

Colorado State University 4-H Horse Level Rater Guidelines

Rater Certification:

1. You must have gone through a state level rater training and been approved within the past three years to rate Level 2, 3 & 4 riding tests. You must be approved in each discipline you choose to rate in.
2. After being approved to rate levels 3 & 4 at a level training, you must shadow a level 3 & 4 rater, in each discipline, before being put on the state list.
3. After three years, you must recertify with the state by going through a rater training seminar and being approved.

Shadowing:

1. In order to be state certified as a Level 3 or 4 rater, you must shadow an approved rater and gain their approval. A form with their consent must then be sent to the state office. These forms are available online at www.equineextension.colostate.edu. Once this is received you will be added to the list.
2. You must contact a rater and personally ask them permission to shadow. They will give you dates they are rating in the future.
3. Upon arrival, introduce yourself and ask where you can stand that won't be in the way during the testing process.
4. As the shadower, you are expected to observe and rank the ride as you would if you were rating the rider yourself. You should not ask questions of the rater or youth until the testing is completed.
5. Shadowing a test is done on an individual basis, and you should discuss the test with the rater after the level testing is complete. At this time the rater will decide whether to approve you or not.

Expectations of raters during testing situations:

1. Level testing should be done in a different arena than the one a member usually rides in when possible.
2. Youth should be in show attire while testing. When you are asked to rate, you may want to remind the person requesting your services of this expectation. If a child shows up without proper attire, inform them as soon as possible so they can change or make another appointment.
3. Since we expect youth to test in show attire, we also ask that you show up to test in appropriate attire for a horse environment.
4. When testing, you should come prepared with copies of the tests you will be giving and any other materials you may require ie. tape measure, working ranch horse items, jumps etc. If you do not have these items, be sure to inform the person requesting your services that these items will be needed. Remember, you are the expert on level testing in these situations.
5. Try to stay as positive as possible. Youth are always nervous in a testing situation so do what you can to help them feel comfortable.

6. Only ask the rider to perform the maneuvers listed on the testing sheet. They may be asked in any order. If they are having trouble, skip the activity and come back to it later. Youth are typically given several chances unless it is obvious they do not know how to ask their horse for the maneuver. A member should not be given an unlimited amount of time to complete a maneuver they are having trouble with. A level test should last no more than an hour.
7. Only ask oral questions that are on the Level 3 & 4 riding test before or after the riding portion of the test. Do not ask other questions during testing. Youth are being tested on riding ability at this time, not on horse knowledge and it tends to make them nervous.
8. Do not touch a child or their horse during testing.
9. Remember, you are there to find out what the member knows, not to teach them how to ride or perform specific maneuvers. If they don't know how to do it, rank them below an eight for that maneuver and move on.
10. If a member is obviously failing a test and becoming frustrated, you may want to ask the member if they would like to continue the test or not. They have paid you to test completely, so if they would like to continue, rank them accordingly. Even if they are already failing, completion will give them a better view of everything they need to work on before trying again.
11. If any one maneuver is scored below an 8, the member must retest. If they cannot complete it at all, give them a 0, half complete a 5 and perfect a 10. An 8 would be given to a member that completes the maneuver but either has to try a few times or had mild problems completing it.
12. After the test is complete, take the time to tell the member how they did on each maneuver and why they scored as they did in private. If a parent is present, it is helpful to go over a failing test with them, so they are aware of what their child needs to work on before retesting.