

Virginia 4-H Horsemanship Skills Program

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of the Horsemanship Skills Program?

- a. The Horsemanship Skills Program was designed to evaluate the preparedness and safety of horse and rider combinations attending the State 4-H Horse Show and State Fair Show.

2. Who needs to be tested for 2017?

- a. All youth & horse combinations who have not previously shown at the State 4-H Championship Horse & Pony Show
 - i. 4-H Members who have not previously attended the State 4-H Horse Show
 - ii. 4-H Members who have previously shown at the State Level, but **not** with their current project horse (Unless they fall into the exemption category designated below with *******)

Please note: In the case of a substitution, the substituted horse must have also previously attended the state horse show with that rider, or have already completed the appropriate horsemanship skill levels with that rider in order to be an eligible substitution horse.

*****The 4-H Horse Program Advisory Council has voted to exempt those 4-H Horse Show participants from additional Horsemanship Skills retesting if they declare a new project horse IF:**

- 1) Have previously taken and passed Levels 1 and 2 of Horsemanship Skills and,
- 2) Are a senior (4-H age 14-19) and,
- 3) Have exhibited at the state horse show at least twice (as a junior or senior).

The original grandfathered exemption does not count.

All other State Show qualification criteria will still be required.

Levels 3 and 4 are in the process of being implemented for late 2017 or early 2018. This will not be required testing. Once a 4-Her passes Level 3 and 4, they will not have to take Horsemanship Skills again.

3. Do miniature, showmanship, and driving horses need to complete the Horsemanship Skills Program in 2017?

- a. **Yes!** All youth and horses, as outlined above, are required to successfully complete Horsemanship Skill Level One regardless of discipline.
 - i. Horses and ponies who will only be showing in showmanship are only required to have completed Horsemanship Skill Level One.
 - ii. All miniature horses must complete skill level one, which covers ground handling. Miniature horses who will also be driven at the state show will also be required to complete Driving Skill Level Two.
 - iii. All driving horses and ponies will be required to complete Driving Skill Level Two, once they have successfully completed level one. All driving horses and ponies will still be required to complete the driving clinic at the State Show in 2017.

4. **How many levels must be passed in order to be eligible for the State Show?**
 - a. All youth & horse combinations as outlined above must successfully complete Horsemanship Skill Level One to attend the state show. All horses and ponies that will be *ridden* at the State Show must also pass Riding Skill Level Two. All horses, ponies, and miniature horses that will be *driven* at the State Show will be required to have successfully completed Driving Skill Level Two.

5. **If a rider does not complete a full level on their first attempt, do they have to be re-tested on the entire level or can they just retest the skills they missed?**
 - a. It depends on the level at which that rider was being evaluated:
 - i. If a rider does not complete all of level 1 their first attempt, they will have to be re-tested on all of the skills in level 1.
 - ii. If a rider does not complete all of level 2 on their first attempt, they will only be required to be re-tested on the skills that they have not previously completed.
 - b. If a rider attempts either of the levels and needs to be retested, they can be retested again on the same day, at the evaluator's discretion.
 - c. **Please note that a horse/rider combination cannot pass level two until they have completed and passed all of level one.**

6. **If a horse and rider combination is planning to attend the 2017 State Horse Show, by what deadline must they have completed levels 1 and 2 of the Horsemanship Skills Program?**
 - a. Horse and rider combinations must pass both levels prior to submitting their entries to the State Horse Show.

7. **If I am interested in attending a Horsemanship Skills Rider Evaluation, how do I find one?**
 - a. Horsemanship Skills Program events will be posted on the regular State 4-H Horse Program calendar.
 - b. An additional listing on the State 4-H Horse Program website will list all Horsemanship Skills Program Events. This listing can be located at:
[Horsemanship Skills Program Link](#)

8. **If I am interested in hosting a Horsemanship Skills Rider Evaluation, who should I contact?**
 - a. You should contact your District Horse Council contact to set up the date and location. Once the event has been approved by the District Horse Council, it should be emailed to leonar@vt.edu so that it can be added to the calendar.

9. **If I am interested in becoming a trained evaluator, who should I contact?**
 - a. We have already trained 10-15 evaluators in each district across the state for the Horsemanship Skills Program. If you are interested in being trained in the future, you should contact your district horse council and ask to be included in future trainings.
 - i. Please note, however, that becoming a trained evaluator **does not allow you to evaluate your own 4-H members**. There will be ample opportunities for riders to be evaluated in 2017.

10. How can I verify that I have been evaluated?

- a. Evaluation organizers will submit a list of youth who have successfully completed horsemanship skill levels to the state office after each evaluation
- b. This list of evaluated riders is available on the State 4-H Horse & Pony website:
[Horsemanship Skills Program Link](#)

Additional things to keep in mind:

- The skill levels of the Horsemanship Skills Program are progressive in nature. Consequently, a horse/rider combination cannot pass level two until they have passed level one, and so on.
- Horsemanship Skills Evaluations can be held at a rider's or horse's barn, so long as there are **numerous individuals** who can be evaluated and it is open to riders from outside of the barn.
 - In order to respect the time and expenses of our evaluators, we must avoid small group evaluations.
- **Two trained evaluators** must be present at all Horsemanship Skill Evaluations.
- Trained evaluators do not serve as instructors or trainers when on-site at a Horsemanship Skill Evaluation. Their job is to assess the safety of demonstrated skills, but they will provide direction on skills youth need to improve, or when inherently dangerous practices are occurring.
- **Show attire is not required for horse/rider combinations participating in a Horsemanship Skills Program evaluation.** Horses should be clean and well-groomed, but are not required to be braided/ banded. Riders should be dressed neatly, and use well-cleaned tack. Show coats and formal attire are not required.