

Mounted Standards

Additional standards that may apply to mounted activities may be found in the Core, Equestrian Skills (EKS), or Medical mental health (MMH) sections.

***MA1 MANDATORY**

Is there written evidence that all equine-assisted mounted activities are conducted or directly supervised by a currently certified Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International Certified Riding Instructor?

Yes No

Interpretation: Current PATH Intl. Instructor Certification at the registered, advanced or master level demonstrates compliance with this standard. “Directly supervising” means the instructor is at the activity site and is aware of and responsible for the program activity in the arena or on the premises.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of WRITTEN documentation of current certification and observation of the mounted activity session.

MA2

Is there an implemented procedure to ensure that personnel who mount and dismount participants have been trained in mounting and dismounting procedures, and is a written list of trained personnel maintained?

Yes No

Interpretation: For the safety of the participants, the personnel mounting and dismounting should be designated and trained to be familiar with proper mounting techniques, disabilities, body mechanics and individual equine personalities.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of mounting and dismounting, WRITTEN training list and personnel interview.

***MA3 MANDATORY**

DNA (does not apply): If center does not use saddles or stirrups.

Is there an implemented written policy regarding the use of stirrups with safety features, AND/OR is there an implemented written policy that participants wear riding boots or hard-soled shoes with heels?

Yes No DNA

Interpretation: Stirrups should have safety features that reduce the chance of foot entrapment and should be in good working order. The student's individual needs should be considered when selecting the type of safety stirrup. The written policy may address use of safety stirrups, use of boots by participants or both.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of WRITTEN policy, saddles, stirrups and riding session.

MA4

DNA (does not apply): If the center does not offer T-HPOT.

Is there written evidence in a T-HPOT session of the competence of the therapist/health professional or COTA/PTA on the equine, demonstrating a well-aligned, secure seat and position at all times, during the following:

- 1. Riding at a walk, trot and canter with and without stirrups?**
- 2. Sitting at a walk in the T-HPOT position (behind the equine's center of gravity) while being led or long-lined during changes of pace, serpentines, figure of 8 and transitions to and from halt?**

Yes No DNA

Interpretation: Evidence of riding ability may include, but is not limited to, PATH Intl. certification at the advanced level; US Pony Club C-level or higher; comparable CHA certification; or a letter from another instructor who has PATH Intl. advanced certification, US Pony Club C-level status or CHA comparable certification who has observed the therapist/health professional or COTA/PTA demonstrate the above listed skills, in person or by video.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of WRITTEN documentation and interview of personnel.

MA5

DNA (does not apply): If the center does not offer T-HPOT.

Is there an implemented procedure for the use of tack in a T-HPOT session that ensures the following:

- 1. The pad used to protect the equine’s back is large and long enough to accommodate both the participant and the therapist/health professional or COTA/PTA on the equine?**
- 2. The pad is safely secured to the equine?**
- 3. There is a handle/handhold accessible to the therapist/health professional or COTA/PTA on the equine?**

Yes No DNA

Interpretation: Saddles, English or Western, are inappropriate for T-HPOT due to the displacement of the weight of the therapist/health professional or COTA/PTA on the equine over the equine’s loin area and the interference and possible cause for injury to the therapist or PTA on the equine by the cantle of the saddle.

In T-HPOT the protection of the equine’s back is of prime importance. Size and length of the pads should cover the equine’s back and sides so that the participant and the therapist/health professional or COTA/PTA on the equine sit comfortably on the pads and not on the equine’s back. The pad should be of a material sufficient to protect the equine’s back with shock-absorbing and weight-distributing properties, with consideration given to the balance and position of the participant. For safety, the pad must be secured so that it does not slide.

In an emergency, the therapist/health professional or COTA/PTA on the equine should have easy access to a secure handle, for balance, not to control the equine. Examples may be the handle of a surcingle, a properly fitting neck strap or other reliable tack.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation and interview of personnel.

