

Testing Information for Volunteers and/or Examiners

Volunteers should work with their extension agent to ensure that youth have sufficient time, resources and opportunities to learn and practice skills *before* testing. However, youth are ultimately responsible for researching, practicing and mastering the skills.

Youth should practice skills at home, clinics, mock testings, demonstrations, meetings, camps, etc. It may take considerable time (i.e. weeks, months or years) to prepare for testing and master skills, depending upon ability of horse and rider, and available resources.

Testing should be conducted in an educational and informative manner, but should *not* be conducted like a clinic with extensive instruction. Youth should be prepared to demonstrate skills at testing. Examiners may provide youth with more than one opportunity to complete skills correctly, but should set limits and be aware of time available for testing.

Maintenance of high standards is critical to ensure that 4-H members successfully master the skills at each level. It is imperative that examiners require youth to CORRECTLY demonstrate each skill in order to pass that level. Youth should pass ONLY if they correctly demonstrate each skill. It is important to remember that the objective of the program is to promote safety and develop a foundation of horsemanship skills. Learning is more important than passing or awards.

Examiners should recognize that many youth may be nervous at testing and should try to make youth feel at ease. Testing should be friendly and youth should be reminded that no one fails. If youth do not pass the test, they should be encouraged to practice and re-test at a later date.

Volunteers should work with their extension agent to set date(s), location(s) and schedule for testing. Youth and parents should be aware of designated testing date, time and location, tack and equipment needed for testing, and other testing details as appropriate.

Examiners from other counties may participate to help share workload. Multiple teams of examiners and/or multiple testing dates may be needed if large numbers of youth are involved.

Youth are tested for Levels 1 and 2 *only* in the county by certified Level 1-2 Examiners. Level 3 and 4 tests are conducted by certified Level 3-4 examiners at the district or state level. Counties should work together to coordinate Level 3-4 testing as needed at the district level. Lists of certified examiners for all levels are available on the 4-H Horse Program web site at:

<http://www.das.psu.edu/4h/horse/>

Thank you for your cooperation in promoting safety and proper horsemanship skills.