

# **Virginia Regional Handbook**

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## **Dedication**

This handbook is dedicated to the volunteers of the Virginia Region who give of themselves and their time through a love of children and horses. Proudly, the Virginia Region takes special recognition of our District Commissioners (DCs), Riding Center Administrators (CAs) and officers who assume regional and club/center leadership. It is hoped that this handbook will support our leaders and make their jobs easier. The handbook is intended to be a document that will grow and change with the needs of the Region.

## **1.0 PURPOSE AND APPROVAL**

### SECTION 1.1: PURPOSE

The practices enclosed within are established as a guideline for the administration and management of the VRPC. These practices are intended to be the means to carry out the Mission Statement and the Guiding Beliefs of the United States Pony Clubs, Inc. VRPC policies and practices shall be consistent with USPC policy. Club policies and practices shall be consistent with USPC and VRPC policies.

### SECTION 1.2: MISSION STATEMENT

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.

### SECTION 1.3: GUIDING BELIEFS

The Guiding Beliefs of the USPC, Inc. are:

1. USPC is an educational organization that progressively develops the well-rounded horseperson.
2. The well-rounded horseperson is capable of riding safely and tactfully on the flat, over fences, and in the open.
3. Knowledgeable care of horses and ponies (horse management) is basic to the well-rounded horseperson.

4. USPC is committed to the well-being of the horse.
5. Fair and friendly competitions develop teamwork and sportsmanship.
6. Fun and friendship are part of Pony Club.
7. USPC requires parental and volunteer involvement and support.
8. The USPC is committed to safety.
9. The local club is the core of USPC.

#### SECTION 1.4: THE PONY CLUB PLEDGE

As a member of the USPC, I stand for the best in sportsmanship as well as 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. (Parents should support this philosophy at all times.)

I shall endeavor to maintain the best tradition of the ancient and noble skill of horsemanship, always treating my horse with the consideration due a partner.

I shall strive at all times to uphold the high ideals of Pony Club and my country.

#### SECTION 1.5: REVIEW AND CHANGES

These practices should be reviewed on a regular basis by the Secretary, with input from the regional officers. Any proposed changes will be presented to the Regional Council for action. Proposals for changes should be set forth in writing by the DCs/CAs or officers six weeks ahead of the next regularly scheduled meeting and sent to the Secretary and the Regional Supervisor (RS). Changes to the regional policies that are approved by the Council will become effective at the time of approval, pending approval of the USPC Vice President of Regional Administration (VPRA).

#### SECTION 1.6: DEVIATIONS/WAIVERS

The RS may authorize deviations to or waivers of regional policies and practices in situations with special circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Any requests for consideration of deviation or waiver must be in writing and submitted to the RS by the member club's DC or the CA with a statement or explanation from the parent or sponsors, if appropriate. The RS may authorize the request provided it does not conflict with the by-laws of the VRPC or the USPC.

## **2.0 REGIONAL ORGANIZATION**

### **SECTION 2.1: USPC BY-LAWS OF REGIONS See Appendix I**

### **SECTION 2.2: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF REGIONAL SUPERVISOR**

The RS has the authority, duty and responsibility for all matters in the Region that include but are not limited to, the direction, supervision and management of regional programs and activities and the regional clubs and riding centers. All actions and decisions of the RS shall be in accordance with USPC policies and subject to the supervision of the USPC VPRA.

### **SECTION 2.3: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VICE REGIONAL SUPERVISORS**

The Vice Regional Supervisor (VRS) have the authority, duty and responsibility for those specific activities, which include but are not limited to, the direction, supervision and control of all matters in the Region and in the regional clubs and riding centers, within their specific assignments. All actions and decisions of the VRSs shall be in accordance with USPC policies and subject to the supervision of the RS. The Virginia Region shall have one or more VRSs. The VRS positions may include the following: VRS Activities, responsible for all Regional Rallies and coordinating regional participation in Championships or Festival; VRS Instruction, responsible for Regional and National Testing, test preparation, clinics, and Horse Management instruction. The VRS Instruction responsibilities may fall under the RIC position; VRS Administration, responsible for regional communication and membership, including management of the regional website, membership databases, newsletters and other communications as appropriate. Each VRS may have “coordinators” that take on pieces of the VRS responsibilities.

### **SECTION 2.4: REGIONAL OFFICERS**

The Regional Council will elect officers each year at the annual regional meeting. A Nominating Committee (3-5 people) is appointed by the RS at the spring meeting and approved by the Regional Council. It will present a slate of candidates to fill the offices of Regional Supervisor, Vice-Regional Supervisor(s) (at least one), Secretary, Treasurer, Regional Instruction Coordinator (RIC) and Horse Management Organizer (HMO). The Regional Supervisor and the Vice-Regional Supervisor(s) cannot serve as a current District Commissioner, a Joint District Commissioner or a Riding Center Administrator concurrently, unless approved by USPC. It is recommended that the term for all officers be limited to four (4) consecutive years.

### **SECTION 2.5: REGIONAL COUNCIL**

The Regional Council is comprised of all Administrative officers of the Region, (RS, VRSs, DCs, JtDCs, and Riding Center Administrators) and the Secretary, Treasurer, HMO and RIC. The following have voting rights on the Regional Council: the elected Regional Officers, the CAs, and the DCs of all member clubs. This is the voting body for regional policy and major business transactions. In the absence of the DC, the JtDC may vote. If a club or riding center does not have a DC or CA present, any other officer of the club or riding center may vote with a proxy as the designated representative of the DC or CA. A current Pony Club member, unless they are a Horsemasters member, may not represent the club or riding center as a proxy. The President of USPC and the USPC Vice President for Regional Administration *shall be ex-officio* members of the Regional Council.

