



The United States Pony Clubs, Inc.  
**STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY**

(Revised January 1, 2002)

The United States Pony Clubs has established Standards of Proficiency within the framework of the international Pony Club movement as the curriculum for a program of instruction and testing of its members.

**D Rating**

The D ratings are an introduction to the fun and challenge of riding, establishing a foundation of safety habits and knowledge of the daily care of a mount and tack. The D-1 through D-3 Pony Club member learns to ride independently and with control, maintaining a reasonably secure position at the walk, trot, and canter and over low fences. All D ratings are awarded at the club level.

**C Rating**

The C is a Pony Club member learning to become an active horseman, to care independently for mount and tack, and to understand the reasons for what he or she is doing. The C shows development towards a secure, independent seat, and increasing control and confidence in all phases of riding. The C-1 and C-2 ratings are awarded at the club level. The C-3 is a regional rating and reflects a basis of competence in riding and horse care that will make possible a lifetime of pleasure with horses.

B, H/H-A, and A ratings are scheduled on a national basis and require a greater depth of knowledge and proficiency than the earlier ratings. Successful candidates are competent, all-around horsemen, active and contributing members of USPC, who participate in a variety of Pony Club activities. They are also thoughtful leaders who set an example for all levels.

**B Rating**

The B rating is for the active horseman and Pony Club member who is interested in acquiring further knowledge and proficiency in all phases of riding and horse care. The B is able to ride experienced mounts with confidence and control on the flat, over fences, and in the open. The B should be able to ride and care for another person's experienced mount, maintaining proper mental and physical condition without undoing any of the mount's education. The B understands and is able to explain the reasons for what he or she is doing and to contribute to the education of younger Pony Club members.

**A Rating**

The A, the highest rating, is divided into two parts: the H/H-A, which covers horse management, teaching, and training, and the A, which tests the riding phase. The H/H-A has the knowledge, experience, and maturity to evaluate and care for a mount's needs efficiently and in a variety of circumstances, and to teach riding and horse care to others. The A is able to ride mounts at various levels of schooling with judgment, tact, and effectiveness; to train young mounts; and to retrain spoiled mounts.

In addition to its instructional programs, USPC offers a variety of activities at club, regional, inter-regional and national levels for team and individual participation. These activities include Eventing, Dressage, Foxhunting, Quiz, Mounted Games, Show Jumping, Tetrathlon, Polocrosse, and Vaulting.

**Achieving a rating does not necessarily qualify the Pony Club member for competition in any horse sport.**

Further study and preparation for a particular activity, including working as a team member, may be necessary.

Dimensions of Fences D to A\*

Rating	Height	Width at Top		Width at Base	
		CC	SJ	CC	SJ
D-2	18"	1'	1'	1'6"	1'6"
D-3	2'6"	2'6"	2'6"	4'3"	4'3"
C-1	2'9"	2'9"	2'9"	4'3"	4'3"
C-2	3'0"	3'3"	3'3"	4'7"	4'11"
C-3	3'3"	3'11"	3'9"	5'3"	5'7"
B	3'7"	4'7"	4'3"	6'7"	6'3"
A	3'9"	5'3"	4'9"	7'10"	6'11"

\*Based on USPC Eventing Rules and AHSA Eventing Rules. When a second height is required at any one level, use appropriate dimensions shown on the chart above.

**'C' STANDARD**

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## THE C-1 STANDARD

### Riding Test Expectations

*The candidate should ride with confidence and control on the flat and over fences, demonstrating a basic balanced position and use of natural aids. The rider should begin to initiate free forward movement, and begin to establish light feel of mount's mouth.*

#### Riding on the Flat

Ride on flat using Riding Test Expectations.  
Demonstrate emergency dismount at the trot.  
Demonstrate mount's warm-up routine for everyday work, to include warm-up exercises.  
Perform suppling exercises for rider without stirrups, at the walk and sitting trot.  
Demonstrate aids for moving mount away from the leg, at halt (sideways).  
Demonstrate long rein, loose rein, light contact at walk.  
Ride at walk, trot and canter, with smooth transitions, performing circles and figure-8's at each gait.  
Discuss performance with Examiner, including whether or not mount was moving freely forward.  
Describe three artificial aids and their uses.  
Perform emergency dismount at trot.

#### Riding Over Fences

Ride over fences using Riding Test Expectations.  
Perform simple gymnastic exercises for rider over trotting poles, followed by small jump (2'3").  
Ride over small grid (three fences, not to exceed 2'3").  
Ride over jumping course of six to eight obstacles; include a two-stride combination; obstacles not to exceed 2'9".  
Discuss performance with Examiner, including steadiness of pace and ways ride could be improved.

