



The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) Standards for Certification and Accreditation details voluntary standards for the equine-assisted services (EAS) field, precautions and contraindications to therapeutic riding, a glossary of industry terms and sample forms.

Business and Administration Standards

PATH Intl. Business and Administration Standards cover:

- Organizational structure
- Insurance requirements for centers
- Registration requirements and policies
- Staff, volunteer and participant orientation
- Staff and volunteer training
- Participant paperwork, such as health history, contact information
- Policies on helmet usage and equipment safety

Facility Standards

PATH Intl. Facility Standards cover:

Facility maintenance

- Safety equipment, such as fire extinguishers, emergency phone/numbers, first aid kits
- Facility accessibility policies
- Stable and stall maintenance
- Tack and equipment maintenance and storage
- Arena maintenance, equipment placement and footing
- Equine Welfare and Management Standards

PATH Intl. Equine Welfare and Management Standards cover:

- Equine screening and evaluation policies
- Equine training and conditioning procedures
- Evaluation of equine welfare
- Basic equine care, such as feed charts, health records and shelter

Activity Standards

PATH Intl. Activity Standards cover mounted, driving, interactive vaulting and ground activities:

Certification requirements for the specific activity
Standards specific to the safety and equipment in each activity

Service Standards

PATH Intl. Service Standards cover equestrian skills and medical/mental health (includes physical therapy utilizing equine movement and counseling therapy utilizing equines as part of a treatment strategy):

Initial evaluation of participant and progress notes

Medical/mental health:

Professional licesure/certifications of medical/mental health professional in a session (OT/PT/SLP therapists in an equine environment and/or counseling incorporating interactions with equines

Training of personnel and supervision required in a PT/OT/SLP or counseling session

Initial evaluation of participant, progress notes and treatment plans

Guidelines

PATH Intl. Guidelines outline best practices for circumstances outside of PATH Intl. Standards. PATH Intl. has guidelines on adaptive tack, alternate helmet usage and the American with Disability Act and a PATH Intl. Member Center.

Precautions and Contraindications

Knowledge of current precautions and contraindications to equine-assisted activities is essential. The presence of a precaution requires additional investigation, such as contacting the physician, therapist or mental health professional before accepting a participant into a program. It may also require modification of the program, additional equipment and re-evaluation at regular intervals to ensure the appropri-ateness of the program. PATH Intl. Instructors should stay within the scope of their practice, knowledge and experience when accepting participants into their programs and consult with appropri-ate professionals when determining who is appropriate for participation in what type of equine-assisted activities.

The presence of a contraindication makes this activity inappropriate. Few contraindications are clear-cut. A contraindication may be permanent. For instance, some activities may never be appropriate for certain participants due to safety or health concerns. A contraindication may be temporary. Activities may only be contraindicated until appropriate conditions exist at a center or until a participant's health condition improves enough to make participation safe. If a particular activity is contraindicated, alternative equine activities may be explored. For example, if riding is contraindicated, driving or unmounted sessions may be appropriate and beneficial.