

# USPC GUIDELINES FOR CLUB RATINGS: D-1 THROUGH C-2 2002

**THE USPC STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY** provide a core curriculum for individualized instruction for young riders by describing a clear progression of skills in riding and horse management. The Standards also provide opportunities for goal setting, as Pony Club members are encouraged to proceed through those skills at a pace that is comfortable for them.

**PURPOSE OF A RATING TEST.** Pony Clubs use the Standards of Proficiency as a plan for instruction programs. Therefore, rating tests are an evaluation of the Pony Club members' progress through the rating levels. At the same time, the rating tests should be a positive educational experience. They must be carried out in an environment that encourages the candidate to "show and tell" what he or she knows.

**RIDING IS A HOBBY**, something we do for fun! We use ratings to recognize achievement and to increase enjoyment by encouraging Pony Club members to gain confidence, independence and good safety habits while working with mounts. Goal setting, teaching and testing are good ways to accomplish this purpose.

**EVALUATING A PONY CLUB MEMBER'S READINESS FOR A RATING.** The Standards of Proficiency describe the specific requirements for each level. A Pony Club member is ready for a rating test if he or she is able to perform the requirements for that level in a **supervised teaching situation**. Because D-1 is an introductory level, there will be no fail on the D-1 test sheet. After passing a test a Pony Club member may or may not be ready to attempt skills required at the next rating level. If not, he or she will continue to receive instruction appropriate to the earlier level until a greater degree of proficiency is achieved. *AT NO LEVEL IS COMPETITION REQUIRED TO PROVE READINESS FOR A RATING.*

All Pony Club members should be encouraged to **progress at a pace that is comfortable for them**. Pony Club instructors should be very familiar with the Standards of Proficiency so that the instruction program is based on the clear progression of skills described in the Standards. The candidates should have the assistance of an older Pony Club member or knowledgeable adult in preparing for the rating test.

## ORGANIZING A RATING TEST

**CLUB RATING TESTS AT THE D-1 AND C-2 LEVELS SHOULD BE OFFERED AT LEAST TWICE A YEAR**, more often if the number of candidates warrants it.

Since a club's instruction program is based on the Standards of Proficiency, a rating test measures a child's progress in that program. Every child must be given the opportunity to test at an appropriate level in a timely manner, however, they must be a member for one month before they can rate.

**AT LEAST SIX WEEKS PRIOR TO THE TESTING DATE**, determine the number of candidates, choose a site and secure examiners (one for every three candidates as a general rule). It is preferable to select an examiner from another club, however the DC may conduct the test if no other examiner is readily available. Some older Pony Club members make good examiners, particularly for the D levels. They can also be used as scribes or assistants to adult examiners. *HOWEVER, NO PONY CLUB MEMBER MUST EVER BE GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHER CHILDREN WITHOUT A RESPONSIBLE ADULT PRESENT.*

**AT LEAST FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO THE TESTING DATE**, notify candidates and their parents about the date, place, time, attire, what to bring, meal arrangements, cost (if any), etc. Supply each one with a copy of the particular Standard and Test Sheet on which he or she will be tested.

Whenever possible, complete the test in one day. If it is necessary to conduct a test over several days, all requirements must be completed within a four-week time period.

Oral examination must be used for the Horse Management sections at all levels. *Orals should be conducted on a one-to-one basis at the D level*, and in very small groups of three to four at the C level. Care must be taken to see that candidates are afforded every opportunity to express what they know, thereby gaining confidence in a testing situation. The rating test should be educational, and must be limited to the requirements listed on the Standards of Proficiency for that rating level.

### **SHARING OF MOUNTS AT D-1 THROUGH C-2 TESTINGS**

All Pony Club members should be tested riding a safe and reliable mount. Any candidate's, parent's, or DC's concerns about a given horse or pony should be discussed with the Organizer or the Examiner well before the rating test. The borrowing/sharing of suitable mounts is allowed at the D-1 through D-3 level, but *only* if the rider is familiar with the mount and has ridden it – prior to the testing – on the flat and over fences safely and successfully at the level being tested. At the C1-C2 level, a mount may not be shared for a full testing by candidates at the same testing. The exchange of mounts for testing purposes is not allowed at this level.