#### Riding in the Open

Ride safely with control in a group, on a suitable mount, at the walk, trot, and canter.  
C-1 speed should not exceed 325 meters per minute to 350 meters per minute.  
Discuss and/or demonstrate, if time available, riding safely over varied terrain, including hills, ditches, low banks, flat open area and streams.  
Ride over several cross-country obstacles, not to exceed 2'9" in height.  
Discuss performance with Examiner giving reasons for any disobediences.

### Horse Management Expectations

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

#### Turn Out/Tack

Attire to be correctly formal or informal, or as designated by the DC.  
Mount to be well-groomed, reflecting regular care.  
Tack to be safe, clean, and well adjusted, reflecting regular care.

#### Conditioning

Discuss what is meant by conditioning and how to condition for a particular Pony Club activity of your choice.

#### Nutrition

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

#### Stable Management

Discuss types of bedding appropriate for your area.  
Be able to put a blanket on mount safely.  
Discuss types and causes of stable vices.  
Describe and give reasons for three types of clipping.  
Describe conditions which foster internal and external parasites, procedure for parasite control in pasture and stall management, ways to control flies, bot eggs.

#### Pony Parts, Conformation & Lameness

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

#### Travel Safety

Discuss basic equipment needed for mount's safety and comfort during trailer travel.  
Know trailer safety check list.

#### Record Book

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

#### Health Care & Veterinary Knowledge

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

#### Introduction to Horse Sports

List all the horse sports that are offered in USPC.

#### Teaching

Under direct supervision of Examiner, perform and explain reasons for a safety and tack inspection for a D Pony Club member.

#### Longeing

Discuss reasons for longeing.  
Discuss equipment necessary and safety procedures.

#### Foot & Shoeing

Discuss the five steps in shoeing.  
Recognize farrier tools and know their uses.

#### Bandaging

Be able to apply a shipping bandage with assistance.

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## THE C-2 STANDARD

### Riding Test Expectations

*Candidate should ride with confidence and control on the flat and over fences, demonstrating a secure basic balanced position and progress toward an independent seat and coordinated use of aids; should initiate free forward movement while developing a steady light feel of mount's mouth.*

#### Riding on the Flat

Ride on flat using Riding Test Expectations .  
Demonstrate emergency dismount at the trot or canter.  
Demonstrate warm-up for flat work.  
Discuss warm-up schedule for three different activities of candidate's choice.  
Perform suppling exercises for the mount at walk and trot, to include large circles, small circles, and serpentines.  
Ride at the walk, trot, and canter, changing directions twice in each gait, using coordinated aids, maintaining even rhythm and smooth transitions.  
Discuss performance with Examiner, including evenness of rhythm & smoothness of transitions.  
Halt squarely and stand quietly for five seconds.  
Ride without stirrups at all gaits.  
Develop a hand gallop from a canter and return to canter smoothly (performed individually).  
Demonstrate aids for moving mount away from leg (sideways) at walk.

#### Riding Over Fences

Ride over fences using Riding Test Expectations.  
Discuss reasons for adjusting stirrups for different types of work.  
Perform simple gymnastic exercises for rider over grid at trot or canter.  
Develop a plan of how to ride a stadium course, at height suitable for mount not to exceed 3'.  
Ride course according to plan.  
Discuss performance with Examiner, including impulsion maintained throughout the course.

#### Riding in the Open

Ride in a group at the walk, trot, and canter on a suitable mount.  
Discuss and/or demonstrate safety measures when riding over varied footing, i.e. water, mud, rocks, ice, bog, hard ground, sand, pavement.  
Ride over several cross-country obstacles, not to exceed 3', at appropriate speed (350-375 mpm).  
Discuss performance with Examiner, including reasons for any disobediences.

### Horse Management Expectations

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

#### Turn Out/Tack

Attire to be correctly formal or informal, as designated by the DC.  
Mount to show thorough grooming, with attention to mane and tail, reflecting regular care.  
Tack to be safe, clean, with metal polished, and well adjusted, reflecting regular care.  
Explain reasons for equipment used on own mount for flat work and over fences.

#### Conditioning

Present a written outline of a six-to-eight-week conditioning and feeding program in preparation for a specific competition of candidate's choice.  
Measure and record pulse, temperature, and respiration of own mount at rest in front of Examiner.

#### Nutrition

Describe own mount's ration when developing fitness, maintaining fitness, taking day off, sick, roughed out.

