

## Pony Club Member Responsibilities For Ratings Preparation D2 thru C2

**RESPONSIBILITY:** It is a big word that figures big in the Mission Statement of Pony Club. Dedicated adult volunteers become passionate about what Pony Club has to offer to young people because they see how important skills such as responsibility are in the world and they see how Pony Club can help young people develop these skills. When adults are asking you to be responsible, it is because they care about you and your development as a young person.

Four Rivers Pony Club has a policy for Ratings that outlines the member's responsibilities for ratings preparation and application for ratings. This policy is attached as an appendix to this notice. Most members are doing a good job and understand their responsibilities, but I think there are still some members who do not clearly understand the policy and procedures and are not fully aware of their responsibilities.

Sometimes members may feel they are not being supported in their progress toward a rating, but this feeling seems to arise when members have not been aware of and fulfilled their own responsibilities for ratings preparation. The DC is not being unsupportive by informing a member they have not fulfilled their responsibilities and requirements, they are being *supportive* by informing them of what they need to do to be successful.

This notice will hopefully help you understand the procedure so you can successfully prepare and apply for club ratings D2 through C2.

The DC also has responsibilities related to ratings. These are found in the USPC Guidelines for Club Ratings D1 through C2:

- 1. Provide instruction programs based on the Standards**
- 2. Evaluate Pony Club members as to their readiness for a testing. Candidates should have a good attendance record and be competent in all requirements of the rating level prior to the testing.**

In order to accomplish number (2) clubs have been advised to devise some sort of check-off system to evaluate competency. Our club has such a system, but as with all systems it doesn't always work perfectly, especially since realistically members cannot always attend every meeting and stay all day long.

While it is the DC's responsibility to ensure each member is competent in all requirements prior to the testing, the Pony Club member must share in that responsibility.

This is why it is the member's responsibility to be aware of what the competencies are (read the Standards) and what competencies they have and do not have checked off when they reach the point that they are considering a rating. FRPC now has the SPURS materials to help members and the DC assess progress toward the rating. The members have a page in their *SPURS Progress Summary Forms* which should be kept updated as various aspects of the Standard are completed.

**\*Member Responsibility #1:** *To be aware of what skills are required for the rating aspired to including all of the riding and horse management requirements.*

In order to fulfill this responsibility, you need to read the Standards of Proficiency for the next rating thoroughly as soon as you accomplish a rating. As soon as you complete one rating, you should be working on accomplishing the skills for the next rating. You need to be reading your manual and the recommended reading listed in the Standards. You need to be practicing your skills (eg bandaging) and answering questions at home or in your private lessons. Your *SPURS Prep Guide* provides an organized format for completing all components of your unmounted preparation. The *SPURS Riding Rubrics* and *SPURS Horse Management Rubrics* give you specific criteria for exactly what is expected for each skill. Read and study all of these. When you first start working toward a new rating, read through these documents and then start prioritizing where you need to spend your preparation time.

**\*Member Responsibility #2:** *To be aware of what skills have been evaluated as being competent for the rating aspired to and which skills have not been evaluated or have been evaluated but found not to be at the standard.*

To fulfill this responsibility, you need to ask to see the DC's Progress File for you at mounted meetings and it is your responsibility to mark down what competencies you do and do not have checked off. It is not the DC's responsibility to inform you which skills are and are not checked off if you don't come and ask. The DC has a *SPURS Ratings Prep Progress Summary* and you have an identical one in your Spurs Portfolio. You need to make sure the dates in these match.

The FRPC policy states that you must have all of your skills checked off **before** you apply for a rating. If you read the Ratings Application Form, you must mark that you have all your skills checked off. **If you do not have your skills checked off you cannot submit your application with accurate information.** In other words, you can't mark you have your skills checked off if this is not true. This includes all of the skills for riding and horse management. As you progress in the levels, the horse management skills will include items such as a record book, a conditioning plan, assisting with club instruction etc., not just riding and answering oral questions. As you complete unmounted topics and document this in your *SPURS Prep Guide*, be sure to show your prep guide to the DC and get those topics dated.

Your Riding Rubrics will be completed at mounted meetings, and you must ask to see the instructor rubric after you ride to transfer the information to your Portfolio rubrics, along with any other instructor feedback which will be written on the back of the Instructor Rubric for your riding group. When you see that you are falling within the Meets Standard section for the essential elements of the Standard, particularly items relating to Basic Balanced Position and Control, you should plan on having a full ratings prep and have all the riding rubrics completed. Be sure Riding in the Open is completed in addition to the Riding sections in an arena. Riding in the Open also should not be a "one time event" during the year, it needs to be assessed in more than one location and on more than one occasion.

You may also have instructors outside of Pony Club meetings assess you and fill out your Portfolio Rubrics, and do a self-assessment if you are mature enough to do this. You must bring these rubrics to the DC at which point she can copy the information onto an instructor rubric for the DC files.