***MA6 MANDATORY**

Do all participants wear a helmet certified by the American Society for Testing and Materials - Safety Equipment Institute (ASTM-SEI) or an international equivalent helmet for equestrian use while participating in a mounted activity?

If a helmet that is not ASTM-SEI or international equivalent approved for equestrian use is worn for mounted activities, is there WRITTEN documentation meeting the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International Guidelines for Alternative Helmet Use?

Yes No

Interpretation: This standard applies to all participants engaged in center mounted activities. It is the center's responsibility to verify currency of ASTM-SEI or international equivalent approved protective equestrian helmets. Information can be verified by contacting SEI at www.SEInet.org (headgear, equestrian helmet). Helmets should fit snugly and have the harness strap adjusted correctly. Helmets should not interfere with the participant's vision. It is recommended that participants also wear helmets during groundwork conducted with or near equines (e.g., grooming, tacking and leading). Helmets not approved for equestrian use must have written documentation that meets the Guidelines for Alternative Helmet Use found in the Guideline section of this manual.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of center mounted activities, verification of ASTM-SEI or international equivalent tags in randomly selected helmets, WRITTEN documentation for all individuals using alternative helmets in mounted activities, personnel interview.

Driving Standards

Centers with existing driving programs and those considering adding a driving program should also review the following standard sections for standards that may impact their driving program: Core Administration and Business, Facility and Equine Welfare and Management contain standards that may apply to a driving program. All centers must currently meet the ground activity (GA) standard. Equestrian Skill Standards can be found in the Service section of the Standards manual and apply to driving activities since the goal for the participant is to gain the equestrian skill of driving. To select an appropriate equine for driving activities, review the Equine Selection Criteria for driving found in the Guideline section of the standards manual. If the goal of the Driving Activity is to improve or change the health of the participant and is provided by a licensed health care professional along with a PATH International certified driving instructor, the Medical-Mental Health standards would also apply.

***DA1 MANDATORY**

Is there written evidence that all driving sessions are conducted or directly supervised by a currently certified Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International Certified Driving Instructor?

Yes No

Interpretation: Current PATH Intl. Driving Instructor certification demonstrates compliance with this standard. “Directly supervising” means the instructor is at the activity site and is aware of and responsible for the program activity in the arena or on the premises.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of WRITTEN documentation of current certification and observation of the driving session.

***DA2 MANDATORY**

During a driving session, is there a means of attaching a lead rope to the equine?

Yes No

Interpretation: A lead rope should be available for ease of control by the header. This can be attached to any type of halter, a head collar with a ring or a ring attached to the noseband. It is important that this does not interfere with the bridle or bit. Lead ropes should be removed before driving commences. When the lead rope is not in use, the equine should be unattached.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of driving session.

DA3

Is there an implemented procedure to ensure that the vehicle is suitable for the participant?

Yes No

Interpretation: The motion provided by the suspension and balance of the vehicle should be appropriate for the participant. Vehicles should have a dashboard to protect participants from material thrown up by the equine's feet. Participants must be able to brace their feet or be otherwise supported and may need a footrest. Traditional vehicles with easy access may be used for semi-ambulatory participants. Those in wheelchairs may need specialized vehicles with loading ramps or lifts.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of vehicles and personnel description of procedures.

***DA4 MANDATORY**

Is there an implemented procedure to ensure that the equine is put to the vehicle prior to anyone entering the vehicle?

Yes No

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of driving session.

***DA5 MANDATORY**

Are there implemented safety procedures that include the following:

- 1. Address participant safety during entering and exiting each vehicle?**
- 2. Address the specific needs of the participants?**
- 3. Require the presence of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International Certified Driving Instructor?**

Yes No

Interpretation: Each program should establish procedures so that participants can quickly and safely enter and exit from each vehicle. These procedures will vary from vehicle to vehicle and should include but not be limited to the following:

1. The presence of a header at the equine's head.
2. The presence of the able-bodied whip (ABW) in the vehicle prior to the participant entering and after the participant exits the vehicle.
3. Any adaptations necessary for vehicles that are being used.

