requirements while on the national testing grounds.
- Wash hands often, provide and use hand sanitizer, gloves, masks, and other PPE (see Appendix I Definitions) as recommended.
- Do not mix or share equipment any more than necessary (tack, grooming supplies, lead shanks, etc.) and sanitize shared equipment before and after each use.
- Regularly sanitize stall doors, bucket handles, light switches, etc., and equipment including tack, grooming, feeding, stall cleaning materials, etc.
- Use mounting blocks to avoid one-on-one contact.

Additional Considerations

- Participants should have their own adequate food and beverage supplies available for the duration of the national testing.

Recommendations for National Testing Organizers

The following recommendations have been provided to assist national testing organizers with determining risks and developing measures to mitigate those risks. USPC strongly encourages the implementation of the following.

General Considerations

- Whenever possible use local national testing volunteers to minimize travel and housing needs.
- Consider limiting the number of entrances and exits to the venue to manage the number of individuals accessing the national testing grounds.

Planning

- Create a National Testing Safety and Crisis Plan that include biosecurity details specific to a COVID-19 incident or outbreak that includes local medical resources and addresses outbreak protocols including medical evaluation, isolation, quarantine, and reporting.
- Use radio, phone, and online communication methods as much as possible and communicate important information frequently throughout the national testing grounds.
- The number of individuals handling hardcopy paperwork should be minimized. The PIP examiner will handle all test sheets and evaluations until the end of the testing. Evaluators should use hand sanitizer prior to receiving their evaluation to fill out. Evaluation forms should be filled out at the debriefing area then returned to the IO. Candidates may look at test sheets in the debriefing area then return to PIP.
- Increased time should be built into all schedules (turnouts, rides, etc.) to accommodate for social distancing and other COVID-19 protocols.
- If candidates are overnighting it is the responsibility of the candidate (if over the age of 18, an adult) or the parent/chaperone (if the candidate is not yet 18 years of age) to oversee social distancing compliance outside of testing hours.
- When stabling, empty stalls should be left between each candidate's horse(s). If candidates are hauling into the testing site sufficient space should be left between trailers to allow for social distancing guidelines to be met.
- Social areas are strongly discouraged unless social distancing requirements are enforced in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local regulations, guidelines, requirements, and orders as well as [CDC guidelines](#) as they relate to mass gatherings and sporting events.
- Consider limiting the number of entrances and exits to the facility to manage the number of individuals accessing the Testing grounds.
- If the testing is held at a boarding facility every effort should be made to keep the testing participants isolated to one area of the grounds where intermingling with boarders or facility staff is minimized.

Staffing Considerations

- Housing and Transportation

- Anyone requiring housing should be single occupancy per room unless they are from the same household.
- Individuals should drive separately unless they are from the same household.
- Volunteers and NEs from out of town should be housed in a hotel with single room occupancy.
- Refreshments and Provisions
 - The testing organizer should advise candidates to bring their own refillable water containers or bottled waters. The testing organizer may provide additional bottled water but there should not be any community water coolers.
 - Organizers may provide pre-packaged snacks only. Provide markers to delineate 6 feet spacing between people accessing snacks.
 - Testing organizer should provide bottled water, snacks, and meals to NEs. All snacks and meals should be prepackaged.

Facility Considerations

- Stabling
 - Restrict access to the stabling areas to candidates, chaperone/parents, national examiners, and other essential personnel as determined by organizer.
 - Remind all personnel in the stabling areas to comply with all best practices and guidelines in effect at the national testing.
 - Restrict barn access to visitors and non-essential individuals.

National Testing Considerations

- Schedule national testing days as efficiently as possible to minimize time spent on the national testing grounds each day.
- Organize seating areas in each testing station to comply with social distancing requirements.
- Restrict the number of people accompanying a candidate and horse to the testing area and advise that they must comply with social distancing requirements.
- Warmup and testing area provisions:
 - Provide monitors to ensure compliance with requirements and best practices.
 - Dressage and jumping arenas - provide sanitizing items (spray bottles, wipes) at each arena and warm-up area and advise individuals to wear gloves while handling equipment and to wipe down equipment after use.
 - Determine equine/human capacity in relation to the area and restrict access to a limited number to maintain social distancing requirements.

National Testing COVID-19 Adaptations

National testing procedures may include significantly more opportunities for the transmission of viruses and diseases. While this document and the following recommendations are targeted primarily at COVID-19 prevention, they are helpful for the transmission of any respiratory illness. Communicating the schedule and biosecurity expectations prior to the testing gives the participants an understanding of the potential risks and prevention measures in place.

The following are adaptations to normally mounted and unmounted testing processes and are in effect until discontinued by USPC. The following information is in addition to the standard information for national tests.

Testing Facility Opening Times and Procedures

Develop a process for arrival and plans for maintaining social distancing during move-in.