**\*Member Responsibility #3:** *To submit the application for a rating at the latest at the last FRPC meeting before the scheduled rating.*

Two months is recommended on the policy, but it has been difficult to get members prepared on everything that far in advance. You cannot submit your application the week of the rating and you cannot submit your application if you do not have all your skills checked off. There is only leeway allowed on the unmounted if all the mounted work is accomplished. You can submit your application if you have 90% of your unmounted as being competent if you meet the overall horse management expectations for your rating level and are close to answering the 10% of skills accurately but just need to polish up your responses or make minor corrections in your record book. **However, you cannot submit your application if you have not gotten all the skills checked off, and this includes record book, conditioning plan, letter from DC etc. as needed for your particular rating.**

This is to your advantage. When members bring in their record book and conditioning plan etc. to be evaluated, it is often found that things need to be changed or improved. If you don't bring these things in and don't get them checked, it is possible you would not pass the item at the rating, have to re-test that section, and could fail the entire rating if there are too many sections failed. The DC has no way to evaluate your competency on these items if you don't bring them to a meeting—recall DC responsibility #2 above.

This leads to the problem of planning when and how to get your skills evaluated. The club plans certain meetings as either partial or primary ratings preps. If it is getting close to the time of a ratings and the club is having meetings primarily devoted to preps, your rsvp as to your attendance becomes very important. If you have indicated that you will be at certain meetings then the DC will plan accordingly as to when you will have time devoted to getting your skills checked off. Sometimes the prep is general questioning in a group to look at overall quality of answers without marking off individual members, just to get an idea of what you need to study. Other times you will be evaluated and coached specifically and get checked off if you are competent. You need to have a plan to ensure that time is set aside for you personally to get your skills checked off, and to arrange alternative planning if you are unable to attend at the last minute for a valid reason. It is a great inconvenience to schedule individual sessions outside of the pony club meetings simply because someone changed their mind about attending. The DC is not obligated to do this and could reasonably reject the application because the skills are not checked off as required.

**\*Member responsibility #4:** *You must plan your attendance to be sufficient to get your skills checked off. This includes unmounted as well as mounted instruction. You must have a plan as to how and when you are going to get all of your skills checked off if you are planning to rate up. You must be sure the DC knows of your attendance plans to accomplish this well in advance, at least for the 3 months prior to the scheduled rating. If there is an emergency that causes these plans to change then the member is responsible for coming up with an alternative plan with the DC. If you are not sure when the remaining items you do not have checked off are going to be evaluated it is your responsibility to ask the DC when it is going to be done and to be sure you attend those dates. You must also consider that if it has been over a year since you accomplished unmounted oral skills you will need to review them and be rechecked.*

If you come to meetings and only stay for the riding part, or wait until the week before the rating to do your record book, you will not be able to fulfill this responsibility. It would be a good idea for members to pick at least one section of the standard or more each month and prepare as if for a rating on that section. You can use the Horse Management Study Guide and the *SPURS Prep*

*Guide* and use the topic for that month, and add additional things from the Standard as you feel ready, such as the record book, doing a safety check on a D Pony Clubber with supervision etc. **When you come to a mounted meeting and are prepared to be checked off, notify the DC that you are ready for that section of the test.** Then the DC will arrange for an appropriate person to evaluate your competency on that section at the meeting. The *SPURS HM Rubrics* should be used to assess unmounted sections. This will help us reduce the need to schedule extra sessions outside of mounted meetings. **In general, any person that you are taking private lessons from will not be used to check you off, even if they are a Pony Club member or instructor, and you will be assigned to a different evaluator.** This is to ensure objectivity and to keep things like they will be at a rating, when the ratings examiner is not going to be someone you are familiar and extremely comfortable with. The preferred check off evaluators will be the ones with the most experience doing ratings, but in all cases will be designated by the DC.

You must also consider your attendance in terms of the mounted portions. You must have the skills for all the mounted work on the horse you are intending to use for the rating. **You must plan your attendance so you can get your skills checked off on all three phases with that mount including flat work, stadium, and cross-country.** Keep in mind that once the weather gets bad there may not be many opportunities to do the cross-country portion. You must also remember that it is not just jump height but pace for cross country that is evaluated. You must perform the work at the level stated on the standard at Pony Club mounted meetings, for example you can't work at only 2 foot at the meetings if you are wanting to be checked off on that horse to be used for a d3 rating.

Keep in mind that if you are just "barely there" in terms of ratings preparation, you risk failing one or more portions of the ratings test. You will be nervous the day of the rating, you may be working with a strange, new instructor, or your mount may be behaving less than ideally. It is strongly recommended that you wait until you have been performing well within the next Standard level for some period of time before you attempt the rating. Keep this in mind as you plan when to apply for a ratings.

I hope this is helpful to members and that you have a better understanding of your responsibilities and how you can ensure that you successfully prepare for ratings.

