

Pony Club®

Where it all begins



Safety Handbook

2025

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 mount with consideration due a partner.

USPC MISSION STATEMENT

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

USPC PARTICIPATING MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. is proud of its reputation for good sportsmanship, horsemanship, teamwork and well-behaved members. The USPC expects appropriate behavior from all members, parents and others participating in any USPC activity. Inappropriate behavior may include, but is not limited to: possession, use or distribution of any illegal drugs or alcohol; profanity, vulgar language or gestures; harassment (i.e., using words or actions that intimidate, threaten or persecute others before, during or following USPC activities); failure to follow rules; cheating; and abusing a horse. I

USPC CORE VALUES

Horsemanship with respect to healthcare, nutrition, stable management, handling and riding a mount safely, correctly.

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

Respect for the mount 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.

understand that my membership and participation is under the governance of USPC and is subject to all applicable USPC By-Laws, Policies, Rules and Regulations. I understand that I have access to these By-Laws, Policies, Rules and Regulations, and that it is my responsibility to read them. USPC does not own or operate any Riding Center Facility or Business. Acceptance of this application is not a guarantee of membership acceptance. As specified in the By-Laws, membership may be denied or revoked at any time, with or without cause. Should my membership be terminated or forfeited for any reason, I understand that there will be no refund of USPC membership dues.

This handbook should be kept in a 3-ring binder to allow for addition of revisions and new instructional sections. Do not remove pages from your handbook; be sure to make copies of all forms and charts before writing on them.

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INTRODUCTION

Riding Safety and the USPC Experience:

All sports, including horse sports, are inherently dangerous and therefore involve some level of risk.

This handbook is written for USPC members (Pony Club), leaders, volunteers, and parents. Use these guidelines as you begin your planning for successful mounted and unmounted meetings, rallies, and clinics. Be aware of and plan for potential accidents. All leaders, members, parents, volunteers, and clinicians are expected to model safe behavior. While the nature of horse sports and related activities introduces risk to the safety of the participants, USPC expects the organizer and/or the designated responsible adult representing the Club/ Center/Region to be both aware of and use appropriate management techniques to reduce the risk faced by our members.

This handbook is not intended to be all inclusive but rather a useful companion to the other USPC educational resources. Please reference the Horse Management Handbook, Discipline Rulebooks and the D, C, and H-B - A Manuals of Horsemanship for additional details.

USPC Safety Committee:

Since its founding, Pony Club has led the equestrian community in promoting safe horsemanship practices. Recognizing that riding is an inherently dangerous activity, the USPC Board of Governors endorses the goal to teach safe practices in all Pony Club activities. Pony Club's commitment to teach safe practices begins at the D-1 and D-2 level when members learn how to safely approach the pony, safely lead, safely tie and safely pick out the feet. These steps are the foundation for learning the safe handling of a very large animal capable of causing serious bodily injury or death to itself or rider/handler. Refer to Corporate Safety under USPC National Policies & Resolutions .

Pony Club was the driving force behind the standardization in safety testing of riding helmets. Until recently, Pony Club was the only equestrian organization that collected data on accidents and incidents that result from horseback riding or working with horses on the ground. The study of the collected data by the Safety Committee allows for Pony Club to recognize potential causes of accidents unique to horse activities and possible actions that might be taken to prevent or reduce these risks.

To further Pony Club's commitment to safety, the Safety Committee was formed for the purpose of promoting best practices in riding and working with horses and educating those involved with all Pony Club activities in the methods of incident and accident avoidance. A full list of the duties of the national Safety Committee can be found in USPC Resolution 9.

Acknowledgements:

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many Pony Club members, parents, volunteers, and national office staff members who have contributed to this handbook.

– The USPC Safety Committee

CHAPTER I: FACILITY SAFETY

Safety must be uppermost in your mind when buying a farm or evaluating a facility that will be used for Pony Club activities. Remember that no checklist is comprehensive. Accidents can only be prevented by careful assessment – and acting responsibly when a risk is identified.

Evaluating a Facility for a Mounted Meeting
See Chapter VI: Local Club/Center Meetings, pg 12.

Checklist for Evaluating an Equine Facility

- Stall and barn doors open easily and close completely.
- Aisles are free of loose equipment and are wide enough for a horse and the person leading him to pass through easily.
- Stall walls are solid enough to resist kicking.
- Stalls have adequate ventilation.
- Stall floors drain well and are bedded properly.
- Animals have access to fresh water 24/7.
- Each horse's stall/paddock is labeled with its name and owner's contact information.
- Fixtures are clean and fairly rust-free.
- There are no extra nails, screws, etc. on the walls, windows or doors of the barn.
- Heavy equipment such as tractors, manure spreaders, or utility vehicles is stored away from high traffic areas.
- Roof intact with drainage away from barn area.
- Arena is fenced with appropriate footing.
- Fencing is sturdy, visible to both horses and people, and in good repair.
- Gates latch securely without gaping.
- Tack is stored in a dry, secure place.
- Feed is stored in secure containers.
- Poisons or traps must be stored or used so that they are inaccessible by domesticated animals and children.
- Central record of immunizations, results of Coggins tests, deworming schedule etc.

In addition, see the Fire Safety Checklist in Chapter II, pg 3.

CHAPTER II: FIRE SAFETY

No one likes to think about fire, but if you have a barn, you must think about ways to prevent fire. Barn fires can be caused by humans and are preventable:

- If it is not possible to store bedding and hay in a separate building, be sure the storage area is well ventilated.
- Keep aisles clear of equipment, debris and cobwebs, etc.
- Aggressively control rodents, as they may chew through electrical wires.
- Place large fire extinguishers (type A or ABC) mounted near exits. Check gauges periodically (once a month is recommended) and/or expiration dates. Post a chart next to each extinguisher noting the date of each check. Check should include:
 - The extinguisher is still present in its designated location
 - No damage has occurred to the equipment
 - No obstructions are blocking the equipment from view or from easy access
 - The extinguisher is fully charged and operational
- Check all electric equipment and wiring periodically; not only for wear, but to remove dust and dirt.
- Electrical wiring enclosed in metal conduits.
- Report any electrical malfunction immediately to the electrical provider.
- Storage of any flammables (gasoline, paint) should be separate from barn, hay and bedding.
- No smoking in and around barns or storage areas.
- Make sure everyone knows the location of electrical master switches, and fire department phone numbers.
- Know the address of the barn and how to direct someone to the premises.
- Post emergency phone numbers in an obvious place (Police, EMS, Facility Owner, Barn Manager, Veterinarian).
- Keep a halter and lead rope by each stall.
- Have a plan for escape.
- If, despite your efforts, fire becomes a reality, you must act quickly. Immediately, call 9-1-1 to report the location and address of your barn.

Do not enter a burning structure. Remember that as the heat from the original fire grows, the resultant super-heated air can cause explosive conditions many feet ahead of the active fire, possibly cutting off your escape route. Smoke can also limit vision and cause death. Most importantly, human life must not be risked under any circumstances!

Some local fire departments require that maps of the barn showing fire escape routes be posted. Make a plan for evacuating the barn and hold a 'fire drill' to practice.

Consider asking the local fire department to conduct a Fire Safety Awareness meeting for the barn staff and boarders. Proper use of how to use a fire extinguisher can be demonstrated (PASS technique: Pull, Aim, Squeeze and Sweep). An extinguisher hanging by the entry only helps if someone knows how to use it. It may also be useful for fire department personnel to learn about horse behavior and the safe evacuation of horses.

Remember to securely enclose horses rescued from a barn fire. Horses in panic will often re-enter a blazing barn.

No human life is worth the life of a horse. Fires spread very quickly—if a fire does start in your barn, do not enter. The most important step you can take is to call for help.

CHAPTER III: UNMOUNTED SAFETY

One of the wonderful things about horses is that they have a mind of their own. However, because they can think independently of the humans around them, and because the horse's natural reaction to threats is to flee, this also means that there are some important things to keep in mind in order to keep both humans and horses safe during equestrian activities.

WORKING WITH A HORSE ON THE GROUND

Be Aware

Even the calmest horse may startle. When working with horses it is helpful to keep in mind their range of vision. Horses see best about 55-65 degrees directly in front of them, with a small blind spot in the very center of their forward visual field. They have more limited (monocular) sight to the side. A horse can see very little of what happens behind them, so must rely on sound to determine what is approaching or happening to their rear.

It is never a good idea to stand directly in front of a horse. If a horse is startled it may move forward quickly. Standing to one side of the horse will keep you from getting run over.

Approaching a Horse

Try to approach from the front or side of a horse. This way the horse knows you are not a threat.

Sometimes when a horse is tied, you may need to approach them from the rear. Use your voice as a cue so that they know where you are, and give them time to react before you are in the range of any startling behavior.

Leading a Horse

Most horses can be led from either side. It is more common to lead from the left or near side of the horse. When doing so, make sure to keep both hands on the lead rope. Your right hand should be about six inches from the snap, your left should hold the folded extra length.

- Never hold loops of the lead rope. Fold it to avoid being entangled should your horse spook.
- Never tie or wind the lead rope around any part of you in any way.
- Do not put the excess lead rope over your shoulder.
 - If the horse spooks, the rope could whip around your neck, dragging you along behind your frightened horse.
- Always turn a horse away from you while leading.
- Always hold the cloth or leather portion of the lead rope (never the metal chain) if using a chain shank.
- If a chain is used, it must be threaded over the horse's nose or attached to the halter in another safe way, so neither you nor your horse can become tangled in the chain.

Tying a Horse

- The object the horse is tied to must be sturdy enough to withstand the horse setting back against it.
 - Example: use a fence post rather than a rail. Never tie to a temporary stall or a stall door.
- When tying to a trailer, you must have a tow vehicle attached to the trailer.
 - This gives the trailer more stability so that if a horse pulls back, the trailer will not tip over, or be dragged.
 - If bad weather hits, you can load your horse immediately without spending valuable time hooking up the tow vehicle.
- While both cotton and nylon are appropriate choices for lead ropes and cross ties, keep in mind that nylon creates more friction on the hand than cotton does, which means a greater chance of rope burn.
 - Never use a bungee-style tie. When a horse sets back and the tie comes loose, it acts as a missile, springing back toward either you or the horse.
- What has the horse's history been with tying? If he has had issues in the past with pulling back, then perhaps having someone hold the horse while working with him is a better choice.
- Always use a quick release knot when tying with a lead rope to a fixed object.
- When a horse is tied, do not duck under the horse's neck to get to the other side. It is much safer to go around the rear of the horse.
 - Put a hand on the horse's hip to let him know when you are going around the hind end. Walk close to the horse, with a hand on the hindquarters to let him know you are there, or walk far enough away to avoid the hooves should the horse kick out.

CHAPTER III: UNMOUNTED SAFETY

- When tying in cross ties, make certain that the end attached to the fixed post has a breakaway option, either a safety string or panic snap.
 - Cross ties should be at the level of the horse's back.
 - If you are working with your horse in cross ties in a barn aisle and someone needs to lead another horse by, unsnap one of the ties and move your horse to the side. Never lead a horse under a fastened cross tie.
 - Horses should not be left unattended in cross ties. They could get bored or startled and hurt themselves—or you.
- Untie the lead rope/cross ties before putting a halter around the neck when bridling and unbridling. This is more secure should the horse try to pull away.
- Secure the halter up off the ground after bridling. If you leave it hanging on the ground, it becomes a tripping hazard.
- Keep tie area clear of hazards—don't leave your grooming kit where it can be stepped on or nibbled.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones speed up an emergency response but can also create a distraction from unpredictable behavior which may result in injury. Similarly, the use of noise-canceling listening devices can prevent you from hearing a person or horse in distress and should not be used around a barn.

SAFE ATTIRE WHEN WORKING WITH HORSES

Since any horse may spook at any time, it is important to make sure that you are wearing proper footwear. According to the Horse Management Handbook (Article 48 & 51) Proper Footwear Requirements for Unmounted Footwear at all USPC Activities, footwear must be:

- Thick-soled shoes/boots (short or tall)
- Cover the ankle
- In good condition
- Entirely closed
- Securely fastened
- Well-fitted to foot
- Sturdy construction (e.g. Ugg-type boots do not meet this requirement)

Example: paddock boots / jodhpur boots, rubber riding boots, rain boots/wellies, western boots.

Mounted Footwear

A conventional type of riding footwear with a heel is required. (e.g., leather, synthetic or rubber riding boots, paddock/jodhpur boots or equivalent).

Note: Refer to the individual discipline rulebooks as there may be additional specific requirements.

Gloves are required for longeing, are recommended while riding, and can save a handler from blisters or worse when working with a horse on the ground.

In addition, it is best to wear clothes that fit properly. Loose clothing can snag on objects and too-tight clothing can limit movement.

UNMOUNTED LONGE WORK:

See section on Longeing in **CHAPTER FOUR: Riding Safety**

CHAPTER IV: RIDING SAFETY

Riding lore has it that jumping, racing and Western speed events are the most dangerous of horse sports, but studies both in the United States and England show that most accidents result from horses on pleasure rides going no faster than the walk.

