

## PATH International Standards as They Apply to Instructors

Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International Standards are not only important to centers that go through accreditation, but are also very important to the ongoing work and daily activities of instructors. Standards provide guidance to instructors to strive toward best practices. If instructors do not know and understand the standards of the industry, they could be putting their participants at risk. PATH Intl. members have access to a free electronic download of the *PATH Intl. Standards for Certification and Accreditation* manual, and may purchase a [printed manual](#). Non-members may purchase a [printed manual](#) or an [electronic download](#) of the standards through the [PATH Intl. online store](#).

- Core standards are the basics. It is important as an instructor to understand not only the equine welfare and management and facility standards but also the administrative and business standards. Don't depend on others to make sure standards are followed; it is part of the job as instructor. Abiding by core standards will encourage instructors to provide a high level of service while ensuring the safety of the participants. Among the core standards are:

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| Participant paperwork | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>MANDATORY:</b> written waiver or release of liability available on-site from all participants, volunteers or from a participant's parent/legal guardian</li> <li>2. Written completed and signed health history available on-site for all participants</li> <li>3. A signed and dated physician's statement for equine-assisted services from a health care provider for each participant</li> </ol>  |
| Policies              | <p>Written policies that establish the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eligibility of participants</li> <li>2. Discharge of participants</li> <li>3. All volunteers and personnel 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 mounted</li> <li>4. Correlation for the number of participants, equines and equipment to the size of the activity area and the service being provided</li> </ol> |
| Procedures            | <p>Implemented procedures to ensure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proper fit of equipment to the equine</li> <li>2. Proper fit of equipment to the participant</li> <li>3. Equipment safety checks are conducted at the beginning of each activity</li> </ol>   |

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|                          | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Activity areas are clearly defined, free of obstruction, routinely maintained and level with even footing adequate for the activity being provided</li> <li>5. Grooming and tacking areas and/or aisles are clear of obstacles, accessible and spacious enough to allow freedom of movement for participants, volunteers and/or personnel for safety and performance of activities</li> <li>6. Tack and equipment are safe and in good repair</li> <li>7. Arena gate(s) is (are) closed securely during activities</li> <li>8. Each arena is clear of objects that might injure equines, participants and personnel</li> </ol>  |
| Facility characteristics | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>MANDATORY:</b> The center must have an available working telephone or similar communication device in a designated location known by personnel and volunteers; and written emergency information and instructions for use posted adjacent to the telephone or similar communication device</li> <li>2. Cross-ties or tie-ropes must be made of non-elastic material and tied or fastened with quick release capability to sturdy, stationary fixtures</li> <li>3. A human first-aid container should be readily available on-site and at each activity site</li> <li>4. An equine first-aid should be readily available container at each activity site</li> <li>5. A minimum of one working gate in the arena(s) that is made of sturdy building materials (rope, baling twine, barbed wire, slick wire or electric wire/tape are NOT acceptable) and can be opened easily in the event of an emergency</li> <li>6. A physical barrier around the arena(s) built of sturdy materials so that it can contain participants and equines during a lesson (rope, barbed or slick wire, electric wire or tape is NOT acceptable) that is protected to minimize injury in the event of an accident</li> <li>7. The mounting block(s) must be laced in a location convenient to but not within the working area of the arena and constructed of materials of a strength and size to accommodate the participants, personnel, equipment and activities for which it is used</li> </ol> |
| Equine Welfare           | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>MANDATORY:</b> Documentation regarding equine workload limits that includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A written policy that sets a maximum limit for each equine's working session to no more than three continuous hours and workday to no more than six hours</li> <li>- Written records of the number of hours and types of sessions for each equine per day</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Implemented procedure for the appropriately credentialed PATH Intl. Certified Professional to:</li> </ol>  |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Check for changes in physical soundness and behavior of each equine prior to its assignment to an activity or service session so as to ensure that the equine is able to perform as needed</li> <li>- Make assignment and proceed with the session as scheduled or remove the equine from participation in session(s) until soundness and behavior issues can be addressed</li> </ul> |
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- Activity standards are for those offering, piloting or considering adding an activity: mounted, driving, interactive vaulting and/or ground. Becoming familiar with the activity standards is necessary before deciding to offer that new activity or to pilot a program. A center must be sure that the facility and staff meet the activity standard requirements. Among the activity standards are:

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| Personnel/Supervision | <p><b>MANDATORY:</b> Written evidence that all mounted sessions are conducted or directly supervised by a currently certified Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International Certified Riding Instructor</p> <p><b>MANDATORY:</b> Written evidence that all ground sessions are conducted or directly supervised by an individual holding a current Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International recognized certification in the specific equine activity and service being held</p>                         |
| Helmets               | <p><b>MANDATORY:</b> All participants must 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 mounted activities. If a helmet that is not ASTM-SEI or international equivalent approved for equestrian use is worn for mounted activities, there must be written documentation meeting the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International Guidelines for Alternative Helmet Use</p> |
| Stirrups              | <p><b>MANDATORY:</b> A written policy regarding the use of stirrups with safety features, AND/OR an implemented written policy that participants wear riding boots or hard-soled shoes with heels</p>  |