



## The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY FOR D-LEVELS

(Revised January 1, 2009)

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc., establishes Standards of Proficiency within the framework of the international Pony Club movement as the curriculum for a program of instruction and evaluation of its members for ratings.

**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.

**The H/H-A Rating** requires 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.

*Pony Club members may choose to follow one or all of three riding tracks. They are: Traditional, 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 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. Like the B, the A 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.

**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, and Polocrosse. **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 Levels:

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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## THE D-1 STANDARD

### Riding Test Expectations

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

#### Riding on the Flat

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

#### Riding Over Fences

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

#### Riding in the Open

Not applicable.

#### Horse Management Expectations

*The candidate is a beginning-level horse manager, willing to learn the simple routine necessary for safe handling of quiet, well-trained horses. His or her knowledge will vary widely depending on age, educational level, and experience.*

#### Turn Out/Tack

Rider in safe and neat attire: collared shirt with long or short sleeves, long pants with shirt tucked in, short or tall riding boots or shoes that cover the ankle and have a boot heel, Pony Club pin and an ASTM/SEI approved helmet. Long hair neatly up or back. Half-chaps, gloves, show coat and belt optional. No inappropriate jewelry.  
Mount neatly brushed; feet picked out (with assistance); showing farrier care.  
Tack safe and neat (properly adjusted with assistance if necessary).

#### Conditioning

Know one reason for cooling out mount after exercise.

#### Nutrition

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

#### Stable Management

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

#### Pony Parts, Conformation & Lameness

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

#### Travel Safety

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

#### Record Book

Not applicable.

#### Health Care & Veterinary Knowledge

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

#### Teaching

Not applicable. (See D-3 Teaching.)

#### Land Conservation

Verbally list three different places in your area where you see horse activities taking place. Include where you have your Pony Club mounted meetings.

#### Leading & Longeing

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

#### Foot & Shoeing

Give one reason to pick out feet.

#### Bandaging

Not applicable.

## THE D-2 STANDARD

### Riding Test Expectations

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

#### Riding on the Flat

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

#### Riding Over Fences

Ride over fences using Riding Test Expectations.  
Maintain jumping position at the trot on the flat and over ground poles.  
In an enclosed area, ride a simple stadium course of four to five obstacles of cross bars and verticals (no spreads). The majority of fences should be set at, but not exceed, 18".  
Discuss with Examiner ways to improve ride.

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### **Riding In The Open**

Ride safely and considerately on public and private property, in a group, at the walk and trot.

Ride with control, up and down hills, at the walk and trot.

Jump a minimum of three simple and natural obstacles. The majority of fences should be set at, but not exceed, 18". No ditches, banks or water. May be jumped at the trot.

### **Horse Management Expectations**

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

### **Turn Out/Tack**

Rider in safe and neat attire: collared shirt with long or short sleeves, breeches, jodhpurs or riding tights with shirt tucked in, short or tall riding boots or shoes that cover the ankle and have a boot heel, Pony Club pin and an ASTM/SEI approved helmet. Long hair neatly up or back. Half-chaps, gloves, show coat and belt optional. No inappropriate jewelry.

Mount to be clean and well brushed, with feet picked out and showing farrier care. Eyes, nose, lips, and dock wiped off.

Tack to be safe and clean, (properly adjusted with assistance, if necessary) with attention to stitching, girth, and stirrups. No obvious jockeys or heavy dust.

Name and locate 15 parts of saddle and bridle. Identify 3 different bits.

Apply (with assistance of examiner if needed) protective boots and bell boots, if appropriate, to mount's leg.

### **Conditioning**

Know basic condition of own mount.

Describe ways to know if mount is properly cooled out.

### **Nutrition**

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

### **Stable Management**

Groom mount, pick out feet with assistance if needed.

Name 5 grooming tools and demonstrate how to use them.

Tack up and untack independently.

List three examples of unsafe equipment.

Name three common stable vices.

Bring a stall card for own mount to test. Discuss what we put on a stall card.

### **Pony Parts, Conformation & Lameness**

Name and locate any 15 parts of the mount.

Name and describe six colors of mounts.

Name and describe five markings of ponies.

Name four horse or pony breeds.

### **Travel Safety**

Know the basic rules for riding on public roads in your state.

Name two ways you can help your mount be safe in a trailer.

### **Record Book**

Not applicable.

### **Health Care & Veterinary Knowledge**

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

### **Teaching**

Not applicable. (See D-3 Teaching.)

### **Land Conservation**

Talk with grandparents, parents, instructors and/or older friends/neighbors about where they rode when they were young and how it is different from today.

### **Leading & Longeing**

Lead mount correctly in hand and while tacked up.

Do walk-halt-walk transitions in hand.

Lead mount in and out of stall safely, tie up in appropriate place with quick-release knot.