These procedures should be reviewed and updated periodically.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of driving session and personnel interview.

***DA6 MANDATORY**

DNA (does not apply): For advanced independent drivers.

Is there an implemented procedure that the ABW is in the vehicle and does the following:

- 1. Holds the reins and takes control of the equine before the participant enters and remains in the vehicle until after the participant exits?**
- 2. Has a second set of reins to take control of driving the equine during the session if needed?**

Yes No DNA

Interpretation: The control of the equine and vehicle should be safely maintained by the ABW while the participant enters and exits the vehicle. The header also assists while the participant enters and exits the vehicle. A second set of reins attached to the bit will enable the ABW to take control in case of emergency or if the participant tires. Reins for the participant may be attached to the halter, terrets, saddle rings or bit depending on his/her skill level. Reins of a different color/type/texture/width for the ABW and the participant may be helpful for clearer identification.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of driving session.

DA7

DNA (does not apply): If there are never participants using a wheelchair in the vehicle.

- 1. Is there an implemented procedure to ensure that the wheelchair occupant is secure in the wheelchair?**
- 2. If needed, is the seat belt or harness of a quick release type?**

Yes No DNA

Interpretation: A Velcro seat belt or similar type of harness may improve the stability and balance of the participant.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of driving session and personnel interview.

***DA8 MANDATORY**

DNA (does not apply): If there are never wheelchairs in the vehicle.

Are there implemented procedures that ensure the following:

- 1. There is only one wheelchair at a time allowed in the driving vehicle?**
- 2. The wheelchair is secured so that it cannot move in any direction?**
- 3. Attendants understand how to secure and release the wheelchair from the driving vehicle?**

Yes No DNA

Interpretation: Multiple wheelchairs are not allowed in the driving vehicle at the same time, and while in the driving vehicle, wheelchair locks are required to be in the locked position. It is recommended that all methods for securing the wheelchair to the driving vehicle have a quick release mechanism. All attendants are required to understand how the quick release mechanism works as methods will vary with the construction of the vehicle.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of the wheelchair secured in the driving vehicle and personnel explanation of how the wheelchair is secured and released.

***DA9 MANDATORY**

DNA (does not apply): If power wheelchairs are never in the vehicle.

Are there implemented procedures that ensure safety considerations for power wheelchairs to include but not be limited to the following:

- 1. Battery power off and battery safely encased or removed while wheelchair is in vehicle?**
- 2. Appropriate larger size and stability of the vehicle?**
- 3. Ability of equine and equipment to pull the considerably increased weight?**
- 4. Adequate device for entering and exiting the vehicle?**

Yes No DNA

Interpretation: It is preferred that only manual wheelchairs are used in the driving vehicle due to the excessive weight of power chairs. The decision to use a specialized or power chair should be carefully thought out considering safety, the welfare of the equine, insurance and program policies.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of driving session and personnel interview.

DA10

Is there an implemented procedure for the PATH Intl. Certified Driving Instructor and ABW to check the complete turnout prior to the driving session?

Yes No

Interpretation: The ABW should check the harness and vehicle and warm up the driving equine prior to the participant entering the vehicle in order to maximize safety during the session.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of driving session and personnel interview.

***DA11 MANDATORY**

Is there an implemented procedure for the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International Certified Driving Instructor to verify the driving qualifications of the ABW to include but not be limited to the following:

- 1. Is 18 years of age or older?**
- 2. Has at least 50 hours of experience driving equines in varied settings?**
- 3. Is trained in the use of the second set of reins and in assisting the participant while driving, if needed?**

Yes No

Interpretation: Competency of the ABW is vital. The ABW should also have good upper body strength and drive regularly in addition to the session within the program.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor interview with driving instructor and ABW.