Guidelines for site and equipment requirements may be found on the last pages of these guidelines.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER (DC)**

1. Provide instruction programs based on the Standards.
2. Evaluate Pony Club members as to their readiness for a testing. Candidates should have a good attendance record and be competent in all requirements of the rating level prior to the testing.
3. Select and contract to use a site that is appropriate for the requirements of the rating level. Secure Hold Harmless insurance for the site.
4. Choose examiners from the local area or invite them from a neighboring Pony Club. If possible, select someone who has attended a recent Standards and Ratings Clinic. Compensation for the examiner is at the discretion of the DC, but reimbursement for all travel expenses should be offered. Treat examiners with consideration and provide them with a quiet place for lunch and for writing up test sheets.
5. Provide examiners, well ahead of the test, with a copy of the Standards being tested, test sheets, time schedule, and these guidelines. Ask how *they* interpret a certain skill or requirement. Discuss with them any local conditions and financial arrangements. Inform them if any candidate has a learning, physical, or other disability if this information is known by DC by reason of disclosure to DC by candidate or candidate's parent or other legal guardian, and with their written permission.
6. Notify candidates and their parents about details of the test at least four weeks before the testing date. Send each a copy of the relevant Standard and Test Sheet.
7. Be present to oversee proceedings and handle any unusual circumstances or conflicts that might disrupt the test. These are your Pony Club members--know what your examiners expect of them. (If your own child is a candidate, an impartial observer should be appointed.) As much as possible, be available to answer questions. Be aware of the nearest Emergency Medical Facility and its telephone number.
8. Be sure that examiners, candidates, parents and other spectators understand that there will be no unauthorized assistance, misuse of equipment, carelessness while working with horses or ponies, or unsportsmanlike behavior. Candidates are expected to show courtesy to one another, to examiners, and to their mounts.
9. Provide lunch and refreshments for examiners, and fluids for candidates and their mounts. Inform parents of meal arrangements for candidates prior to testing.
10. Appoint, if desired, a Ratings Chairman or Committee to organize the entire day.
11. Make sure, after the test, that the landowner (and anyone else involved) was thanked and the property left as it was found.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXAMINERS

Examiners should study the Standards of Proficiency, Test Sheets, and these guidelines, and be familiar with the texts studied by candidates. They should be sensitive to young people, and able to conduct the test in a positive, educational framework. Attendance at a local USPC Standards and Ratings Clinic, whenever possible, is highly recommended.

Testings can be stressful for candidates (and their parents), and examiners should empathize with young people's moods and diverse personalities. The examiner should set the tone of the testing as a teaching situation, drawing the best from each candidate. Outgoing, confident candidates should not be allowed to intimidate those who are less assured: rather, each candidate must be encouraged to demonstrate what he or she *does* know.

The examiner should request details of the facility and equipment available, and of any learning and /or physical disabilities of candidates. If a disability exists that limits performance, but the candidate can ride safely *and still meet the requirements of the Standard*, he or she should pass the test. There is a range from ADEQUATE TO SUPERIOR, and anyone within that range should pass.

Candidates must be asked to jump *only to the Standard*. If jumps cannot be found at the appropriate height, candidates should jump a lower height. Testing should never be above the Standard.

Examiners must complete Test Sheets and make written comments, especially for those sections where the candidate did not meet the Standard (DNMS). Comments should be specific and encouraging, with suggestions for correcting any problems. Although examiners may suggest a particular exercise as a teaching aid, **ONLY THE REQUIREMENTS LISTED ON THE TEST SHEET MAY BE TESTED**. Even when a candidate does not meet the Standard, the examiner's comments should be as positive and encouraging as possible.

Care must be taken when notifying candidates of test results to avoid uncomfortable situations among candidates, parents and examiners. In addition to continuous feedback during a test, a complete critique should follow the test, with parents invited to listen *IF CANDIDATES AGREE*.