#### Stable Management

Describe caring for a mount efficiently and economically when:  
**Stabled** - feed and water schedule, minerals needed, clothing, exercise, grooming.

**At grass** - safety check of pasture, fencing, water, mineral supply, shelter, feed, and grooming.

Discuss knowledge of safety measures, preparation and care of mount and equipment on day of strenuous work, including feeding schedule, consideration of mount's condition, consideration of climate and terrain, cooling out, treatment of any injuries, and making mount comfortable.

Discuss pasture safety and fencing

Name three toxic plants in your area and describe appearance.

#### Pony Parts, Conformation & Lameness

Name five basic conformation qualities that you want in a mount for your own use, and how they affect the basic movement and soundness (i.e., sloping shoulder means longer stride).

Name and locate on a mount the following unsoundnesses: ring-bone, curb, bowed tendons, sidebone, spavin, navicular, splint, thoroughpin, sprains.

#### Travel Safety

Be able to load and unload, with assistance, an experienced, cooperative mount.

#### Record Book

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

#### Health Care & Veterinary Knowledge

List annual immunizations and health requirements appropriate for your area.

List prevalent internal parasites in your area.

Describe routine parasite prevention for your mount.

Describe how tetanus and strangles are transmitted.

Explain the need for the regular care of teeth.

#### Teaching

Assist a D-1 and/or D-2 to prepare for turnout.

Candidate must bring a letter from DC that they are assisting in simple unmounted instructional programs for D-level Pony Club members with supervision.

#### Longeing

Longe own mount for exercise in an enclosed area with assistance. Discuss methods, equipment, and safety precautions for longeing.

#### Foot & Shoeing

Recognize and describe good and bad shoeing.

#### Bandaging

Apply a shipping and stable bandage, under supervision of examiner, and give reasons for use.

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## THE C-3 STANDARD

### Riding Test Expectations

*Candidate should ride with a basic balanced position, demonstrating coordinated use of aids, developed through an independent seat, initiate and maintain free forward movement with smooth transitions and a steady light feel of mount's mouth. Show confidence and control at all gaits on the flat and over fences.*

#### Riding on the Flat

Ride on flat using Riding Test Expectations.

Mount and dismount from either side.

Demonstrate warm-up for flat work.

Ride schooling figures to include circles, half circles, and straight lines at each gait.

Discuss performance with Examiner, including accuracy of transitions and whether or not mount maintained forward motion and was bent correctly on circles.

Discuss difference between increase of speed and lengthening of stride.

Demonstrate ability to ride a different mount, initiating free forward movement at each gait, showing confidence and control.

Discuss performance with Examiner, including ways in which the mount was different from own mount.

Demonstrate: moving mount away from leg at walk or trot in sideways movement; knowledge of aids for reinback; increase and decrease of speed at each gait.

#### Riding Over Fences

Ride over fences using Riding Test Expectations

Discuss reasons for different lengths of stirrups and various positions for different work.

Demonstrate warmup for jumping, using exercises appropriate for mount including simple gymnastic grid on own mount.

Ride over stadium fences, at height appropriate for level of mount, not to exceed 3'3".

Discuss performance and ways ride could be improved.

Ride without stirrups over one or two low fences or simple gymnastic grid on own mount (not to exceed 2'6").

Demonstrate ability to ride a different mount over stadium fences, showing confidence and control at height suitable for mount, not to exceed 2'9".

Evaluate performance and how mount differs from own.

#### Riding in the Open

Demonstrate a knowledge of pace at 240 meters per minute, developing estimated 350-400 mpm, using a large circle in an open field.

Ride at a gallop in the open, alone, and in a group.

Ride over several cross-country obstacles at height suitable for mount, not to exceed 3'3", at appropriate pace (350-400 meters per minute).

Discuss performance, pace, and reasons for any disobediences.

#### Horse Management Expectations

*The candidate should achieve a level of competence to care for his/her mount in a manner that will ensure comfort and health, while knowing when and where to turn for help if needed. He/she should also have the ability to explain stable and veterinary routine to D-level Pony Club members.*

#### Turn Out/Tack

Correct formal or informal attire.

Mount should show evidence of regular grooming and must be clean, with attention to ears, dock, mane, tail, and feet.

Tack should be safe, clean, with metal polished, and well-adjusted, reflecting regular care.

Explain the use and function of equipment used on own mount for flat and over fence work.

Describe basic actions of snaffle, curb, pelham.

#### Conditioning

Discuss condition of own mount.

Know normal vital signs of own mount at rest and after work.

Discuss different methods of conditioning for various activities.