## SECTION 2.6: REGIONAL MEETINGS

The Regional Council will have two regular scheduled meetings each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. The fall meeting shall serve as the regional annual meeting. It shall include the budget for the coming year, serve as a time to plan/finalize activities for the coming year, include the report of the nominating committee, and election of officers for the coming year. Additionally, it shall include a review of regional activities; a financial report for the closing year; scheduling of activities; action on proposals to amend or update regional policies; and provide an opportunity to discuss any other areas of interest or concern. It will serve as a time to finalize plans for regional activities and to discuss the proposed calendar and potential sites for activities that will take place in the following year there by, always working ahead.

The spring Regional Council meeting shall serve as a time to finalize activities for the year, the budget may be refined, and the nominating committee will be elected for the next year. The RS, VRS, or USPC VPRA may call additional meetings of the Regional Council, or by written petition of 20% of Council Members.

Additional meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of the RS.

Each member club and riding center is required to send a representative with voting privileges to all regional council meetings to ensure a quorum of a majority of the member clubs and centers, plus the RS or VRS. JtDC's, parents and sponsors are encouraged to attend Regional Council meetings but are not allowed to vote unless they have a proxy from the DC or CA stating that they are acting on behalf of the DC or CA. A current Pony Club member, unless they are a Horsemasters member, may not represent the club or riding center as a proxy.

## SECTION 2.7: REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

A) **Regional Website** - The regional website will be maintained by the webmaster, appointed by the RS. The webmaster will be responsible for updating the website as often as needed as a means of improving communication between clubs, centers, parents and members. Ideally the webmaster will report through the VRS Administration. The

regional website will include a link to the USPC home page, pertinent news from USPC, information on regional activities, the regional calendar, regional club and center directory, regional forms and news from member clubs. At no time should the website list the addresses, E-mail addresses or telephone numbers of individual pony club members, unless that listing is only available through a password protected section of the website. It is expected that each member club and center will submit information to be posted to the webmaster within any stated deadlines.

**B) Regional Roster of Officers.** The roster of Officers and Regional Contacts is to be placed on the website annually in January. This roster will include the names, email addresses, and phone numbers of all regional officers, Regional Council members and key volunteers. All changes to this information should be sent to the regional secretary and the webmaster. At least one electronic address in each club is necessary to ensure effective communication. Ideally, the webmaster will maintain this roster based on information provided by the RS.

**C) Regional Newsletter.** Ideally on a monthly basis, the region will produce and distribute a Newsletter to the membership. The Newsletter will provide information on upcoming events, as well as summarize recent activities and events. The Newsletter will also communicate topics that should be of interest to the members. Ideally, the Newsletter will be managed by a Newsletter Editor reporting to the VRS of Administration. The Newsletter should represent a culmination of various contributors including the Regional Council and VRPC members.

**D) Regional Email.** The RS will use a regional email list to communicate to the leaders and members on an as-needed basis. DCs and CAs can distribute email communication to the entire VRPC membership through the RS. The RS will determine the appropriate email communication tool for the region

## SECTION 2.8: REGIONAL POSITIONS

### 2.8.1. Regional Instruction Coordinator (RIC)

The Regional Instruction Coordinator (RIC) is elected by the Regional Council. The RIC is a regional resource person who works with various coordinators to meet regional instruction needs. The RIC maintains a regional list of instructors dedicated to upholding the USPC standards which is available to the clubs and riding centers via the website. The RIC is familiar with all riding disciplines recognized by USPC and encourages, advises and suggests instructional improvement techniques to clubs and riding centers. The RIC monitors certification testings to determine needed improvements in instruction programs and assists with regional certification preps, clinics, and the Standards and Ratings Clinic. The RIC will coordinate, ideally through a volunteer coordinator, National Tests hosted by the Virginia Region. The RIC is a voting member of the Regional Council. The RIC may have one or more of the following coordinators to support his/her activities.

### 2.8.1.1 Upper Level Prep Coordinator

The Upper Level Prep Coordinator reports to the RIC and is responsible for organizing Regional upper level mounted and un-mounted clinics and preps as needed and identified by the RIC. The Virginia Region typically holds a series of un-mounted sessions in preparation for the H-B Test. As necessary, the Coordinator will arrange other upper level preps to help our members prepare for their National Certifications.

### 2.8.1.2 National Testing Coordinator

The National Testing Coordinator reports to the RS through the RIC. The Virginia Region National Testing Coordinator shall be responsible for identifying host clubs for all National Certifications and overseeing all aspects of the testings. Responsibilities will include identifying available testing sites for all national tests, making facility contacts and arrangements, and ensuring facilities meet the needs of the specific test. This job also includes identifying clubs for hospitality for each testing, in coordination with the RS and RIC requesting test dates from the National Office. The National Testing Coordinator will receive candidate listings, with names and addresses, from the National Office and provide additional information on the specific testings to the candidates and national examiners. The National Testing Coordinator keeps the RIC and RS informed.