CHOOSING A MOUNT

Choosing a mount is one of the more important and challenging things Pony Club parents are asked to do. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we only had to do it once? Beginners and young riders need friendly, well-mannered mounts. Trying to make one mount meet the changing needs of the rider can sometimes mean compromising safety.

So what do we look for? First, realistically assess the rider and their abilities. A young or novice rider needs a mount that is friendly, quiet, and unflappable. Far too many accidents occur when handling unruly ponies. The rider and mount need to fit each other physically, too. A horse that is either too large or too small can make the rider less secure. Unfortunately, even the best pony can be outgrown in a very short period of time (see, D Manual Second edition; pp 15-21).

Using an uneducated horse and planning to have the horse and rider "learning together" is not a good idea with a sport as potentially dangerous as riding. Well-schooled mounts are often expensive, but are usually worth it. Looking in other disciplines for a well-trained mount with a good temperament can be a good compromise when looking for Pony Club mounts. Older horses can be excellent teachers. The horse must be physically sound enough to safely perform the required tasks. Having a realistic discussion with a veterinarian at a pre-purchase exam, including an honest discussion of the type of work likely to be expected of the horse, will help decide if that horse is a good fit for that rider doing that activity.

Professional judgment is required to determine if a particular horse or horse/rider combination is unsafe. If Pony Club members do show up on unsuitable mounts, it is the responsibility of leadership to obtain input from knowledgeable horse persons and act on it. No one wants to be the "bad guy", but if an unsafe situation exists, it must not be allowed to continue.

Horses are large, unpredictable animals and riding is a high-risk sport. Pony Club intends to make participating in this wonderful sport as safe as possible. Buying the safest, most appropriate mount you can afford is one way to reduce the risks. A cheap horse is not always a bargain! Anyone who has owned horses knows the purchase price is a small part of the total investment. A sane, safe beginner mount will always be in demand when you need to move up to a bigger or more athletic animal for your advancing Pony Club member.

RIDING ATTIRE

Helmet/Proper Helmet Fit:

Wearing an approved helmet every ride, every time is required.

See helmet Requirements & Fitting (*Excerpted from HM Handbook, Chapter 19*).

From Attachment A to USPC Policy 0800—Safety Requirements for helmets:

Wearing a properly fitted equestrian helmet, securely fastened, containing certification that it meets or exceeds the criteria established by the following international or national safety bodies is required to participate in any Pony Club activities:

- ASTM F1163-15 or ASTM F1163-23 with SEI Mark (North America) (required for USEF Competitions)
- SNELL Memorial Foundation E2021
- PAS 015-2011 with BSI Kitemark (United Kingdom)
- AS/NZS 3838 with SAI Global Mark (Australia and New Zealand)
- VG1 01.040 2014-12 BSI Kitemark and/or IC Mark (European)
- EN 1384 BSI Kitemark and/or IC Mark (European)

A detailed explanation on determining helmet fit can be found in Appendix A.

To preserve the optimal function and lifespan of a helmet, avoid placing it on top of hairspray, sunscreen, or insect repellents. Clean the inside and outside of the helmet often with warm water and a mild detergent. Do not soak any part of the helmet, put it close to high heat, or use strong cleaners. Helmets should be stored in a climate-controlled room and where it is away from direct sunlight. (Do not store an equestrian helmet in a car.)

It is important to check helmets for damage and not allow a rider to use a cracked or broken helmet or a helmet that is missing any padding or parts. Replace any equestrian helmet that is damaged or has been involved in an impact from a fall. Equestrian helmets are designed to help protect the rider's brain and head from only one serious impact. You may not be able to see the damage to the inner protective foam, but the foam materials inside the helmet will crush after an impact. That means that the foam in the helmet can't effectively help protect the rider's brain and head from another impact.

Footwear:

Having a thousand pound animal step on your instep is painful. Worse, it can break bones that may never heal correctly. Wear proper footwear whenever you work around horses.

From the Horse Management Handbook and Rules for Rallies:

A conventional type of riding footwear with a heel is required whenever you are around horses or are riding. (e.g., leather, synthetic, rubber riding boots, paddock/jodhpur boots or equivalent). Requirements for Unmounted Footwear at all USPC Activities

CHAPTER IV: RIDING SAFETY

Footwear must meet all the following criteria:

- Thick-soled shoes/boots (short or tall)
- Cover the ankle
- In good condition
- Made of leather or synthetic materials
- Entirely closed
- Securely fastened
- Well-fitted to foot
- Sturdy construction (e.g. Ugg-type boots do not meet this requirement)

Examples: paddock/jodhpur boots, rubber riding boots, rain boots/wellies, western boots.

Mounted Footwear

A conventional type of riding footwear with a heel is required. (e.g., leather, synthetic or rubber riding boots, paddock/jodhpur boots or equivalent).

Note: Refer to the individual discipline rulebooks as there may be additional specific requirements.

Body Protector/Safety Vest Fit:

In 2018 a study of incident report data was performed by the USPC Safety Committee, and there was a statistically significant reduction in risk of injury when body protection was worn during cross-country activities. Because of the results of this study, wearing a properly fitted equestrian body protector is required when jumping cross-country/solid obstacles during any USPC activity per USPC Policy 0830. Safety Vest/Body Protector (Policy 0830): USPC requires members to wear a properly fitted equestrian body protector when jumping cross-country or solid obstacles during any activity sponsored by the USPC, its regions, registered clubs, or riding center programs. A member may wear a body protector at their discretion for any mounted activity.

Equestrian body protectors can be certified for design and performance criteria, similar to helmets. While there are some body protectors on the market that carry no certification, USPC requires wearing a body protector that meets or exceeds ASTM standard F1937-04 (manufactured in the US) or EN 13158:2018 BETA Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3 (made in Great Britain).

When purchasing a body protector, it is important to follow the manufacturer's guidelines for fit. These are generally located on the websites of each manufacturer. In addition to the use of sizing charts, the final step in determining proper fit should be sitting on a saddle to check the back length of the body protector. There should be approximately four fingers between the saddle and the base of the body protector, so that it will not interfere over a drop fence. At the front, the body protector should reach the breastbone at the top and cover the bottom rib but should not

cover the belly button. More information about vest fit can be found in Appendix B.

Similar to helmets, you can preserve the optimal function and lifespan of body protectors by avoiding placing them in contact with hairspray, sunscreen or insect repellents. You can clean body protection vests with warm water and a mild detergent, but do not soak the vest, put it close to high heat, or use strong cleaners. Body protectors should be stored in a place that does not get too hot or too cold and where it is away from direct sunlight.

In the event of a fall, you should inspect your vest for signs of possible material or component failure. It is recommended that vests be replaced in the event of a hard impact fall or every 5 years from the date of purchase. Vest materials degrade over time and exposure to conditions including body heat.

Air Vests:

Many equestrians are now utilizing newer safety technology commonly referred to as air vests. Pony Club allows members to utilize this technology when they are riding regardless of the sport or activity. Air vests must be worn as recommended by the manufacturer.

RIDING SAFETY

Before Mounting a Horse

Prior to every mounted meeting each member must have a "pre-ride inspection" or Safety Check as described in Appendix C.

The Safety Check will include inspection of the member's equipment, including correct attire and proper adjustment and condition of tack, and a check of the mount that is being used. Knowledgeable adults may be assigned to assist the instructor(s) in conducting Safety Checks prior to the start of the meeting.

No member is ever responsible for another member's safety. C-1 Certified or above members may do Safety Checks under the supervision of a knowledgeable adult.

Refer to Appendix C for a safety checklist.

Riding in the Open

As open land inevitably disappears, more and more pleasure riders, including Pony Club members attending Pony Club activities, are going to have to negotiate roads.

All riders must learn to share the road with other users in a safe and courteous way. Riding outside a ring—along trails and fields—can be great fun and a nice change for you and your mount. To enjoy it fully, however, you must learn the rules that will keep you safe. A knowledgeable rider follows these rules and shows respect for the land where he or she is privileged to ride.

CHAPTER IV: RIDING SAFETY

Before You Ride in the Open:

- Before attempting to ride in the open, a rider should feel confident at the walk, trot and canter and have basic control of his or her mount.
- Check with property owners in advance to make sure their land is open to you.
- Before mounting, make use of the Safety Check Checklist to ensure tack, horse and rider are properly outfitted for the ride. (See Appendix C.)
- Never ride alone.
- Make sure at least one experienced rider goes along. When riding in a large group, the most experienced rider should be in the lead, the least experienced in the middle, and a strong rider in the rear.
- Let someone know where you will be riding.
- Know and follow your state's traffic laws as they apply to horses. Remember that you must obey the instruction of police officers or other appointed persons engaged in controlling traffic. Your state Department of Motor Vehicles will supply you with a driver's manual that explains the Highway Code.
- Find out if you or your horse is likely to be considered liable if you cause any harm to other people or their property. Your insurance carrier can tell you this.
- Make sure you can control your horse in traffic. If you have a green horse or one that you know is traffic-shy, go on the road only in the company of steady horses. Better yet, keep to quiet roads and avoid peak traffic times until your horse has learned to accept oncoming or passing cars and trucks.
- When riding in groups, plan the ride with the least experienced horse or rider in mind and be considerate of other riders.
- Avoid riding at night or during bad weather.
- Be aware of any horse that might kick. Tie a red ribbon as a warning on his tail and put him at the end of the line.

While Riding in the Open

- Be prepared for the unexpected at all times.
- Walk for at least the first 10 minutes and the last 10 minutes. When it is cold, you may increase this time to 15 minutes so that horses are adequately warmed up and cooled off.
- Before changing the gait, the leader should warn the group and give time for preparation.
- Stay behind one another so your horse's head is facing the tail of the horse in front of you. Ride in single file. Do not pass without specific permission from the group leader; if a horse needs to pass (after permission has been given) turn your horse's head towards the passing rider to prevent any kicking.

- Distances (the faster you are going the longer it takes to stop):
 - At the walk, keep one horse's length between you and the horse in front.
 - At the trot, two horses' lengths.
 - At the canter, three horses' lengths.
- Starting with the leader, every second rider should warn those behind of dangers ahead. Do not hold branches, as they will snap back in the face of the next rider.
- If a car passes, it is better to keep your horse moving at a controlled speed. A stopped horse is concentrating on the oncoming car. A moving horse being asked to continue walking has most of his attention on the rider and less on the passing traffic.
- When it is necessary to cross a road, use a flanking movement, where all the horses turn and cross the road at the same time rather than crossing single file. After crossing, no one should proceed until all other riders are across the road. See pg 138, USPC Manual of Horsemanship D Level, Second edition.
- School your horse to expect to stop at the edge of the road before crossing, whether or not there is oncoming traffic. Also train your horse to walk across roads both because of traffic and frequent slippery surfaces. If this habit is well established, it could prevent potential trouble in the future if your horse becomes anxious to get back to the stable.
- Close all gates behind you. The first rider can open the gate and lead the group through. All riders should then wait for the last rider to close the gate and remount, if necessary.
- If riding on trails, stay on established trails rather than heading out into the rough ground. Do not cross plowed or planted fields; ride around the edge. If absolutely necessary, ride through the furrows, not across them.
- If you lose control in an open area, guide your horse in a circle, trying to make the circles smaller and smaller to slow the horse. Remember to pull and release on the reins rather than simply pulling. Most important—remain calm!
- Stay in a group. Do not straggle. This will prevent horses in the middle and end of the group from having to go faster to catch up.
- If a rider falls off and the horse runs away, do not chase them. Halt and wait as they may return to the group, or send one rider quietly to catch them. (Tidbits—carrots or sugar—may be taken along in case of such an emergency.)
- Walk up and down steep hills.
- Do not "cluck" or raise your voice; use your aids silently so you do not influence other horses.
- Do not race—ever.

CHAPTER IV: RIDING SAFETY

- Stay out of water unless your group leader is familiar with the footing. If it is necessary to go through water, enter slowly but confidently and encourage your horse to keep moving forward with his head up.
- Do not let your horse nibble grass or leaves as he goes along.

What to Wear and Take Along

Wear:

- An approved helmet, properly fitted and fastened, proper riding footwear
- Medical armband or bracelet
- Approved body protector/safety vest if jumping solid obstacles

Take Along:

- Cotton scarf or bandanna in a pocket (for emergency bandage or sling)
- Travel size first aid kit
- Drinking Water
- At least one rider must carry a working cell phone

Remember

- Be considerate and helpful to other road users, taking special care when passing pedestrians who may be frightened of horses. A friendly smile and hello may put them more at ease, and remaining calm and relaxed will influence your horse's behavior. Always acknowledge any courtesy shown by others toward you and your group.
- Always acknowledge any courtesy shown by others toward you and your group.

- Follow mannerly trail procedures. Pass other riders and pedestrians only at a walk, and only after requesting and receiving permission to pass.
- Plan ahead when observing possible hazards. Signal your intention clearly and well in advance. Allow sufficient time for the other person to react and take the necessary action.
- A smile and a thank you always leave a good impression.
- Being courteous, alert, visible, and prepared results in being safe!

