



Sportsmanship
Stewardship
Leadership
THROUGH
Horsemanship

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY FOR WESTERN D-LEVEL CERTIFICATES

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

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

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

The H-B, C-3, B, H-HM/H/H-A and A Certifications are facilitated on a national basis and require a greater depth of knowledge and proficiency than the earlier certifications. Successful candidates are competent, all-around horsemen, active and contributing members of USPC, who participate in a variety of Pony Club activities. They are also thoughtful leaders who set an example for all. Each of the national-level certifications have a minimum age requirement.

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

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

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

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

The B Certification is for the active horseman and Pony Club members who are interested in acquiring further knowledge and proficiency in riding. The B is able to ride experienced mounts, both their own and others, with confidence and control. Similar to the C-3, the certification has both demonstration and discussion components. The B should be able to ride and care for another person's experienced mount, maintaining proper mental and physical condition without undoing any of the mount's education. The B understands and is able to explain the reasons for what he or she is doing. The minimum age for the B certification is 14 years old.

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

NOTE: In addition to its instructional programs, USPC offers a variety of activities at club, regional, inter-regional and national levels for team and individual participation. Please visit www.ponyclub.org for a list of activities. Achieving a certification does not necessarily qualify the Pony Club member for competition in any horse sport, discipline, or activity. Further study and preparation for a particular activity, including working as a team member, is necessary.



Our Mission:

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

Our Core Values:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY FOR WESTERN D-LEVEL CERTIFICATES

THE D-1 STANDARD

Horse Management Expectations

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

Turnout/Tack

- Rider in safe and neat attire: collared shirt with long or short sleeves, long pants with shirt tucked in, short or tall riding boots that cover the ankle and have a boot heel. Pony Club pin, medical armband, and a properly fitted equestrian helmet, securely fastened, containing certification that it meets or exceeds the criteria established by a national or international safety body, is required to participate in any USPC activity (see USPC Policy 0125A). Long hair neatly up or back. Half-chaps, gloves, show coat and belt optional. No inappropriate jewelry.
- Mount neatly brushed; hooves picked out (with assistance if needed); showing farrier care.
- Tack safe and neat (properly adjusted with assistance if necessary).

Conditioning

- Know one reason for cooling out mount after exercise.

Nutrition

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

Stable Management

- Groom mount with brush and curry comb, pick out feet, with assistance.
- Tack up and untack mount, with assistance.
- Name 10 parts of saddle and bridle (any).
- Know two reasons for cleaning tack.

Pony Parts, Conformation & Lameness

- Name any 10 parts of the mount (such as mane, tail, leg, eye, etc.).
- Know color and breed of own mount.

Travel Safety

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

Record Book

- Bring a stall card for own mount to show examiner.

Health Care & Veterinary Knowledge

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

Teaching

- Not applicable. (See D-3 Teaching.)

Land Conservation

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

Leading & Longeing

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

Foot & Shoeing

- Give one reason to pick out hooves.
- Tell whether your mount wears shoes or not.

Bandaging

- Not applicable.

THE D-1 STANDARD

Riding Expectations

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

Riding on the Flat

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

Riding Over Obstacles

- Ride over obstacles using Riding Expectations.
- Walk over poles on the ground in balanced position.
- Discuss with Examiner the reason for different hand positions when riding on the rail and through various obstacles.

Riding in the Open

- Not applicable.

THE D-2 STANDARD

Horse Management Expectations

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

Turnout/Tack

- Rider in safe and neat attire: collared shirt with long or short sleeves, long pants with shirt tucked in, short or tall riding boots that cover the ankle and have a boot heel. Pony Club pin, medical armband, and a properly fitted equestrian helmet, securely fastened, containing certification that it meets or exceeds the criteria established by a national or international safety body, is required to participate in any USPC activity (see USPC Policy 0125A). Long hair neatly up or back. Half-chaps, gloves, show coat and belt optional. No inappropriate jewelry.
- Mount to be clean and well brushed, with hooves picked out and showing farrier care. Eyes, nose, lips, and dock wiped off.
- Tack to be safe and clean, (properly adjusted with assistance, if necessary) with attention to stitching. No obvious jockeys or heavy dust.

STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY FOR WESTERN D-LEVEL CERTIFICATES

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

Conditioning

- Discuss basic condition of own mount.
- Describe ways to know if mount is properly cooled out.

Horse Sports

- Name two horse sports.

Nutrition

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

Stable Management

- Groom mount, pick out hooves with assistance if needed.
- Name 5 grooming tools and demonstrate how to use them.
- Tack up and untack independently.
- List three examples of unsafe equipment.
- Name three common stable vices.

Pony Parts, Conformation & Lameness

- Name and locate any 15 parts of the mount.
- Name and describe six colors of mounts.
- Name and describe five markings of mounts.
- Name six horse or pony breeds.

Travel Safety

- Know the basic rules for riding on public roads in your state.
- Name two ways you can help your mount be safe in a trailer.

Record Book

- Bring a stall card for own mount to show examiner. Discuss what is included on a stall card.

