



The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY FOR WESTERN C-1/C-2 LEVEL CERTIFICATES

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc., establishes Standards of Proficiency within the framework of the international Pony Club movement as the educational curriculum for a program of instruction and evaluation of its members for certifications in three primary areas: Horse Management, On the Flat, and Over Fences (English only).

The D-Levels offer 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 related equipment. The D-Level Horse Management focuses on acquiring the knowledge and skills related to care and ground handling of the mount. The D level-member may also learn and be evaluated on riding independently on the flat, with control, maintaining a reasonably secure position at the walk, jog and lope. All D certificates are awarded at the club/center level.

The C-1 and C-2 Levels are for the Pony Club member learning to become an active horseman, to care independently for his/her mount and tack, and to understand the reasons for what he or she is doing with the mount while either mounted or unmounted. Similar to the D-level, the C-1 and C-2 levels focus on advancement and evaluation of Horse Management skills as well as show development towards a secure, independent seat and increasing control and confidence in all phases of riding, flat or obstacle/trail. The C-1 and C-2 certificates are awarded at the club/center level.

The H-B, C-3, B, H-HM/H/H-A and A Certifications are facilitated on a national basis and require a greater depth of knowledge and proficiency than the earlier certifications. 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. Each of the national-level certifications have a minimum age requirement.

The H-B Certification covers Horse Management knowledge and skills that demonstrate increasing awareness, education, and competence in the care and handling of horses and in teaching the same skills to others. It reflects the theory and study as well as the practical aspects of unmounted horse management that can be expected of a high school curriculum. The minimum age for the H-B certification is 13 years old.

The H-HM/H/H-A Certification requires the knowledge, experience and maturity to evaluate and care for a mount's needs efficiently and in a variety of circumstances, to competently ground train horses; and to teach riding and horse care to others. It reflects the theory and study as well as the practical aspects of unmounted horse management that can be expected of a college curriculum. The minimum age for the H-H-M/H/H-A certification is 16 years old.

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

The C-3 Certification reflects a basis of competence in riding, ground schooling, and horse care that will make possible a lifetime of pleasure with horses. The certification has both demonstration and discussion components. It is the first of the riding certifications to evaluate a member's ability to seamlessly transfer their riding skills from their own horse to an unknown horse. If the C-3 riding test is passed before the H-B, the member becomes a C+. The minimum age for the C-3 certification is 13 years old.

The B Certification is for the active horseman and Pony Club members who are interested in acquiring further knowledge and proficiency in riding. The B is able to ride experienced mounts, both their own and others, with confidence and control. Similar to the C-3, the certification has both demonstration and discussion components. 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. The minimum age for the B certification is 14 years old.

The A Certification is the highest riding certification available to members. The A is able to ride mounts at various levels of schooling with judgment, tact and effectiveness; to train young mounts; and to re-train spoiled mounts. Like the C-3 and the B, the A understands and is able to explain the reasons for what he or she is doing as well as demonstrate the skills required. The A understands and demonstrates a variety of training techniques and discusses their training techniques as a trainer. The minimum age requirement to take the A certification is 16 years old.

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. Please visit www.ponyclub.org for a list of activities. Achieving a certification does not necessarily qualify the Pony Club member for competition in any horse sport, discipline, or activity. Further study and preparation for a particular activity, including working as a team member, is necessary.



Our Mission:

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc., develops character, leadership, confidence and a sense of community in youth through a program that teaches the care of horses and ponies, riding and mounted sports.

Our Core Values:

Horsemanship with respect to health-care, nutrition, stable management, handling and riding a mount safely, correctly and with confidence

Organized teamwork including cooperation, communication, responsibility, leadership, mentoring, teaching and fostering a supportive yet competitive environment

Respect for the horse and self through horsemanship; for land through land conservation; and for others through service and teamwork

Service by providing an opportunity for members, parents, and others to support the Pony Club program locally, regionally and nationally through volunteerism

Education at an individual pace to achieve personal goals and expand knowledge through teaching others

Explanation of H-HM/H/H-A Level:

H-HM: A candidate who passes all requirements of the H-A test and is an H-B member

H: A candidate who passes all requirements of the H-A test and is also a C-3 member

H-A: A candidate who passes all requirements of the H-A test and is also a B member

HEADGEAR: A properly fitted equestrian helmet, securely fastened, containing certification that it meets or exceeds the criteria established by a national or international safety body, is required to participate in any USPC activity (see USPC Policy 0125A).