Riding At Night

Riding at dusk or by night should be avoided. However, if you must ride after dark or at dusk, the cardinal rule is "be seen-be bright." This means carrying an effective light and wearing reflective clothing. Remember, dusk is an especially dangerous time to be on the road. Do not ask someone to follow you in a car, because headlights cast shadows, which make it difficult to see and also may spook the horse. Your eyes as well as your horse's eyes will slowly become accustomed to the night.

Adverse Road Conditions

If riding on winter road surfaces cannot be avoided, extra care must be exercised. Ask your farrier about shoeing for these conditions. Discuss with them the use of snow pads, borium, caulks, etc. Allow your horse the maximum use of their head and neck and encourage them to walk on. Horses usually balance themselves better with as little interference from the rider as possible.

CHAPTER V: MOUNTED INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

In Pony Club the first question asked is, "IS IT SAFE?" This includes giving thought to the rider, the animal, and the bystanders. Once the first question is affirmed, other questions follow. Is it fun? Is it appropriate? Does it provide instruction? These are true whether conducting a certification, conducting a tack and horse inspection, setting up a lesson plan, or choosing a mount.

Telling a student "not today" or "not yet" can be one of the most important decisions an instructor makes.

Sometimes when asked to instruct in a strange place, it is easy to take it for granted that the facilities will be adequate. This could be a mistake. A good instructor should always pre-check the area assigned for teaching.

When teaching or coaching, especially when we don't know the rider or animal well, there are certain procedures that should never be omitted.

SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

Instructors, upper-level Pony Club members, coaches, horse management judges, DCs, etc., have a duty to set good examples of safety for students. Clothing should be professional with appropriate footwear. A full description of mounted and unmounted attire can be found in the current Horse Management Handbook, Chapter 4, articles 47 & 48. Instructors may find having a bag with a helmet, spurs, crop, towels, etc. helpful.

LEVEL OF INSTRUCTION

Instructors need to be familiar with the Pony Club Standards of Proficiency (SoP). Being familiar with the SoPs allows an instructor an instant guideline for what may be appropriate to teach the students, based on their certification level. The USPC Flowchart is available with side-by-side Eventing SoPs for D certifications click [here](#). For Eventing SoPs for C Certifications click [here](#). National Level Certifications for C-3 through A for the Eventing SoPs are available [here](#). National Level Certifications for HM are available [here](#).

Some higher certified members may be on green horses, and it is important to include the member in conversations about horse and rider readiness for instruction.

Communicating clearly with your students, including listening to concerns about any instruction they may feel is unsafe, is important.

PONY CLUB MEMBERS AS INSTRUCTORS

For your own protection and the safety of your students, make sure there is a supervising adult on the grounds to provide help if you need it, or who can go or call for help if needed. You should never allow anyone to place you in the position of being alone and totally responsible for an entire group of members with ponies or horses.

Any student who fails to meet the requirements of the Safety Check must not be allowed to participate in your lesson.

Remember: you are responsible for teaching safety in horseback riding as well as how to ride.

INSTRUCTOR CHECKLIST

Facility

- Precheck for:
- Bees/wasps
- Footing
- Condition of arena perimeter fencing
- Condition of jumps
- Availability of shade and water in hot/humid weather, and warmth and shelter in the cold
- Weather conditions and forecast
- Loose dogs or children
- Access to immediate communication and emergency services

SAFETY CHECK:

A Safety Check must be performed before each and every ride and following tack changes. See Appendix C for a checklist. In addition to the checklist, there are a few other things an instructor should note prior to beginning the lesson.

Pre-ride Check

Condition of Horses

- Fitness
- Temperament
- Respiratory rate
- Signs of heat or air quality stress
- Skin condition: sores, etc., suggesting poor tack fit
- Hydration
- Hooves
- History of level of schooling and competition
- Length of relationship with current rider

Condition of Students

- Hydration
- Fitness level
- Respiratory distress
- No gum, candy, or jewelry in the mouth
- History of level of schooling and competition
- History with this mount (may be different than above item)
- Signs of anxiety or fear

CHAPTER V: MOUNTED INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

- Disposition, especially attitude towards mount
- Signs of heat intolerance. See Appendix D.
- When working with a group of students for the first time it is advisable to ask the DC/CA or the designated responsible adult if there is anything special or important that you should know about any of the students or about any of their mounts.

Mounted Assessment

Ability of Students:

- To follow instruction
- To adjust rein length
- To maintain control and spacing
- To perform emergency dismount, if appropriate
- Appropriateness for planned exercises
- To perform to usual level under stressful/competition conditions

Longe Work with Riders

- Proper equipment (See Longe Work/Equipment, page 11)
- Area in which longeing takes place is fenced and obstacle-free
- Mount is relaxed and willing to longe
- Ability to control horse in both directions determined before allowing rider to mount

Reliability of Mount

- In a group
- On the longe in both directions
- In the open

Instructor

- Avoid temptation to instruct to your own level; instead, focus on the level of the students.
- Don't rush talented students too fast—they all need hours in the saddle.
- Set a good example with appropriate attire, footwear, no dangling jewelry, etc.
- NEVER use drugs and/or alcohol while instructing at a Pony Club activity.
- Stick to your own good judgment.
- Seek advice from mentor instructors
- Be willing to say NO! - in unsafe or overfaced situations

REMEMBER:

Mounts may react differently outside an enclosure, and riders' minds may go blank under stress.

LONGE WORK:

Equipment:

- Longe whip
- Approved, properly fitted equestrian helmet
- Secure hair
- Collared long or short-sleeved shirt
- Long pants or breeches
- Gloves
- Appropriate footwear
- Watch
- Longe line (Preferably cotton)
- Leg protection for the horse, if appropriate
- Surcingle or saddle
- English: secured irons or no irons on the saddle
- Western: stirrups hang down
- Longeing cavesson, properly fitted
- Bridle with reins off or secured as outlined USPC Manuals of Horsemanship

Unmounted Longe Work:

Do a Safety Check (see Appendix C) on the horse and tack as if you were about to allow a rider to mount the horse you are about to longe.

Make certain that the area in which you will longe is obstacle-free so that neither you nor the horse will trip or become entangled. You should longe in a fenced area that allows for a 20-meter circle.

Mounted Longe Work:

Safety is paramount during a mounted longeing lesson and shouldn't be taken lightly. Longeing should only be done by an experienced and capable Instructor. Mounts used for longeing lessons must be absolutely stable and under control. The mount must also understand the commands of the person longeing. Longe the mount thoroughly for obedience and steadiness in both directions before the rider is ever allowed to mount.

CHAPTER VI: LOCAL CLUB/CENTER MEETINGS

GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR ALL CLUB/CENTER MEETINGS

The *USPC Horse Management Handbook* has many safety points for unmounted work with horses. While you might think of the HM Handbook as only devoted to rules governing Rallies, Pony Club advocates using best practices for safety on a day-to-day basis. This helps establish a solid grounding in safe behavior, reinforced by constant use. This way, when a rider is stressed, such as at rally or even while attending a mounted meeting away from home, safety is already second nature.

Running your Club/Center meetings with an eye to the best practices outlined in the HM Handbook will help prepare your members to keep safety first.

Medical Armbands/Bracelets

All members must have either a bracelet or an armband containing a USPC/USEA medical card completely filled out. This card is to stay in a medical armband placed on the upper arm for all Pony Club activities, both mounted or unmounted. If a bracelet is worn, it must visibly contain at least the following items: name, date of birth, emergency contact information, known allergies, current medications, and existing medical conditions.

Weather Conditions

Be aware of possible conditions that may influence transportation. Outside meetings in the summer or winter require awareness of the potential for heat or cold related illness. Don't be afraid to cancel a meeting if the weather conditions are worrisome.

Refer to the USPC Guidelines for Event Cancellation or Delay which can be found [here](#).

Personnel

At least two adults be in attendance with adequate means of transportation to take Pony Club members home or to the hospital as the situation dictates. Having two adults in attendance assures that one is left with the remaining Pony Club members if the other adult has to leave with an injured member. Although the presence of medically trained individuals and/or an ambulance is not a requirement, it is recommended that those adults in charge should be familiar with techniques of CPR and general first aid.

Member and Volunteer Protection

Pony Club is committed to providing a safe environment for its members and volunteers. Creating a safe environment goes beyond mounted safety; it is an environment free of physical or sexual abuse, verbal or physical bullying, threats and physical violence. In support of this commitment, Pony Club has a policy that requires specific volunteers to complete the SafeSport Trained Course TM (Policy 0900 and 0900 P.1).

There should always be two adults present at any Pony Club activity. This serves to protect both the members and the adults.

We all have a duty to prevent and report suspected or actual child abuse. When possible, you must intervene to put a stop to any abuse that you see occurring at the time. Remember that reporting or intervening to prevent abuse may also prevent future cases of abuse.

If a child is in immediate danger, call the police.

If you reasonably suspect a youth member is being abused at times other than during Pony Club activities, contact your local Child Protective Services or authorities. Toll-free numbers for specific agencies in your State, which are designated to receive and investigate reports of suspected child abuse can be found at: <http://www.childwelfare.gov/state-resources/>

In addition to reporting to Child Protective Services or local authorities, report all inappropriate or suspected illegal conduct to your RS and/or to the Pony Club Executive Director, President, or Vice President of Regional Administration. Upon request, and to the extent consistent with the legal obligations of USPC, the identity of a person making a report will be kept confidential. Refer to Policy 0900 for more information.

Each year millions of children and youth experience the humiliation and devastating effects of bullying. Bullying damages the physical, social, and emotional well-being of its targets. It also hurts the children who bully, as well as those who watch it happen. In fact, bullying creates a climate of fear, callousness, and disrespect for everyone involved. Bullying can be prevented in recreational programs and centers when staff and volunteers:

- Commit to making programs safe for participants, free from physical and emotional harm.
- Provide close supervision
- Model inclusive behavior
- Raise awareness and motivate adults to take action
- Spend time talking with participants about bullying.

Please visit www.stopbullying.gov and <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/bullyingresearch/index.html> for more information on bullying.

Emergency Response Contact Card

A template for the Emergency Contact Card is located in Appendix E. This sheet should include the telephone numbers for activating EMS (usually 911); directions to the nearest/most relevant hospital and the phone number; and address/directions to where the meeting is being held.

It is recommended that Action Plans for Concussion and Heat Illness (See Chapter IX) and an Emergency Response Contact Card (completed for the facility at which the activity takes place) be kept in a waterproof container in a human first aid kit (see recommendations for a human first aid kit, Appendix H) And that this information be made known to all adults in attendance.

CHAPTER VI: LOCAL CLUB/CENTER MEETINGS

Incident Report Forms

Club/Center leaders help Pony Club track safety statistics by filing out an Incident Report each and every time a member falls or anyone is injured or requires medical assistance at a Pony Club activity. All safety incidents should be reported. There is an online form available [here](#). A hard copy of the form can be found in Appendix I, so that it can be printed and kept on hand for use at Pony Club activities.

MOUNTED MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES

Choosing a Riding Facility

Refer to Chapter I: Facility Safety when evaluating a facility's suitability for hosting a mounted meeting. Facilities may not meet all criteria on the checklist, but it gives you a basis for evaluating how safe the area is and what potential problems young riders and their mounts may face in to a new-to-them location.

It is necessary to use some common sense when looking for a riding facility. Before you choose, give some thought to the planned activity (mounted meeting, rally, camp, etc.) and to the Equine Facility Checklist. Take into consideration that no matter how well run a facility is, nor how competent and successful the instructors, the member must like them and get along with them. If not, the relationship will fail in its goals.

- Is safety a high priority with the management and instructors?
- Are the instructors well trained and appear professional in their behavior with students?
- Are staff members friendly and helpful?
- Are there adequate personnel for safe instruction?
- Are the horses and equipment in good condition and do the horses appear content?
- Does the facility meet most or all of the requirements of a safe facility?

USPC recommends that a Safety Officer is appointed for all mounted activities. The Safety Officer's duties include ensuring that the following are in place and adhered to as well as completing Incident Report forms.

Access to telephone

A cellular phone is preferable to obtain medical help as soon as possible. Know or have access to the Emergency Response Contact Card that lists the telephone numbers of the EMS and closest hospital.

Emergency response services

An EMS unit or ambulance is not required for all mounted meetings. Nevertheless, it is advisable to notify the local EMS that you are conducting a mounted meeting and provide information as to the date, location and directions. Knowledge of the telephone number of the nearest EMS services is mandatory.

Safety Check

Prior to every mounted meeting, each member must have a "pre-ride inspection" as described in Appendix C.