Testing Start Time

The testing officially begins with the briefing and must occur prior to any evaluations. Once the testing officially starts the barns are closed to anyone other than candidates, parents, chaperones, support person(s) and officials, including the Regional Supervisor, Organizer, Impartial Observer, and National Examiners. There will not be any open barn time for visitors.

Briefings

In addition to the testing briefing, a preliminary briefing must be electronically transmitted to candidates, IO's, Organizers, RS's, support staff, volunteers, and parents within one week of the testing. The in-person briefing location, at the testing, must be large enough to accommodate social distancing requirements. Individuals from the same household may be close together but distanced from others.

Helmet and Safety Vest Checks

The following procedure will be in place for both NE's who are inspecting candidates, as well as for candidates who are inspecting volunteer students for the teaching section of the H-HM/H/HA testing. During helmet and safety vest checks, both the candidate/volunteer student must follow the above reference facial coverings/masks requirements. NE/Candidate watches from 6' away and directs the parent or chaperone to manipulate helmet and safety vest to demonstrate fit and makes adjustments, as necessary. NE/candidate is shown the helmet label verifying it meets the helmet policy.

Turnout Inspection

All parties must maintain a 6' distance as much as possible and must follow the above reference facial coverings/masks requirements. Scheduling of Turnouts should reflect the extra time needed due to social distancing requirements.

The candidate's parent, chaperone, or support person must attend with each candidate. After the initial presentation by the candidate, the chaperone, parent, or support person will hold the mount. While the candidate follows the direction of the NE to lift feet, raise saddle flaps, etc. for inspection. The NE will not touch the candidate, mount, or equipment during the inspection except for extreme safety circumstances.

Course Walks and Setting of Courses, Gymnastics and Cavaletti

In preparation for and during all course walks and setting of courses, gymnastics and cavaletti, candidates and volunteers must maintain social distancing requirements and must follow the above reference facial coverings/masks requirements.

Scheduling of National Testings

Schedule must be publicly posted. The certification should be scheduled in a way to reduce potential candidate contact.

Switch Rides

All candidates will wipe down their own equipment prior to switching horses. Each switch ride should be handled individually. The IO or NE will hold the candidate's horse while wearing disposable gloves and must follow the above reference facial coverings/masks requirements. Disposable gloves must be changed between handling of each switch horse. The switch rider will take the horse from the NE or IO and mount at appropriate distance. This process will need to be repeated until all candidates have switched mounts then repeated when candidates switch back to their mount. Switch riders will need to wipe down equipment prior to returning mount.

Safety Checks

The following procedure will be in place for both NE's who are inspecting candidates, as well as for candidates who are inspecting volunteer students for the teaching section of the H-HM/H/HA testing. All parties must follow the above reference facial coverings/masks requirements and the NE/candidate will maintain at least a 6' distance. The chaperone, candidate's parent/volunteer student's parent or support person must attend with each candidate. After the initial presentation by the candidate/volunteer student, the chaperone, parent, or support person will hold the mount. While the candidate/volunteer student follows the direction of the NE/candidate to lift feet, raise saddle flaps, etc. for inspection. The NE/candidate will not touch the candidate/volunteer student, mount, or equipment during the inspection except for extreme safety circumstances.

Testing of Bandaging – The candidate and NE must follow the above reference facial coverings/masks requirements. The NE may touch the bandage coverings, remove them completely, and place them aside for the candidate to retrieve later. NE's must wash/sanitize hands or apply a fresh pair of disposable gloves between each candidate's bandage section.

Oral Stations at the H-B and H-HM/H/H-A

Seating: Orals must be placed in locations where all candidates, the NE and the IO can be seated with 6 feet distance between them.

Drawing Cards: Cards will be drawn at random by the NE and then read orally to the candidate. Candidates will not be handling cards.

Sections requiring identification of multiple cards: NE will draw the required cards at random. They will then read each to the candidate. The candidate can then go and select the items of tack or hay/grain/bedding individually and return to their seat. Then the next candidate can do the same. After each group completes the section, all equipment must be wiped down with sanitizing material prior to the next group entering the station.

Discussions During/Following Mounted Phases

During all discussions, candidates and NE's must remain a minimum of six feet apart.

Handling of Test Sheets at H-B and H-HM/H/H-A

The test sheets should not be carried from section to section by candidates at H-B or H-HM/H/H-A. Test sheets should remain with the examiners until the debriefing where they will be handed to the candidates to review before they are returned to PIP examiner.

Test Sheets

It is recommended that test sheets be passed out individually, limiting the number of people who touch them. If a final briefing occurs, it must follow social distancing measures (6' apart and must follow the above reference facial coverings/masks requirements) and the test sheets picked up individually. (i.e., one person wearing gloves place test sheets on table and each candidate picks up their test sheet.)

