



Pony Club[®]

Where it all begins

USPC Examiner's Handbook D-1 – C-2

A guide for Active Members and Adults serving as Examiners at a
Certification of the USPC D-1 – C-2 Standards of Proficiency



The United States Pony Clubs, Inc.

THE USPC PLEDGE

As a member of the United States Pony Club,
I stand for the best in sportsmanship as well as in horsemanship.
I shall compete for the enjoyment of the game well played and take winning or losing in stride,
remembering that without good manners and good temper, sport loses its cause for being.
I shall endeavor to maintain the best tradition of the ancient and noble skill of horsemanship,
always treating my horse with consideration due a partner.

USPC MISSION STATEMENT

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. is an educational organization that builds the foundations of teamwork and sportsmanship through riding, mounted sports, and the care of horses and ponies, while developing and enhancing leadership, confidence, responsibility, and a sense of community in its youth and adult members.

USPC CORE VALUES

Horsemanship with respect to healthcare, 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.

USPC CODE OF CONDUCT

USPC is proud of its reputation for good sportsmanship, horsemanship, teamwork and well-behaved members. The USPC and the Organizers and Officials of USPC activities/competitions expect appropriate behavior from all Competitors, parent(s) and others participating in any USPC activity/competition.

- Inappropriate behavior is, but not limited to:
- Possession, use, or distribution of any illegal drugs or alcohol
- Assault
- Profanity, vulgar language or gestures
- Harassment – using words or actions that intimidate, threaten or persecute others
- Cheating
- Abusing a horse

Any USPC member or parent not conforming to the Code of Conduct is subject to the following action: The Officials of the competition may immediately suspend or expel an individual from the competition upon consulting with the Ground Jury.

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc.

USPC

Sportsmanship, Stewardship, Leadership through Horsemanship

Certifications and the Pony Club Experience

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. was founded in 1954 as a nonprofit national youth organization to teach riding and horsemanship through a formal educational program. The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. is unique because it places equal emphasis on the teaching of riding skills, horse-care fundamentals, and team participation with good sportsmanship.

The Standards of Proficiency are a carefully thought out set of skills – with a clear progression in each category. Participating in a Certification allows each member to demonstrate their skill progression and is an important part of the USPC program.

USPC Examiner's Handbook D-1 – C-2

Every attempt has been made to update this Handbook to include current USPC Policies and recent revisions to the Standards of Proficiency. Any changes or addenda to this Handbook will be posted on the USPC website. Please check any hard copy of this Handbook to ensure you are using the most current version. The revision date of any changes or addenda will be marked in the footer of the pages.

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INTRODUCTION

USPC local-level Examiners play a vital role in the functioning and image of The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. All certifications are based on the Pony Clubs Standards of Proficiency (SOPs). The SOPs and their related test sheets outline the skills and knowledge required, and test content, required at each level, D-1 through A. Only the SOPs themselves define the specific requirements for each level within the specific riding discipline or track. At each level, the testing must cover all sections required and may not include any other requirements beyond that which are in the SOPs for that level. However, members are responsible for and can be tested on requirements of any previous level achieved. These standards provide a developmental and progressive path that each member can pursue at their own individual pace.

Administering a Certification (testing) of any level requires skill. Reading this Handbook is the first step toward making yourself knowledgeable about the way USPC Club/Center certifications are accomplished. You will find it helpful to review this Handbook prior to each test you conduct.

There are several excellent tools available in this Handbook. Of particular interest are the topics covered in the Appendices, which can make the test experience a positive one for both Examiner and candidates.

THE PURPOSE OF A CERTIFICATION

The purpose of a Certification is to measure and define an individual member's current skill level and to recognize their achievement. The local club/center uses the SOPs as a basic guide or plan for their instructional programs. As a member progresses through the certification levels, the tests themselves should be a positive educational experience. They must be carried out by well qualified and well-prepared Examiners in an environment that encourages the member to "show and tell" what they know.

A USPC LOCAL-LEVEL EXAMINER ...

... COMBINES experience as a horseperson with a thorough knowledge of the USPC Standards of Proficiency ("Standards") and testing procedures and believes in Pony Club's mission.

... HAS KNOWLEDGE and experience of the USPC Standards. They may be a graduate Pony Club member, an Upper Level (UL) member, or an individual who has been involved with Pony Club as an instructor or other volunteer and has learned the Standards and procedures for conducting a local-level test.

... ACCEPTS responsibility both as a role model for candidates and as a representative of the national organization.

It is recommended that all local-level Examiners:

- Attend a Standards and Certifications clinic within the past two years.
- Hold a current First Aid card
- Review the Pony Club *Safety Booklet*.
- Review Guidelines for Delay, Cancellation or Disruption of Events Due to Severe Weather or Natural Disaster.
- Pass the “Its Hot Outside” training module (USPC Safety webpage).
- Pass the “Heads Up Concussion” training module.
- Read the *Horse Management Handbook* and check the Saddlery and Bitting section of the relevant discipline rulebook.
- Be thoroughly conversant with the testing directives for DC/CAs, and Organizers found in the *Guidelines for Local-Level Testings* prior to each testing.

It can be helpful to individuals interested in becoming an examiner at the local-level to apprentice a certification. If your region, club or center has a formal program, declare your interest to the Regional Instruction Coordinator (RIC) early so that you can gain experience in a nurturing environment. If they do not have a formal program, you can work with your RIC to plan an apprentice experience for yourself to become a local-level Examiner.