Health Care & Veterinary Knowledge

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

Teaching

- Not applicable. (See D-3 Teaching.)

Land Conservation

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

Leading & Longeing

- Lead mount correctly in hand and while tacked up.
- Do walk-halt-walk transitions in hand.
- Lead mount in and out of stall safely, tie up in appropriate place with quick-release knot.

Foot & Shoeing

- Know reasons for daily hoof care.
- Give two reasons why the farrier regularly checks your mount.

Bandaging

- Give two reasons why you would bandage a mount's leg(s).
- Demonstrate (with assistance of examiner) how to apply protective boots and bell boots, if appropriate, to mount's leg.

THE D-2 STANDARD Riding Expectations

Candidate should ride in an enclosed area without lead line, demonstrating control while maintaining a safe basic balanced position at the walk and jog, and should begin to develop the lope.

Riding on the Flat

- Ride on flat using Riding Expectations.
- Mount and dismount independently (using mounting block if necessary).
- Shorten and lengthen reins at halt and walk. Demonstrate proper hand position for bit and rein equipment, and for age and appropriate control of mount.
- Perform balancing and supplying exercises for rider at walk and halt and discuss 1 or 2 reasons for doing this.
- Ride at the walk, performing simple turns and large circles.
- Ride without stirrups at the walk.
- Demonstrate emergency dismount at the walk.
- Ride with balance at the jog performing simple turns and large circles.
- Ride at the lope in both directions in an enclosed area and be aware of leads.
- Discuss performance with Examiner, indicating whether or not mount was on correct lead.

Riding Over Obstacles

- Ride over obstacles using Riding Expectations.
- Maintain balanced position at the jog, on the rail, and over poles.
- In an enclosed area, complete a simple obstacle course to include poles (walk and jog over), halt, walk, jog, backing, turns, and navigation around cones or upright poles.
- Discuss with Examiner ways to improve ride.

Riding in the Open

- Ride safely and considerately on public and private property, in a group, at the walk and jog.
- Ride with control, up and down hills, at the walk and jog.
- Navigate several natural obstacles, to include logs (no more than 12"), trees, and small divets (lowered sections of ground) where available.

STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY FOR WESTERN D-LEVEL CERTIFICATES

THE D-3 STANDARD

Horse Management Expectations

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

Turnout/Tack

- Rider in safe and neat attire: collared shirt with long or short sleeves, long pants with shirt tucked in, short or tall riding boots that cover the ankle and have a boot heel. Pony Club pin, medical armband, and a properly fitted equestrian helmet, securely fastened, containing certification that it meets or exceeds the criteria established by a national or international safety body, is required to participate in any USPC activity (see USPC Policy 0125A). Long hair neatly up or back. Gloves, neckwear and show coat optional. No inappropriate jewelry.
- Mount to be well brushed (no sweat), clean (no dirt), with feet picked out, showing farrier care. Mane and tail brushed and eyes, nose, lips, and dock wiped off.
- Tack to be safe – especially stitching – and clean – no jockeys or dust, stress points clean, and bit clean. All tack must be properly adjusted.
- Describe formal attire, informal attire.
- Describe proper adjustment of the bridle. Describe proper adjustment of curb chain if appropriate.

Conditioning/Nutrition

- Know 5-7 basic rules of feeding.
- Describe care of mount after strenuous work, to include cooling out, inspection of legs, watering and feeding.
- Know vital signs of mount at rest and what TPR stands for.
- Describe two indications a mount may not be fit enough for the work asked of him/her.
- Discuss the amount of roughage and the amount of concentrates per ration for own mount.

Horse Sports

- Name five horse sports offered in USPC.

Stable Management

- Demonstrate and discuss how to clean a dirty/soiled stall. Demonstrate the proper steps and methods for removing manure and wet areas, how to bank a stall, and discuss the reasons for and benefits of regular stall cleaning for the health and safety of your mount. For testing purposes, a soiled horse trailer may be used.
- Demonstrate and discuss the proper methods of hanging a water bucket and haynet/haybag, hanging both at a proper height for your mount, at either a trailer or stall. Discuss the different needs of your horse during a day rally or clinic, or overnight stay.

Pony Parts, Conformation & Lameness

- Name six horse breeds, four pony breeds, and five draft horse breeds.
- Describe how to measure height of mount.
- Identify at least 20 parts of the mount, to include hock, gaskin, withers, croup, fetlock, pastern.
- Know common conformation faults of neck, back, shoulder, head and pasterns.

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

Travel Safety

- Know rules for riding safely on public roads in your state.
- Know procedure for mounted group crossing a public roadway.
- Discuss the proper procedure for loading and unloading a mount.

Record Book

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

Health Care & Veterinary Knowledge

- Name some symptoms of a sick or injured mount that would cause you to seek help.
- Describe location of eyes and how this affects the mount's vision.

Teaching

- D-3s are encouraged to assist D-1s and D-2s during unmounted Pony Club activities, not mounted activities.
- No child is responsible for the safety of another child. There must always be adult supervision.