CHAPTER VI: LOCAL CLUB/CENTER MEETINGS

Follow General Safety procedures plus:

Unmounted Meeting	Mounted Meeting/Clinic	Rally (See Discipline Rulebooks for more details)
	Safety Check required before mounting horse (Applies to ALL riders, regardless of age or certification level)	Safety Check required before mounting horse (Applies to ALL riders, regardless of age or certification level)
Proper Footwear required if working with horses	Proper Footwear required	Proper Footwear required
	Approved, correctly-fitted helmet	Approved, correctly-fitted helmet
Medical Armband/bracelet required	Medical armband/bracelet required	Medical armband/bracelet required
	Approved body protector, if jumping solid obstacles Cross-Country	Approved body protector, if jumping solid obstacles Cross-Country
Emergency Contact Card	Emergency Contact Card	Emergency Contact Card
EMS phone numbers & directions to event, posted in a prominent location	EMS phone numbers & directions to event, posted in a prominent location	Qualified medical personnel on site with equipment. Ambulance recommended for higher risk activities such as Show Jumping and Eventing
Human First Aid Kit	Human First Aid Kit	Human First Aid Kit & additional medical supplies provided by EMT on site
	Equine First Aid Kit	Equine First Aid Kits brought by teams & vet on grounds or on call

* Qualified Medical Personnel should have no other duties during the rally. Qualified Medical Personnel must have available appropriate medical equipment, as required by their certifying State or EMS Region, during all scheduled performances at the competition. Any special safety rules or guidelines particular to the host facility or venue should be published.

Qualified Medical Personnel are currently certified or licensed EMT, or Paramedic, Certified First Responder, or a Physician or Nurse trained in pre-hospital trauma care, who is currently certified or licensed in their profession under applicable law where the competition is held. A Physician or Nurse trained in pre-hospital trauma care is a Physician or Nurse who is currently certified in Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS), Basic Trauma Life Support (BTLS), Pre-hospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS). Any other comparable certification requires review and written approval by USPC prior to the start of competition. It is strongly recommended that EMTs and/or Paramedics be used to fill this position. Medical personnel must not exceed the scope of their practice.

See <https://www.ems.gov/national-ems-scope-of-practice-model/> for additional information regarding Qualified Medical Personnel

CHAPTER VII: TRAVEL SAFETY

Maintenance of a towing vehicle and horse trailer is critical for ensuring safe transportation for both you and your mount. While maintenance is important, familiarity with the transportation laws and regulations for your area is also necessary. Avoid traveling alone when pulling a trailer. There are many circumstances where an assistant can help avoid a dangerous situation and provide a helping hand when needed.

Trailer & Tow Vehicle Maintenance

Weekly Check (or each time you tow if less often than weekly):

- Oil, fluid levels, belts on the tow vehicle
- Hitch on tow vehicle for loose or cracked welds and bolts
- Trailer for rust in receiver
- Tow vehicle for loose ball
- Both vehicles for loose or broken electrical connectors
- Signal and brake lights on the trailer
- Functioning of trailer brakes (as you pull away, depress brake box lever and feel for equal brake drag)
- Safety chains and hooks and places they connect
- Tire pressure on tow vehicle, trailer and spare tires
- Tire changing equipment to fit trailer and vehicle tires
- Dual tires—hit inside tire with hammer, hammer will bounce back if air pressure is okay
- Interior for wasp and hornet nests—they can appear within a week!

Monthly Check:

- Clean and inspect your trailer (so it will be ready to go when you are)
- Clean inside and out with soap and water
- Wash and wax trailer exterior
- Check tires for cuts, uneven wear, and pressure
- Check quick releases mechanisms and d rings where they attach to trailer
- Check floor mats; inspect and clean floors with mats removed
- Check lubrication of nose wheel, hitch assembly and
- Tailgate mechanism (especially if stored outside)
- Check center partition, lubricate groove bolts and rump chain or bars for easy removal in an emergency
- Check surface rust and sharp edges that may be developing, touch up with paint and repair when needed.

Yearly Check:

- Inspection date, register in the appropriate month (if required)
- Insurance coverage
- Condition of springs, shackle hangers and bolts or rubber torsion axle (for cracks and excessive wear)
- Condition of all wiring, bulbs, lenses and reflectors
- All channel iron supporting the floor for rust or cracks
- The underside of the floor for dry rot by scraping and probing with a knife
- Tread and condition of tires, including the spare
- Ramps and hinge for sag or rust—oil hinges
- Tailgate and threads on screw-type clamps for wear, replace if beginning to strip
- Braking system, including shoes
- Wheel bearings (repack)
- Wood floor planks (seal with a wood preservative) (Aluminum floor trailer wash and sprinkle a box of baking soda under the mats to neutralize corrosive action of urine)
- Replace trailer break-away battery, if needed.

Travel/Trailer Equipment Checklist

(See Appendix J.)

CHAPTER VIII: EMERGENCY PLAN

REGIONAL EMERGENCY PLAN

Be Aware—Be Prepared—Get Organized

In response to both natural disasters and the increased need for homeland security, the USPC Safety Committee strongly recommends that each region considers and develops emergency response plans. Regional plans may vary to meet the individual needs. Some areas must deal with tornados; others hurricanes, extreme heat, or brushfires. Due to the limits of space and the differences in regional needs, this handbook does not address each and every situation you may face. See the DC/CA Guide for additional information. Emergency plans need to address the requirements of the Pony Club members, adults, and their animals for rallies, clinics, camps, etc. The reality of today's world is that we need to be prepared!

Important Websites

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): www.fema.gov
- Department of Homeland Security: www.dhs.gov
- American Red Cross: www.redcross.org

Your own local resources can be of immense help. The Fire Department, Police, County Services, and Animal Control may have developed tools that can be of help in your part of the country in both emergency and evacuation planning. The importance of this cannot be overlooked. Take the time to prepare and be organized. Hopefully, you will never have to use your emergency plan. But it is important to create one, and to update and review it annually to stay current.

Preparing for Emergencies

- Always have two adults present for the entire activity.
- Make sure a telephone (with good reception) is available.
- Know how to activate emergency response systems (in most cases, by dialing 911).
- Know your address and other details that would need to be provided to direct emergency personnel
- Weather Forecast: Check for heat index and possible inclement conditions.
- Medical Information—All members are required to have an armband containing a USPC/USEA medical card or bracelet listing required medical information.
- Make sure you have emergency contact information for all people on site.
- Human First Aid Kit (See Appendix F).
- Emergency Contact Information Card (Appendix E) Prominently Posted. (Keep in human first aid kit between meetings.)

Guidelines for Medical Emergency Response

The best way to respond to a medical emergency is to be prepared. Anticipation is the key to avoiding confusion and assure adequate medical coverage at any Pony Club event or meeting. The needs for medical coverage vary according to the nature of the particular event. Requirements for a mounted meeting will not necessarily be the same as those of a regional rally or national competition. See Chapter VI for the minimum requirements for local Pony Club mounted and unmounted meetings, regional rallies and national competitions.

SEVERE WEATHER

Different regions can experience a wide variety of severe weather. Knowing what is coming your direction is the key to planning and coming through severe weather events in as safe a manner as possible.

Many cell phones can be used to track weather through internet sites. It is also recommended that you have a weather radio available in case of emergency when cell phones may lose contact with the local transmission tower.

Before Events/Meetings:

- Be aware of potential weather or natural disasters that occur in your area
- Check the weather forecast
- Check the batteries on your weather radio
- Communicate and post a copy of the severe weather plan at the beginning of the event/meeting
- Be prepared to act when weather hits

During Events/Meetings:

- Follow your severe weather plan
- Communicate to all participants the progress of weather and what the severe weather plan calls for next
- Do not call the "all clear" until weather has completely passed your area

After Events/Meeting when the Severe Weather Plan was Used:

- Evaluate effectiveness and revise the plan

CHAPTER IX: HEALTH AND SAFETY OF HORSE AND RIDER

HUMAN HEALTH

The health and safety of Pony Club's members and volunteers is a high priority. The organization has been at the forefront of safety for the entire length of its existence, being the first equestrian organization to require the use of protective helmets. The organization continues its commitment to human health and safety by monitoring other organizations' safe practices and the information available to us from the medical community. Pony Club requires a minimum of a human first aid kit to be available at every meeting, be it mounted or unmounted, to help ensure that minor wounds can be treated quickly. In addition, the Emergency Response Card must be posted in a central and easily viewed location during each and every meeting.

Best Practice: Have a CPR and First Aid certified individual at your meetings. Designate an adult to oversee safety concerns.

Emergency Response Card

See Appendix G.

Human First Aid Kit

See Appendix H.

CONCUSSION ASSESSMENT TOOL & CONCUSSION RETURN TO PLAY

Head injury is the usual cause of the most serious and fatal horse-related injuries.

Riding is an impact sport. Everyone participating in impact sports needs to know the risks.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), most injuries are "closed head injuries" caused by a blunt trauma. Although helmets reduce the risk, head injuries still occur. Most head injuries do not result in coma, but that doesn't mean they aren't serious.

There is mounting evidence that subtle brain damage may result both immediately and after repeated mild head injuries. Reduction in abilities to learn, personality changes and or loss of recent memory can result from repeated (as few as three) mild head injuries. Even a seemingly mild head injury can be fatal if repeated incidents occur within a relatively short period of time.

In Pony Club, a responsible adult should **always** be present. This responsibility is serious and sometimes involves difficult decisions. One of the heaviest responsibilities is the decision whether or not to allow a potentially injured rider to continue to participate in the current activity.

The following guidelines are for information purposes only and should not be viewed as teaching non-medically trained adults when to allow an injured member to continue with an activity.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has put together a traumatic brain injury campaign called "**Heads Up,**" which includes concussions. On their website, the CDC has various educational and promotional materials on concussions, statistics and information on concussions (as a whole and by select sports), videos and other resources that are helpful in understanding the signs, treatment and prevention of concussions.

Pony Club has always believed in ongoing education in all areas of safety. Equestrian sports are inherently dangerous and we have a responsibility to our members, leaders, and volunteers to provide the resources, recommendations, guidelines and policies to ensure that the Pony Club experience is the very best experience.

In conjunction with USPC Policy 0800.B, 0900, and 0900 P.1, Member and Volunteer Safety & Protection which includes Concussion and Return to Play, all volunteers in a leadership position within Pony Club (DC, CA, RS, VRS, etc.) and especially anyone involved directly with mounted or unmounted lessons or activities (NEs, CHMJs, RICs, HMOs, Clinicians, Local Instructors and Examiners, etc.) are required to go through the CDC Heads Up Concussion Training Module. After completing the module, they must take the USPC-specific online Concussion Training Module posttest.

All members of the appropriate maturity level, particularly those members who are teaching, parents and other volunteers are encouraged to go through this module and take the test as well.

Because of the overwhelming information about the length and severity of the effects of concussion, particularly among children, Pony Club has developed a Concussion Assessment Tool that can assist the Responsible Adult to determine appropriate action. The CDC Concussion Assessment Card and the USPC Concussion Assessment Tool can be found in Appendix I.

A big consideration after any fall or bump is assessing when a member may "return to play" and rejoin the Pony Club lesson or activity. Any member suspected of having sustained a concussion must be removed from the activity and observed for any increased severity of concussion signs. Call 911 if it is an emergency. If not, the member must be removed from the activity that day and evaluated by their physician before they can return to participate in any Pony Club activity. The parent and physician Head Injury/Concussion Return to Play Form can be found in Appendix J or on the Pony Club website under the Safety Tab by clicking on "Head Injury/Concussion."

The form should be completed and signed by a physician and the parent or adult member (if over the age of majority in their state of residence) and returned to the Club/Center leader before they are allowed to participate in Pony Club activities. Note to club/center leaders: once the Concussion Return to Play form is returned, please fill out the Head Injury/Concussion Report which can be found in Appendix K and on the Safety Page of the Pony Club website.

CHAPTER IX: HEALTH AND SAFETY OF HORSE AND RIDER

Please visit the following [safety page](#) on the Pony Club website for full information about Concussion evaluation and management.

ponyclub.org/safety/

HEAT ILLNESS IN HUMANS

In conjunction with USPC Policy 0900 on Heat Illness, all, volunteers in a leadership position within Pony Club (DC, CA, RS, VRS, etc.) and especially anyone involved directly with mounted or unmounted lessons or activities (NEs, CHMJs, RICs, HMOs, clinicians, local instructors and examiners, etc.) are required to go through the CDC Heat Illness Training Module. After completing the module, they must take the USPC-specific online Heat Illness Training Module posttest. More information on this program can be found at ponyclub.org/safety

Heat Illness Terms

- Heat Cramps—Muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. Although heat cramps are the least severe, they are often the first signal that the body is having trouble with the heat.
- Heat Exhaustion—Typically occurs when people exercise heavily or work in a hot, humid place where body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. Blood flow to the skin increases, causing blood flow to decrease to the vital organs. This results in a form of mild shock. If not treated, the victim's condition will worsen. Body temperature will keep rising and the victim may suffer heat stroke.
- Heat Stroke—A life-threatening condition. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly.
- Sun Stroke—Another term for heat stroke.

Dealing with Heat Illness

Children sweat less than adults. This makes it more difficult for them to keep their body temperature within the correct range while exercising in the heat. Recognizing heat illness in the early stages—and doing something about it—is imperative.

If you are planning an activity during a hot day, make preparations to have a cooling station available for both the people and the horses. Appendix D, has a full heat index chart.

Human Cooling Station

- Good: Pop-up shade canopy with a cooler of cold water and some washcloths.
- Better: Shade, drinking water and a misting apparatus.
- Best: Air-conditioned space and cool water to drink.