## **2.8.2. Regional Horse Management Organizer (HMO)**

The Regional Horse Management Organizer is elected by the Regional Council and works with the RS and RIC for the purpose of strengthening Horse Management (HM) instruction programs at the club and riding center level. The HMO works with the RS, VRS Activities and/or the Organizer to coordinate staffing and judging at regional competitions. The HMO shall be responsible for overseeing proper Horse Management instruction at the club and riding center level. In addition, the HMO shall be responsible for maintaining a current list of regional and national qualified Horse Management judges in the Region. The HMO shall also be responsible for obtaining HM judges, including the Chief Judge for all rallies in all disciplines, and shall organize a regional HM judges seminar for all current and potential HM judges. This position is a voting member of the Regional Council.

## **2.8.3. VRS Activities**

The VRS Activities is responsible for coordinating, through “Club” appointed Rally Organizers, qualifying and non-qualifying rallies for the Virginia Region. The VRS Activities is responsible for ensuring on time and in budget rally preparation through the club appointed Rally Organizer for a given rally, including preparing a rally budget, approving proposed officials, dealing with venue needs/issues that arise, identifying and

managing rally equipment needs, etc. The VRS Activities orders all rally awards and ribbons. The VRS Activities is responsible for all Regional Rally Equipment (stop watches, bells, whistles, pinnys, etc.). The VRS Activities manages all financials associated with a rally, including deposits and payments; pays all vendors/suppliers associated with a rally and reports expenditures and income, and budget variances to the regional Treasurer. In preparation for the Regional meetings, and as necessary, provides detailed financial reports on rally expenses and income. The VRS Activities will review, approve and distribute all rally invitations according to the agreed upon template. Upon completion of a rally the VRS Activities will provide the rally results to the webmaster for posting and will provide a list of qualifiers to the Champs Coordinator, along with any other Champs documentation (e.g., signed Games Rally program).

#### 2.8.3.1 Rally Organizers:

Each Rally will have a “Rally Organizer” that reports to the VRS Activities. The Rally Organizer is responsible for planning and organizing a successful Rally, utilizing key volunteers as Rally Secretary, Stewards, etc. Rally Organizers must work with the VRS Activities to prepare rally invitations, budgets, hire officials, deal with venue needs/issues, and identify and manage equipment. See section 8.2 for details on the Rally Organizers responsibilities.

#### **2.8.4. Championships Coordinator**

The Championships Coordinator reports to the RS and shall be responsible for obtaining all required entry information for championships qualifiers and alternates. The coordinator is responsible for entering the team information into the USPC Championships database and for forwarding any paperwork (as applicable) to the USPC Championships’ discipline Secretaries by the designated deadline. This is to include Eventing, Show Jumping, Dressage, Quiz, Games, Tetrathlon, and any other disciplines that have regional representation. The coordinator shall notify qualifiers and alternates of any and all information available for their discipline championship and obtain from qualifiers and alternates all necessary paperwork. The coordinator shall also provide any necessary information to each team’s chaperone and in the case of Eventing, Tetrathlon, Dressage and Show Jumping, notify the coaches. This position requires that the coordinator work closely with the RS in determining teams, coaches, and obtaining all of the necessary forms from USPC for entries. Along with the RS, this person is also responsible for determining fees for each qualifier, which will include entry fee, coach and team shirt. The coordinator should be present at the end of each qualifying rally to accept Championships entries and associated fees, or identify a designee. The coordinator is also responsible for securing a hotel and block of rooms for the Virginia Region. The Champs Coordinator will also prepare a summary after Championships including VRPC member achievements as well as a detailed financial summary. The Champs Coordinator will be responsible for all Regional Champs Equipment including saddle pads, banners and pins.

### **2.8.5. Secretary**

The Regional Secretary reports to the RS and is responsible for securing a location for regional meetings, distributing meeting agendas and other relevant information, in advance of meetings, taking and publishing regional meeting minutes, and securing required insurance riders for regional activities.

### **2.8.6. Treasurer**

The Regional Treasurer reports to the RS and is responsible for maintaining financial records for the Region in compliance with USPC and IRS requirements. The Treasurer will ultimately hold all regional financial documents, including expense vouchers, associated receipts, deposit slips, etc. The Treasurer will provide a monthly reconciliation report, and PNL and Budget to Actual reports as needed by Regional leaders. While a limited number of regional leaders (RS, VRS Activities, etc.) will each have a Regional debit card and check writing privileges, the Treasurer is ultimately responsible for maintaining the Regional records (including but not limited to receipts for all transactions, invoices, reimbursement forms, bank statements, etc.). The Treasurer will prepare all required IRS and USPC filings, prepare for audits as necessary, and meet all filing deadlines.

## **SECTION 2.9: ACTIVE CLUB**

Member clubs are required to meet the following by the stated deadlines to retain active status in the VRPC:

- \* Submit regional dues, minutes of sponsor meetings, treasurer report, list of PC members, sponsors and officers each year by the deadline established by the RS and the USPC National Office, per USPC By-Laws. Typically the deadline is in late October.
- \* Submit member club summary sheet to RS at the fall Regional Council meeting, or by the date determined and communicated by the RS.
- \* Respond in a timely fashion to all information requests from the region and copy all responses to USPC National Office requests to the RS.
- \* Send a representative with voting privileges to all Regional Council meetings. Note: this cannot be an active Pony Club member.
- \* Sponsor, co-sponsor, or assist with a regional activity at least once a year.
- \* Send PC members to regional activities who are well prepared for the activity.



- \* Submit information to the webmaster by the stated deadlines as a means of keeping the Region informed of club activities.
- \* Hold regularly scheduled mounted and un-mounted meetings, and provide club certification opportunities to members at least twice each year.
- \* Submit all national dues and required paperwork to USPC by the stated deadlines.
- \* Maintain a copy of current approved club policies with the Region.
- \* Comply with all financial reporting requirements of the IRS and USPC, including meeting all filing deadlines.