It has been found that many clubs that do in-house ratings and have lax procedures for ensuring ratings readiness have had big problems when the members get to the C3 level and find they are not adequately prepared. The application process for National Testings at the C3 and above level is much more demanding, and the application must be submitted by a specific date. The process becomes even more involved and you must do things such as show First Aid certification with your application (HA), and the timelines become even more strict. In fact, there is a \$100 penalty for late entries, which are accepted only one month beyond the deadline for applications. Hopefully our club procedure will help all the members to be successful should they choose to go on to regional or national testings, and if not, they will still have learned valuable lessons in responsibility.

Good luck to all in your progress on the Standards!

Leslie

**FOUR RIVERS PONY CLUB  
POLICY STATEMENT**

**Subject: Ratings Eligibility  
Policy #004**

**Effective Date: October 20, 1995**

- I. Philosophy: The Sponsors of the Four Rivers Pony Club recognize the need to clarify requirements for readiness for ratings. The Standards of Proficiency list requirements for ratings that include the following:
1. Be a Pony Club member in good standing, having paid both local and national dues
  2. Have a record of regular attendance and participation
  3. Have a thorough knowledge of requirements for each level to be tested
  4. Be able to discuss and/or demonstrate any requirements from all previously attained standards
  5. Be a member of Pony Club for one month or more; no minimum age limit
  6. Be recommended by the District Commissioner for each rating
  7. Achieve each rating before the next one is attempted
  8. D-3 Candidates must bring the Horse Health/Maintenance Book to the test
  9. C-1 and C-2 candidates must meet all the above requirements including #8 and be a member of Pony Club for at least three months
- In order to clarify the process by which the District Commissioner makes a recommendation for a rating, a policy is needed to outline the requirements for this recommendation.
- II. Policy: The policy of the Sponsors of the Four Rivers Pony club is that the following procedure will be followed in determining the District Commissioner's recommendation for each rating for a member:
1. Two months before a scheduled rating, the candidate must inform the DC that they would like to rate. (**Addendum, 2002: The Application for Club Rating form should be used for this for D-2 through C-2**). A new member wishing to take only the D-1 test may give one month's notice. Ample notice is needed so the DC may plan appropriate preparatory activities for the candidate. The DC may waive the two month requirement.
  2. A Ratings Prep will be scheduled by the DC. This Prep will be approximately 6 to 8 weeks before the rating, if possible, although it is recognized that scheduling constraints may necessitate another time frame. If at all possible, this initial Prep will be conducted by qualified Pony Club instructors from outside the local club, in order to provide objective outside feedback to the candidates. The purpose of the Prep is to prepare the candidates for the rating, and to assess the candidates' readiness for the rating. Candidates will be given feedback as to their strengths and weaknesses and can work on areas in which they are not prepared.

3. Following the Prep, the DC will determine if the candidate meets the criteria for a Member in Good Standing and is recommended by the Prep instructor for the rating, as well as meeting any other requirements listed in 1 through 9 above.
4. Each candidate will then be notified verbally and for D-2 through C-2 in writing using the Club Application for Rating form by the DC or Jt. DC if they are recommended for the Rating.
5. A candidate who is unable to attend the Ratings Prep Day may demonstrate readiness for the rating by turning in a completed Prep Book and having all items representing the Standards of Proficiency in their club curriculum packet marked as passed/proficient at regular club mounted instructional meetings. **Addendum 030107: Members may show they have all the sections on the Ratings Prep Progress Summary dated as completed by the DC. The “club curriculum” checklist is no longer in use.**

### III. Amplifying Instructions and Guidelines

- A. All candidates are encouraged to use their club curriculums to help them determine when they are ready to take their ratings test. At each meeting instructors should give them feedback about their performance on the various standards that were covered at the meeting, and they will be marked “P” for “passed/proficient” when the member is performing the skill at the level that meets the particular Standard involved. Once the member has had all the skills marked “P” and has completed the unmounted instruction either at home or through unmounted meetings, he/she should consider attempting the Ratings.

**ADDENDUM 030107:**

**The club curriculum has been updated. The new *SPURS* system will be used to track ratings progress. The DC keeps a Ratings Prep Progress Summary which tracks dates that various components of *SPURS* have been completed, including Prep Guide topics, and progress to the Meets Standard sections of Riding and Horse Management Rubric assessments. It is the member’s responsibility to keep track of their progress in their individual portfolios using the provided checklists.**

- B. Mounted competitive rally experience may not be required for advancement in D-1 through C-2 ratings according to the DC Guide.
- C. Readiness to compete at Rally at a given rating level may not be required in order for a member to attempt a Rating, according to the DC Guide.
- D. The club may use local club instructors and upper level Pony Clubbers to conduct the Prep if an outside instructor is not feasible.
- E. After the Ratings Prep, the local club instructors and/or upper level Pony Clubbers will continue to help prepare the candidates for the ratings at “polish preps”.

IV. Delegation of Authority: The District Commissioner shall have the overall responsibility for enforcing this policy.

V. Enactment:

Established: Leslie McColgin Date: 10/20/95

District Commissioner