## GENERAL TESTING INFORMATION

**TESTING NEW MEMBERS:** A new Pony Club member who is young and inexperienced may become a D-1 and then take two to four years to achieve the D-3. An older, more experienced rider who joins Pony Club may be capable of passing several rating levels at his or her first testing. However, the D and C Program Committee strongly suggests that a new Pony Club member be rated no higher than D-3 at a first rating, so that he or she can gain a broad experience of Pony Club. All horse management sections must be tested orally, both the test and re-test.

In the event a candidate receives permission to try for more than one level at his or her first rating, both candidate and examiner must have copies of all Standards and Test Sheets up to and including the level desired. Each level of horse management **must** be covered, and examiners must be very careful, when testing riding, not to miss anything from the previous levels, (i.e. mounting is covered in the D-2 but not the D-3 Standard).

The oral sections of each level will be covered first. If any part is not passed, the candidate will take the riding test at the rating level at which the oral requirements were completed. If successful, the candidate will be awarded that rating; if not, the rating appropriate to the riding standard achieved will be awarded. Note: Re-testing under these circumstances is inappropriate because no candidate should remain unrated at the end of the day.

Once the first rating day has been completed, a Pony Club member may take only *one rating at a time*, and each rating must be fully completed before the next one is attempted.

**SUBSEQUENT TESTINGS:** Candidates are responsible for, and can be tested on, the requirements of any previous level.

**TESTING CONDITIONS:** Organizers and Examiners should be prepared to adjust to different conditions that may exist at the time of a testing. Under no circumstances should children be kept mounted for long periods; riders should dismount while others are performing individual skills. There should always be plenty of water available for both riders and horses.

**CLARIFICATION ON PACE:** D-3 speed should not exceed 240 meters per minute or 300 meters per minute appropriate for the size of the horse. C-1 speed should not exceed 325 meters per minute to 350 meters per minute.

**ORALS:** All candidates, but especially lower level Ds, need a relaxed test atmosphere. Oral questioning can take place in a quiet room or under a tree, although many questions can be asked while the horse is present and the Pony Club member is demonstrating skills. It often helps to have one examiner do the actual “hands-on” and riding sections,

while someone else does the oral questioning. In a testing that includes several rating levels, one group can ride while another is doing orals, and vice-versa.

If a candidate does not meet the Standard in one or more areas (up to 1/3 of the sections on the Test Sheet), a re-test may be scheduled on sections not passed. Only the original examiner may authorize such a re-test, and must so indicate on the candidate's test sheet. Such a re-test must be completed in one day and within one month of the original testing. Failure to pass any part of the re-test will require the candidate to take the entire test again when next scheduled by the club. If the re-test is not completed within a month, the entire test must be taken again at a regularly scheduled test.

If a candidate takes a portion of the test over again with a different examiner, BOTH examiners must have signed the certificate before the candidate is considered to have passed. Normally, any test or re-test must take place within the Pony Club member's own region. The DC decides whether or not a Pony Club member may be tested or re-tested with another club. **AT NO LEVEL IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR A CANDIDATE OR PARENT TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A TESTING OUTSIDE THE CLUB OR REGION.**

### **RECOMMENDED TIME FRAMES**

**D levels:** Groups of 4-5  
1 1/2 - 2 hours riding  
1 1/2 hours unmounted

**C levels:** Groups of 4-5  
2 -2 1/2 hours riding  
1 1/2-2 hours unmounted.

Generally speaking, a workable schedule is as follows:

Turnout/Inspection (questions such as parts of the horse, tack, conformation, shoeing, etc., may be asked at this time).

Horse Management (hands on: saddling, grooming, etc.).

Flat riding phase

Riding in the open (D-2 and up)

Cooling out

Other Horse Management skills (hands-on)

Oral questioning phase (parents can be used to watch horses at this time)

## TEST SITE REQUIREMENTS

The following facilities should be available for D-1 through C-2:

- Enclosed area, sufficiently level for flat and stadium phases
- Ground poles, cavaletti/trotting poles and grids
- Open area for cross-country, with varied terrain, if possible
- Cross-country type obstacles, suitable for level (*NOT TO EXCEED LEVEL*).  
(Cavaletti/trotting poles in the open may be used for D's.)