### **Foot & Shoeing**

Know reasons for daily foot care.

Give two reasons why the farrier regularly checks your mount.

### **Bandaging**

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

## **THE D-3 STANDARD**

### **Riding Test Expectations**

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

### **Riding on the Flat**

Ride on flat using Riding Test Expectations.

Demonstrate correct mounting (using mounting block if necessary).

Adjust stirrups and girth with feet in the stirrups while mounted at the halt.

Perform balancing and suppling exercises for rider at walk and trot under direction of examiner.

Ride mount on flat demonstrating 20-meter circles showing correct positioning in both directions at walk, at sitting and rising trot with correct diagonals and at the canter with correct leads.

Ride without stirrups at the sitting trot.

Demonstrate an increase and decrease of speed either alone or with others as appropriate.

Demonstrate a halt followed by a simple step back.

Demonstrate emergency dismount at the trot.

Discuss performance with examiner including rider's basic balanced position, and whether or not circles were round and natural aids were used correctly

### **Riding Over Fences**

Ride over fences using Riding Test Expectations.

Ride over small gymnastic grid of trot poles followed by a cross rail, then a vertical set at, but not exceed, 2'6" set at appropriate distances for mount's stride.

Jump a simple stadium course of five to seven obstacles. The majority of fences should be set at, but not exceed, 2'6".

Discuss performance, reasons for any disobediences.

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## **Riding in the Open**

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

Jump four to five simple cross-country obstacles. The majority of fences should be set at, but not exceed, 2'6".

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

Discuss ways to control a mount in the open.

Discuss performance with Examiners.

## **Horse Management Expectations**

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

### **Turn Out/Tack**

Rider in safe, neat, clean attire: collared shirt (polo, turtleneck, dress shirt or ratcatcher) with long or short sleeves, breeches, jodhpurs or riding tights with shirt tucked in, belt (if belt loops), tall boots or paddock boots with or without half chaps, Pony Club pin and ASTM/SEI approved helmet. Long hair neatly up or back. Gloves, neckwear and show coat optional. No inappropriate jewelry.

Mount to be well brushed (no sweat), clean (no dirt), with feet picked out, showing farrier care. Mane and tail brushed and eyes, nose, lips, and dock wiped off.

Tack to be safe – especially stitching on stirrups/girth – and clean – no jockeys or dust, stress points clean, stirrup pads (if used) clean, and bit clean. All tack must be properly adjusted.

Describe formal attire, informal attire.

Describe proper adjustment of the snaffle bridle with cavesson noseband. Describe proper adjustment of curb chain if appropriate.

### **Conditioning/Nutrition**

Know 5-7 basic rules of feeding.

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

Know vital signs of mount at rest.

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

### **Stable Management**

Demonstrate and discuss how to clean a dirty/soiled stall.

Demonstrate the proper steps and methods for removing manure and wet areas, how to bank a stall, and discuss the reasons for and benefits of regular stall cleaning for the health and safety of your mount. For testing purposes, a soiled horse trailer may be used.

Demonstrate and discuss the proper methods of hanging a water bucket and haynet/haybag, hanging both at a proper height for your mount, at either a trailer or stall. Discuss the different needs of your horse during a day rally or clinic, or overnight stay.

## **Pony Parts, Conformation & Lameness**

Describe how to measure height of mount.

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

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

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

### **Travel Safety**

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

Know procedure for mounted group crossing a public roadway.

Discuss the proper procedure for loading and unloading a mount.

### **Record Book**

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

### **Health Care & Veterinary Knowledge**

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

### **Introduction to Horse Sports**

Name five horse sports that are offered in USPC.

### **Teaching**

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

**No child is responsible for the safety of another child. There must always be adult supervision.**

### **Land Conservation**

Name three important rules when riding across privately-owned land.

Write thank-you notes to two landowners who support your club and tell them why you appreciate being able to use their land.

If you ride on public land, write a thank-you note to the manager or contact person.

### **Leading & Longeing**

Demonstrate correctly jogging mount, moving mount forward with whip (if necessary).

Lead safely from both sides.

### **Foot & Shoeing**

Describe obvious signs of a foot needing shoeing or trimming.

### **Boots & Bandaging**

Describe critical areas protected by shipping bandages or boots and give reasons for their use. Apply protective boots with supervision on own mount.

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## Information for D Candidates

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

- Be a Pony Club Member in Good Standing, as defined by club policy, having paid local, regional and national dues and fees.
- Be a member of Pony Club for 1 month or more, no minimum age limit, except as defined by Club policies for joining.
- Attain each rating before next level is attempted.
- 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 tested on and pass all sections of the test completely and in the appropriate area/arena/open terrain before being awarded the new Rating.
- Any special testing requests including exceptions or exemptions must be submitted to the USPC National Office, through the DC. These requests will be reviewed on an individual basis and the final decision for any exception will be the responsibility of the D-1 through C-2 Program Committee Chair and the Vice President of Instruction.