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THE C-1 STANDARD

Horse Management Expectations

The candidate should show a developing awareness of cause and effect in the care of own mount. He/she should be familiar with local common horse terms. Assistance is recommended in demonstration of bandaging.

Turnout/Tack

- Attire to be correct according to the Western Rules and Guidelines, page 8. Pony Club pin, medical armband, and a properly fitted equestrian helmet, securely fastened, containing certification that it meets or exceeds the criteria established by a national or international safety body, is required to participate in any USPC activity (see USPC Policy 0125A). Long hair neatly up or back. No inappropriate jewelry.
- Mount to be well groomed, reflecting regular care with a healthy coat; no sweat or dirt. Mane and tail brushed with little, if any, dandruff. External areas around sheath/udder clean. Feet picked out and reflecting regular farrier care. Eyes, nose, lips, dock clean.
- Tack to be safe, properly adjusted, supple and reflecting regular care. No jockeys or dust. All stress points clean. No cracked leather. Metal clean and polished and stirrup pads clean.
- Identify tack on own mount and discuss fit.

Conditioning

- Discuss the meaning and reasons for conditioning of mount.
- Describe how to condition mount for a particular Pony Club activity of your choice.
- Know the acceptable ranges for temperature, pulse and respiration for a mount at rest and the importance of these numbers.

Nutrition

- Describe how feeds are measured and weighed.
- Know amount and type of feed for own mount.
- Describe characteristics of good and bad feed, watering, and pasture.

Stable Management

- Discuss types of bedding appropriate for your area.
- Safely put a blanket on a mount.
- Demonstrate proper adjustment of blanket/sheet and halter.
- Discuss types and causes of stable vices.
- Describe and give reasons for three types of clipping.
- Describe conditions which foster internal and external parasites, procedure for parasite control in pasture and stall, ways to control flies, and bot eggs.
- Discuss general barn safety procedures for your barn or where your horse is stabled.
- Describe proper use of fire extinguisher and how to tell if it is fully charged.

Breeds, Pony Parts, Conformation & Lameness

- Identify good and bad points of basic leg conformation.
- Describe five common unsoundnesses as to location and outward appearance.

- Name three to four types of teeth found in a horse's mouth.
- Name five coat colors or patterns which include white on the body.
- Name one breed that excels in each of these disciplines: racing, dressage, games, vaulting, eventing, foxhunting, hunter/jumper, endurance, driving and western.

Travel Safety

- Discuss basic equipment needed for mount's safety and comfort during trailer travel.
- Demonstrate trailer safety check from trailer safety checklist on USPC website.
- Discuss safety precautions for riding on a trail including additional precautions during hunting season.

Record Book

- The C-1 is expected to keep a careful Record Book of all immunizations, veterinary visits, farrier visits, etc. The book must be brought to the test for review and critique. Must have records for at least 6 months. Records should reflect appropriate depth of knowledge for this level.

Health Care & Veterinary Knowledge

- Describe how to treat minor wounds.
- Discuss: Regular worming control for own mount; how and why to deworm new mounts in barn and use of fecal test.
- Know health care schedule for own mount including dates of inoculations (tetanus, encephalomyelitis, etc.), deworming, floating of teeth, shoeing.
- Know the reason for having a Coggins test done.

Introduction to Horse Sports

- List all the horse sports that are offered in USPC.

Teaching

- Demonstrate a safety and tack inspection for a D Pony Club member under direct supervision of Examiner.
- Explain to the D member the reason for the check, the process, and any safety issues found.

Land Conservation

- Name three different uses of land on which you, or others, ride. Examples: Farmland, fair grounds, crops, etc.
- If your region conducts an Eventing Rally, determine who owns the land where the rally is held and the total amount of acres owned.
- Identify one place in your area previously used for equestrian activities that is no longer available.