Evaluations

The evaluations will be placed on a table by the IO wearing gloves, and then the candidates and parents will pick them up individually and return them individually to the table. The IO should place the evaluations in the envelope wearing gloves and seal the envelope. Evaluators should use hand sanitizer prior to receiving their evaluation to fill out. Evaluation forms should be filled out at the debriefing area then returned to the PIP.

Appendix I Definitions

CDC – Centers for Disease Control. All activity that occurs at a USPC function must be conducted in accordance with CDC guidance protocols.

Close Contact – For purposes of this document, close contact as [defined by the CDC](#) is someone who was within six (6) feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period* beginning two (2) days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, two (2) days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. It is important to note that close contact has occurred regardless of whether one, or both individuals is wearing a mask. (Refer to [CDC FAQ](#)).

**Individual exposures added together over a 24-hour period (e.g., three 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes).*

Face Coverings – For purposes of this document, any reference to face coverings includes cloth face coverings, N-95, KN-95, and surgical masks.

****Cloth face coverings** should fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face, be secured with ties or ear loops, include multiple layers of fabric, allow for breathing without restriction and be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape. The CDC currently recommends N-95, KN-95 should be reserved for healthcare workers or other medical first responders.

Fully Vaccinated – An individual is [fully vaccinated](#) two weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer, Moderna, etc.), or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine (Johnson & Johnson).

IO- Impartial Observer

Isolation – Separation of a person or group of people known or reasonably believed to be infected with a communicable disease and potentially infectious, from those who are not infected to prevent the spread of the disease.

Participants – For purposes of this document, any reference to participants includes candidates, parents, chaperones, volunteers, support persons, facility representatives, NE's, RS's, and IO's.

PIP NE- Lead NE for that testing

PPE – Personal Protection Equipment which may include gloves, face masks, etc.

Public/Spectators – For purposes of this document, spectators refer to the general public, fans, or any individuals who are not directly involved in the testing by way of being a candidate, parent, chaperone, support person, NE, RS, Test Organizer, and IO.

NE- National Examiner

Quarantine – Separation of a person or group of people, known or reasonably believed to have been exposed to a communicable disease but are not yet symptomatic, from others who have not yet been exposed, to prevent the possible spread of the communicable disease.

RS- Regional Supervisor of the region hosting the testing.

Social Distancing – Defined as avoiding congregate settings or concentration of individuals in a single area and maintaining a minimum of six feet from others unless absolutely impossible.

Service Providers – For purposes of this document, service providers are those individuals or entities who provide direct services contracted by test organizer. Service providers include but are not limited to caterers, feed suppliers, photographers, videographers, cleaning service providers (including portable restroom service), and waste disposal personnel.

Symptoms – Symptoms of COVID-19 include, but are not limited to, subjective or measured fever, cough, and shortness of breath and/or difficulty breathing. Additional symptoms may include sore throat, muscle pain, headache, chills/shaking, or newly developed loss of taste or smell.

Temperature Monitoring – The daily (or alternatively defined period) non-contact body temperature testing utilizing technology that scans forehead temperature (temporal or infrared thermometer) to measure an individual's body temperature to verify no fever is present. For purposes of this document, a fever is defined as an elevated body temperature of 100.4°F (38° C) or higher. *This definition of fever utilizes a temperature*

threshold slightly lower than in CDC guidelines, but this more stringent temperature threshold prevails as the requirement.

Testing Facility/Site - For purposes of this document, any reference to the test facility or test site includes rings, arenas, fields, cross-country fields, barns, additional stabling, oral examination areas, and any other areas designated for testing purposes.

Test Organizer – For purposes of this document, the test organizer is the region, center or club management designee(s) for the testing.

Appendix II Resources

USPC Resources

Key National Testing Contacts	<i>Instruction Services Director</i> Connie Jehlik instrction@ponyclub.org (859) 559-0652	<i>Vice President of Instruction</i> Becky Logsdon beckyl@ponyclub.org (502) 905-1476	<i>Executive Director</i> Teresa Woods executivedirector@ponyclub.org (859) 254-7669
Information and Signage	Emergency Response Template	Testing Briefing Template	USPC COVID-19 Signage

CDC Resources

(Centers for Disease Control)

Information	Signage
State Health Department Websites	Symptoms of Coronavirus Disease
Symptoms of Coronavirus and treatment resources	What you should know about COVID-19 to protect yourself and others
Resources for Large Community Events and Mass Gatherings	Stop the Spread of Germs
Q&A on Event Planning and COVID-19	STOP: Stay at home when you are sick!
Guidance for Organizers - Mass Gatherings and Event Preparation	Share Facts About COVID-19
Reference Videos	

Additional Resources

<p style="margin: 0;">The Horse</p> <p style="margin: 0;">COVID-19 Resources for Horse Owners</p>
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