### Attire

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

Refer to D Standards of Proficiency in this document, for proper inspection and mounted attire.

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

### Equipment

Saddlery and biting for USPC Testing should comply with the Horse Management General Rules on Saddlery and Biting and with the USPC Eventing Rules for Saddlery and Biting, D Level Riders. Whips, no longer than 43.3 inches (110 cm) including lash, will be allowed. Any rulebook change following publication of the current Horse Management Handbook will supersede these rules.

All bits with more than one point of attachment (i.e. gag, Pessoa, elevators) must have one rein attached so that the snaffle action of the bit is in effect. If other bit actions are to be used, two reins will be required. At the D level, converters will be allowed on Pelham bits. If the Pessoa type bit is used, a single rein may be attached to the first or second ring. If a third or lower ring is used, a second rein must be attached higher so that the snaffle action can be in effect when possible/desired.

### Testing Information

Testings may be held more often if practical for the club, but must be offered a minimum of twice a year. Testing dates are determined by the DC(s). By networking with other clubs within the Region to establish group ratings with other clubs, increased opportunities to rate can be made available to members.

A testing is designed to and should be conducted in one day if possible, or, 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.

A testing shall be an instructional, working session, covering only requirements listed in the Standards but must not become a “lesson” on each section.

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

Upon recommendation of the Examiner only, a candidate who does not meet standards on not more than one-third of tested sections may be retested within one month on only the sections not passed including riding sections.

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

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

### Appropriate Horse

It is the responsibility of the candidate and his/ her parent(s) or guardian to bring an appropriate mount to the testing. The conditioned mount must be capable of completing the flat and jumping phases at the heights indicated at the appropriate levels. Embracing USPC’s commitment to safety for all horses and riders is of the utmost importance. Failing to follow these guidelines will make it difficult for the candidate to meet the standard on that given day.

### Presentation of the Mount for Inspection

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

Braiding is not allowed.

### Examiners (D-1 through C-2)

Examiners are to be chosen by the DC(s).

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.

Examiners should be familiar with the Standards D through A. Examiners should be sensitive to young people and conduct the test in an educational framework.

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

The Examiners must set the tone of the testing as a teaching situation, making every effort to draw the best from each candidate, without allowing the test to become a lesson on the skill in question.

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

Examiners should bear in mind that there may be a range from adequate to superior, and anyone within that range, i.e. that meets Standard or better, should pass.

Refer to the current D-1 through C-2 testing guidelines, testing organizers guide, and the USPC Examiners Handbook, available online at [www.ponyclub.org](http://www.ponyclub.org) under Forms and Publications.

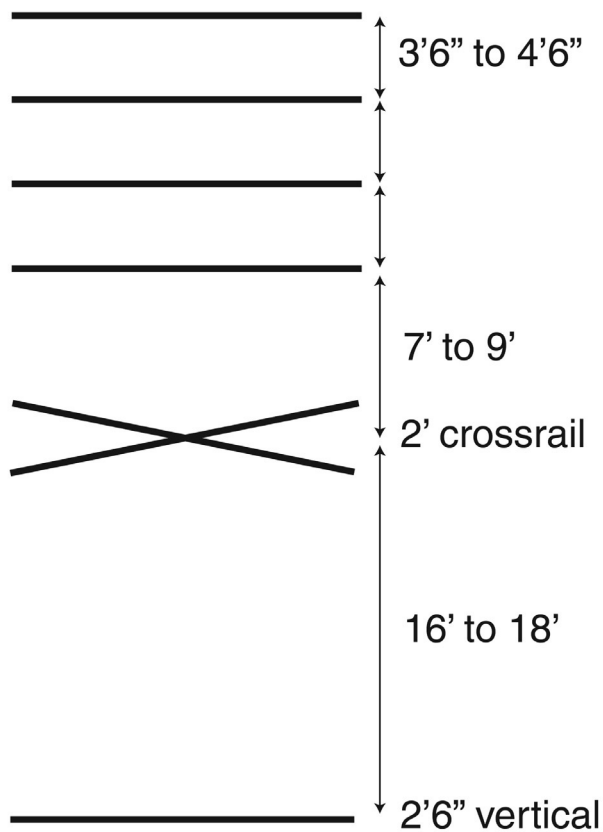
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## Over Fences

### D-3 Level

a. Gymnastic Jumping Exercises

Use 3 or more trot poles placed at 3'6" to 4'6" apart, according to mount's size. You might need to set different distances inside the gymnastic line as well.



b. Course Work: 6 to 8 jumps with verticals and ascending oxers (all with ground lines). The majority set to 2'6".

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