Good ways to learn how to be an effective Examiner:

- **Scribe:** Scribing can allow you to hear all the interactions between an Examiner and candidates. This gives you an idea how effective communication can help smooth the way for a less stressful test.
- **Assist:** Administer a small portion of the test while a mentor (an experienced Examiner) oversees you. By participating in a short portion of the test, it lessens the stress on you and allows you to learn while doing. Listen when your mentor goes over your performance. Feedback from your mentor is invaluable.
- **Build up to Success:** Test small groups of candidates and then work your way up to coordinating a large group of candidates. With experience comes the ability to juggle more aspects of a test.

Qualities of a USPC Local-Level Examiner

Local-level Examiners should...

- be knowledgeable about the Standards from the D-1 to the C-2 Level.
- possess objectivity and good judgment.
- be approachable, sensitive to young people, and able to conduct the test in a positive and educational framework.
- have a good understanding of Pony Club materials, programs, and goals.
- have the confidence to apply their knowledge in a tactful, diplomatic way while exercising fair and excellent judgment.
- be currently active in horse sports.
- demonstrate leadership ability, flexibility, and a sense of humor!

Examiner Attire

Examiners must dress appropriately, either in clean casual riding attire, which consists of a shirt with collar and sleeves, tucked in with a belt, and boots shined, or in appropriate paddock boots, (sneakers are not appropriate footwear) khakis or slacks, shirt with collar and sleeves, and tucked in, with a belt (if pants have belt loops). Examiners must keep in mind they are representing Pony Club Standards as much as the member is expected to. Proper turnout on the part of Examiners indicates a respectful, serious approach to candidates and the test as a whole.

Examiner Behavior and Demeanor

- Keep communication positive. Be careful of the words you choose to use. Examiners are expected to be diplomatic and respectful with candidates, parents and all associated with the test. Tests can be an emotional and physically demanding experience for both candidate and parents.
- When speaking with candidates, it is best to remove dark glasses.
- Stand when addressing candidates during the riding phases. Sitting in a lawn chair or on a fence conveys lack of effort and courtesy.
- Remember that facial expressions and body language can speak louder than words.
- The Examiner must not use profanity, or slang that could be found offensive to the members or their parents.
- Convey the impression of total commitment for the period of the testing. Obvious impatience, “clock watching,” or comments about neglected personal responsibilities are out of place and make candidates ill at ease.
- Cell phones should be turned off while testing.
- Smoking during a test is inappropriate.
- It is inappropriate for an Examiner to bring babies, young children or even older family members to a test. Should it prove unavoidable, arrangements for their care or entertainment elsewhere must be made in advance. Organizers should never be expected to house or feed persons unrelated to the test at their expense.
- Etiquette states that if you stay with a host family, care should be taken to conform to house rules.
- Be prepared for the unexpected.

WORKING WITH A TEST ORGANIZER

Good communication between Organizer and Examiner is key. It is to everyone's benefit to cover all these details at least four weeks before the test date.

Checklist of Topics to Cover:

- Test Date:** Once you accept a position as Examiner for a test, you must consider it a commitment.
- Location Requirements:**
 - The Facility must have the necessary terrain and obstacles for the test being administered. Ask about arenas, jump equipment and areas in which the candidates can ride in the open.
 - For the C-2 test, a longeing area needs to be enclosed, flat, and have good footing. Remind the candidates to bring their longeing equipment.

- A dressage court will be needed for Dressage Track candidates D-2 and above and for the C-1 and C-2 Eventing Track candidates.
 - Depending on the weather, shade or cooled or heated rooms are needed for discussions.
 - Riding areas need to have clear, mowed, marked areas for flatwork, and possibly an adjacent area for warm-up. All riding areas must have safe footing, free of holes and ruts.
 - Show Jumping and gymnastics need to have sufficient jumps to make a stadium course appropriate for the levels being tested. Back rails of oxers must use safety cups. Wooden dowels or wooden pencils can be used to modify non-breakaway cups. (See suggested jump course examples on the USPC website.)
 - Riding in the open: Cross-country fences need to be of sufficient number and types of fences and be of a level commensurate with the levels being tested. Terrain should be varied in accordance with the Standards.
- Fees** (if any) and rate of reimbursement for travel expenses:
- Examiner Fees vary widely across the country. Make sure you have a firm understanding with the Organizer if you expect to be paid a fee.
 - The host Club/Center should cover your travel expenses and your housing if an overnight stay is necessary.
- Schedule:** It is recommended that the Examiner set the test schedule. All parties well in advance (2-4 weeks) of the test date must approve this.
- Supplies:** Determine who will provide test sheets, pads of paper, black pens (better when test sheets are copied), whiteout, measuring tape clipboard, dowels, and tape measure. *You are responsible for bringing your own bad weather gear, emergency warm clothing, hat and/or sunglasses, sunscreen, and insect repellent as appropriate.*
- Contact Information:** Obtain information from local contacts, additional Examiners if any, and the test Organizer. Make sure that the appropriate people have your contact information.
- Travel Plans:** Communicate when you will arrive, and how you are traveling (by car/bus/train/plane/pony express).
- Miscellaneous:** If there is anything your hosts should know about you, advise them ahead of time (i.e., that you are a vegetarian, allergic to smoke or if you smoke, etc.). *Be prepared just in case! People mean well, but your personal information may not get to those who need it.*