Leading & Longeing

- Discuss reasons for longeing.
- Discuss equipment necessary and safety procedures.
- Demonstrate jogging mount, moving mount actively forward from the whip, with smooth transitions.

Foot & Shoeing

- Discuss the five steps in shoeing.
- Recognize farrier tools and know their uses.
- Discuss causes of thrush and prevention.

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Bandaging

- Apply stable bandage under direct supervision and with assistance of examiner.

THE C-1 STANDARD Riding Expectations

Candidate should ride with confidence and control on the flat and over obstacles and patterns demonstrating a basic western balanced position and use of natural aids. The candidate should begin riding mount freely forward in balance and rhythm while developing a light contact appropriate to bit and an independent seat.

Riding on the Flat

- Ride test consistently demonstrating Riding Expectations.
- Demonstrate supplying exercises for rider without stirrups at walk.
- Demonstrate mount's warm-up routine for everyday work.
- Discuss candidate's warm-up for both rider and mount with examiner.
- Work mount at walk, jog and lope, with smooth transitions, demonstrating correct bend, performing straight lines on center-line, and quarter lines. Ride large and small circles and figure eights with simple transitions at each gait.
- Demonstrate long, loose and light contact at walk.
- Back 2-3 steps.
- Discuss aids for and then demonstrate a simple turn-around (spin) in each direction.
- Discuss performance with examiner on the following; the rider's basic western balanced position, whether or not mount was moving freely forward in balance and rhythm, and whether rider established a light contact (appropriate to bit) and use of natural aids.

Riding Obstacles and Patterns

- Ride through obstacles and patterns as per Riding Expectations.
- Ride over small gymnastic grid of poles set at appropriate length for mount. Demonstrate proper hand position for mount over poles.
- Complete an obstacle course of six to ten obstacles, to include poles (walk and jog over), halt, walk, jog, lope, back with a change of direction, turns, side-passing, a single-hand maneuver (such as a gate or pick-up), and navigation around cones or upright poles.
- Complete a simple pattern
- Discuss performance with Examiner, including steadiness of pace and ways ride could be improved.

Riding in the Open

- Ride safely with control in a group, on a suitable mount, at the walk, jog and lope
- Discuss and demonstrate riding safely over varied terrain, incorporating as many of the following elements as local conditions allow: hills, small/shallow ditches, flat open areas and shallow streams as available.
- Discuss performance with Examiner giving reasons for any disobedience.

THE C-2 STANDARD

Horse Management Expectations

The candidate should show a solid awareness of cause and effect in horse management skills. Assistance/supervision is allowed in the demonstrations of bandaging, longeing, and loading mount.

Turnout/Tack & Bits

- Attire to be correct according to the Western Rules and Guidelines, page 8. Pony Club pin, medical armband, and a properly fitted equestrian helmet, securely fastened, containing certification that it meets or exceeds the criteria established by a national or international safety body, is required to participate in any USPC activity (see USPC Policy 0125A). Long hair neatly up or back. No inappropriate jewelry. Boots polished and in good repair. Spurs (if used) polished and put on properly.
- Mount to be thoroughly groomed, reflecting regular care with a healthy coat; no sweat or dirt. Mane and tail brushed with little, if any, dandruff. Sheath or udder showing regular attention. Feet picked out and reflecting regular farrier care. Eyes, nose, lips, dock clean.
- Tack to be safe, clean and properly adjusted, reflecting regular care/conditioning with metal polished. No jockeys or dust, no cracked leather, and all stress points clean.
- Explain reasons for equipment used on own mount for flat work and over fences.
- Demonstrate proper adjustment and reason for tack used on mount.
- Name three different types of bits.
- Discuss the basic action of the snaffle bit and the curb.

Conditioning

- Present a written outline of a six-to-eight-week conditioning and feeding program in preparation for a specific competition of candidate's choice.
- Know vital signs of own mount at work.
- Measure and record pulse, temperature and respiration of own mount at rest under supervision with assistance if necessary.

