



PARA DRESSAGE FACT SHEET FOR RUNNING PARA DRESSAGE CLASSES AT DRESSAGE COMPETITIONS

Organizers of Equestrian Canada (EC) sanctioned competitions should make every effort to accommodate riders with physical impairments. It is the responsibility of competition organizers to ensure that there are no barriers to participation to help support the growth and development of equestrian sport in Canada.

Holding para dressage classes at dressage competitions is incredibly easy and can be achieved with little effort from the organizing committee.

Para dressage and dressage competitions are both governed by [Section E](#) of the EC Rules. The primary differences between para dressage and dressage are the classification of riders, different tests for para classes and a smaller arena for some classes. These, along with a few other exceptions, are outlined in [Section E](#).

Para Dressage Dispensation Certificate/Classification

- At the Bronze level, para dressage riders only require a Dispensation Certificate to compete.
 - A para dressage Dispensation Certificate identifies any compensating aids that the rider is permitted to use.
- In order to compete at EC Silver/Gold competitions, para dressage riders must have a Classification profile.
 - Riders are assessed by accredited Classifiers and given a grade based on their functional abilities in areas such as muscle power, joint range and coordination. The Classification Profile identifies their grade, as well as any compensating aids that the rider is permitted to use.

Para Dressage Grades (FEI and EC)

- Grade I: Often use wheelchairs. They have impairment to all four limbs. Grade I riders may be able to walk with an unsteady gait, but trunk and balance are severely impaired.
- Grade II: Often use wheelchairs. They have poor trunk balance and/or impairment of function in all four limbs, no trunk balance and good upper limb function, or moderate trunk balance with severe impairment of all four limbs.
- Grade III: Often use wheelchairs. They have little locomotive ability with some limb function. Others have severe unilateral impairment.
- Grade IV: Often riders are able to walk without support. They may have minimal use of their



limbs or loss of sight.

- Grade V: Riders usually have an impairment in one or two limbs or have a visual impairment.

Note: For EC sanctioned competition, Grade VI riders are deemed ineligible for classification as a para dressage rider as a result of the classification process. Grade VI riders have a minor disability and are able to compete in dressage classes with an approved compensating aid as per their para dressage Dispensation Certificate.

Each grade has its own series of tests:

Technical and Freestyle tests in the five grades (I, II, III, IV, V) are graded according to the rider's functional ability. All grades should be offered. Only the current para dressage tests may be used in official competitions.

- Grade I tests - riders compete at walk. Rider bridle numbers in this grade should begin with a one (1).
- Grade II tests - riders compete at walk and trot. Rider bridle numbers in this grade should begin with a two (2).
 - Grade I and Grade II riders may be combined where there are less than four (4) entries in either class. Each rider competes in his/her grade and test results are calculated by comparing percentages.
- Grade III tests - riders compete at walk and trot. Rider bridle numbers in this grade should begin with a three (3).
- Grade IV tests - riders compete at walk and trot with lateral work, and canter. Rider bridle numbers in this grade should begin with a four (4).
- Grade V tests - riders compete at walk, trot and canter with lateral work. Rider bridle numbers in this grade should begin with a five (5).

EC Bronze Competition Tests

The following para dressage tests are to be used in EC Bronze sanctioned competitions:

- Walk Tests (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3) for riders who wish to compete at the walk.
- Walk/Trot Tests (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3) for riders who wish to compete at the walk and trot.
- Walk/Trot/Canter Tests (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3) for riders who wish to compete at the walk, trot and canter.
- FEI Novice Test A (Grade I – V)
- FEI Novice Test B (Grade I – V)
- FEI Intermediate Test A (Grade I – V)
- FEI Intermediate Test B (Grade I – V)
- RDA Freestyle Tests (Grade I – V)



Riders are not required to be classified to compete at EC Bronze sanctioned competitions; they are required, however, to submit a completed para dressage Dispensation Certificate if using compensating aids.