#### SECTION 2.10: REGIONAL ACTIVE PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

The USPC By-Laws requires each Region to establish criteria for active participation of its members that establishes a member's standing in the Region. Each Virginia Region club/center criteria for a member in good standing needs to be compatible with the Regional criteria. A member maintains active participation in the Region by:

1. Paying all club/center, Regional, and National dues by the stated deadlines.
2. Paying all required club/center and regional fees for activities per deadlines.
3. Abiding by the Regional, club/center and National Code of Conduct.
4. Resolving any consequences of violation of the Code of Conduct.
5. Meeting the requirements of their club/center criteria for a member in good standing.

#### SECTION 2.11: CONSEQUENCES OF NON-ACTIVE CLUB OR NON-ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

If a club/center fails to abide by the definitions for an active club/center and/or active participation, the RS will first have a conversation with the club leaders to determine steps to compliance. If a club/center remains out of compliance, the RS may implement an action plan designed to help the club/center into compliance. If RS efforts fail to achieve desired compliance, the club/center members may be suspended from participation in regional activities until a time that they become compliant.

#### SECTION 2.12: REGIONAL YOUTH BOARD (RYB)

At the discretion of the Regional Supervisor, the Region may support a RYB as a means to provide leadership and growth opportunities to our older members, provide connectivity between members and the council, be a sounding board for the Regional Council, and sponsor and organize activities of interest to our members (e.g., social

events, camps, clinics, etc.). The RYB will be advised by the RS and a RYB Advisor, appointed by the RS. The RYB will have an elected Chair, Co-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Representatives from each club. Ideally the RYB will have two to three representatives that will participate on committees and/or become an elected officer. Elections will be held by the RYB members. Officers will be elected each year, at the February Regional Council Meeting. Representatives are appointed by each club, and should serve at least one year. Representatives must be D3HM or higher or be at least 13 years old. The RYB will meet, in person, at least once per year at the February Regional Meeting. They will have additional meetings as necessary and will use communications tools (e.g., Email, Skype, etc.) as necessary to achieve goals throughout the year. At the February meeting the RYB will elect officers and identify 2-3 projects/activities/goals they intend to accomplish in the coming year. They will determine the best course of action and present to the Regional Council for approval.

### **3. ADMINISTRATION**

#### **SECTION 3.1: FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year for the VRPC shall be January 1 to December 31.

#### **SECTION 3.2: MEMBERSHIP FEE**

The annual regional membership fee (dues) for the VRPC is set by the Regional Council each year prior to August 1. For new members joining between September and December, a prorated fee is assessed to cover the remainder of the year and the subsequent year. For example if the current fee is \$20, a prorated fee of \$25 is charged for new members joining between September and December to cover the remainder of the current year and the entirety of the subsequent year.

For current members that do NOT rejoin/renew their membership prior to November 15, a late fee of 50% will be assessed, regardless of what month they join.

Club checks or PayPal payments (or personal checks or PayPal payments for riding center members) covering these fees need to be sent to the Regional Membership Coordinator at the same time the membership is sent to the USPC National Office.

#### **SECTION 3.3: SURVEY FOR REGIONAL/NATIONAL TESTINGS**

At the Regional Council annual meeting (fall), all member clubs/centers shall complete the Regional/National Testing Survey Form that will be provided by the region. The DCs/CAs will report new certification needs for the upcoming year for the H-B and above certification levels. The clubs/centers are responsible for updating this list to the RS/RIC prior to the Spring Regional Council meeting.

## SECTION 3.4: ANNUAL CLUB STATUS

Member clubs of the VRPC shall conduct their Annual Sponsors Meetings no later than October 31st in time to provide the region with the USPC Annual Club Status report prior to November 10<sup>th</sup> so that the Region can complete a regional report to the USPC National Office. These reports shall be reviewed by the RS and used to provide a demographic report on the region.

The Status Report shall include the following:

1. Copy of the completed summary sheet from USPC
2. List of elected officers
3. Copy of updated membership list from USPC
4. Copy of club sponsor list
5. Copy of minutes for the club annual sponsors' meeting.
6. Annual regional membership fees.
7. Financial report by the club treasurer

The DC/CA serves as the club administrative officer and is the primary liaison between the club/center and the Region. The DC/CA represents the club at the Regional Council meetings and is responsible for ensuring that the club/center has set the policy and criteria that determines a member in good standing of the club/center. A copy of the updated club/center policies and any amendments shall become effective when adopted by the sponsors and RS. Policies must be given to the Region and the RS must be informed of any changes to the policies, approved by the RS, and subject to review by the USPC VPRA.

A Member is considered in Good Standing if they are current with all dues and fees owed the Registered Club/Riding Center Program, Region and USPC **and** when available participate in one or more of the following:

1. They show evidence of sincere interest in the activities of Pony Club at the local, regional or national level.
2. They assist younger members in the learning process.
3. They participate in Pony Club activities at the local, regional, or national level when and where appropriate, according to age, experience, and suitability of mount.

The Virginia Region adheres to the USPC Policy # 0150, core activity and directs the DCs/CAs to ensure that their club/center programs provide instruction for all members in

horse management, and in riding on the flat, over fences, and in the open. (See Appendix for USPC Policy #0150))

## **4.0 FINANCIAL**

### **SECTION 4.1: GENERAL**

The income, expense and financial operation of the VRPC will be explained in this article. It is expected that this article will be amended frequently as sources of income and regional expenses change. Amendments will be added to this document when the occasion rises.