Steps to keep hydrated and cool while exercising

- Keep an eye on the temperature. Humidity raises the ambient temperatures. See Appendix D for more information about the heat index.

- Hydrate. This means drinking water. Drinking sugary drinks does not do as well at hydrating as plain water does. Caffeine actually dehydrates tissues, so avoid those kinds of beverages.
- If symptoms of dehydration are seen, such as dry mouth, thirsty, irritability, headache, dizziness, excessive tiredness, cramping:
 - Move the person to an air-conditioned space, shady area or misting zone.
 - Encourage them to drink water.
- Return to Play after dehydration
 - May return to play when they are symptom-free
 - However, keep an eye on them as they may redevelop symptoms.

Signs and Symptoms of Severe Heat Illness or Heat Stroke

- Increase in body temperature; 103 degrees F. by oral digital thermometer or 102 degrees F. by forehead electronic scanner.
- Central nervous system dysfunction, such as altered consciousness, seizures, confusion, emotional instability, irrational behavior or decreased mental acuity.
- Other possible indicators include:
 - Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
 - Headache, dizziness or weakness
 - Hot and wet or dry skin
 - Increased heart rate, decreased blood pressure or fast breathing
 - Dehydration
 - Combativeness

This is a serious condition. 911 must be called immediately, while attempts are made to cool the person down.

Return to Play after Severe Heat Illness

- It is best to follow the advice of a certified health professional concerning when to return to play.

EQUINE HEALTH

HEAT RELATED ILLNESS IN THE HORSE

Humans are not the only ones affected by heat. Since humans are the ones making the decisions about when they will work and where, we need to be aware of and recognize when our equine partner is suffering from dehydration or heat illness. Horses can dehydrate quickly, which can bring on the potential for colic. Be aware of the signs of dehydration and heat illness in your equine partner and be ready to take action on his or her behalf.

Appendix D has a full heat index chart.

CHAPTER IX: HEALTH AND SAFETY OF HORSE AND RIDER

Equine Cooling Station

An equine cooling station serves as a mini vet box. It can be as elaborate as a trough full of ice water and buckets to sluice off the horse, followed by fans to help dry them, or as simple as a clean muck bucket full of water, wash sponge and scraper under a shady tree.

Dehydration

A horse that is dehydrated needs to stop work and drink immediately. The average horse needs 8–10 gallons of water per day. The amount increases as the temperature increases. Horses in work may need two to three times this amount per day to stay hydrated. Horses should have ready access to salt to encourage drinking and to replace those salts lost in the sweat. Additionally, electrolytes can be added to the feed or water to replenish the salts lost through sweating. If providing electrolytes in water, you should also provide a water source free of electrolytes.

Signs of Dehydration:

- Dry mucous membranes of the inner eye lid and gums
- Sunken eyes
- Fatigue and weak pulse
- Elevated heart and respiratory rates

Testing for Dehydration:

- Pinch the skin on your horse's shoulder, near the neck. The skin should spring back to normal quickly, not "tent."
- The gums are a good place to check for capillary refill time, a good measure of hydration. Press the horse's gum lightly. The gum will blanch under the pressure. Color should return to normal within two seconds after pressure is lifted.

Overheating

Horses also suffer from the heat. Any horse displaying symptoms of heat illness needs to stop work immediately and be given appropriate treatment.

Signs of Heat Illness in Horses:

- Weakness, stumbling
- Respiratory rate > 32 breaths per minute
- Rectal Temp > 102 degrees F

Treatment for Heat illness:

- Get the horse to a shady spot, preferably with a good breeze or fan
- Encourage the horse to drink cool water
- Bathe horse in cool water starting with the legs and working your way up the body
- Isopropyl alcohol can be added to bathing water as it increases the evaporation rate of the fluid from the horse's body. Recommend leaving the alcohol bottle floating in the bucket of treated water if left standing to alert everyone to the water's altered status. **DO NOT ALLOW THE HORSE TO DRINK FROM ALCOHOL TREATED WATER.**

- Make sure to scrape water away from the horse after applying it when it starts to turn warm so that it doesn't pool on the body. Warm pooling water actually acts as an insulator, keeping the heat from escaping.
- Take the rectal temperature every fifteen minutes until the horse returns to normal
- In severe cases of heat illness, a vet may need to administer IV fluids to counteract the dehydration and effects of heat

EQUINE HEALTH: DISEASE VECTORS AND BIO SAFETY

The U.S. is seeing more and more imported diseases. We can act to help delay the spread of disease from horse to horse by being aware of how diseases are spread.

Water:

- Bring your own water when traveling or supply water from a fresh source in the horse's own bucket.
- Never allow your horse to drink from a communal water source when away from home. All it takes is one sick horse drinking from that trough and all subsequent horses are infected.
- It is advised to not dunk the end of a hose into water buckets when filling them. The hose could spread contamination from one bucket to others that are filled in this manner.

Soil

- If there are soil-borne diseases active on your farm or close by, clean your boots before visiting other people's farms.
- If you visit an infected farm or area, clean your boots after you leave and before going out to work on your farm.
 - Wear clean boots that are freshly polished as the dirt comes off much more easily.

Insects

- Practice good insect control to prevent the spread of diseases, such as the removal of ticks and the use of fly control procedures in your area. It is best not to leave standing water if possible, as it can become a breeding ground for mosquitos.
- Practice good hand washing techniques after handling strange horses to avoid spreading any disease of the skin or that is spread by saliva or body fluids.

Other Horses

- To avoid the spread of disease, horses should not:
 - Share tack
 - Share grooming supplies
 - Be allowed to greet each other nose to nose
 - Be moved into a new stall without it being disinfected first
- If a horse is new to a farm or is suspected of being sick, it should be quarantined from the other horses until it is determined that the horse does not have a contagious disease.

CHAPTER IX: HEALTH AND SAFETY OF HORSE AND RIDER

EQUINE FIRST AID KIT:

See HM Handbook or Appendix L in this Handbook.

Infectious Disease in Humans and Biosafety

In 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it became a clear demonstration of the high potential for disease transmission when non-related groups gather in close proximity. The WHO, CDC, state governments, USEF and other competitive organizations have developed ever evolving position statements and policies to mitigate risk while still allowing competitions. Their websites should serve as the most current information source.

Reporting Incidents and Accidents

Contrary to some Pony Club lore, Incident Reports have nothing directly to do with the insurance coverage USPC requires for our meetings and rallies. These reports are extremely important to the organization as a tracking tool to help determine which of our safety practices are in fact effective.

Club/Center leaders help Pony Club track safety statistics by filing out an Incident Report each and every time a member falls or is injured at a Pony Club activity.

INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Pony Club provides DCs/CAs with an online form for reporting Incidents/Accidents that occur at Pony Club functions. [The incident report can be found here.](#) For a hard copy of the Incident Report Form, see Appendix I.

This data provides information to improve safety in horsemanship.

An incident is an accident that does not necessarily result in an injury. An incident should be reported if it is of concern to the student, instructor, adult in charge, DC/CA, etc.

All incidents that result either in an injury of any degree or no actual injury at all MUST be reported.

Pony Club has been a leader in the acquisition of information about events that could or do result in injury associated with horsemanship. This information includes not only those incidents that lead to injury during riding but also those that may occur during grooming or any other function associated with the care or transport of the horse. The information obtained from USPC yearly surveys has led to significant improvements in safety and has reduced the number of injuries for all riders.

For example, restricting the use of helmets to those meeting the standard of the ASTM has lessened the numbers of Pony Club members who have sustained a concussion after a fall. Strict attention to the problems of heat and humidity has greatly reduced the occurrence of heat related illness. Insisting on proper footwear reduces foot injuries. These are but a few of the safety measures that have been introduced based on the results of the incident and accident reports. They are an important part of Pony Club.

The responsibility for completing these forms belongs entirely to the DC/CA or adult in-charge at a meeting. Without full support and cooperation, the Safety Committee cannot know what issues may arise that warrant study. When an incident occurs that may have resulted in injury or when an accident results in injury, the responsible DC/CA or designate MUST complete an Incident Report. The Safety Committee will review this report and either contact the DC/CA or send a more complete form for completion. The Safety Committee will follow up on all accidents that produce injury. This includes situations that produce no injury.

These reports are compiled at the year's end and reported to all members of Pony Club. Recommendations for changing policy that may lessen the risks of injury-producing accidents are presented to the Vice Presidents of Instruction and Activities for further review and consideration.

The function of the Safety Committee depends on the full cooperation of all DCs/CAs to complete the forms in a timely fashion. Don't forget to fulfill this important function each time an incident (without injury) or accident (with injury) occurs. Obviously, common sense must prevail in reporting incidents that are unassociated with injury. The goal of the reporting process is to learn what things contribute to an accident and how these may be prevented. In addition, these reports provide insight into incidents that could result in injury. For example, a fall from a horse that is not associated with any injury is important, especially if this occurs because of poor footing, unsuitable horse/rider combination, etc.

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APPENDIX A: HELMET REQUIREMENTS & FIT

Helmet Requirements

Need for Protection

The activities with highest risk of head injury are: motorcycle racing, car racing and horseback riding. It has been proven that riding helmets save lives and prevent serious brain injury! That is why they are required.

While a fall from two feet can cause permanent brain damage,

- A mounted rider is elevated eight feet or more above the ground.
- When a rider falls and hits his/her head, the most impact tends to occur at the back of the head. Riding helmets are designed to protect that area, whereas bike helmets are not designed for this type of impact.

The Rule

Every Pony Club member (even members over the age of 18) must wear a properly fitted, approved helmet with the chin harness secured at all times:

- When mounted
- When longeing
- At horse inspection (jog for soundness), and
- At pre-riding inspections (turnout inspection and safety checks).

Helmet

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 safety requirement for helmets policy). USPC recognizes the following safety bodies' criteria for acceptable helmets:

- ASTM F1163-15 or ASTM F1163-23 with SEI Mark (North America) (required for USEF Competitions)
- SNELL Memorial Foundation E2021
- PAS 015-2011 with BSI Kitemark (United Kingdom)
- AS/NZS 3838 with SAI Global Mark (Australia and New Zealand)
- VG1 01.040 2014-12 BSI Kitemark and/or IC Mark (European)
- EN 1384 BSI Kitemark and/or IC Mark (European)

What to do if Your Helmet Comes Off

If a helmet comes off, or the harness becomes undone while riding or longeing, the helmet must be replaced and/or resecured before you continue. Failure to comply is cause for elimination from competition.

Riders must dismount to replace and/or re-secure helmets. In competition, someone may hand your helmet to you—it is not unauthorized assistance.

Put the Helmet on Correctly

Even the best safety helmet will not provide adequate protection if it does not fit properly or is not worn correctly. Follow the manufacturer's recommendation for fitting the helmet.

- Helmet manufacturers have stated that it doesn't really matter if the rider wears their hair under their helmet or outside the helmet, as long as the helmet is properly fit.
- When trying on a new helmet, wear your hair in the same style you will wear it for riding (such as a braid or plait doubled up and tucked under in a hair net).
- Make sure the helmet is level—the visor should not tip up or down.
- Fasten the harness, making sure it's comfortably snug.



Incorrect Fit



Correct Fit

Check the Fit

Make sure the helmet fits snugly all the way around.

- Wiggle it back and forth and side to side; when the helmet moves, your scalp and your eyebrows should move with it.
- If it slides freely, you need a smaller size.
- If it squeezes uncomfortably, you need a larger size.

Check the Shape

The helmet may not be the right shape for your head. A different style with a more or less oval shape may be needed.

- The helmet is too round if it squeezes the brow, but still rocks freely side to side.
- The helmet is too oval if it fits at the sides, but rocks back and forth.

Small fitting problems can be solved by following the manufacturer's instructions, usually by adding the foam padding provided with the helmet or by adjusting the internal harness if it has one. If the helmet needs more padding than is provided, a smaller size or a different model is needed.

- For example, if the helmet is too round, put a pad on each side or try a different style with a more oval shape.

APPENDIX A: HELMET REQUIREMENTS & FIT

Check the Brim

The brim should rest 1/2" to 1" inch above your eyebrows. Some helmets can be adjusted (with lacings or foam pads) to rest lower or higher or try a style with a deeper or more shallow crown.

- If it sits higher, you're not getting full protection; any lower, and it could obscure your vision.

Check the Fit of the Retention Harness & Chin Strap

Helmets are made to work with a snug harness. You should be able to fit one finger between your chin and the strap.

- Adjust the harness so the chin strap fits snugly under the chin.
- If there is an adjustable 'V' harness, the tip of the V should fit under the ear.



Correct Harness Fit

The helmet should stay on when harnessed, without rocking or moving around, regardless of activity. It should be comfortably snug and adjusted for firm contact with the jaw/chin.

* Bend over at the waist and shake your head. With the harness secured, the helmet should move very little.

Check it Before You Ride

All adjustments should be checked each time the helmet is worn, making sure it fits snugly and correctly at all times. A properly fitted, well adjusted, and correctly positioned helmet:

- Is more likely to remain in place during an accident, and
- Give the most protection available for the design, and
- Will be the most comfortable to wear.

With the helmet on and tightly fastened, try to remove it by moving it rolling it backwards and forwards as far as possible.

