

Chapter 9

BYLAWS AND POLICIES – writing and using them

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***U**our club has policies, your region has policies, and the national organization has policies. But did you know that the national organization has bylaws and has established bylaws for the regions and clubs? After the initial investment in time and energy, the bylaws and policies SUPPORT the DC and CLUB by defining the expectations and rules for everyone involved in the club.*

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

BYLAWS:

1. establish the purpose and governance structure for an organization
2. are typically broad in nature
3. drive the policies

POLICIES:

1. state the rules as to how the organization is run
2. are written in simple language
3. should be available to all before joining and after
4. are enforceable and fair
5. are flexible

Bylaws – The framework of USPC

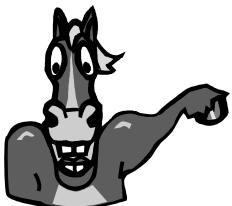


TIP: USPC Bylaws are available on the Web site

USPC Bylaws are the governing document for your club. They are the foundation upon which the administrative structure of every club is based. They are the same for every club and are not updated very often and can only be updated by the USPC Board of Governors. There are three sets of bylaws: National, Regional and Registered Clubs. These documents supercede all other governing documents at the national, regional and club levels.

- ▶ *The National Bylaws establish the purpose and governance structure of the United States Pony Clubs, Inc., its regions and registered clubs.* This is a relatively short (approximately 20 pages) document with plenty of “legalese,” but it is relatively easy to understand. It outlines membership in the national organization, meetings of those members, the national Board of Governors and committees, executive and administrative officers, regions and registered clubs, the chain of command, and other corporate issues. These bylaws do not address specific activities or instructional areas.
- ▶ *The Regional Bylaws outline further and more specifically the structure of regions.* They govern the guidelines on how each region may be set up and administered.
- ▶ *The Club Bylaws are the foundation upon which the administrative structure of every club is based.* They contain everything you need to know – and some you may wish you didn’t know – about running your club.

Policies



TIP: USPC policies are available on the Web site, under publications, or may be purchased from the Bookstore. Make use of the Subject Index to help you find the policies relating to any questions you may have about the administration of your club.

*Policies, continued***NATIONAL POLICIES – Filling in the details**

- ▶ *USPC policies further expand upon the intent and spirit of the bylaws.* They cover multiple topics with details pertaining to goals and objectives in such areas as the national organization, administration, regions, members and clubs, instruction, activities, fiscal, facilities, public relations, and others. The index is in alphabetical order and user friendly.
- ▶ *USPC policies are constantly being reviewed.* They are kept up to date with the direction of the organization and are written to be clear and concise.
- ▶ *USPC policies supercede regional and club policies.* That is, club and regional policies must not contradict what is in the national policies.

REGIONAL POLICIES – Getting close to home

- ▶ *Regional policies function in the same manner as those at the national level.* They outline how the region is to be governed. It is good for you to read through them so that you understand how your region is organized and run.
- ▶ *Regional policies are initiated and updated by the Regional Council* and are reviewed by the VPRA. Regional policies must not contradict national policies and bylaws or the regional bylaws.
- ▶ *Regional policies supercede club policies.* This means that in order to write club policies, you need to be familiar with your region's policies, so there is no contradiction with the region's policies in your club policies.

CLUB POLICIES – Just for you and yours

- ▶ *Local club policies are written and voted on by the Sponsors and approved by the RS.*
- ▶ *Club policies are governed by and must not contradict the regional bylaws and policies and the national bylaws and policies.*
- ▶ *Review regularly and update as necessary.*



TIP: It is a good idea to communicate the club policies to all Sponsors, parents, and Pony Club members annually. This lessens the chance that responsibilities and policies are misunderstood.

Writing Your Club Policies



REMEMBER: By writing and communicating club policies for certain administrative functions and club activities, the possibility for misunderstanding a DC's decision is greatly reduced.

Examples of club policies can be found in Appendix H. Each club is different and the sample policies are not necessarily best for your club. Your RS has final approval over your club policies and they may be reviewed by the Vice President of Regional Administration.

The policy basics listed here are those most commonly needed, but clubs may develop others as necessary, so long as they do not conflict with regional or national policies. You should have copies of the USPC National, Regional and Clubs Bylaws, and you should be very familiar with them. Copies are available on the USPC Web site. They are also available for purchase through the USPC Bookstore.



REMEMBER: Transportation of members is the sole responsibility of the member's parent/guardian, including travel to and from rallies. A club cannot write policies regarding transportation of members.