CONDUCTING A CERTIFICATION TEST

Overall Test Guidelines

Testing Mission Statement: *USPC National Instruction Council advocates for an environment that enables each candidate to best demonstrate their competence. Examiners should be thorough, consistent, and fair in evaluating each candidate's performance for each phase of the certification and communicate the certification results in a positive and sensitive manner. Safety, as always, is a primary concern.*

Certifications (tests) are meant to be a learning experience but not necessarily an instructional experience. The test should be educational, but not deteriorate into a lesson on the topic/skill being addressed and may not go beyond the requirements listed on the Standards for that certification level. The amount of instruction that can be given in a testing situation decreases as the certification level increases. The D-1 level is a no fail test. If the candidate has not mastered the knowledge or test skill the examiner will teach the candidate until they have met the standard. At the D level, although the candidate should possess the basic skills described in the Standards, a greater amount of instruction and coaching can take place than at the C-2 level.

Note: In any section of a test sheet, which contains the wording “with assistance,” you may assist/teach the candidate to achieve the desired skill. These are essentially “no fail” blocks. Plan to teach the skill if it is not up to the Standards.

CREATING A SCHEDULE

General/Recommended Timeframes for D-1 to C-2 Tests that Include HM and Riding.

Groups of 2-4 per Examiner

D-1 and D-2 levels:

1-2 hours riding

1 hour unmounted

D-3 level:

1 ½-2 hours riding

2 hours unmounted

C-1 level:

2-2 ½ hours riding

2-2 ½ hours unmounted

C-2 level:

2 ½ -3 hours riding

2-2 ½ hours unmounted

**The D-1 to C-2 tests, which include all unmounted and mounted sections, are used in the development of these timeframes, and can be used as an example from which a modified schedule can be developed for any alternate progression certification track. Times do not include breaks and tack changes, Examiners finishing paperwork and briefing candidates on results. Unforeseen events or difficulties with mounts can also affect the ability to stay on schedule.*

See Appendix A for examples of suggested schedules. These can also be found on the USPC website.

Creating a Positive Atmosphere

Examiners should be open and receptive. If you don't know the answer to a question, find out by looking at the manual or online.

Be willing to explain questions further or rephrase questions until you are satisfied the candidate understands.

Be flexible when asking “how to” questions. Any practical response should be accepted. Be aware of the various methods that work, and when and where to apply these methods.

Examiner's Handbook D-1 – C-2

A balance should be maintained in all parts of the test. Be mindful of your areas of expertise.

The candidate's basic approach and style of riding may differ from yours. Although the candidate's approach may differ from that of the Examiner, the candidate passes as long as their performance is in accordance with the Standards. The emphasis is on practical application of knowledge as required by the test.

Each candidate is certified to the Standards, not on a comparative basis with other candidates.

A candidate may have been taught by a well-known instructor. This should not influence your decision. That instructor may not necessarily understand the Standards or the objectives of USPC.

Question candidates only to the point of being satisfied that their knowledge meets the Standards. However, if time allows, before finishing a session, ask the candidates if there is anything further they would like to discuss or demonstrate. This might indicate an "Exceeds Standard" in that particular section.

The candidate should not be judged as failing to meet the Standards until basic suggestions have been made and it is seen whether these can be maintained or not, especially in the mounted phase

Avoid overworking horses. Be conscious of the amount of time each horse is actually being used and allow for rest periods.

Before leaving the test site, thank the Organizer and your host family. Everyone has worked hard and deserves appreciation. A thank you note is a thoughtful gesture.

Some candidates involved in a testing may become emotionally upset. Organizers, DC/CA's, coaches and parents may also be affected. Understanding some of the reasons for this concern may help Examiners deal with the testing situation in a manner that will make it run more smoothly.

Candidates have the greatest potential for anxiety. They have prepared and hopefully have come ready to test. A little time spent helping candidates dispel their anxieties will prove worthwhile.

Organizers, for their part, have logistical and meteorological situations to deal with. DC/CA's may feel that if their candidate is not successful it reflects poorly on their local program. The DC/CA or RS who is also a parent has a double set of pressures, and these can have an effect on the candidate concerned. See examples of conflict resolution below.

Make sure that candidates understand that the Examiner(s) will give feedback. They often let them know if they met Standards in the current skill before moving on to the

next section. This is not meant to dismiss a candidate from the testing. If it is safe for the candidate to continue, it is highly encouraged.

How to Work with a Co-Examiner

If you are testing with another Examiner, remember to work cooperatively and to be respectful. Local-level tests are sometimes broken up into sections and each Examiner has specific sections that they test. This should be discussed prior to arriving at the certification.

If working together on the riding sections, depending on number of riders, take turns listening to the evaluations and critique of each riding section so you develop knowledge about each candidate.

All the Examiners should write on the test sheets to eliminate the perception of a “positive vs. challenging” Examiner. What you write should reflect what all Examiners saw and discussed with the candidate during the certification. Collaborate in writing comments on a section where a candidate might not be meeting the Standard, giving all viewpoints. The candidate must pass if there is not enough justification to adequately describe why they did not meet the Standards.