- The helmet should not be able to be removed or roll backwards or forwards to expose the forehead or obscure vision.
- Repeat fitting steps as necessary until you have the correct fit.

Improperly Fitting Helmet

USPC Chief HM judges, examiners and instructors may make a judgment on the fit of the helmet. They may NOT take a helmet that does not fit and make it do so by adding padding, etc.

Helmet Care and Storage

To preserve optimal function and lifespan of a helmet, avoid placing it in contact with hairspray, sunscreen or insect repellents. Clean the inside and outside of the helmet often with warm water and a mild detergent. DO NOT soak any part of the helmet, put it close to high heat, or use strong cleaners. Helmets should be stored in a room that does not get too hot or too cold and where it is away from direct sunlight. (Do not store an equestrian helmet in a car.)

Old or Damaged Helmets

- You can't tell if a helmet has been damaged by looking at or even from feeling a helmet. Not all helmet damage is easily seen or felt.
- The material inside a helmet that absorbs the concussion is expanded polystyrene, which is similar to the material used to protect heavy electronics during shipping. This material may be damaged if the helmet is dropped or worn in a fall. It will be unable to effectively absorb another impact in the same area.
- Helmets showing signs of aging or damage of any kind, should be replaced.
- The headliner (the soft material between the head and the hard, outer shell) may compress over time, making a helmet too loose.
- Any helmet worn in a fall, should be inspected for damage by the manufacturer before further use or replaced.
- Save the helmet box and receipt. If there is suspected damage after a fall, many manufacturers will replace the helmet for a nominal fee if you have documentation.

APPENDIX B: BODY PROTECTOR (VEST) FIT

Getting the Best Fit for Your Body Protection Vest

Wearing a body protector that provides high technology coverage will protect your internal organs, chest and ribs, and may prevent bruising, cuts and contact burns on the area it covers. Equestrian body protectors can be certified for design and performance criteria, similar to helmets. While there are some body protectors on the market that carry no certification, in the United States, USPC requires wearing a properly fitted (per manufacturer's guidelines) equestrian body protection vest containing the standards and certifications that meet criteria established by specific safety bodies listed below is required when jumping cross-country/solid obstacles during any activity sponsored by the USPC, its Regions, Registered Clubs, or Riding Center programs.

- ASTM F1937-04
- EN 13158:2018 BETA Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3

However, a body protector that doesn't fit properly won't be able to give you the highest level of protection.

Achieving the perfect fit is as easy as taking the right measurements and selecting the right body protector model to suit your preferences. Remember that your body protector should be fitted over light clothing and that heavier garments should be worn over it.

There are four measurements that will determine what size body protector you need.

- The circumference of the widest part of the chest to find the appropriate size range. Some models for kids and teens are adjustable and designed to fit a growing rider.
- The circumference of the natural waist to ensure that the body protector won't feel too loose or shift on the body.
- The measurement from waist to waist over the shoulder.
- The measurement of back length, starting at the base of the neck and ending at the base of the spine, approximately at the cross seam of the seat of your breeches.

Once you've referenced the size chart available on each body protector tag, try on the one that best matches your measurements. Fasten any adjustable straps to make a snug fit.

If possible, the final step should be sitting on a saddle to check the back length of the body protector. There should be approximately four fingers between the saddle and the base of the body protector so that it won't interfere over a drop fence. At the front, the body protector should reach the breastbone at the top and cover the bottom rib but should not cover the belly button.

APPENDIX C: SAFETY CHECK CHECKLIST

The conversation between the rider and the person providing the Safety Check can serve as an important education moment for less experienced riders and serves as a complimentary second check for someone with more experience.

RIDER:

- Pinny or rider number if at rally
- Medical release in armband or medical bracelet.
- Helmet that is properly fitted, securely fastened, and in good condition. Hair away from face and rider number. It should contain certification by one of the following international or national safety bodies:
 - ASTM F113-15 or ASTM F1163-23 with SEI Mark (North America) (required for USEF Competitions)
 - PAS 015-2011 with BSI Kitemark (United Kingdom)
 - AS/NZ 3838 with SAI Global Mark (Australia and New Zealand)
 - SNELL Memorial Foundation E2021
 - VG1 01.040 2014-12 BSI Kitemark and/or IC Mark (European)
 - EN 1384 BSI Kitemark and/or IC Mark (European)
- No jewelry that dangles except medic alerts. Stud piercings, wedding rings, show bows, decorated stock pins, folded scarves, bolo ties are allowed.
- Safe, neat, workmanlike attire. (Shirt tucked in, belt, if there are loops except for Games and UR-D-2).
- Safe and conventional footwear with a heel.
- Spurs properly adjusted, rowel size (if applicable)
- Body protection vest (if applicable per Policy 0830) – Properly fitted
 - ASTM F1937-04
 - EN 13158:2018 BETA Level 1, Level 2, or Level
- Whips or bats correct size for discipline with no wrist loops.

MOUNT:

- Well groomed and in accordance with rider's certification level.
- Check the condition of feet: if picked out, shoes and studs (if any) secure and suitable for ground condition.
- Galls, cuts, or other wounds attended to.

BRIDLE:

- Check over all fit and all stitching for signs of wear and condition of the leather.
- Cavesson/noseband—should be one to two fingers below cheekbone, snug but not uncomfortably tight.

- Keepers, buckles and hooks—secured and in good condition.
- Cheekpieces—should be of equal length with at least one spare hole above the buckle.
- Crownpiece/browband—fit without rubbing or pinching ears.
- Throatlatch—loose enough for the neck to flex, tight enough so it can't be pulled over cheekbones. There should be a fist or four fingers between the throatlatch and the throat. At least one spare hole above the buckle.
- Dropped nosebands—should rest on edge of nose bone, just above the soft part of the nose, snugly, yet be able to slip a finger underneath.
- Flash noseband—cavesson should be adjusted fairly high and snugly. The flash strap should not pull the cavesson down. The chinstrap/flash strap should fit snugly below the bit, in the chin groove with the buckle not near the lips.
- Figure 8 noseband—The upper strap goes under the jaw behind the cheekbones, inside the bridle. The lower strap buckles below the bit, in the chin groove. The small pad rests high on the nose bone, where the straps cross. Both straps should be snug, but not tight.
- Reins—Check at bit and buckle for signs of wear, Check stitching and length.
- For western, no noseband except bosal (not mechanical hackamore except when allowed by AQHA).
- Crownpiece/browband/ear loop.
- Most western bridles do not have throatlatches; however, several styles do – it is probably safer to have throatlatch, but ear loop holds most depending on horse's head shape.
- Romal properly adjusted with knots properly adjusted, mecate on bosal properly tied, western split reins tied with a square knot or suitable buckles.
- Nosebands are not allowed in western unless meets AQHA guidelines.

BIT:

- Check for correct adjustment and size, 1/4" space on each side is recommended depending on the type of bit and shape of the horse's mouth.
- Check for rough spots and rust. Note that western sweet iron bits are designed to rust at the mouthpiece and cop- per mouthpieces will slightly reshape to the horse's mouth.
 - Horses prefer these to chrome – it stimulates slobbering.
- Snaffle—typically two small wrinkles at corners of lips. Cheek pieces do not bow away from the face when reins are tightened.

APPENDIX C: SAFETY CHECK CHECKLIST

- Pelham and Kimberwickes—typically one small wrinkle at corners of lips.
- Curb Chain—Twisted so links are flat and adjusted so that when the bit rotates 45 degrees the curb chain comes into contact with the chin groove to tighten the chain.
- Lip Strap—runs through the center (fly) link and buckles to tiny rings on bit shank.
- For western, curb strap leather ends well oiled, no breaks or excess wear, curb chain lies flat with no twists, ½ inch wide, no rust, rivets tight and holding chain in place flat.
- Billets—The first billet must be used, but using either the second or third billet is acceptable depending on the fit.
- Western cinch—has no broken parts, no rust on buckles or tie rings, buckles open and move freely, neoprene does not have broken areas, cinch strings are strong and not rusty, fuzzy cinches are complete without missing or packed spots, flank cincha (if used) fits loosely with a connecting strap to the front cinch.
- Cinch strap—tied on properly with knots facing away from the horse, the offside is normally doubled and slides on the cinch ring where it is tied at the top or tied with a cinch knot; ties near side—should be tied at the top, and long enough to double when tightened, the buckle or tie knot tied properly and securely.

SADDLE:

- Check the overall fit, tree, condition and cleanliness of leather and stitching
- Safety bar is down/open
- Stirrup leathers—Check the soundness of buckles, leather, and stitching. They should be an appropriate length, and at least two spare holes above and one below the buckle.
- Western stirrup hobble straps should be properly adjusted and tight.
- Stirrup irons—Appropriate size, 1" wider than rider's boot. Metal not stressed or bent. Pads in good condition, not worn/hard. They should fit snugly in the stirrup. Fillis stirrups must have pads.
- Western stirrups—Check to see if bolts are tightened (cannot twist stirrup at the top or pull and bolt come loose), bolt ends to be covered smoothly (can cut your leg if there are exposed sharp bolt nuts).
- Buckle/billet guards—Required except for saddles with long billets. They should cover the buckles.
- Girth—Check for cleanliness and wear. It should have at least two buckles on each end. It should be adjusted the same on each side with at least two holes above the buckle and one below when the girth is tightened. Saddle pad strap goes through one/two of the billet straps.

- Saddle pad—Same on both sides, smooth, pulled up into the gullet and off the withers.
- Western saddle pad—has area raised (preferred) or cut out for withers, wear leathers sewn with stitches complete, saddle blanket lies smoothly on the horse with no wrinkles under the saddle, at least 1" around the saddle skirts.

OTHER EQUIPMENT:

- If used-check breastplates, breast collars, martingales, bell boots, protective boots, etc. for condition, cleanliness and proper fit. Fitting may vary on style and size of mount. Be sure tack is safe and comfortable. Be certain it is appropriate for the sport.
- Rein stops—required for running martingales and in good condition.
- Rubber ring—required for standing martingales and in good condition.

SYNTHETIC TACK:

- Reins must have a breakaway section.
- Tack must be appropriate to the discipline.



APPENDIX D: HEAT INDEX (NEW CHART)

The Heat Index (HI) or "Apparent Temperature" is the temperature the body feels when heat and humidity are combined. This reduces the amount of evaporation of sweat from the body and outdoor exercise becomes dangerous even for those in good shape.

Heat Index (Apparent Temperature) Chart

		Relative Humidity (%)																			
		5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
80	77	78	78	79	79	79	80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87	87
81	78	79	79	79	79	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	85	86	86	87	88	90	91	91
82	79	79	80	80	80	80	81	81	82	83	84	84	85	86	88	89	90	91	93	95	95
83	79	80	80	81	81	81	82	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	90	91	93	95	97	99	99
84	80	81	81	81	82	82	83	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103	103
85	81	81	82	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	88	89	91	93	95	97	99	102	104	107	107
86	81	82	83	83	83	84	85	85	87	88	89	91	93	95	97	100	102	105	108	112	112
87	82	83	83	84	84	85	86	87	88	89	91	93	95	98	100	103	106	109	113	117	116
88	83	84	84	85	85	86	87	88	89	91	93	95	98	100	103	106	110	113	117	121	121
89	84	84	85	85	86	87	88	89	91	93	95	97	100	103	106	110	113	117	122	122	122
90	84	85	86	86	87	88	89	91	92	95	97	100	103	106	109	113	117	122	127	127	127
91	85	86	87	87	88	89	90	92	94	97	99	102	105	109	113	117	122	126	132	132	132
92	86	87	88	88	89	90	92	94	96	99	101	105	108	112	116	121	126	131	136	136	136
93	87	88	89	89	90	92	93	95	98	101	104	107	111	116	120	125	130	136	141	146	146
94	87	89	90	90	91	93	95	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135	141	147	152	152
95	88	89	91	91	93	94	96	99	102	105	109	113	118	123	128	134	140	146	152	158	158
96	89	90	92	93	94	96	98	101	104	108	112	116	121	126	132	138	145	151	157	163	163
97	90	91	93	94	95	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	125	130	136	143	150	157	164	170	170
98	91	92	94	95	97	99	102	105	109	113	117	123	128	134	141	148	155	162	169	175	175
99	92	93	95	96	98	101	104	107	111	115	120	126	132	138	145	153	160	167	174	180	180
100	93	94	96	97	100	102	106	109	114	118	124	129	136	143	150	158	165	172	179	185	185
101	93	95	97	99	101	104	108	112	116	121	127	133	140	147	155	162	169	176	183	190	190
102	94	96	98	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	130	137	144	152	160	167	174	181	188	195	195
103	95	97	99	101	104	108	112	116	122	127	134	141	148	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	200
104	96	98	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	131	137	145	153	161	168	175	182	189	196	203	203
105	97	99	102	104	108	112	116	121	127	134	141	149	157	166	173	180	187	194	201	208	208
106	98	100	103	106	109	114	119	124	130	137	145	153	162	172	179	186	193	200	207	214	214
107	99	101	104	107	111	116	121	127	134	141	149	157	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	216
108	100	102	105	109	113	118	123	130	137	144	153	162	172	179	186	193	200	207	214	221	221
109	100	103	107	110	115	120	126	133	140	148	157	167	177	184	191	198	205	212	219	226	226
110	101	104	108	112	117	122	129	136	143	152	161	171	181	190	197	204	211	218	225	232	232
111	102	106	109	114	119	125	131	139	147	156	166	176	186	195	202	209	216	223	230	237	237
112	104	107	111	115	121	127	134	142	150	160	170	181	191	200	207	214	221	228	235	242	242
113	104	108	112	117	123	129	137	145	154	164	175	185	195	204	211	218	225	232	239	246	246
114	105	109	113	119	125	132	140	148	158	168	179	189	199	208	215	222	229	236	243	250	250
115	106	110	115	121	127	134	143	152	162	173	184	194	204	213	220	227	234	241	248	255	255
116	107	111	116	122	129	137	146	155	166	177	187	197	207	216	223	230	237	244	251	258	258
117	108	112	118	124	132	140	149	159	170	181	191	201	211	220	227	234	241	248	255	262	262
118	108	113	119	126	134	142	152	162	174	186	196	206	216	225	232	239	246	253	260	267	267
119	109	114	121	128	136	145	155	166	178	189	199	209	219	228	235	242	249	256	263	270	270
120	110	116	122	130	138	148	158	170	182	193	203	213	223	232	239	246	253	260	267	274	274
121	111	117	124	132	141	151	162	174	187	198	208	218	228	237	244	251	258	265	272	279	279
122	111	118	125	134	143	154	165	178	190	201	211	221	231	240	247	254	261	268	275	282	282
123	112	119	127	136	146	157	169	182	194	205	215	225	235	244	251	258	265	272	279	286	286
124	113	120	129	138	148	160	172	185	197	208	218	228	238	247	254	261	268	275	282	289	289
125	114	121	130	140	151	163	176	189	201	212	222	232	242	251	258	265	272	279	286	293	293