Land Conservation

- Name three important rules when riding across privately-owned land.
- Write thank-you notes to two landowners who support your club and tell them why you appreciate being able to use their land. If you ride on public land, write a thank-you note to the manager or contact person.

Leading & Longeing

- Demonstrate correctly jogging mount, moving mount forward with whip (if necessary).
- Lead safely from both sides.
- Discuss longeing equipment and use.

Foot & Shoeing

- Name three parts of the hoof.
- Describe obvious signs of a hoof needing shoeing or trimming.
- Discuss signs of thrush and hoof abscess.

Boots & Bandaging

- Describe critical areas protected by shipping bandages or boots and give reasons for their use.
- Describe a stable bandage and give two reasons they can be used.
- Apply polo wraps with assistance.

STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY FOR WESTERN D-LEVEL CERTIFICATES

THE D-3 STANDARD Riding Expectations

Candidate should ride in a basic balanced position with control at the walk, jog, and lope. Candidate should maintain a secure base of support while riding through the obstacles and out in the open.

Riding on the Flat

- Ride on flat using Riding Expectations.
- Demonstrate correct mounting (using mounting block if necessary).
- Perform balancing and supplying exercises for rider at walk and jog under direction of examiner.
- Ride mount demonstrating large circles showing correct positioning in both directions at walk, jog, and at the lope with correct leads.
- Ride without stirrups at the jog.
- Demonstrate emergency dismount at the trot.
- Demonstrate an increase and decrease of speed either alone or with others as appropriate.
- Demonstrate a halt followed by a simple step back. With attention given to seat position during the halt.
- Discuss performance with examiner including rider's basic balanced position, and whether or not circles were round and natural aids were used correctly.

Riding Over Obstacles

- Ride over obstacles using Riding Expectations.
- Complete a simple obstacle course of five to seven obstacles, to include poles (walk and jog over), halt, walk, jog, backing, turns, side-passing, a single-hand maneuver (such as a gate or pick-up), and navigation around cones or upright poles.
- Discuss performance, reasons for any disobedience.

Riding in the Open

- Ride safely with a group at the walk and jog, over varied terrain, through shallow water and small ditches as occur in natural terrain if available.
- Complete four to five natural trail obstacles, which may include gates, dismounting/mounting, ditches, hills (up and down, showing proper balance and hand position).
- Discuss ways to control a mount in the open.
- Discuss performance with Examiners.

STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY FOR WESTERN D-LEVEL CERTIFICATES

Information for D Candidates

Requirements for Candidates

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

Attire

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

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

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

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

Presentation of the Mount for Turnout

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

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

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

Equipment

See page 8 for Western Rules and Guidelines.

Appropriate Horse

USPC's commitment to safety for all horses and riders is paramount during a testing at any level.

Candidates may bring their own, borrowed, leased or rented mounts to a test. They may present with more than one mount at a test. The care of each of the candidates' mounts at a test is the responsibility of the candidates themselves.

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

While not recommended, the sharing of suitable mounts for a test is allowed. However, sharing should only be permitted if 1) each proposed candidate is familiar with the mount and has ridden it prior to the test, successfully and safely at the level being evaluated; and

2) each proposed candidate informs the test organizer of the "shared mount" requirement prior to the test day in order to accommodate the mounts' condition and the test schedule. As the safety of horses and riders are paramount, if Examiners determine that shared mounts' condition or other circumstances preclude those mounts' continued participation in the test, they may indicate the candidates in question must withdraw from the test.

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

Information on Conducting a Test

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

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

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

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

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

There is no set time limit between taking any of the D- Level Tests, but each certificate must be attained in the proper order and no levels may be skipped. Usually the horse management skills and knowledge must be attained prior to presentation of or any riding skills evaluation. However, there may be exceptions due to weather and facilities. If the riding sections are evaluated prior to the Horse Management sections, then the award of the certificate must wait until the successful evaluation of the Horse Management section.

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

Retest Information

Upon recommendation of the Examiner and with approval of the DC or CA, a candidate who does not meet standards at a test may be retested within one month. He/she is only required to retest the sections of the standards the candidate did not previously meet successfully. In general, retest opportunities are only available if the member meets standards on at least two thirds of the skills or knowledge expected in each section. Please refer to each test sheet for each certificate level for specific requirements for retests.

STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY FOR WESTERN D-LEVEL CERTIFICATES

Examiners (D-1 through C-2)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Responsibilities and Authorities

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

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

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The United States Pony Clubs, Inc.
4041 Iron Works Parkway • Lexington, KY 40511
Phone (859) 254-7669 • Fax (859) 233-4652 • email uspc@ponyclub.org • website www.ponyclub.org

STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY FOR WESTERN D-LEVEL CERTIFICATES

Western Rules and Guidelines

Bits and Bitting:

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

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

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

Reins:

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

Saddles and Pads:

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

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

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

Bridles/Headstalls:

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

Training Devices

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

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

Protective Equipment:

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

Shoes/Shoeing:

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

Riding Attire for Certifications:

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

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

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

Other:

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

Belt: Required when mounted unless interferes with specific activity.

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

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

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

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