***DA12 MANDATORY**

DNA (does not apply): If ABW has no impairment that limits his/her ability to respond to safety issues.

If the ABW has an impairment that limits his/her ability to respond to safety issues, is at least one other trained able-bodied person always in the vehicle?

Yes No DNA

Interpretation: For safety reasons, it is preferred that only one person with an impairment is in the vehicle at a time. Should it be necessary to use an ABW who also has an impairment that limits his/her ability to respond to safety issues, the vehicle is required to be able to carry at least one other trained person to assist as necessary.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of driving sessions and personnel description of procedure and equipment.

DA13

Is there an implemented procedure to assign specifically trained volunteers and personnel in designated roles as needed in the driving program?

Yes No

Interpretation:

- An able-bodied whip (ABW) has a second set of reins and is always in the vehicle before the participant enters and after the participant exits. This may be, but does not have to be, the instructor.
- A header works with only one turnout, assists in the preparation of the equine and vehicle, stands at the equine’s head with a lead rope attached while the vehicle is being entered or exited and takes control of the equine when needed.
- An assistant instructor may be needed for a group lesson.
- A sidewalker/spotter may need to be available to offer any additional assistance. Additional sidewalkers may need to be on the ground for beginning participants. Spotters may be an additional safety requirement for advanced whips. Volunteers on wheels may be needed on the trail.
- A wheelchair attendant may be needed who understands the wheelchair mechanisms and can assist the instructor with the entry and exit of the participant in a wheelchair from the driving vehicle.
- A person should be designated as the vehicle maintenance person for safety checks and should be knowledgeable in the care and maintenance of the driving vehicles.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of driving session and personnel interview.

DA14

Are trained headers present and available to assist at all times during driving sessions for each turnout?

Yes No

Interpretation: Headers should always be close enough to render immediate assistance.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of driving session and personnel interview.

DA15

Is there an implemented written procedure to ensure that the vehicle and driving terrain are suitable for the equine?

Yes No

Interpretation: The weight of an equine is generally the best guide for how much weight the equine can pull. The ratio of the weight of the equine to the weight of the vehicle and its load can vary from 1:1 for difficult terrain to 1:3 for walking on good flat surfaces. Other factors include the size and strength of the equine, the road surface and grade, equine shoes and traction, the vehicle, the type of work and the weather.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of driving area, WRITTEN procedure and personnel interview.

DA16

Do all driving activities for participants whose reins are attached to the saddle, breast collar terrets or to the lead halter take place in an enclosed area free from other activities?

Yes No

Interpretation: Safety will be maximized if driving activities for entry level students take place in an enclosed fenced area. The flat surface of the boards should be on the inside. Cable, pipe or barbed/smooth/ electric wire are not recommended. Public roads are not recommended. Do not mix riders, or other activities and drivers. A beginning participant’s reins are attached to the saddle, breast collar terrets or to the lead halter.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of driving area and activities and interview of personnel.

***DA17 MANDATORY**

Do all participants wear a helmet certified by the American Society for Testing and Materials - Safety Equipment Institute (ASTM-SEI) or an international equivalent helmet for equestrian use while participating in a driving activity?

Yes No

Interpretation: This standard applies to all participants engaged in center driving activities. It is the center's responsibility to verify currency of ASTM-SEI or international equivalent approved protective equestrian helmets. Information can be verified by contacting SEI at www.SEInet.org (headgear, equestrian helmet). Helmets should fit snugly and have the harness strap adjusted correctly. Helmets should not interfere with the participant's vision. It is recommended that participants also wear helmets during groundwork conducted with or near equines (e.g., grooming, tacking/harnessing, leading and ground driving.)

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of center driving activities, verification of ASTM-SEI or international equivalent tags in randomly selected helmets, and personnel interview.