#### Nutrition

List six classes of nutrients needed by mount and primary feeds that provide them.

For your area, know availability, cost, and origin of hay and grain needed to meet nutritional requirements of own mount.

#### Stable Management

Discuss safety practices, both human and equine, around barn, including fire prevention.

Describe three toxic plants in your area, when most toxic, which parts are toxic, symptoms of poisoning

#### Pony Parts, Conformation & Lameness

Describe good and bad points of conformation of own mount.

Know what conformation points might contribute to the following blemishes or unsoundnesses; bowed tendon, curb, ringbone, sidebone, navicular, interfering, overreaching, forging, splint.

#### Travel Safety

Discuss preparation of trailer and vehicles for safe, comfortable travel.

#### Record Book

Record Book must be kept up to date and brought to test.

Must have records for at least 1 year prior to testing. Records should reflect appropriate depth of knowledge for this level.

#### Health Care & Veterinary Knowledge

Discuss causes and signs of the following: colic, azoturia, laminitis, heaves, choking, tooth problems, skin diseases.

Discuss symptoms and preventive measures for the following common diseases: influenza, equine encephalomyelitis, tetanus, strangles, rhinopneumonitis.

Discuss internal parasites and the damage they can cause to mount.

Discuss teeth to include: concept that teeth grow continuously, and baby replaced by permanent; location of incisors and molars; number of teeth (male & female).

#### Teaching

C-3 candidate must bring a letter from DC that he/she is assisting his/her club in simple mounted instructional program for D-level Pony Club members with supervision.

Prepare a lesson plan and present an unmounted lesson of choice from D-2 or D-3 standards to D-1 or D-2 Pony Club members (limit 10 minutes).

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## Longeing

Supervision is required in the testing of longeing.

Longe own mount, under direct supervision, to mount's level of ability using properly fitted equipment suitable to own mount including: bridle or cavesson, saddle or surcingle, (side reins are not required, but allowed if appropriate).

Demonstrate safe longeing technique.

Demonstrate proper use of equipment and voice.

## Foot & Shoeing

Discuss types of shoes on own mount and why they are used.

## Bandaging

Independently apply a shipping bandage and a stable bandage, and explain purposes and dangers involved.

### INFORMATION FOR C-LEVEL CANDIDATES

#### Requirements for All Candidates

- Be a Pony Club Member in Good Standing, as defined by club policy, having paid local, regional and national dues and fees.
- Have a record of regular attendance and participation.
- C-1 and C-2: Be a member of Pony Club for at least three months and must be recommended by the DC.
- C-3: Be a member of Pony Club for at least six months. Be at least 13 years of age as of January 1 of year of application and must be recommended by the DC and RS.
- The C-3 and above Candidate will fulfill the active participation criteria as defined by the region. The criteria will include: teaching; participating in mounted and unmounted instructional programs and activities at the local and regional levels.
- The C-3 candidate is required to compete in at least one mounted rally on a mounted or unmounted basis.
- Have a thorough knowledge of requirements of level being tested and be able to discuss and/or demonstrate any requirements from all previously attained standards.
- Attain each rating before next level is attempted.

#### Attire

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

Correct formal or informal, exceptions to meet local conditions may be designated by the District Commissioner. Refer to the USPC Horse Management Handbook, USPC Rules for Eventing, and the USPC Manual of Horsemanship I and II.

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

Formal Dress: Black or dark-colored, uniform-colored coat; white stock tie secured with a plain horizontal pin: white, canary, tan, or buff breeches; black boots; Pony Club pin.

Informal Dress: Riding coat (other than solid black); plain-color shirt; choker, necktie or turtleneck; breeches or jodhpurs of any color; appropriate boots as defined in USPC Horse Management Handbook, Pony Club pin.

## Equipment

Saddlery and biting for USPC Testings should comply with the Horse Management General Rule on Saddlery and Biting and with the USPC Eventing Rules for Saddlery and Biting. Whips, no longer than 48 inches including lash, will be allowed in the flat section of testings although they are not allowed at the C level and above at Eventing rallies. Any discipline rule change following publication of the current Horse Management Handbook will supersede these rules.

#### C-1 – C-3

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

#### Testing Information (C-1 and C-2)

Testing dates are determined by the DC.

Testings may be held every three months, or more often if practical for the club, but must be offered a minimum of twice a year.

A testing should be conducted in one day, or all requirements tested within a one-month period (D-1 through C-2).

A testing shall be an instructional, working session, covering only requirements listed on the Standards.