Additional equipment/facilities required:

### D-1 Level

Enclosed area  
6-8 trotting poles  
and Stall or holding pen

### D-2 Level

Stalls  
Protective boots and bell boots

### D-3 Level

Stalls  
Stall cleaning equipment

### C-1 Level

Horse blanket  
1-2 Pony Club members with ponies  
tack

### C-2 Level

Easy-to-longe horse or pony  
(Candidate may longe own horse)  
Longeing equipment appropriate  
for animal  
Easy-to-load pony/horse (may be  
candidate's own)  
1-2 D Level riders with ponies and  
tack  
Farrier tools

## REQUIRED RIDER EQUIPMENT

### All Levels

ASTM/SEI approved riding helmet  
Hard-soled shoes which cover the ankle  
or boots with heels  
Halter, lead rope, bucket  
Grooming kit

### C-1 and Above

Correct formal or informal attire

## OTHER EQUIPMENT

### D Levels

Basic grooming tools

### D-2

Protective boots and/or bell boots, if used

### D-3

Up-to-date Pony Health & Maintenance

Record Book (3 months minimum)

Protective boots and/or bell boots

Stable bandages

### C-1 Level

Record Book (6 months minimum)

Shipping bandages

Simple conditioning schedule

### C-2 Level

Record Book (9 months minimum)

Shipping and stable bandages

Thermometer and watch with second hand

Letter from DC in reference to teaching program

Longeing equipment appropriate for horse.

### 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 USAEquestrian Eventing Rules\*\*\*

When a second height is required at any one level, use appropriate dimensions shown on the chart above.

## SAMPLE JUMPING COURSES D-1 THROUGH C-2

### D-1 Level Requirements

Enclosed area  
3-4 ground poles  
(Walk over poles in jumping position;  
No in-and-out or poles-in-line <cavaletti> allowed.)

### Sample courses

**D-1:** Very simple course, once around.

### D-2 Level Requirements

Enclosed area  
4-5 obstacles, 18" maximum  
(No oxer or in-and-out)  
Trotting permissible

**D-2:** Uncomplicated course  
generous turns, safe  
distances for horse/pony

### D-3 Level

Enclosed area  
5-7 obstacles, 2'6" max. height  
One oxer (graduated only)  
(No in-and-out)

**D-3 :** No difficult turns, safe  
distances for horse/pony

### C-1 Level Requirements

Enclosed area  
Simple gymnastic, at trot only, no bounces or  
oxers, max. 3 fences  
6-8 obstacles, 2'9" max. height  
Two oxers only (must be graduated)  
One in-and-out only (2 strides,  
vertical must come first)

**C-1:** Related distances: bending  
lines. Safe distances for  
horse/pony

### C-2 Level Requirements

Enclosed area recommended  
Simple gymnastic (at trot/canter, no bounces)  
4 fences max.  
6-8 obstacles, 3' max. height  
2-3 oxers (may be 1-stride), not part of  
combination; may be in line if enough room  
Longeing equipment appropriate for horse.

**C-2:** Slightly more difficult turns  
Safe /related distances;  
bending lines

**WHERE TO GO FOR HELP:** Regions throughout the country must work to ensure that all ratings are recognized as important, even vital, to the USPC goal of developing well-rounded, capable horsemen. These guidelines are a beginning and should be read carefully by all those involved with Pony Club.

If problems or questions arise, it is important to know that there is someone to turn to for answers. The D1 - C2 Program Committee is anxious to ensure that USPC, as an educational organization, is meeting the needs and expectations of all Pony Club members and their families. This committee works closely with the Curriculum-Standards Committee, the C-3 Program Committee and the National Testing Committee. Please feel free to call on the current members of these committees if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions.

**MEMBERS OF THE D1 - C2 PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

Refer to the current Annual Directory for names, addresses and phone numbers of the committee members.