Discuss conflicts before a phase is over – all Examiners need to express opinions quietly and diplomatically. Ask for a redo or clarification on a topic from the candidate, when appropriate, at the level they are testing before you leave the field or knowledge session. This should not drag on or overwork the candidate or horse. The candidate should know during the critiques that there is a problem. (not that the Examiners may not be agreeing at this point, but that the candidate is possibly not meeting the Standards.) If there is a disagreement to a candidate meeting the standard the decision will be in favor of the candidate.

What goes on during Examiner discussions should not be repeated and is **strictly confidential**, during and after the certification.

Initial Briefing

All candidates, Examiners, impartial observer and parents are expected to attend the Initial Briefing. During this meeting, Examiners will learn to connect names to faces. (Being addressed incorrectly is a blow to a candidate's self-esteem.) Examiners will review the schedule of the test and should encourage questions at this meeting.

Topics to be Covered in Initial Briefing

- Introduction of testing and organizing staff and candidates and distribution of name tags
- Location of
 - Bathrooms
 - Manure Disposal
 - Parking
 - Neutral Zone
- Schedule Overview

- Review Code of Conduct
- Health of Rider
- Safety & Emergency Procedures
 - Explain that candidates or their families may privately share any medical conditions that they feel are important for the Examiners to know about. This is **OPTIONAL**.
- Standards of Proficiency
 - Remind candidates and their families that performance at a test is measured against the Standards and not against other candidates.
- Communication
 - Encourage candidates to let the Examiner know when a question or directive has not been understood. We all learn and communicate differently.
 - Encourage parents to use their Club/Center officers or the Impartial Observer (IO) to communicate with you and the candidates during the test. Mention that a candidate may become **MORE** nervous if their parent gets in the middle of the test situation or that you may be busy and would have time later.
 - Tell candidates that this is their testing, and they need to take some of the responsibility for how things go. If they feel they want to ask questions or demonstrate a skill again before moving on to another area of the test, remind them that most of the time you would be happy for them to do so. It may not result in a Meets Standards, but they will be able to go home knowing they tried their best.
- Care of Horse
 - The care of the horses should be exemplary, whether they are the candidate's own or borrowed mounts. If they bring more than one horse, they are responsible for their care and proper turnout.
 - Ask if there are any problems concerning a horse's care or health. Candidates are ultimately responsible for their horse and its care – they know him and his fitness level, if he feels off or affected by the heat, etc. Urge them to share it with you if a situation develops where they have a concern about the horse's health.
- Stress and Performance
 - Remind candidates that they cannot expect to be up and happy the whole time. They should not beat themselves up if everything does not go perfectly.
 - The best tests are usually when the candidates work together and support one another, sort of like a rally team. This does not mean doing each other's work or bandages. Remind the candidates that everyone must do their own work.
 - Inform candidates that Examiners must test only what is seen on the day of the test. Remind them that stress may affect their performance and that they may be perfectly capable, but that their performance **ON THIS ONE DAY** may not meet Standards.
 - Explain retest procedures.

Interpretation of the Standards

Depth of Knowledge Required

For Examiners and candidates alike, correct interpretation of the Standards, and their progression, together with an understanding of the objectives for each test, are vital to the success of the testing program. Determining and maintaining the depth of knowledge required is also essential if consistency in testing is to be maintained. To become familiar and comfortable with the expectations, Examiners should do the following:

- Be familiar with the current Standards at each level.
- Observe Pony Club members at various certification levels on an ongoing basis.
- Discuss the current Standards with other Examiners and RIC.
- Compare sample questions used by other Examiners.
- Attend a Standards and Certification clinic every two years.
- Be familiar with the reference materials and the current recommended reading list for candidates at each level.

Pass/Fail Criteria

For a candidate to pass, the Standards must be met or exceeded in every section. It can be helpful to think of each section of the test sheet as a “box”. Some candidates may be at the bottom of the box, but still fall inside it. Others may be at the top of the box, but not quite exceeding it. There is often a range of “meeting the standard” between candidates at a testing.

- Because D-1 is an introductory level, it is a “no fail” certification. If the candidate lacks the knowledge or skill needed the examiner should plan to teach/coach the candidate to the level. A D-1 test can be done at a regular mounted or unmounted meeting.
- The local-level tests (D-1 through C-2) should be a positive teaching/learning experience. Especially at the D level a testing should be a somewhat instructional, working session. Only the requirements listed in the standards may be covered. Jump heights may not be exceeded.
- At the D level the candidate should have some knowledge of the topic or ability of the skill. But depending on the level being tested, they can be coached to provide the information or demonstrate the skill to the Standards. Encouraging them to add more information when needed may be helpful.
- Sections that include the wording “with assistance.” This means you may assist/teach the candidate to achieve the desired skill.

Retest at the Local-Level (D-1 – C-2)

If a candidate does not meet Standards (DNMS) in any part of one (or more) section(s) of the test, they might be eligible for a retest. The allowed number of sections to be retested is stated on the last page of the test sheet, and retest is strictly limited to that number.

- The Examiner must list the retest sections on the original test sheet.
- If the candidate is eligible to retest, the DC or CA will work with the candidate to schedule the retest. The retest, if possible, should be with the original Examiner(s).

- Re-testing sections of the test sheet is not automatic and is not necessarily appropriate in all circumstances.
- The retest must be completed in one day.
- Those testing during the current year have until December 1 of the following year to complete all retest. If they do not pass their retest within this time period, then they will have to take the entire test again.