Heat Index

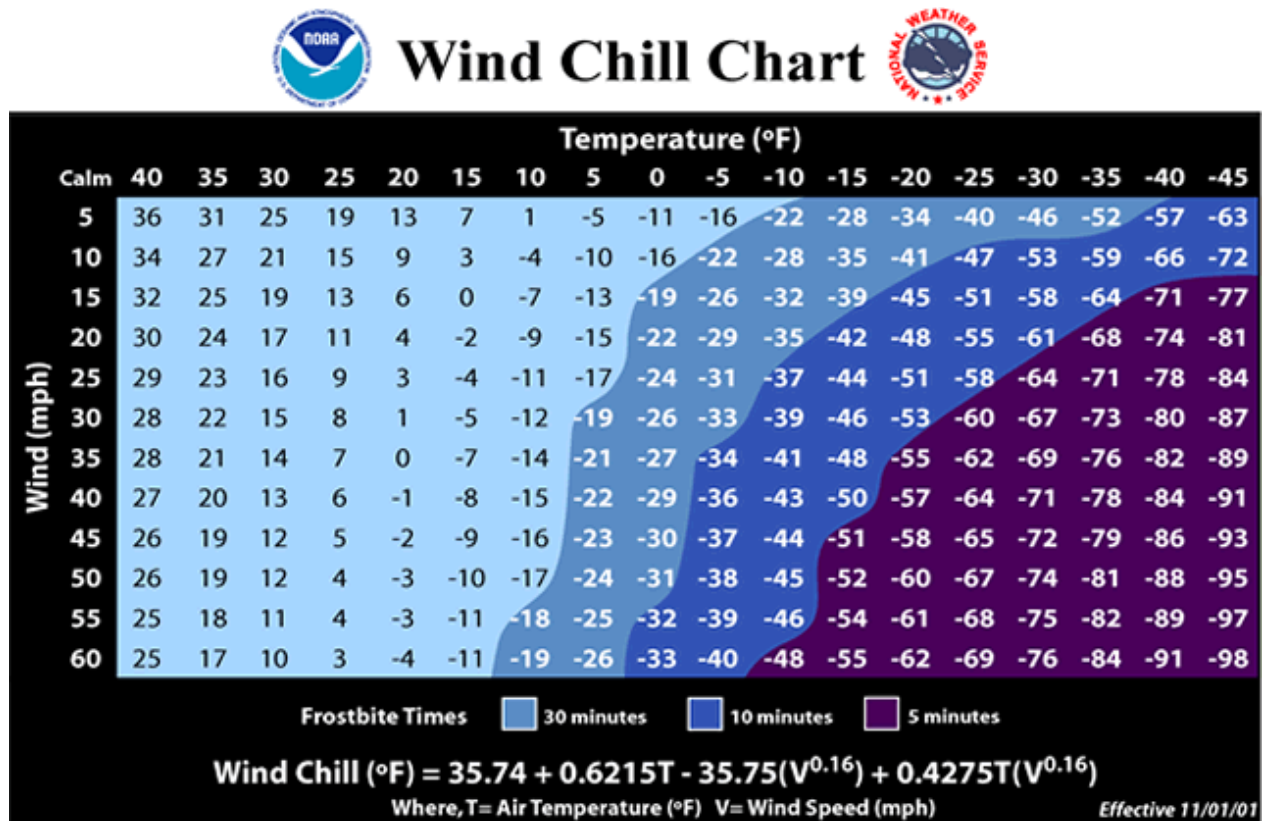



Extreme Danger	Heat stroke likely.
Danger	Sunstroke, muscle cramps, and/or heat exhaustion likely. Heatstroke possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.
Extreme Caution	Sunstroke, muscle cramps, and/or heat exhaustion possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.
Caution	Fatigue possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.

APPENDIX E: WIND CHILL CHART

See the National Weather Service Wind Chill Chart below

- If the Wind Chill Temperature Index is in the light blue zone proceed with caution and limit exposure to the elements
- If the Wind Chill Temperature Index is in the medium blue, dark blue, or purple zone it is recommended that the event/meeting is canceled or delayed until a warmer part of the day



There is clear research indicating damage to equine respiratory tissues caused by extremely cold temperatures. Turbulent air of 15 degrees Fahrenheit or less, like that caused by breathing hard, causes damage to the lining of the airways from nostrils to air-exchanging alveoli deep in the lungs. Temperatures of 15 degrees or below are uncomfortable for people too, and it is recommended that exercise be limited to walking only or canceled. Heated arenas and stabling can accommodate for winter conditions, but caution should also be given to proper cooling out of the mount and rider to avoid frostbite and chills after exercise.

APPENDIX F: AIR QUALITY INDEX CHART

Guidelines for Poor Air Quality:

See the United States Environmental Protection Agency Air Quality Index (AQI) below

- If the AQI is in the yellow or orange zone inform participants that those with a sensitivity may be at risk, those in charge should make accommodations for those who identify that they have a sensitivity. Proceed with caution and consider limiting the level and duration of exercise .
- If the AQI is in the red zone proceed with extreme caution and reduce the level and duration of exercise.
- If the AQI is in the purple or maroon zone it is recommended that the event/meeting is canceled or delayed until a time of day with improved AQI.

Air Quality Index		
AQI Category and Color	Index Value	Description of Air Quality
Good Green	0 to 50	Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Moderate Yellow	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups Orange	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is less likely to be affected.
Unhealthy Red	151 to 200	Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy Purple	201 to 300	Health alert: The risk of health effects is increased for everyone.
Hazardous Maroon	301 and higher	Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected.

- Air quality is another stress on our horses, just as it is on people. Horses respond to irritants and particulates in their airways by coating the breathing surfaces with mucus. The down side of the protective mucus production is if the irritation continues the horse's body makes more mucus-producing cells and can respond faster and with more mucus every time an irritating situation occurs. Once they make more cells, they never lose them. This is the mechanism of heaves (Recurrent Airway Obstructive, sometimes called Equine Asthma). This physiologic response of the horse is why we need to protect them from smoke, smog, dust, pollen, molds, fungi, and even cold. When air quality is poor for humans, take precautions for your equine partners as best you can.

APPENDIX G: EMERGENCY CONTACT CARD

EMERGENCY CONTACT CARD

General Emergency Number

Usually 911

EMS: _____

Meeting Location

Address: _____

Cross Streets: _____

Directions: _____

If you have a regular meeting location, post this card (protected in a clear plastic laminate sheet protector) in a prominent location, such as a tack room or office and make everyone aware of the information. If an activity is being held at a new location be sure to have the same information available to provide to the adult(s) who will be responsible for this activity.

APPENDIX H: HUMAN FIRST AID KIT FOR PONY CLUB ACTIVITIES

(Excerpted from HM Handbook, Appendix D-2 & HM Required Equipment Checklist Amplification)

“The Human First Aid Kit is intended to provide first aid and comfort to competitors. It has the items needed to take care of the simplest of cuts/scrapes when further care is not indicated. Of course, in a serious situation, medical personnel may need to be called. Some of the materials in the Equine First Aid Kit are acceptable for use by humans, such as gauze band-aging, scissors and adhesive tape. Medicated products from the Equine First Aid Kit are not intended for human use.”

Required Items: Kit Must be Easily Accessible

- 1 extra Medical Armband with blank USPC Medical Card
- Band-Aids
- Triple Antibiotic Cream; prior to expiration date
- 3 Pair Synthetic Protective Gloves

The above list is the minimum First aid equipment needed for Club meetings. additional items may be added to the kit, such as:

- Tweezers, pointed or flat
- Instant cold compresses
- Human digital thermometer
- Antiseptic wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Aloe Vera cream/sunburn cream
- Blister bandages
- 1 dozen 4" x 4" sterile gauze pads, individually wrapped
- Sunscreen

- Bug Spray (Human)
- 2 rolls of 3" wide conforming gauze
- 2 large triangular bandages (two can be made from a 3-foot square of cloth cut diagonally)
- 4 oz. or more of antibacterial, antimicrobial, or antiseptic scrub
- 6 large safety pins (diaper pins don't rust and have safe heads)
- 1 full roll of 1" wide tape
- Bandage shears
- Anti-sting or other analgesic preparation to ease the sting of wasps, bees, etc. **Pony Club members who are allergic to bee or wasp stings should carry their own bee-sting kit at all times. They should know how to use it or be accompanied by an adult who does.
- Concussion Recognition document (Appendix I)
- Parent handout: Return to Play document
- Emergency Contact Card (Appendix E)

Items that should not be included in the team Human First Aid Kit, but may be kept with the member or a designated responsible adult, are:

- Over-the-counter medications such as aspirin, decongestants, allergy relief, etc.
- Prescription pharmaceuticals, including inhalers and epinephrine auto-injectors.

APPENDIX I: INCIDENT REPORT FORM

File your Incident Reports online [here](#), or print this page and mail to: USPC Safety Committee, 4041 Iron Works Parkway, Lexington, Ky 40511. For the most current Incident Report form please visit the ponyclub.org website.

USPC INCIDENT REPORT FORM For USPC use only

This section is to be completed by local, regional, or national official (DC/ CA/RS, Safety Officers–SO, or other Designated Person–DP) who should note the circumstances..

DC/CA/RS/SO/DP Name _____ Phone _____
Club/Center/Group _____ Region _____

Person involved in incident:

Name _____ Date of Birth/Age _____ Gender _____ Current Certification _____
Club/Center/Other _____ Region _____
Parent/ Guardian Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____ Email _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Incident Information:

Date of Incident _____ Incident involved (Check all that apply):

- PC Member/Rider Parent Volunteer
 Spectator Official PC Member Unmounted
 Other _____

Location of Incident _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

- | | |
|--|---|
| Incident involved the head. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Showed signs of a concussion. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Was pulled from participation. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Returned to participation after a break. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Individual/Parent was given a Concussion Return to Play Form to complete. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

Indicate where the incident occurred:

- Stable/Barn Arena Warm up area Cross Country Course Field of Play/Open Area
 Parking area Other: _____

Type of Pony Club activity:

- Mounted Meeting Unmounted Meeting Rally Camp Certification Testing
 Fundraiser (describe) _____ Other (describe) _____

Discipline involved (if applicable):

- Dressage Eventing Games Polocrosse Quiz Show Jumping Tetrathlon
 Western dressage Hunter Seat Equitation Gymkhana Trail Other Discipline

APPENDIX I: INCIDENT REPORT FORM

If the incident involved jumping:

Show Jumping Cross Country Hunter Seat Equitation Fox Hunting

What type of fence _____ Approximate height: _____

Describe what happened in as much detail as you can provide:

Describe nature of injuries:

Please check if person involved:

- No injury observed
- Required no treatment, continued with activity
- Required no treatment, but declined to continue with activity
- Required treatment, returned to activity
- Required treatment, was unable to continue with activity
- Serious injury, was transported to hospital

Protective Equipment Used:

ASTM/Sel helmet—please provide make, model, and year _____

Other helmet Type—please provide make, model, and year _____

No Helmet worn

Protective Vest— Impact Inflatable None Unknown

If vest was used, please provide make, model and year _____

Safety stirrups (Type) _____

Other _____

Contributing factors to the accident:

Weather (explain) _____

Unknown

Footing (explain) _____

Unknown

Distractions (give details) _____

Other _____

Please mail or fax (859-233-4652) all incident report forms to:

USPC Safety Committee
4041 Ironworks Pkwy
Lexington, Ky 40511

In the case of a very serious incident, please report to USPC Executive Director or Executive Assistant as soon as possible. 859-254-7669 or email to: executivedirector@ponyclub.org or execassistant@ponyclub.org.