Nutrition

- Describe own mount's ration when developing fitness, maintaining fitness, taking day off, sick, roughed out.
- Look at a feed label and identify sources of protein, carbohydrates, and fat (can bring own label).

Stable Management

- Describe caring for a mount efficiently and economically when:
Stabled – feed and water schedule, minerals needed, clothing, exercise, grooming.
At grass – safety check of pasture, fencing, water, mineral supply, shelter, feed, and grooming.
- Discuss knowledge of safety measures, preparation and care of mount and equipment on day of strenuous work, including feeding schedule, consideration of mount's condition, consideration of climate and terrain, cooling out, treatment of any injuries, and making mount comfortable.
- Discuss pasture safety and fencing.
- Name three toxic plants in your area and describe appearance.

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- Discuss emergency information that should be posted at all barns.

Breeds, Pony Parts, Conformation & Lameness

- Name five basic conformation qualities that you want in a mount for your own use, and how they affect the basic movement and soundness (i.e., sloping shoulder means longer stride).
- Discuss angles of shoulder and hip of own mount.
- Name and locate on a mount the following unsoundnesses: ringbone, curb, bowed tendons, sidebone, spavin, navicular, splint, thoroughpin, sprains.
- Identify and/or describe parts of the horse's mouth to include bars, lips, incisors, molars, wolf teeth and canines.
- Differentiate between: tobiano and overo; dun and buckskin; grey and cremello.
- Discuss how conformation of own mount is related to breed.

Travel Safety

- Be able to load and unload, with assistance, an experienced, co-operative mount.

Record Book

- Record Book (health, maintenance, immunizations) must be kept up to date and brought to test. Must have records for at least 9 months prior to test. Records should reflect appropriate depth of knowledge for this level.

Health Care & Veterinary Knowledge

- List annual immunizations and health requirements appropriate for your area.
- List prevalent internal parasites in your area.
- Describe routine parasite prevention for your mount.
- Describe how tetanus and strangles are transmitted.
- Explain the need for the regular care of teeth.

Teaching

- Demonstrate knowledge of safe grooming, handling and tacking up by assisting a D-1 or D-2 to prepare for turnout under direct supervision of Examiner. Explain to the D member what the appropriate steps are and what safety procedures should be followed. Assess turnout and equipment for safety and explain to the D member any safety concerns and how to fix them.
- Candidate must bring a letter from DC that he/she is assisting in simple unmounted instructional programs for D-level Pony Club members with supervision.

Land Conservation

- Name the zoning requirements for the county in which you keep your horse. Example: A minimum of 10 acres is required to keep one horse.
- Know what public land is available for riding in your county.

Longeing

- Discuss methods, equipment, and safety precautions for longeing.
- Longe own mount, with assistance if necessary, at walk and trot in both directions in an enclosed area while demonstrating the correct use of equipment, body position, posture, and voice.

Foot & Shoeing

- Discuss reasons for shoeing versus not shoeing.
- Recognize and describe good and bad shoeing.
- If shod, discuss features of own mount's shoes.
- Describe use of a foot poultice.

Bandaging

- Apply a shipping and stable bandage, under supervision of examiner, and give reasons for use.
- Discuss possible effects of poor bandaging.

THE C-2 STANDARD Riding Expectations

Candidate should ride with confidence and control on the flat and over obstacles and patterns, demonstrating a secure western balanced position and progress toward an independent seat and coordinated use of aids. The candidate should begin to initiate free forward movement, establishing balance and rhythm while developing a light contact appropriate to bit.

Riding on the Flat

- Discuss the meaning of the Riding Expectations. Ride consistently demonstrating riding test expectations.
- Demonstrate warm-up for flat work including rider exercises.
- Discuss candidate's warm-up for rider and mount.
- Discuss warm-up schedule for three different activities of candidate's choice.
- Work mount at walk, jog and lope, changing directions at least twice in each gait, using coordinated aids, maintaining even rhythm, balance and impulsion and smooth transitions.
- Demonstrate large and small circles, figure-8s, serpentines and work on the center or quarter lines to develop suppleness and straightness.
- Demonstrate walk to extended walk, jog to extended jog.
- Stop squarely and stand quietly for five seconds.
- Ride mount without stirrups at all gaits.
- Discuss aids for and demonstrate a reinback of 2-3 steps.
- Discuss aids for and then demonstrate leg yield at walk.
- Develop a hand gallop from a lope and return to lope smoothly.
- Perform 2-3 simple-turn around (spins) in each direction.
- Discuss performance with examiner including the rider's position, and whether mount was moving forward in balance and rhythm.