### **SECTION 4.2: ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT**

Each year at the annual VRPC Regional Council meeting, the Treasurer shall present the annual financial report which shall include the following information: A financial statement listing income and expenses for the year to date. This report shall be updated at the end of the fiscal year for tax purposes and reviewed prior to the Virginia Regional Council Annual Meeting. At the fall Regional Council meeting, the Treasurer will present a proposed regional budget for the following fiscal year for review and approval.

### **SECTION 4.3: BUDGET**

#### **Expense Categories**

**Supervisory Administration:** The Regional Supervisor supervises all financial accounts.

**Supervisory Communications:** This part of the General Fund shall be used to cover mailing, website, newsletter tool, and shipping expenses incurred by the Officers to communicate with member clubs/centers and the national office.

**Supervisory Travel:** This part of the General Fund shall be used to cover an annually determined portion of the transportation and lodging expenses for any Regional Officers (RS, VRS(s), HMO, RIC, Secretary, Treasurer) to attend the USPC Annual Meeting and a standard (IRS) mileage allowance for conducting regional business.

**Miscellaneous:** This part of the General Fund shall be used to cover expenses incurred by other regional volunteers on regional business when authorized by the RS.

**Education and Clinics:** Amount to be determined each year at the Virginia Regional Annual Meeting upon recommendation by the RS/VRS and Treasurer.

**Reserve:** This part of the General Fund shall be held in reserve to support any other expense category where expenses exceed the budget and the RS deems it necessary to continue the activity even if over budget.

## **5.0 GENERAL PRACTICES**

### **SECTION 5.1: CLUB MEMBERSHIP**

When a child wants to join pony club, it is the responsibility of the DC/CA of the club/center of initial contact to make certain that the club/center best suits the need of that child. If there is a choice of more than one club/center, the DCs/CAs from all clubs involved should be consulted and the prospective member be encouraged to talk to each club. A member who wishes to change clubs/centers must have the approval of both the old and new club DC/CA as well as the RS before transferring. This request must be in writing to the DCs/CAs of both clubs/center and the RS. No transfer will be made without the approval of the RS and both DCs/CAs.

### **SECTION 5.2: SAFETY CHECKS AND HEALTH**

Pony Club is committed to safety. Each club/center has the responsibility to check each member's horse management skills and to be sure that each member's equipment is suitable, safe and in good repair. The VRPC requires knowledgeable adult supervised safety checks before EVERY mounted meeting. This includes ensuring a helmet meeting USPC requirements and proper footwear and dress is worn by every member.

Mounts must be in good health and proper condition in order to participate at the club/center and regional level. It is the responsibility of the club/center and its instructors to be concerned with the health, suitability, and condition of mounts before allowing them to participate in Pony Club activities.

### **SECTION 5.3: UNSPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR**

The Virginia Region upholds the USPC Code of Conduct for both members and parents. USPC and the VRPC will not condone unsportsmanlike behavior in any situation. The VRPC will not tolerate cheating or any deceitful behavior, such as the substitution of equipment at competition for equipment that is not used for the entirety of the competition. Vulgar language will not be tolerated. Pony Club members should show respect for all instructors. Any member of the VRPC who is viewed to be acting in a manner that is unsportsmanlike will be at risk of elimination at said competition. Parents not adhering to the Code of Conduct or showing any unsportsmanlike behavior can be ejected from the grounds.

## **6.0 EDUCATION**

### SECTION 6.1: GENERAL

VRPC encourages all clubs/centers to hold regularly scheduled mounted and un-mounted meetings, keeping foremost the goals of USPC as stated in the Mission Statement and Guiding beliefs. In support of these goals, the region will institute activities to assist member clubs/centers that may need help in improving their instruction.

### SECTION 6.2: PREPS & CLINICS

The region will plan preps and clinics and other educational activities for the year as deemed necessary.

The RS/RIC, at the fall regional council meeting, will present an educational calendar for the coming year.

The Region will offer upper level preps for C-2 and up candidates, both mounted and un-mounted. We encourage all of the C-2 Pony Club members to participate in appropriate preps regardless of when they plan to test. The preps will be educational as well as an evaluation of preparedness to test. They are NOT intended to determine the probability of pass/fail outcome.

The Virginia Region strongly recommends that all candidates for H-B/C-3 and up ratings attend at least one prep and as many as possible to enhance their chance of success. Different areas of required knowledge are covered at each session.

The Region will endeavor to have a Standards and Ratings Clinic every other year. The purpose is to produce instructors and examiners who are qualified to teach and certify according to the USPC Standards of Proficiency. The RS/RIC will oversee the development of a list of approved/qualified examiners for certifications.

The Horse Management Organizer shall be responsible for preparing knowledgeable, rally experienced horse management judges. The HMO shall be responsible for keeping a current updated list of available Horse Management judges. All regional members need to assist the HMO in identifying potential judges. The HMO shall conduct an annual Horse Management Seminar.

## **7.0 CERTIFICATIONS**

## SECTION 7.1: STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY

USPC has established Standards of Proficiency to measure the progress and level of achievement of its members. Please refer to the current certification guidelines and rules for eligibility as presented in the current USPC Standards of Proficiency. The Standards may be found on the USPC Website and are appended to the USPC Policies.