The DC or CA must maintain accountability and control of the test sheet, until the certification is complete. Normally, any test or retest must take place within the Pony Club member's own region. It is important that DCs, CAs or instructors do not provide unnecessary roadblocks or obstacles to the availability of retest opportunities. We want to facilitate growth and success when possible.

Test Sheets

Bring black pens (they copy better), white-out, a pocket dictionary, thesaurus and any other notes and tools that you may need.

Comment Writing

- State all your comments in a positive manner, clearly indicating what needs to be fixed.
- Pass or Fail: written comments must reflect the reasons for the decision. Justify pass or fail by referring to the Standards or Riding Test Expectations.
 - Suggestions for improvement should be meaningful, useful, consistent, and encouraging.
 - Stress both a candidate's strengths as well as areas that need work.
- Make your comments positive and clear and most importantly honest, while outlining any correctios needed to reach the Standards.
- Transfer from notes to test sheets as soon as possible. If another person scribes or transcribes your notes for you the test sheets must be checked for accuracy.
- On their notes, Examiners should include with their notes comments identifying each candidate, i.e. hair or shirt colors. (These notes can be helpful if a failed candidate thinks that they have been confused with another candidate of the same name or on a similar colored horse.)
- The test sheet should be shared with the candidate first so they can ask any questions of the Examiner. It can then be shared with the DC/CAs, instructors, and parents, and should clearly convey a picture of the actual performance to those who were not present.
- While parents, DC/CA and other adults will read the test sheets, keep in mind that your audience is the candidate. Use appropriate wording so that they can clearly understand what you are telling them.

SAFETY

Safety should be at the forefront of all USC activities. Approved helmets and USPC medical armband or medical bracelets, are required for each candidate and must be worn at all times during the Pony Club testing. If a rider is injured, the parents/guardians must be immediately contacted, and safety protocol must be followed. An Incident Report

must be filed by the local-level leadership, which is found on the Safety page on the Pony Club website.

A clear method of communication should be established in the event of an emergency. As the Examiner should confirm that there is a working form of communication at testing locations, such as cell phone or phone lines available to contact emergency personnel and that emergency numbers are available from the Organizer. If this information and communication ability is not available, the test must not continue.

Facility Guidelines for Examiners

Examiners will check the facility, for suitability and safety, including the jumping and cross-country areas, prior to the beginning of the test for suitability and safety. These areas must be easily accessible to emergency vehicles.

Deficiencies must be corrected prior to commencement of any phase of a test.

The Examiner should notify the DC/CA and/or Organizer, and fellow Examiners (if any) at the testing if a facility is deemed unsafe. If deficiencies are not corrected or cannot be corrected, after consultation, the testing may be canceled by the Examiner.

Examples of Unacceptable Testing Facilities

1. Large holes in riding areas and/or where horses will be standing
2. Barbed wire enclosing the riding areas
3. Riding areas not mowed
4. Foreign material in riding area such as nails, pieces of metal, glass, wire, farm equipment or anything that is potentially harmful to horse or rider
5. All areas not easily accessible by emergency vehicles

Helmets

All USPC members must wear a helmet in accordance with USPC Policy #0810. USPC Examiners may make a judgment on the fit and whether the helmet is approved or not. Examiners MAY NOT take a helmet that does not fit and make it do so by adding padding. If the helmet clearly does not fit and no accommodations can be made after consultation with the adult responsible for the candidate, the Examiner will inform the candidate they may not ride. In addition, if the helmet is clearly not an approved helmet, the candidate may not ride.

The following are guidelines for proper helmet fit:

- Follow the manufacturer's fitting recommendations included in the box with the helmet.
- Helmets should sit level on the head, about 1" above the eyebrows, with the brim straight ahead.
- Helmets should be snug and fit equally well all the way around. (With hands on the top of the helmet, gently rock it side-to-side and front to back. The scalp should move with the helmet.)
- Harnesses must be adjusted for firm contact with the jaw or chin with the buckles just below the earlobes, on most helmets.
- Helmets showing signs of aging or damage should be replaced. Helmets worn in a fall should be inspected by the manufacturer before further use.

USPC Statement on the Use of Body Protectors

Wearing a properly fitted (per manufacture's guidelines) equestrian body protector is required when jumping cross-country/solid obstacles during any activity sponsored by the USPC, per USPC Policy #0830. Body protectors may be worn for any phase of a testing at the discretion of the member and/or his/her parent or legal guardian. When a body protector is worn, members should fit them according to manufacturers' guidelines.

Tack Adjustments & Bits

Examiners and Instructors are allowed to make tack adjustments concerning members' safety or control. This may only be done in consultation with the candidate. Use caution whenever making tack adjustments as this could dramatically affect the horse or rider in a negative manner. The Examiner should discuss with the candidate the reasons for the adjusted fit. Any adjustment must be made only with an explanation as to why it needs to be made, keeping in mind that there may be a valid safety reason for an unusual adjustment ("my coach told me to" or "I always do this" are not necessarily valid reasons). The final say, however, rests with the Examiner.

Examiners MAY NOT insist on the changing of a bit that they may not like or be familiar with. All Examiners are responsible for keeping themselves fully informed on proper fit/adjustments of helmets and tack and the legality of bits. It is imperative that Examiners do not allow their personal likes and dislikes to enter into judgments that are made. Any saddlery and biting equipment must comply with the Horse Management General Rule on Saddlery and Biting and with the appropriate USPC discipline rules for Saddlery and Biting. Following the publication of the current *Horse Management Handbook*, any discipline rule change will supersede the HM Handbook.