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Riding Obstacles and Patterns

- Discuss reasons for adjusting stirrups and rein length for different types of work.
- Develop a plan of how to ride an obstacle course.
- Ride course according to plan.
- Discuss performance with Examiner, including whether control was maintained throughout the course.
- Rider should demonstrate secure Western basic balanced position over obstacles, showing control and use of aids.
- Develop plan to ride a pattern.
- Discuss performance with Examiner, including whether control was maintained throughout the pattern.

Riding in the Open

- Ride in a group at the walk, jog and lope on a suitable mount.
- Demonstrate riding safely over varied terrain, as conditions allow. Discuss safety measures when riding over varied footing, i.e. water, mud, rocks, ice, bog, hard ground, sand, pavement.
- Ride over five to seven obstacles.
- Discuss performance with Examiner, including reasons for any disobedience.

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Information for C-1/C-2 Level Candidates

Requirements for All Candidates

- Be a Pony Club Member in Good Standing.
- Be recommended by the District Commissioner (DC) or Center Administrator (CA).
- Have a thorough knowledge of requirements of the level being tested and be able to discuss and/or demonstrate any requirements from all previously attained standards.
- Candidate must be evaluated on and successfully meet the standards on all sections of the selected test before being awarded the new certificate.
- Adhere to the USPC code of Conduct at all times.

Attire

Safe, workmanlike attire, including proper footwear, must be worn in the barn area and when working around mounts. Refer to the Horse Management Handbook.

Refer to C Standards of Proficiency, in this document, for proper Turnout and mounted attire.

An USPC medical information armband must be on the candidate's person, as described by the Horse Management Handbook.

A properly fitted equestrian helmet, securely fastened, containing certification that it meets or exceeds the criteria established by a national or international safety body, is required to participate in any USPC activity (see *USPC Policy 0125A*) and must be worn during Turnout and when riding and longeing. Safety vest wear is at the discretion of the member, parent, or guardian.

Presentation of Mount for Turnout

Standards for Turnout are indicated in the Standards of Proficiency and on each appropriate test sheet. Refer to the Horse Management Handbook.

For the purposes of the test, braiding of the mount is not allowed.

All tack must be clean, show regular care and suppleness, and be well adjusted and in good repair.

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

Equipment

While the C-level Standards of Proficiency are not specific to any riding sport or discipline, saddlery and bitting for C-level should comply with the Horse Management Handbook rules on Saddlery and Bitting, as well as with any current USPC discipline rules for Saddlery and Bitting.

Appropriate Horse

USPC's commitment to safety for all horses and riders is paramount during a test at any level. Candidates may bring their own, borrowed, leased or rented mounts to a test. They may present with more than one mount at a test. The care of each of the candidates' mounts at a test is the responsibility of the candidates themselves.

It is the responsibility of the candidate and his/her parent(s) or guardian to bring to or arrange for an appropriate mount(s) to the test. The properly conditioned mount(s) must be capable of the skills required for the level being tested, to include standing for evalua-

tion of the Turnout, bandaging and longeing. For the riding sections, the mounts must be capable of completing the flat, longeing and jumping phases at the heights indicated at the appropriate levels.

While not recommended, the sharing of suitable mounts at a test is allowed. However, sharing should only be permitted if 1) each proposed candidate is familiar with the mount and has longed or ridden it prior to the test, successfully and safely at the level being evaluated, On the Flat and Over Fences, as applicable; and 2) each proposed candidate informs the test organizer of condition and the test schedule. As the safety of horses and riders are paramount, if Examiners determine that shared mounts' condition or other circumstances preclude the continued participation of those mounts in the test, they may indicate the candidates in question must withdraw from the test.