## SECTION 7.2: CLUB/CENTER CERTIFICATIONS

The member club/center evaluates candidates for the “local” or “club level” certifications. Although a member club/center may conduct in-house ratings for its members, the region strongly recommends that examiners be from outside the local club/center instruction program. DCs/CAs need to refer to the regional list of recommended examiners or contact the RS or RIC for names of others who are qualified to conduct and assist with the certifications. Member clubs/centers are required to offer the opportunity for certifications to its membership at least once per year.

## SECTION 7.3: NATIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

Candidates for National Certifications apply online to the National Office. Online applications and payments must be submitted and processed by the National Office by the application deadline. See the USPC website for deadlines, typically 6 weeks before a test. The National Office arranges each test and the candidates are examined by National Examiners of the USPC. Please note that for all National Level Tests in the Virginia Region, there may be an additional region fee in addition to the test application fee. For additional information on National Level Testing, consult the USPC website.

PLEASE NOTE: The USPC National Office schedules these examinations and will place individuals in testing locations on the basis of first come, first placed. With that practice it behooves candidates to submit testing applications as soon as possible.

H-A, H-M and H applicants must include a copy of their current First Aid Certificate with the testing application. If a pony club member is applying for both the H-A and the A test, they must complete a separate application for each test. Both applications will be submitted online to the USPC National Office and if the candidate is not successful at the H-A the A application fee will be refunded in full.

We would recommend that if a candidate is applying for both the H-A and the A tests that the candidate write two (2) different self-evaluations. Each test requires different types of preparation and, therefore, the statement for the H-A would not necessarily be suitable for the A.

## SECTION 7.4: PONY CLUB MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Pony Club members should always maintain good communication with the DC/CA regarding their preparation and readiness for the next certification. Members should be

familiar with the policy of their local club/center regarding the process for stating their intent to test and need to state what their accomplishments have been with their riding since their previous certification. It is the member's responsibility to be aware of the requirements for their certification. They should be familiar with all the information in the Standard as well as previous standards to be thoroughly prepared for the testing. The region recommends that they utilize the flow charts as provided by USPC for their level. Pony club members must also keep their parents informed of prep needs and status.

Pony club members should take advantage of all possible opportunities to improve their skills. They should be active in their local club/center program and the region; taking on more responsibility as they progress through the certifications. Older members, less able to participate in all the regularly scheduled club activities due to college, work or distance from their club/center will, however, be expected within reason to contribute to their own club/center or to a nearby local club/center.

The upper level candidate should be helping with club/center and region activities -- such as teaching and assisting at rallies. They should take advantage of the educational opportunities that their club/center and region provide for them and should also study and make arrangements to develop expertise outside of Pony Club.

#### SECTION 7.5: DC/CLUB AND CA/CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES

The DC/CA is responsible for organizing (or appointing a coordinator to organize) an instructional program for D-1 through C-2 levels according to the USPC Standards.

The DC/CA is also responsible for overseeing all in-club/center certifications through C-2. It is the DC's/CA's responsibility to make certification testings available when candidates are prepared. DCs/CAs may work with other clubs/centers to combine certification testings. Clubs should strive to offer certification testings at least once each year. The DC/CA must be thoroughly familiar with the requirements of the Standards. The DC/CA must be confident that the examiner is qualified to conduct a rating at the level and is familiar with USPC Standards. It is the DC's/CA's responsibility to follow through on any retesting that may be necessary.

The DC/CA is responsible for keeping the RS informed about the potential number of their national level candidates. The DC/CA should work with the RS to develop prep programs for upper level candidates. The DC/CA should make opportunities available for teaching and oversee the candidate's preparation and planning. The DC/CA should encourage the club's regional participation and support. The DC/CA is responsible for educating the candidates, parents and observers about testing procedures and proper conduct at the testing. The DC/CA should also appoint an Impartial Observer for each certification testing within their club/center (see USPC Guidelines for Conducting Ratings). The DC/CA should attend upper level prep clinics and certifications if possible, when candidates from their club are tested. If the DC/CA cannot attend a non-local rating, the DC/CA should appoint a knowledgeable adult to accompany and support the candidate and to represent the club/center.



All candidates for H-B/C-3 and up certifications must submit the appropriate application with all required papers, releases and fees by the deadline as stated by the National Office. The RS in conjunction with the DC/CA is responsible for ensuring to the National Office that the applicant is in full compliance with the stated qualifications of a member in good standing contained in their club/center policies.

#### SECTION 7.6: REGION RESPONSIBILITIES

The RS will request a date(s) from USPC for all National Tests, if there are enough regional candidates at these levels. The region is responsible for obtaining testing sites and dates and for making local arrangements (stabling, lodging, and meals) for candidates and examiners.

The RS along with the DC/CA has the responsibility for recommending candidates for national certifications. The RIC/ is responsible for selecting Impartial Observers for all national testings.

#### SECTION 7.7: PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

To make a pony club member's participation in Pony Club a positive, successful experience, the parents (or guardians) need to understand that certifications are not competitive events, but an examination of the member's knowledge and skills to determine whether the member not only has mastered the level skills but is also safe to proceed to the next level. Pushing a child beyond a safe skill level can be not only mentally destructive, but physically dangerous as well.

To prepare Pony Club members for certifications, the parent should be committed to getting the member to their scheduled Pony Club meetings, mounted or un-mounted, local, regional or national - on time and with the proper supplies and equipment, and checking beforehand to see that any written requirements are done on time and legible. As the certifications progress, the parent should encourage the member to take on more of the responsibility for the preparation of the certification.