Heat Related Illness

Refer to the Heat-Related Illness section of the Safety Handbook for specific ways to help keep horses and humans in the safety zone when it is hot outside.

The USPC Safety Committee recommends the following to aid in the prevention of heat illness:

- Review the "Parents' and Coaches' Guide to Dehydration and Other Heat Illnesses in Children."
- Review Guidelines for Delay, Cancellation or Disruption of Events Due to Severe Weather or Natural Disaster.
- The candidates should bring adequate fluids to the test for their own consumption.
- The Organizer of a test must be responsible for informing the Examiners of local weather forecasts and actual weather conditions during the test. The Organizer may appoint somebody to do this job. It is strongly recommended that this person monitor a weather app on their phone or other device in order to be informed of approaching dangerous storms and changing conditions. The Organizer should have a water cooler available to the candidates throughout the testing, especially the riding areas

- When daytime highs reach the 80's with high humidity, the most strenuous activities should be scheduled in the coolest part of the day, in spite of the test scheduling. When temperatures are in the 90's with high humidity, special precautions must be taken to ensure that the candidates are properly hydrated, and outdoor activities are kept to a minimum. Please refer to the "critical line" on the temperature/humidity chart which can be found on Appendix D of the Safety Booklet. When conditions are severe, outdoor activity must stop, even if it means canceling or postponing the test. Heat illness can, and does, kill.
- Every effort should be made to utilize the "coolest" facilities possible: a covered or indoor arena, an air-conditioned room, other shelter from the sun, large trees, etc. The candidates should spend only the minimum amount of time in the sun and outdoors.
- All Examiners should review the USPC Safety Booklet available on the USPC website. Examiners should be aware of the need for maintaining their own adequate hydration during the test.

Reducing Heat Stress in Horses

It is known that when the combined total of temperature and relative humidity is 150 or greater, a horse's ability to cool himself by sweating is compromised. Here is an example of how the combination of temperature/humidity is figured:

The higher the humidity, the more severe the effect on the horse. Humidity over 70% will affect a horse's temperature regardless of the actual weather temperature.

During times of high temperature/humidity (combined total over 150), DC/CAs, CAs, Instructors, Organizers and Horse Management Judges need to be aware of adequate sources of water and, depending on conditions, ice. They need to make these readily available to the candidates. In addition, under conditions of high heat/humidity, horses may experience a significant loss of fluids and electrolytes due to sweat lost in testing or travel. Horses may not drink enough on their own to replace lost fluids. In any case, electrolyte replacement should be offered to the horse before shipping and during testing.

Concussion and Return to Play

Concussion is a life-threatening illness. Before serving as an Examiner at any test, you should take the Concussion Awareness Module (on the Safety page of the USPC Website.) This training module comes in two parts: the trainings on the Heads-UP page of the CDC and the Quiz you take on the USPC Concussion page. This training contains valuable information on how to assess a rider for a suspected concussion.

Be aware of the correct procedures to follow if you suspect one of your riders has a concussion:

- Suspect a rider has a concussion? Sit them out. This is not an easy decision or one to make lightly. Remember that rider health is more important than a test.
- Hand the parents the USPC Concussion/Return to Play form.

Accident/Incident Report

Should an accident or incident occur at a testing, be sure an Incident Report is filed with USPC. This should be done by the test organizer. Report is found on the Safety page of the USPC website.

Approaches to Problem Solving

Dealing with an incorrect response or poor performance

An entirely incorrect answer or performance may be the result of ambiguity or lack of definition in the original question or command.

In the case of a totally off-course answer, rephrase the question and try again. Phrases such as “Can you be more specific?” or “Would you like to rethink that one?” can be helpful and encouraging. Turning to another candidate for a response and comparing the answers introduces a different viewpoint and is preferable to an immediate “No that is wrong.”

A candidate's plan for, or evaluation of, a riding performance may have no resemblance to what actually happened. An Examiner's response could be: “I did not actually see you perform that. Would you like to try it again?”

The quiet Candidate

Examiners should make it clear to the group during the oral examination that they will be asking questions directly to one candidate at a time. Each candidate must wait his or her turn and not interrupt another candidate. If a discussion follows, or if there are any questions, all candidates must feel free to participate. Examiners should be alert for signs that a candidate has something to contribute. These signals are fairly easy to pick up with the eager, extroverted candidate; it is more difficult to be aware of the subtle signs of less aggressive ones. However, it is important not to neglect the quiet candidate. The more communicative members of the group may have to be restrained so that information can be drawn from the less outgoing ones.

Handling DC/CAs, parents and other observers

Before each phase, if at all possible, observers should be given a brief, non-technical explanation of what is being asked and what is expected of the candidates. It will also be explained that the oral phase of the testing is between candidates and Examiners only, and that no audience is allowed at this time. The parents appreciate receiving some positive and encouraging remarks about their child.

Less than adequate equipment/facilities:

Organizers are instructed to provide certain basic facilities and equipment. But in some circumstances, Examiners will be faced with a need to improvise. In the case of a complete absence of cross-country fences, a place to gallop or a stadium course, Examiners will have no other option but to write “not tested in this phase” or “does not apply” on the test sheet. The candidate will not be penalized for any inability to complete the test but will need to test the missing blocks at another time/location. It will be reported that the facilities are inadequate, and they should not be used again for tests unless the situation is improved.