Failure to follow these guidelines will make it difficult for the candidate to meet the standards on that given day or testing experience.

Information on Conducting a Test

Please review the Guidelines for Club and Center-Level Testings found online at www.ponyclub.org.

Clubs and Centers must facilitate a testing opportunity for members a minimum of twice a year. Dates are determined by the District Commissioners (DC) or Center Administrators (CA). This may be done within the club/center, in partnership with another club/center, or organized by the Region. By networking with other clubs/centers within the Region to establish group tests with other clubs/centers, increased opportunities to rate can be made available to members.

At the D/C Levels, tests are designed to and should be conducted in one day. If, due to unforeseen circumstances (such as weather or footing), it is not possible to complete a test in one day, all requirements must be tested/completed within a one-month period if possible.

A testing should be educational, working session, covering requirements listed on the tested Standards. However, it is not a "lesson" on each section.

Oral testing and/or demonstration are required for all parts of the horse management phases. Written tests are not allowed. However, at the discretion of the Examiner(s), members may use their own writing and/or drawing to convey their answers during the questioning and/or discussion periods of the test.

There is no set time limit between taking any of the C-level Tests, but each certificate must be attained in the proper order, and no levels may be skipped. Usually the horse management skills and knowledge must be attained prior to presentation of or any riding skills evaluation. However, there may be exceptions due to weather and facilities. If the riding sections are evaluated prior to the Horse Management sections, then the award of the certificate must wait until the successful evaluation of the Horse Management section. Similarly, the On the Flat sections of the riding skills must be evaluated prior to presentation for the Over Fences evaluation. If members do not meet standard in any portion of the On the Flat section, they may present to the Over Fences section of the evaluation only with the approval of the Examiner. If they subsequently meet standards in the Over Fences evaluation, the award of the certificate

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must wait until the successful evaluation of the On the Flat is complete.

The DC, CA, and/or an adult designated by the club, center, or Region, must be present throughout the testing day. In addition, USPC strongly encourages the use of "Impartial Observers" at the tests.

Retest Information

A candidate may retest only if the candidate qualifies for a retest by passing the minimum number of sections stated on the test sheet and the original Examiner has recommended the candidate to retest. Those testing during the current year have until August 31 of the following year to retest. Candidates must arrange for retests through their DC/CA. Please refer to each test sheet for each certificate level for specific requirements for retests.

Examiners (D-1 through C-2)

Please review the Guidelines for Club and Center Level Testings found online at www.ponyclub.org

The DC, CA, or in the case of a regional test, the RS, selects the Examiners for the D-1 through C-2 tests, based on recommendations of USPC leaders and volunteers and/or participation in a regionally-facilitated Standards of Proficiency clinic.

Examiners should be selected with care, should be completely knowledgeable of the Standards of Proficiency at the level(s) they are testing, as well as the level(s) above and below the one(s) they are testing. DCs, CAs, or RSs must ensure that Examiners have a copy of all current USPC Standards, test sheets, and study guides prior to the test.

Examiners should be mature and sensitive to both young people and their adult supervisors.

Examiners must conduct tests in an educational framework, setting a positive tone that makes every effort to draw the best from each candidate, without allowing the test to become a lesson on the skill in question.

While the test is intended to be a learning experience, Examiners should take care to encourage the candidates to express what they know, rather than a demonstration of what the Examiner knows.

Examiners should bear in mind that candidates and their responses and performances may range from adequate to superior, and anyone within that range, that "Meets Standard" or better, should pass.

Responsibilities and Authorities

The USPC Vice President of Instruction is responsible for the Standards of Proficiency and the general USPC certifications program. While the actual management may be delegated, for club/center level tests, the club DC or CA is responsible for the scheduling, organizing, and conduct of the tests. This may be in coordination or cooperation within the Region or other clubs/centers.

Any special testing requests, including exceptions or exemptions, must be submitted to the USPC National Office, Attention: Director of Instruction, through the District Commissioner and the Regional Supervisor. The Director of Instruction forwards exceptions or exemptions requests to the Chair, D-1 through C-2 Program Committee, for recommendations. The Vice President of Instruction is the final approval authority.