### **8.0 REGIONAL COMPETITIONS**

#### SECTION 8.1: REGION RESPONSIBILITIES

The VRS Activities shall determine the competition needs of the Virginia Region, sites for such competitions, as well as dates and hosts/organizers. The VRS shall present a list of recommended dates and sites for rallies for the upcoming year, working at least 18 months ahead of the actual calendar year. This will enable the Regional Council to decide

final dates, organizers and facilities based on information provided. At the fall Regional Council meeting, the host or organizer will be confirmed for each competition.

The VRS Activities shall lend any assistance requested to the host or organizing club/center. This includes protocols developed for the discipline, information pertinent to the site, costs, and any other information necessary for successfully presenting the competition.

The DC/CA/Organizer/Host shall prepare a working budget and provide same to the VRS Activities prior to the competition. The intent of a regional competition is to make available to all members of the region, a venue that is safe, fair and affordable. Regional competitions are NOT fund-raisers for either the host club/clubs/centers or the region, but should seek to break even, except in situations deemed acceptable by the RS. The concessions at a Regional Rally may be used for a club fundraiser. If the hosting club is not interested in using it as a fundraiser, the opportunity will be offered to other clubs. The region encourages the participation of all eligible members and seeks to provide a positive atmosphere for all parties including volunteers and their families.

The region will make up losses. Any profits will be turned over to the region to be used at the discretion of the Regional Officers and Council.

## SECTION 8.2: ORGANIZER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Discuss selection of officials with the VRS Activities and hire.
2. Submit an estimate of rally costs to the VRS Activities for approval.
3. Obtain USPC rules and guidelines for that discipline at least 3 months in advance.
4. Communicate regularly with the VRS Activities.
5. Send all necessary information and entry forms to the VRS Activities for approval and distribution.
6. Follow all guidelines provided by the specific discipline, including the selection of recognized officials (depending on disciplines).
7. Awards shall be a reflection of the TEAM scores based on total scores for all phases, except Tet.
8. Awards shall also be given for TEAM Horse Management total scores. In the case of very large rallies, teams may be divided into two or three divisions for awards, within those divisions. This may be done in consultation with the VRS Activities.
9. Ensure clean up.

10. Within one week of competition, Rally “team” results must be sent to the webmaster. These results must be in an editable format and include team name, each competitor's web postable name (ie. first name, last initial), PC/RC, raw scores (if applicable), HM team placing, and overall team placing. Additionally, the “individual” results must be sent to the Championships Coordinator to determine Champs qualifiers. These results must also be in editable format and include competitor's full name and web postable name (ie. first name, last initial), PC/RC, certification, raw scores, and overall individual placing.

11. Within one week after rally, the organizer shall submit a full report to the VRS Activities. This report shall include a financial report, summary of the rally results, any issues/concerns, and suggestions for improvements in the future.

### SECTION 8.3: DC/CA/CLUB/CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COMPETITIONS

All active clubs/centers are required to take part in planning and hosting some regional activity or assist another club/center in doing so, yearly. Clubs/centers should strongly encourage members to participate in regional rallies. Rally teams should be composed of members from the same club/center. When there are not enough members to compose a full team, the organizer will place members so as to compose scramble teams to allow all regional members an opportunity to participate.

DCs/CAs should respond promptly to organizer's requests for an estimate of participation and avoid making changes at the last minute. Remember to complete and return all required items. DCs/CAs are responsible for sending riders who will be safe competing at the level of competition, appropriate to the riders' skill level and who meet the qualification policy. DCs/CAs should be sure that competitors and parent are informed as to expectations of them at the competition.

Because Pony Club is a volunteer organization and the success of the competition is directly related to the response of volunteers, each club/center is expected to provide the required number of volunteers per team and/or individual (in case of a Scramble competitor) participating in that competition.

### SECTION 8.4: PONY CLUB MEMBER'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COMPETITIONS

- \* Be prepared to work for the good of the team. (club/center, scramble or regional team)
- \* Know the rules.
- \* Have a cooperative attitude with teammates and officials.
- \* Take time to make new friends.
- \* Leave the area in a better condition than you found it.

- \* Thank organizers and parents for their work.
- \* Exercise proper care for your mount.

## SECTION 8.5: PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Get member and horse to the activity (rally, clinic, prep, testing, etc.) site in a calm, rested and prepared state at or before the scheduled arrival time. Parents may help competitors unload mounts and heavy items, hang fans, hand walk horses, and then remove themselves as quickly as possible from the barn areas. Parents should not be setting up stalls or the tack rooms. Parents shall check in with the volunteer coordinator to offer their services at the activity upon arrival. Parents are asked to be sure to fulfill their commitments to these assigned jobs.

## 9. NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

### SECTION 9.1: GENERAL

A goal of the VRPC is to field at least one team in each discipline offered at the USPC National Championships. All members within the region who are members in good standing, meet the age and certification requirements for the discipline in which they intend to compete and who qualify at a Virginia region rally in that discipline are eligible to compete to represent the Virginia Region at the USPC Championships. All members in good standing are invited to qualify for the regional teams. Pony Club members certified B and above may compete at Championships without first qualifying at a regional rally. Additionally, members rated C-3 or below who are unable to attend a Virginia Region qualifying Rally may attempt to qualify at any other region's qualifying rally with the permission of both RSs.

Members will be assigned to Virginia Region Championships Teams using the following order of priority: 1) qualifiers at a VRPC qualifying rally; 2) qualifiers at another region's qualifying rally unless the member attempted and failed to qualify at the same discipline's VRPC qualifying rally; 3) members certified B and above who were not able to attend the discipline's qualifying rally; 4) qualifiers at another region's qualifying rally who did not qualify at the same discipline's VRPC qualifying rally. Any member who would like to attend Championships but who is not assigned to a VRPC team will be submitted to USPC as a scramble entry to be placed on a scramble team with members from other regions.