Unsound/unfit/unsuitable horses

If a candidate's horse goes lame, or is not fit enough for continued use, or is unable to perform at the Standards required, it is not the role of the Examiner(s) or organizers, but the candidate's responsibility to replace the horse. If the test Organizer volunteers to provide another horse, that is acceptable. It is preferable to remove for safety reasons any horse that is unsuited, by temperament, training, or fitness, to the demands of the test. The Examiner should make sure the reasons for doing so are clear to the candidate.

Candidates may bring more than one horse to a test if there is room for stabling. Refer to the Standards for information regarding sharing of mounts.

Inclement weather

If weather conditions make it impossible to complete a phase of the test, this fact should be noted on the test sheet. If a section is not completed, the test is not completed. (*Refer to Guidelines for Delay, Cancellation or Disruption of Events Due to Severe Weather or Natural Disaster on the Safety page of the USPC website*)

Handling the final critique:

DC/CAs, instructors and parents may attend the final critique, which is usually followed by individual discussions with each candidate if they desire. If they do not attend, it is important that the information given to candidates is accurately relayed to parents, so they may fully understand the reasons for decisions reached and schedules. Those parts of the test in which the candidate did well should also be commented on, and the candidate, parents and instructor encouraged to ask questions.

Helping the Candidate deal with the result:

Candidates are advised to bring a parent or friend with them. But sometimes they come alone and have no one to support them in the event of a negative result. Furthermore, they may be facing a long, lonely drive home. Examiners (and Organizers) should be aware of this and keep them talking until the first shock has worn off whether a positive or negative outcome.

Tips for Testing Jumping Sections

Dowels should be brought to every test in case the organizer forgot to bring them for use on the back rails of oxers. At Home Depot, they are sold by the rod. Cut in 6-inch pieces and wrap in a rubber band. Lead pencils are more expensive but also do the trick.

When setting courses, be careful not to set jumps with illusions on the outside of the arena: for example, white poles and white fence of arena, flags or banners on outside that may move unexpectedly.

Walk your course, no matter how simple, to view it as a horse would. Watch those turns onto lines, giving space to get a straight approach of at least 4 strides.

You must check that heights and widths of all fences are appropriate for the levels being tested and cannot assume that they are correct. Always bring your own tape to measure distance and height.

It is easier to set poles before building jumps so as to not waste energy and time. Walk before and again after building a course.

See recommended jump courses on USPC website. The examiner may slightly modify the recommended jump course to fit the arena space.

APPENDIX A – SAMPLE SCHEDULES

Examples are for **1-3 candidates** for the Eventing (EV), Dressage (DR), and Hunter Seat Equitation (HSE) tracks. For Western (WST) and Western Dressage (WDA) we suggest the Dressage track sample schedules. All tests will go fast if candidates are prepared. Keep in mind the retest policy when considering how much teaching is necessary to pass a candidate. When combining riding tests in one day, the briefing and turnout sections do not have to be repeated.

NOTE: At the D and C Levels, there are a variety of tracks and tests, but they are designed to and should be conducted in one day. For example, the entire HM phase should be conducted in one day. The entire riding phase of the HSE and DR should be conducted in one day. In the Eventing track you can either do the flat (phase 1) or the jumping (phase 2) in one day, or all of the riding phase 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 at all possible, as stated in the Standards of Proficiency. At some certifications, Pony Club members complete the HM and Riding phases in one day.

These schedule examples are tight, and do not allow for things to come up, so be ready to make adjustments if necessary. Safety checks are required for mounted phases. Turnout is only required if the candidate has not done it previously in the HM phase.

D-1

- 9:00 Brief candidates and parents. Discuss with candidate what you want them to do. Receive stall card.
- 9:15 Horse Management sections other than those requiring a horse
- 9:45 Stable Management sections: Leading/Longeing (watch halter and leading) and Turnout. Ask HM questions with pony still standing tied up and stall card for your reference.
- 10:15 Walk to ring. Have candidate mount and demo stirrup adjustment.
- 10:30 Candidate demo adjusting reins and begin walk and trot with exercises.
- 10:45 Have candidate go through jumping course (poles between standards). Untack with conversation about testing.
- 11:00 Write papers, lunch and debrief candidates (sign certificates).

D-2 Flat: EV(phase 1)/HSE

- 8:30 Brief candidates and parents
- 9:00 Turnout, Leading/Longeing and Bandaging
- 9:45 Ride on the Flat

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- 10:15 Ride in the Open (outside the arena) unless going onto jumping phase and HSE candidates
- 11:00 Write papers and debrief for flat only candidates (sign certificates). Will take a bit to write up three to four sheets. If you have candidates going on to the jumping test, finish paperwork for the candidates' testing on the flat only before continuing

D-2 Flat: DR

- 8:30 Brief candidates and parents
- 9:00 Turnout, Leading/Longeing, and Bandaging
- 9:45 Ride on the Flat (warm-up and movements)
- 10:15 Ride Dressage Test
- 10:45 Cavaletti
- 11:00 Ride in the Open (outside of arena)
- 11:30 Write papers, lunch and debrief candidates (sign certificates). Meet at 12:00