Or fill out the incident form
online by scanning the QR code.



APPENDIX J: TRAVEL/TRAILER EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

(Even for short trips)

- Tow vehicle registration form
- Insurance card
- Trailer registration with current inspection stamp
- Coggins test results and health papers, if required, for horses
- Tool Kit—including:
 - Sturdy knife to cut tie ropes in an emergency
 - Crowbar (essential in case of need to remove center divider quickly)
 - Screwdriver, plier, hammer, wrench, etc. extra bulbs or light modules for trailer lights
 - A small selection of fuses that fit the tow vehicle (most vehicles with trailer towing packages have a separate fuse box under the hood containing these fuses)
- Extra pin for the hitch of the tow vehicle
- Two flashlights with extra batteries (a self-standing light, e.g. Coleman lantern, can be very helpful during a break-down)
- First Aid Kit—human and equine (see horse Management handbook for list)
- Small pail and sponge or cloth
- Extra cotton and leg wraps
- Jumper cables
- Spare tire and jack for tow vehicle and trailer (include a 2-foot piece of steel pipe that will slip over lug wrench to increase leverage Most tires are put on too tightly with an air wrench for the average person to loosen without the extra leverage from the pipe.)
- Two chocks or blocks to put behind front and back tires when parked
- Towing chain or tow strap
- Flares or emergency triangle markers— in case of breakdown (for road warning)
- Large container of fresh water—can be used for horses, first aid treatment, or for some car problems
- Longe line, extra lead line and halter, sheet or blanket
- One chain lead shank for each horse in the trailer carried in the tow vehicle for safe emergency unloading
- Broom, shovel, fork, rake, manure disposal bags (leave parking areas clean)
- Hay and feed needed for trip
- Water and feed buckets, hay net (fastened so it won't swing around or drop too low)—with fresh hay for each trip
- Chains and hooks for putting up buckets and stall guard if staying overnight
- Assorted bungee cords and duct tape for securing moving cargo, doors etc.
- Small quantity of extra engine oil, transmission fluid, brake fluid and anti-freeze.
- Maps, directions and phone number needed
- Cell phone or CB radio

APPENDIX K: CONCUSSION ASSESSMENT CARD

Clubs/Centers should have a copy of the Concussion Assessment Card readily available during all meetings. Posting it next to the Emergency Contact Card would be a good choice. Between meetings it can be placed in the Human First Aid Kit to ensure its presence at all meetings.

In addition, there are handouts about Concussion and Return to Play available on the Safety Page of the Pony Club website. DC/CAs should have those available to give to the family of any member suspected of sustaining a concussion.

<https://www.sportconcussionlibrary.com/concussion-information-coaches-and-first-responders-trainerstherapists/>

Signs Observed by Coaching Staff	Signs Reported By Athlete
Confused/disoriented, does not know: time, place, activity	Headache
Cannot remember what happened before, during and/or after the injury	Nausea
A brief loss of consciousness (knocked out)	Dizziness
Easily distracted, difficulty with concentration	Vomiting
Not playing as well	Feeling dazed, "dinged" or foggy
Slurred speech	Seeing stars or flashing lights
Slow to answer questions or follow directions	Ringing in the ears
Strange or inappropriate emotions (i.e. laughing, crying, getting angry easily)	Drowsiness
Blank stare/glassy-eyed	Double or blurry vision
	Poor coordination/impaired balance
	Memory problems

APPENDIX K: CONCUSSION ASSESSMENT CARD

When a Concussion is Suspected



If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, implement your four-step “Heads Up” action plan:

1. Remove the athlete from play. Look for signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head or body. *When in doubt, sit them out.*

- Any memory loss immediately following the injury
- Any seizures immediately following the injury
- Number of previous concussions (*if any*)

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2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.

Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:

- Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head or body
- Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and if so, for how long



3. Inform the athlete’s parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion. Make sure they know that the athlete should be seen by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.

4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says s/he is symptom-free and it’s OK to return to play. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death.

CONCUSSION: Prevention and Preparation

Remember, you can’t see a concussion and some athletes may not experience and/or report symptoms until hours or days after the injury. Most people with a concussion will recover quickly and fully. But for some people, signs and symptoms of concussion can last for days, weeks, or longer. Exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games may cause concussion symptoms (such as headache or tiredness) to reappear or get worse. After a concussion, physical **and** cognitive activities—such as concentrating and learning—should be carefully managed and monitored by a health care professional.

It is normal for athletes to feel frustrated, sad, and even angry because they cannot return to sports right away or cannot keep up with their school work. Talk with athletes about these issues and offer support and encouragement.

CONCUSSION: When a Concussion is Suspected

Danger Signs

In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain in a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. An athlete should receive immediate medical attention if after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body s/he exhibits any of the following danger signs:

One pupil larger than the other
Is drowsy or cannot be awakened
A headache that not only does not diminish, but gets worse
Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
Repeated vomiting or nausea
Slurred speech
Convulsions or seizures
Cannot recognize people or places
Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated
Has unusual behavior
Loses consciousness (a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously).

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APPENDIX K: USPC CONCUSSION ASSESSMENT TOOL

Member Name: _____ Date/Time: _____

Signs/Symptoms of Concussion (reported by athlete)	Yes	No
Headache or "pressure" in head		
Nausea or vomiting		
Balance problems or dizziness		
Double or blurry vision		
Sensitivity to light		
Sensitivity to noise		
Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy		
Confusion, concentration or memory problems		
Just not "feeling right" or "feeling down"		
Signs/Symptoms of Concussion (observed by coach or parent)	Yes	No
Appears dazed or stunned		
Forgets an instruction		
Strange behavior or changes in personality		
Moves clumsily		
Answers questions slowly		
Loses consciousness (even briefly)		
Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes		
Can't recall events prior to or after a fall		
More Serious Danger Signs	Yes	No
One pupil larger than the other		
Drowsiness or inability to wake up		
A headache that gets worse or does not go away		
Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination		
Repeated vomiting or nausea, convulsions or seizures		
Bleeding or clear fluid leaking from the nose or ears		
<p>If you marked "yes" to any of the above, seek medical attention.</p> <p>Please fill out a USPC Incident Report and a USPC head Injury/Concussion Report Form. If the member is thought to have sustained a concussion, please provide them with a USPC Concussion Return to Play Form.</p>		


APPENDIX L: HEAD INJURY/CONCUSSION RETURN TO PLAY

Head injuries, even when they seem mild, require time for healing. If inadequate time is allowed for recovery, symptoms including the ability to think and perform at school may be prolonged. In addition, injuries to the head that occur before the brain is 100% healthy can be severe and devastating. The brain cannot tolerate multiple episodes of trauma.

The pediatric brain is especially vulnerable; therefore children and young adults should be extremely cautious about returning to sports after suffering a concussion. In the past, rest was

recommended for a set period of time based on the severity of the head injury. This is no longer the case. It is now known that time for adequate recovery is extremely variable.

Current guidelines recommend a “graded return to play” prior to medical clearance. This means the athlete must perform physical activities similar to riding without Any symptoms prior to returning to ride and must tolerate and demonstrate mastery of simple riding skills prior to returning to their previous level of activity.



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Athletes who experience one or more of the signs or symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events *prior* to hit or fall
- Can't recall events *after* hit or fall

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not “feeling right” or is “feeling down”

January 2021

ACTION PLAN

As a coach, if you think an athlete may have a concussion, you should:


- 1. Remove the athlete from play.**
- 2. Keep an athlete with a possible concussion out of play on the same day of the injury and until cleared by a healthcare provider.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Only a healthcare provider should assess an athlete for a possible concussion.
- 3. Record and share information about the injury,** such as how it happened and the athlete's symptoms, to help a healthcare provider assess the athlete.
- 4. Inform the athlete's parent(s) or guardian(s)** about the possible concussion and refer them to CDC's website for concussion information.
- 5. Ask for written instructions from the athlete's healthcare provider** about the steps you should take to help the athlete safely return to play.

Before returning to play an athlete should:

- Be back to their regular activities (such as school).
- Not have any symptoms from the injury when doing regular activities.
- Have the green-light from their healthcare provider to begin the return to play process.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/HEADSUP

The information provided in this document or through links to other sites is not a substitute for medical or professional care. Questions about diagnosis and treatment for concussion should be directed to a physician or other healthcare provider.



IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON.

Please view the following links for more information on Concussion/heads UP, which may be found on the Concussion page of the Web site found under the Safety Tab:

Athlete Facts

Parent Facts

Coaches Facts

Clipboard Sticker Wallet Card

APPENDIX L: HEAD INJURY/CONCUSSION RETURN TO PLAY

Important points to review:

- Concussion occurs when the head receives a strong force. This does not always occur via a direct blow to the head, therefore any rider who falls is at risk for a concussion.
- Someone may have a concussion even though they did not lose consciousness.
- A rider with any symptoms of concussion should be immediately referred to medical care for evaluation and management by a health care professional trained in concussion evaluation and management.

- A rider who is diagnosed with a concussion should have a return to play plan designated by their physician that includes a graded challenge of activities. Each stage should take at least 24 hours.

At the earliest, the rider could consider returning to full activity after 7 days, but it may weeks or months.

Date of Incident _____ Region _____
Club/Center _____ Age _____
Name _____ Certification _____ Phone _____

Physician Evaluation:

- Stage 1: Physical and cognitive rest: (no sports, no school work, no studying for Pony Club and no video games)
- Stage 2: Light aerobic exercise to test for symptoms when heart rate is elevated: Rider should tolerate light exercise that elevates the heart rate to 70% maximum predicted rate (example: walking on foot)
- Stage 3: Tolerating movement related to riding: Rider should tolerate simulated trotting by hopping up and down; rider should be able to run and jump on foot.

_____ has demonstrated the above and may return to play.

Physician Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Self Evaluation:

- Stage 4: Tolerate very simple riding activity: For Pony Club, rider should be able to show good coordination and judgment riding on the flat in an enclosed area. This stage tests movement combined with the use of the brain for coordination and thinking.
- Stage 5: Tolerate isolated more complex riding activities: The rider should be stored for tolerance and performance in more complex activities such as jumping or riding a memorized dressage test.
- Stage 6: Return to normal full riding activities

USPC Member signature if Member is of age of majority in their state of residence. _____ Date _____

OR

Parent/Guardian Signature if Member under age of majority in their state of residence. _____ Date _____

Reference:

P. McCrory, W. Meeuwisse, K. Johnston, J. Dvorak, M. Aubry, M. Molloy, R. Cantu. Consensus statement on concussion in sport – the 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport, held in Zurich, November 2008. Journal of Clinical Neuroscience 16 (2009) 755-763

APPENDIX M: HEAD INJURY/CONCUSSION REPORT

HEAD INJURY/CONCUSSION REPORT

This form is to be completed by the DC/CA/RS, to report the particulars of a member returning to play following a head injury or the suspicion of a concussion having been sustained.

Person submitting the report:

Name: _____

Email Address: _____ Phone: _____

Injured Person Information:

Date of Incident: _____

Was an Injury sustained at a Pony Club activity?

yes

no

When did the physician sign off on the Concussion Return to Play form? _____

Did the physician understand what was being asked of him/her in signing the Concussion Return to Play form?

yes

no

When did the member/parent sign off on the Concussion Return to Play form? _____

Did the member/parents understand what was being asked of him/her signing the Concussion Return to Play form?

yes

no

How many mounted meetings/activities did the member miss? _____

Did the member participate in unmounted meetings, but not mounted meetings for a period of time?

APPENDIX N: EQUINE FIRST AID KIT

(Excerpted from the HM Handbook and Rules for Rallies, Chapter 24, G & HM Required Equipment Checklist Amplifications on USPC website)

Kit Must be easily accessible

- Petroleum Jelly
- Digital Thermometer
- Liniment or Body Wash
- Isopropyl Alcohol
- Antibacterial or Antimicrobial or Antiseptic Scrub
- Topical Antibacterial or Antimicrobial or Antibiotic Agent; expiration date current
- 4" Sterile Wound dressing
- 1 roll Gauze (2" min. width)
- 2 Flexible Stretch Adhesive/Cohesive Bandages
- 1 Lb. roll 12" Absorbent Cotton
- Bandage Scissors (capable of cutting bandage)
- 1 roll Adhesive Tape (1" minimum width)

- 4 Leg Bandages with appropriate Padding for 4 Stable Wraps

Purpose

The items in the equine First Aid Kit were selected to:

- Make a horse more comfortable after a day of competition.
- Assess the condition of a horse, and
- Help perform emergency first aid on injured horses

The bandaging materials listed in the equine First Aid Kit are geared toward the treatment of multiple emergency leg wounds, with the worst injury during competition being a traumatic leg wound that requires blood stoppage.