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

Upon recommendation of the Examiner, a candidate who fails not more than one-third of tested sections may be retested within one month on only the requirements not passed including riding sections (D-1 through C-2).

There is no set time limit between taking any of the C-level tests, but each level is attained at a separate testing, and rating levels may not be skipped.

Sharing of ponies for a C-level testing is not allowed.

#### C-3 Testing Information

*Candidates must discuss with the Examiner any problems with the mount being used, should ask questions, and should request permission to repeat any performance if so desired.*

The testing must be a constructive working session, not a show.

The candidate is expected to demonstrate an organized and independent approach to all phases, and should be able to discuss all topics more thoroughly than at lower levels. The candidate is beginning to formulate reasons for what he or she is doing.

Testing dates are determined and announced by the RS, but should be held at least twice a year.

Testings may be conducted over one or two days. Oral questioning and/or other unmounted phases can take place very successfully during the evening prior to the day scheduled for mounted work.

Oral testing is required for all parts of the Horse Management phase. Written tests may be given by the DC as preparation only.

To attain this rating, all riding sections must be passed. Candidates who do not pass all riding sections may take the entire test again after 60 days. Candidates not passing not more than five Horse Management sections may be retested on those sections only with the recommendation of the original examiner. The retest must be completed within 60 days, must be conducted orally and in one day. If the retest is not completed within 60 days, the entire test, including the riding sections, must be taken again.

If a candidate does take a portion of the test over again, both the original and the second Examiner must sign the certificate for it to be valid.

All tests and retests must be taken in the candidate's own region. Exceptions to this can only be authorized by the candidate's Regional Supervisor.

The candidate or family does NOT have the option to set up tests outside of the region.

### **Presentation of Mount for Inspection (D-1 through C-3)**

Braiding is not allowed.

All other tack must be clean, well adjusted, and in good repair. Stand by mount, on near side, with Examiner, facing rear, reins in left hand below bit, slack in right, changing sides with Examiner.

### **Examiners (D-1 through C-3)**

D-1 through C-2 Examiners are chosen by the DC. C-3 Examiners are selected by the Test Organizer with the approval of the RS. It is recommended that the PIPs are chosen from the list that is maintained by the National C-3 Program Committee.

Examiners should be selected with care, should not only be knowledgeable, but sensitive to young people and able to conduct the test in an educational framework.

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

Examiners must be knowledgeable of Pony Club philosophy and the Standards, D-1 through A.

The Examiners must set the tone of the testing as a teaching situation, making every effort to draw the best from each candidate.

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

Examiners should bear in mind that there may be a range from adequate to superior, and anyone within the range should pass.

Refer to the current D-1 through C-2 Testing Guidelines, the C-3 Testing Guidelines and the USPC Examiners Handbook, all available from the USPC Bookstore.

## **READING LIST FOR C CANDIDATES**

*\*Note: Item numbers denoted are those found in the current USPC Catalog. For availability and pricing please contact the USPC National Office.*

### **Recommended / C-1 and C-2 Ratings**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
1330	USPC Manual of Horsemanship, Volume I
1340	USPC Manual of Horsemanship, Volume II
9010	Every Time -- Every Ride Video
2000	USPC Horse Management Handbook
2158	The Classical Seat
2180	Safe Horse - Safe Rider
2119	Centered Riding
1030	USPC Standards of Proficiency D Standard
1020	USPC Standards of Proficiency C Standard
1672	USPC Safety Packet (Trailer Safety Checklist)

### **USPC Discipline Rulebooks for:**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
6000	Dressage
5000	Eventing
5500	Show Jumping
4000	Tetrathlon
3500	Polocrosse
3000	Games
2001	Quiz

### **Enrichment / C-1 and C-2 Ratings**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
2182	BHS Manual of Horsemanship, 10 edition
9032	USPC Video Guide to the C-3 Standard
9033	D Level Video
9070	USPC Guide to Successful Longeing Video
2153	Riding to Hounds in America
2123	Grooming to Win
2181	Teaching Safe Horsemanship

### **Recommended / C-3 Rating** (In addition to C-2 Recommended and Enrichment)

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
2129	Horse Gaits, Balance & Movement
2162	Thinking Riding, Vol. 1
2180	Safe Horse - Safe Rider
9032	USPC Video Guide to the C-3 Standard Video
9070	USPC Guide to Successful Longeing Video
2181	Teaching Safe Horsemanship

### **Enrichment/ C-3 Rating**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
6060	Practical Dressage Manual
2153	Riding to Hounds in America
1000	USPC Standards of Proficiency B, H/H-A, A

**Local Resources:** Veterinarian, farrier

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