Interactive Vaulting Standards

Centers with existing interactive vaulting programs and those considering adding an interactive vaulting program should also review the following standard sections for standards that may impact their vaulting program: Core-Administration and Business, Facility and Equine Welfare and Management contain standards that may apply to an interactive vaulting program. All centers must currently meet the ground activity (GA) standard. Equestrian Skill Standards can be found in the Service section of the Standards manual and apply to interactive vaulting activities since the goal for the participant is to gain the equestrian skill of vaulting. To select an appropriate equine for interactive vaulting activities, review the Equine Selection Criteria for Interactive vaulting found in the Guideline section of the standards manual. If the goal of the vaulting activity is to improve or change the health of the participant and is provided by a licensed health care professional along with a PATH International certified vaulting instructor, the Medical-Mental Health standards would also apply.

***VA1 MANDATORY**

Is there written evidence that all vaulting sessions are conducted or directly supervised by a currently certified Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International Certified Vaulting Instructor?

Yes No

Interpretation: Current PATH Intl. Vaulting Instructor certification demonstrates compliance with this standard. The vaulting instructor must hold one level of PATH Intl. Riding Instructor certification before pursuing a PATH Intl. vaulting certification. “Directly supervising” means the instructor is at the activity site and is aware of and responsible for the program activity in the arena or on the premises.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of WRITTEN documentation of current certification.

VA2

Does the center maintain written records indicating the vaulting equipment assigned to each equine participating in the interactive vaulting program?

Yes No

Interpretation: To ensure safety, the vaulting equipment is suitable, strong, fits correctly and is regularly maintained. The vaulting instructor/lungeur should be knowledgeable in the correct use of the equipment. Padding needs to be sufficient to protect the equine’s back in relation to the weight of the vaulters and has sufficient density to block the vaulter’s movements from causing pain to the equine. Some of the pain responses that might be displayed by the equine include wringing the tail, hollowing the back, pinning the ears, biting the air or grimacing. Consideration should be given to the use of the following vaulting equipment:

1. Type of bridle used. A smooth snaffle (such as an eggbutt or loose ring) with no more than two joints with a noseband. A full cheek or D-ring is not appropriate if using a long-line to the bit as it can interfere with effectiveness. A properly fitted lunge cavesson may be used in addition to or instead of a bridle.
2. Type of vaulting surcingle. Consideration should be given to choosing a flexible or non-flexible vaulting surcingle. The level of the vaulters will influence this decision along with the fit to the equine. The non-flexible surcingle is used for more demanding moves and should be treated just like a saddle with a tree that must be fit to the individual equine.
3. Type of side reins.
4. Type of padding that allows sufficient protection to the equine’s back in relation to the weight of the riders.
5. Type of padding under the surcingle in the girth and wither areas of the equine.
6. Type of girth. A non-elastic girth is necessary to help keep the surcingle from moving.
7. Type of long-line. A web long-line with a non-swivel snap or clip is preferable.
8. Type of lunge whip. The lunge whip should be of sufficient length to reach the equine’s hindquarters without the lungeur moving from the center of the circle.
9. Type of protective boots or wraps for the equine, as needed.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of WRITTEN records and interview of personnel.

***VA3 MANDATORY**

Is an additional person present and available to assist at the activity site during all interactive vaulting activities?

Yes No

Interpretation: The additional person may be needed to call for help or assist in an emergency.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor interview of personnel and additional person; observation of an interactive vaulting session.

VA4

Is there an implemented policy for vaulter attire?

Yes No

Interpretation: For safety, comfort and welfare of the equine and vaulters, vaulting attire should be appropriate to the activity. The following attire is recommended:

- Good choices for footwear include lightweight canvas shoes, aqua socks, gymnastics or vaulting shoes. Poor choices include heeled and or heavy-treaded shoes, riding/paddock boots or sneakers.
- Long hair should be tied back.
- Clothing should fit snugly. Loose clothing poses a safety concern.
- Jewelry should be left at home or removed and secured. Medical alert bracelets should be acknowledged, secured and covered.
- Food items, such as gum, should be removed from the mouth.