### SECTION 9.2: COSTS

The cost of sending a regional team to the USPC Championships is significant and varies with the location of the championship and the discipline. The team members and/or their families shall pay the costs associated with transportation of horses, if applicable; entry

fees of the competitor, competitor's hotel and competitor's meals. They shall also be responsible for a portion of the costs associated with team coaching, coaches' room fee and meals. If any costs are incurred prior to the Championships with the team coach, that will also be the responsibility of the family. In addition, VRPC assesses a small fee each year to cover administrative fees and prep picnic fees. VRPC does not attempt to make money on Championships and will issue a refund within 30 days from the end of the competition if there is a surplus.

All competitors and their families are encouraged, but not required, to stay at the "Official Virginia Region Hotel". This suggestion is meant to facilitate communication, competitor supervision, and Virginia Region team camaraderie. If a competitor / family does not stay at the Official Virginia Region Hotel, it is the competitor/ family responsibility to:

1. Supply competitor/family housing contact information to the Regional Championships Coordinator.
2. Keep abreast of all scheduling changes.
3. Keep Regional Championships Coordinator and team chaperone (if applicable) informed of any changes affecting the competitor.
4. Ensure that competitors attend and are on time for all team activities.

### SECTION 9.3: REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS TEAM SELECTION

Competitors must fill out the "Intent to Compete" form stating which discipline is their first, second or third choice and they may wait to see if they qualify for their first choice. Regardless of discipline choice, no competitor is considered who has not turned in the required paperwork and check payable to VRPC. All relevant paperwork can be found on the VRPC championships section of the VRPC website. It is the competitor's responsibility to obtain and complete the paperwork, and to forward it to the Championships Coordinator by the stated deadline.

Stable Managers will be selected on the basis of the team placing in Horse Management at the regional rallies, providing they meet the age and certification requirements. Entry checks will not be deposited until the Virginia Region Entries have been sent to USPC, and those attending will be notified as to when their checks will be deposited. All checks for alternates who do not attend will be returned.

### SECTION 9.4: CHAMPIONSHIPS PREP AND TEAM COACHING

The VRPC will arrange a championships prep session. Attendance at this prep session is important for both competitors and parents. The RS will select the team coaches for those disciplines requiring a coach.

## 10. PAYMENT AND REFUND PROCEDURES

### **PAYMENT POLICY and PROCEDURE:**

- All payments are made (post marked or paid in Pay Pal) by the Team Closing Date as stated on the invitation and in the Wild Apricot calendar.
- A 20% late fee will be assessed to all payments made AFTER the Team Closing Date.
- It is preferred that payments be made by clicking on the invoice link and paying via pay pal.
- Individual and Club checks are acceptable and must be post marked by the Team Closing Date. Please identify the invoice number on the check. For club checks covering a number of participants a list of participants and invoices numbers must be included.
- Failure to comply with the payment policies will result in a member “not in good standing” and will impact the ability of the member to participate in regional activities and certifications.
- *If a late entry is accepted (after the Team Closing Date for Rallies and The Individual Closing Date for all other activities), a late fee of 20% will be assessed. A late registration of Stable Managers will not be assessed a late fee.*

### **VRPC Refund Process for Entry Withdrawal:**

- Each Regional activity’s announcement will state the refund parameters.
- Opening and Closing dates (deadlines for entries) will be clearly stated.
- All refunds will be paid to the person or club that made the original payment. If the club paid, the club will be refunded. If an individual paid, the individual will be refunded. In the event of a withdrawal a participant should notify both his/her DC/CA, the event Secretary or Organizer, and the VRPC Treasurer. An email notification is acceptable if outside 72 hours of the event. A phone call, with email follow up is required if the withdrawal is within 72 hours.

### **Preps and Clinics:**

*Prior* to the individual closing date, refunds will be given

*After* the individual closing date, no refunds will be given except with a vet/med certificate and a 20% administrative fee will be assessed **USPC National**

### **Testing:**

Refunds will be given per USPC policy. The testing region may withhold a portion or the entire regional fee should the candidate decide to withdraw or change sites, per USPC cut off dates.

**Rallies:**

*Prior* to the Individual closing date a refund will be given.

*After* the team closing date, no refund will be given except with a vet/med certificate, and a 20% administration fee will be assessed.

**Championships:**

USPC entry fees will be refunded per USPC Championships policy.

*Prior* to the VRPC Closing Date, a full refund of VRPC Championships fees will be given.

*After* the VRPC Closing Date and prior to travel to Championships, no refund of VRPC Championships fees will be given except with a vet/medical certificate. Vet/Medical Certificates must be received by August 31 of the competition year. A refund will be given less an administrative fee as set by USPC and a \$25 VRPC fee.

**Revision History:**

**March 8, 2017: Revisions made to Section 10**

**February 19, 2017: Revisions include: payment policy, addition of late fee and update to membership dues.**

**November 9, 2013: Revisions include: Added page numbers and section numbers; updated RIC and VRS positions; Added VRS Administration and support Coordinators; Deleted VRS Instruction; Clarified Roles and Responsibilities; Clarified proxy member for Regional meetings; Clarified Regional Communications; Added Upper Level Prep Coordinator, and Upper Level Test Coordinator to RIC responsibilities; Added position description for Treasurer and Secretary.**

**August 1, 2011: Original Issue**