Financial – Good financial policy makes clear where club funds originate and for what purposes they will be used. Are the DC's expenses to be reimbursed? If so, which ones?

Club Dues and Sponsors' Fees – Establish an amount for club dues, one for Sponsors' fees, and if needed, an amount for "Friends" or "Donor" categories.

Term for DC and Jt-DC – The one-year term is established by the National Bylaws, but clubs may wish to set a limit to the number of consecutive terms a DC or Jt-DC may serve.

Attendance – Establish your club's expectation for your members to attend mounted and unmounted meetings. This may be combined with the Member In Good Standing policy that all clubs are required to have. Clubs are encouraged to be realistic and not punitive concerning attendance.

Parent Participation – Many clubs, recognizing the tremendous benefits of parent participation in club activities, create written expectations of parental involvement.

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Ratings Eligibility – Clubs may set policy that clarifies for their members the requirements (in addition to those expectations set forth in the USPC Standards of Proficiency) for ratings progression. Eligibility generally entails attendance at meetings and participation in and contribution to the club in other forms (teaching, coaching younger members, etc.).

Rally experience may not be a prerequisite for establishing rating readiness for D-1 through C-2. National policy requires that candidates for C-3 and above ratings have participated, preferably as team members, in a competitive rally, either as a riding competitor or as a stable manager.

Team Selection – Clubs may establish criteria for selecting teams for regional rallies, such as: ability of horse and rider to perform the task at hand, safety, good sportsmanship, effort, serious work, Horse Management, etc. Criteria should be established well in advance of the competitive rally season and should be given verbally and in writing to parents and Pony Club members.

Member in Good Standing – Section 5.4.1 of the Club Bylaws states, “Each Registered Club shall develop a policy that defines a member in good standing. The club policy must be compatible with the Regional policy on Active Participation.” Applying that definition to your club’s policies is important. You may consider some of the following in determining the level of Active Participation of a given member.



TIP: Before writing a policy that defines a member in good standing, check your region’s policies; pay particular attention to the region’s policy on “Active Participation.”

- ▶ **Financial** – timely payment of club, regional and national dues and other membership obligations.
- ▶ **Attendance** – a certain level of participation. (It should be clear about whether this will include only instructional mounted and unmounted meetings, or whether attendance at all club activities, social, instructional and “work” days is acceptable.)
- ▶ **Behavior** – remember to use broad criteria and remember that one person’s idea of good behavior may not be another’s.
- ▶ **Teaching and Coaching** – Examples for C-1s and D-3s (under supervision) may include helping younger members prepare for inspection, helping them get tacked up, helping them clean tack or ponies, etc., as required by club. For C-1s and C-2s examples of appropriate participation are preparing simple unmounted lesson plans to use to teach D; assisting in mounted lessons by being jump crew;

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leading recalcitrant ponies during lessons; or doing safety inspections; etc., all under supervision of an instructor. For C-3s and Bs assisting in mounted lessons under supervision of an instructor and followed by a critique of teaching; serving as C advisors at D rallies; etc., would be appropriate. For H-As and As consider teaching Ds and Cs under supervision.

- ▶ **Rally participation** – members are encouraged to take part in competitive rallies, because participation is part of the educational program, but remember it cannot be required before the C-3 level.
- ▶ **Special circumstances** – (for members away at school or otherwise unable to adhere to requirements) the policy might state that there will be consideration given to members who are away at school; the DC might waive certain requirements for a specified period of time; the DC might require that a member who is away at school participate in another club's program if there is a club close to the school; the DC might consider waiving certain financial requirements depending on circumstances, etc.

As an example, one region has the following statement on Active Participation:

- ▶ Be a Member in Good Standing of the local club, having paid all club, regional and national dues.
- ▶ Have a record of regular attendance in the local and, where appropriate to the Pony Club member's rating, the regional mounted and unmounted instructional programs and activities.
- ▶ Teaching, coaching and taking part in mounted competitive activities as a member of a club or regional team, appropriate to the member's rating.
- ▶ Competing, in at least one mounted competitive rally, either as a riding competitor or as a stable manager, at some time prior to the C-3 rating.

Sample Member in Good Standing Policy:

Participating Members are considered in Good Standing if they evidence a sincere interest in the activities of the club, assist other members in the learning process, and participate with regularity in the events of the club at the club, regional and national level, when and where appropriate, according to age, experience, and suitability and safety of mount, having paid all necessary dues and fees owed the club, region or national organization.