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STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY FOR WESTERN C-1/C-2 LEVEL CERTIFICATES

Western Rules and Guidelines

Bits and Biting:

D-1 – D-3 certificates: Snaffle bit, short shank bit with shanks not to exceed 5" in length. Other bits appropriate to the level of the horse and rider may be considered based on the experience level of the horse and/or rider. Snaffle bits are to be used with split reins, mecate reins or roping reins only. Short shank bits may be used with split reins, roping reins, or romal reins, and must have a flat curb chain at least ½" wide. All reins are to be held in a manner appropriate to their use.

C-1 – A certifications: Permitted to use any bit appropriate to the training level of the horse, and must utilize reins in an appropriate manner for the bit setup.

Bit list: Snaffle, Short shank, Curb, Bosal Hackamore (mechanical hackamores not permitted), and other appropriate bits that follow AQHA guidelines. (Physical requirements for bits, chin straps, and hackamores to follow AQHA guidelines unless otherwise noted)

Reins:

Approved types: The use of split reins, romal reins, and bosal reins (tied correctly with bosal, or snaffle and slobber straps) is strongly encouraged. Although not recommended, roping reins may be used by D1-3 riders only. Reins must be appropriate for the bit to which they are attached and must be attached directly to the bit or slobber straps.

Saddles and Pads:

Saddles may be any western-type saddle and must be appropriate to the rider and the horse. If back cinch is present, it must be attached to the front cinch with a cinch hobble.

Stirrups must have stirrup hobble present and in use around all stirrup leather pieces.

Pads must extend at least 1" beyond the borders of the saddle skirt for all skirt shapes.

Bridles/Headstalls:

Approved types: Split-ear, single/double-ear, brow band, with or without a throatlatch. Breastcollars are appropriate if adjusted correctly.

Training Devices

D-1 – D-3: Although not recommended, riders are permitted to use leather nosebands with a standing martingale/tie-down. Rawhide nosebands may be worn but may not be used with a tie-down. Whips may be carried by D-level members only.

C-1 – A: Nosebands, cavessons, or tie-downs are not permitted. Training forks (or running martingales) German martingales or other leverage devices may not be used until the B certification level. If used, these devices must be adjusted correctly as per USPC guidelines.

Protective Equipment:

The use of splint boots or polo wraps on the front legs and skid boots on the hind legs is permitted. Bell boots are also acceptable. All equipment to be fitted using USPC guidelines.

Shoes/Shoeing:

Sliding plates may be used when appropriate but are not required for any certification level. Examiners must consider appropriateness of shoes to horse and not length of slide.

Riding Attire for Certifications:

D Level Attire: Rider to be in safe and neat attire: collared shirt with long or short sleeves, long pants with shirt tucked in, short or tall riding boots that cover the ankle and have a boot heel.

C-level attire may be worn by candidate but must be correct according to guidelines below.

C Level Attire: Button-up show shirts, or neat, Western-style shirts, with long sleeves and collar, as well as "slinky" shirts and vests are appropriate attire for certifications. Neatly pressed jeans or slacks, worn with belt. Pants must cover boot tops.

Other:

Boots: Must cover the ankle, have a heel and smooth sole. Boots having a severely pointed toe are discouraged.

Belt: Required when mounted unless interferes with specific activity.

Chaps: Permitted for certifications but not required. If worn, must be properly fitted. Chinks and half chaps may also be worn for activities other than certifications.

Spurs: For D level certificates, shank and rowel no longer than 2"; for a C certificates, no longer than 3"; for B/A certifications, no longer than 4". Rowel to be blunt and is not to exceed 1" for any certification level.

If spurs are worn, the heel of the boot needs to extend out (spur lip/rest) so spur does not come off heel. Spurs must be attached with a spur strap worn over the top of the boot. Candidate may also have a spur tie-down under the heel as long as it is made of breakable material.

Headgear: A properly fitted equestrian helmet, securely fastened, containing certification that it meets or exceeds the criteria established by a national or international safety body, is required to participate in any USPC activity (see USPC Policy 0125A).