Compliance Demonstration: Personnel explanation of policy; observation of an interactive vaulting session.

***VA5 MANDATORY**

Does the center have a written policy that sets a maximum limit for each equine of no more than six lungeing/vaulting sessions of 60 minutes each per week, with a minimum of six hours between sessions?

Interpretation: Interactive vaulting places additional stress on the equine. The equine is required to work on a circle, in balance, with vaulter(s) performing movements that require additional balance reactions by the equine. Because of these additional requirements, it is necessary to adjust the equine usage from the core standard describing equine work-load limits. The equine's condition, pace and types of riders all enter into this decision. Some equines may not be conditioned sufficiently to maintain the outlined requirements. A record should be kept of the number of hours and in what capacity each equine works, whether it is ground, mounted, driving, interactive vaulting, hippotherapy, tandem hippotherapy, psychotherapy sessions, etc., so that the daily working sessions of each equine can be adjusted to not over-extend the equine. A working session is a period of continuous service without any lengthy breaks. Climate, equine conditioning and center activities/therapies vary considerably from center to center and should be considered when determining equine scheduling. A break for an equine would be time without tack or other equipment where the equine is not tied but allowed to move freely in a pen, stall, pasture or other area and has access to water. Given that interactive vaulting can be a stressful activity for an equine, consideration should be given to a lighter schedule for that equine on interactive vaulting days.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of WRITTEN policy and personnel description of scheduling procedures.

***VA6 MANDATORY**

Do all participants wear a helmet certified by the American Society for Testing and Materials - Safety Equipment Institute (ASTM-SEI) or an international equivalent helmet for equestrian use while participating in interactive vaulting activities?

If a participant is not using an ASTM-SEI or international equivalent equestrian helmet while participating in interactive vaulting activities, is there written documentation meeting the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International Guidelines for Non-Use of Helmets in Interactive Vaulting?

Yes No

Interpretation: This standard applies to all participants engaged in center interactive vaulting activities. Helmets should fit snugly and have the harness strap adjusted correctly. Helmets should not interfere with the participant's vision. Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International Standards include mandatory standards for use of ASTM-SEI or international equivalent recognized safety helmets for equestrian use while mounted or driving. There has been some evidence that the use of helmets in higher level vaulting activities may be a safety concern. If a vaulter or a vaulting program is at the level of providing sport vaulting, then it is recommended that the program pursue sanctioning by a sport vaulting organization. However, there are some participants in interactive vaulting who might be at a higher skill level that might offer them opportunities to participate in higher level vaulting activities but are not yet ready for a sport vaulting program. It may be safer for these vaulters not to wear a helmet (as long as allowed by local laws). However, WRITTEN documentation for such a decision is necessary and must answer all the questions posed in the Guidelines for Non-Use of Helmets in Interactive Vaulting. It is recommended that participants wear helmets during groundwork conducted with or near equines (e.g., grooming, tacking, leading, lungeing).

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of center interactive vaulting activities, verification of ASTM-SEI or international equivalent tags in randomly selected helmets, WRITTEN documentation for all individuals not using helmets in interactive vaulting activities and personnel interview.

Ground Standards

***GA1 MANDATORY**

Is there written evidence that all equine-assisted ground activities are conducted or directly supervised by an individual holding a current Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International recognized certification in the specific equine activity being held?

Yes No

Interpretation: In the absence of a PATH Intl. recognized certification specific to a particular equine-assisted activity, a current PATH Intl. Registered (Advanced or Master) Level Certification demonstrates compliance with this standard. “Directly supervised” means the instructor is at the activity site and is aware of and responsible for the program activity in the arena or on the premises.

Compliance Demonstration: Visitor observation of WRITTEN documentation of current certification.