D-2 Jumping: EV (phase 2)/HSE

- Warm-up only if not proceeding straight from flat test. A safety check is required if candidate changed bit or saddle for jumping phase or are new to the group.
- 11:15 Ground poles
 - 11:30 Stadium Course with discussion
 - 12:00 Ride in the Open (possible tack and location changes)
 - 12:15 Write papers, lunch and debrief candidates (sign certificates). Meet at 1:15

D-3 Flat: EV(phase 1)/HSE

- 8:30 Brief candidates and parents
- 9:00 Turnout, Leading/Longeing, and Bandaging
- 9:45 Tack up and Safety Check
- 10:00 Riding on the Flat phase
- 10:00 Warm-up
- 10:15 Movements
- 10:30 Ride in the Open unless going onto jumping phase and HSE candidates
- 11:00 Write papers, lunch and debrief for flat only candidates (sign certificates). Meet 11:45

D-3 Jumping: EV(phase 2)/HSE – need to allow transition time and tack change. Allow time for safety check.

- 12:30 Warm-up section if a break taken or new candidates joining. A safety check is required if candidate changed bit or saddle for jumping phase or are new to the group.
- 12:45 Grid work
- 1:00 Stadium course with discussion
- 2:00 Ride in the Open
- 2:30 Write papers and debrief candidates (Sign certificates). Meet at 3:15.

D-3 Flat: DR

- 8:30 Brief candidates and parents
- 9:00 Turnout, Leading/Longeing and Bandaging

- 10:00 Warm-up
- 10:15 Movements and Ride Dressage Test
- 10:45 Cavaletti
- 11:15 Ride in the Open (outside of arena)
- 11:30 Write papers, lunch and debrief candidates (sign certificates). Meet at 12:30.

C-1 Flat: EV(phase 1)/HSE (no dressage test for HSE candidates)

- 8:00 Brief candidates and parents
- 8:30 Turnout, Leading/Longeing sections and Bandaging
- 9:15 Flat warm-up
- 9:30 Movements
- 9:45 Ride Dressage Test (only EV candidates)
- 10:30 Ride in the Open unless going onto jumping phase or HSE candidate
- 11:00 Write papers, lunch and debrief for flat only candidates (sign certificates). Meet at 12:00.

C-1 Flat: DR

- 8:00 Brief candidates and parents
- 8:30 Turnout, Leading/Longeing and Bandaging
- 9:15 Warm-up
- 9:45 Movements and Ride Test
- 10:15 Cavaletti
- 10:45 Ride in the Open (outside of arena)
- 11:00 Write papers, lunch and debrief for flat only candidates (sign certificates). Meet at 11:30

C-1 Jumping: EV(phase 2)/HSE– need to allow transition time and tack change. Allow time for safety check.

- 11:15 Warm-up section if break taken or new candidates join. A safety check is required if candidate changed bit or saddle for jumping phase or are new to the group.
- 11:30 Grid work
- 12:00 Stadium course with discussion
- 12:30 Ride in the Open
- 12:45 Write papers, lunch and debrief candidates (sign certificates). Meet at 1:30

C-2 Flat: EV(phase 1)/HSE (no dressage test for HSE candidates)

- 8:00 Brief candidates and parents
- 9:00 Turnout and Bandaging
- 10:00 Leading/Longeing sections, up to two candidates at a time
- 10:30 Warm-up
- 10:45 Movements
- 11:00 Ride Dressage Test (only EV candidates)
- 11:30 Ride in the Open unless going onto jumping phase or HSE candidate
- 11:45 Write papers, lunch and debrief for flat only candidates (sign certificates). Meet at 12:30.

C-2 Flat: DR

- 8:00 Brief candidates and parents
- 9:00 Turnout and Bandaging
- 10:00 Leading/Longeing sections, up to two candidates at a time
- 10:30 Warm-up
- 10:45 Movements
- 11:00 Ride Dressage Test
- 11:30 Ride in the Open (outside the arena)
- 11:45 Write papers, lunch and debrief candidates (sign certificates). Meet at 12:30

C-2 Jumping: EV(phase 2)/HSE– need to allow transition time and tack change. Allow time for safety check.

- 12:40 If testing all riding sections on one day, warm-up plan should be for 20 minutes. A safety check is required if candidate changed bit or saddle for jumping phase or are new to the group.
- 1:00 Grid work
- 1:30 Stadium course with discussion
- 2:00 Ride in the open (Allow for tack change and transition time)
- 2:30 Write papers and debrief candidates (sign certificates). Meet at 3:30.

APPENDIX B: EXAMINER RESOURCES

Clubs and Centers throughout the country must work to ensure that all Certifications are recognized as important, even vital, to the USPC goal of developing well-rounded, capable, horsepersons. 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 where to turn for answers. The D-1 - C-2 Instruction and RIC Committees are designed to ensure that USPC, as an educational organization, is meeting the needs and expectations of all Pony Club members and their families. Feel free to call on the current members of these committees, the RIC for the associated region, or the RS or the DC/CA if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions.

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

Additional Resources available at www.ponyclub.org

- Standards of Proficiency for all certification levels
- USPC Guidelines for Club/Center Level Testing
- Safety Booklet
- Heat Illness Training and Quiz
- Concussion/Return to Play Training and Quiz
- Horse Management Handbook
- Recommended Course Maps
- Examples of suggested schedules
- 99 Ways to say “Good Job”