

## Certification Countdown

If you have questions about certifying, contact a more experienced CPC member. Most of these to-do's also apply to [Rallies!](#)

The following apply to any horse you intend to use for your certification. It does not matter whether you own the horse or will borrow/lease him for the certification.

### Six Months before Certification Date

- Consider whether or not you want to rate to the next level. Do you have desire? Will you have the time to ride? Time to study? Will you have appropriate horse? Will he be ready?
- Review the [USPC Standards of Proficiency](#) for that certificate level.
- Begin learning the bookwork and horse knowledge required for that certificate level. Maybe get a study group together of members thinking about taking the same certification.
- Start (or begin to update) and maintain a [A Guide to Filling out the USPC Health and Maintenance Record Book](#) (if required for your certificate level) for your horse.
- Take regular lessons (if you aren't already). Have your instructor review the Standards of Proficiency; work together to get your riding/horse knowledge to that level.



### Three Months before Certification Date

- Really start conditioning your horse. Do not ask him to jump a 9-fence course of 3' fences for a C-2 certificate the week before. Be fair to him; get him fit in plenty of time.

### Two Months before Certification Date

- Check your tack and equipment to make sure it meets Pony Club Standards. Make sure your saddle fits you AND your horse. Replace, buy, or [borrow](#) anything you need.
- Make sure you have the equipment required for your certificate (e.g., bandages, longe whip and line, etc.). Practice using it! Break it in if it is new. See the appropriate Standards of Proficiency for what you'll need.
- By now you should have made up your mind about which horse you will ride (if you have a choice). It is not fair to a horse (or to you), to decide to use him for a certification with less than two months of preparation, ESPECIALLY at levels D-3 and above!

### Six Weeks before Certification Date

- Start grooming your horse. You should be doing this daily anyway. Work on his tail and mane. If he has dandruff, it will take a while to get rid of, so start on it now.
- Check with the District Commissioner to make sure you are a member in good standing (e.g., your account is paid in full, you have participated enough for her to know how prepared you are, etc.)
- Start completing the [Canterbury Pony Club Letter of Intent to Certify](#). Now is the time to honestly ask yourself if you will be truly ready for the certification by the certification date. Will you be prepared? If not, it would be better to work some more for the next few months and take the certification the next time it is offered.
- Have your parents read and sign the Parents' Statement of the Canterbury Pony Club Letter of Intent to Certify (the second page of the Letter of Intent to Certify). If you have questions, talk to a more experienced CPC member, District Commissioner, Certification Coordinator, or a Board member.

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- If a checklist (flowchart) is required, get it updated and signed by an Upper Level Pony Club member or your instructor. Turn in one week before your rating to the District Commissioner (DC).
- Make sure your horse has a current negative [Coggins test](#). If not, get it done NOW. It can take a week or more to get back results, so don't wait!
- Check with the Certification Coordinator if there's a question of [attire](#); is it to be informal or formal? Check your attire to be sure it is in good condition, not torn or stained, and try it on to see if it still fits! Make sure you have/can find everything you need (leather belt, hair net, Pony Club pin, helmet cover, etc.) Replace, buy, or [borrow](#) what you need to meet the attire requirements. There is no reason why you cannot meet turn-out expectations at your certification!
- Review the Standards of Proficiency again. Are you on track? Go over the Standards with your instructor. Work on your weak points but don't forget to keep practicing your strong points.
- Continue to learn/review the bookwork and horse knowledge at your level. Regularly practice bandaging, longeing, identifying horses and conformation faults, etc.

#### **Four Weeks before Certification Date**

- Submit your Letter of Intent to Certify, Parents' Statement, and flowchart (if required) to the District Commissioner. Get a copy to the Certification Coordinator. **If the Letter of Intent is not in before the deadline, you will not be able to rate! PERIOD!**
- Check your horse's feet. Do they need trimming? Shoeing? If so, make an appointment with your farrier now. Don't expect him to drop everything if you wait until the last minute. Don't expect your horse to perform well with feet that were trimmed just the day before the certification.
- Intensify your review of bookwork and horse knowledge. By now you should know it, but keep it fresh in your mind. Have somebody orally quiz you. Practice bandaging, longeing, etc.

#### **One Week before Certification Date**

- Trim and/or clip your horse (if required). Make sure his mane and tail are perfect.
- Finalize your Health Maintenance Record (if required).
- Gather your attire, tack and equipment. Don't wait until the last minute to get everything together. [Borrow](#) what you can; buy what you need.
- Give your tack a thorough cleaning. Do a super good job on it now so that the night before your certification, you're not up late looking for leather conditioner and metal polish. Wash saddle pads, blankets, and bandages. Polish your tall boots. Iron your shirt.

#### **Day before the Certification**

- Bathe and thoroughly groom your pony. Give him plenty of rest for the big day.
- Give your tack and equipment another good cleaning. Since you did an intense cleaning job a few days ago, it shouldn't take much. But don't wait until 11:00 p.m. to start!
- Pre-load as much of your tack and equipment as you can. Lay out your attire for the next day. You'll be too nervous or too rushed to think about it clearly then. Don't forget your Pony Club pin, medical armband, and Health Maintenance Record. Pack a lunch if you need one and hay and water for your horse.
- Get a good night's rest. You'll benefit more from adequate sleep than last-minute cramming.
- **Good Luck!** If you've followed this countdown and have been honest with yourself about your readiness to certify, you should have no trouble moving up to the next level.