EC Silver and Gold Competition Tests

The following para dressage tests are to be used in EC Silver and Gold sanctioned competitions:

- Walk Tests (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3) for riders who wish to compete at the walk.
- Walk/Trot Tests (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3) for riders who wish to compete at the walk and trot.
- Walk/Trot/Canter Tests (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3) for riders who wish to compete at the walk, trot and canter.
- FEI Novice Test A (Grade I – V)
- FEI Novice Test B (Grade I – V)
- FEI Novice Freestyle (Grade I-V)
- FEI Intermediate Test A (Grade I – V)
- FEI Intermediate Test B (Grade I – V)
- FEI Intermediate Freestyle (Grade I-V)
- FEI Grand Prix Test A (Grade I – V)
- FEI Grand Prix Test B (Grade I-V)
- FEI Grand Prix Freestyle (Grade I-V)

EC Platinum (FEI) Competition Tests

EC Platinum Competitions must use the FEI Para Dressage tests:

- FEI Para Novice Test A and Test B (Grade I-V): For CPEDI 1 competitions only.
 - FEI Novice Freestyle Tests (Grade I-V)- Optional for all riders
- FEI Para Intermediate Test A and B (Grade I-V): For CPEDI 2* competitions only.
 - FEI Intermediate Freestyle Tests (Grade I-V)- Optional for all riders
- FEI Para Grand Prix A and Grand Prix B (Grade I-V): For CPEDI 3*, or higher, competitions only.
 - FEI Grand Prix Freestyle Tests (Grade I-V)- For qualified riders

Please refer to the [EC website](#) for the Para Dressage tests.

Please refer to the [FEI website](#) for FEI Para Dressage tests.

Riders are required to be classified to compete at EC Silver, Gold and Platinum sanctioned competitions.

Please reference Article 6.4 Para Dressage Tests within [Section E](#) in the EC Rules.



Arena Size

- All EC para dressage tests are held in a 20m x 40m arena.
- FEI tests for Grades I-III are held in a 20m x 40m arena.
- FEI tests for Grades IV-V compete, wherever possible, in a 20m x 60m arena.
- Since two different arena sizes are being used for the different grades, it's advisable to factor in additional time for the arena change in the schedule.

Tip: Using the small arena at the end and/or beginning of the day will help keep things on schedule and limit the time needed for transitions. If using the small arena at the beginning of the day, start with Grade III, then Grade II and Grade I, as it is more difficult for a Grade I rider to be prepared for an early ride. Conversely, if using the small arena at the end of the day, start with Grade I, then II and III.

Facility Requirements

- Wheelchair accessible ramps for all facilities used by riders.
- Preferred parking for the impaired riders.
- Wheelchair accessible washrooms for all facilities used by riders.

Compensating Aids

- Compensating aids are used by riders to compensate for the physical or sensory limitation resulting from their impairment, thereby enabling them to ride a horse/pony.
- A full list of acceptable compensating aids can be found [here](#).
- It is the responsibility of each competitor and coach to ensure all compensating aids used in competition have been documented correctly on their EC Classification Profile or para dressage Dispensation Certificate.

Rider Requirements

- EC Sport Licence (Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze) equal to level of competition.
- Riders of all grades, as well as horses/ponies, may compete in a maximum of four tests per day.
- Riders who use compensating aid(s) and are competing at the EC Bronze level must have either a para dressage Dispensation Certificate or an EC Classification Profile that identifies the compensating aid(s) that they are permitted to use in competition.
- Riders with a physical or visual impairment who use compensating aid(s) and are competing at the EC Silver or Gold level must have a Para Dressage Classification Profile.
- Riders are required to submit a copy of their para dressage Dispensation Certificate and/or EC Classification Profile with their entries for each show. They must be listed on the para dressage Classification Master List and para dressage Dispensation Master List.
- The organizer must notify the competition officials that there is a rider(s) competing with compensating aids. Stewards and Technical Delegates have the right and responsibility to



inspect and declare an aid unsafe for horse/pony or rider. The rider must be able to fall free from the horse/pony.

Officials

- EC competitions must use EC, USEF or FEI certified para dressage officials. All Canadian dressage officials are permitted to officiate para dressage classes and are welcomed and strongly encouraged to ask for additional information should it be required.
- Judges and Stewards require a copy of the para dressage Dispensation Certificate or para dressage Classification Master List attached to the dressage test (for Judges) or the order of go (for Stewards)

If you would like additional information on offering para dressage classes and/or classification, please do not hesitate to contact the EC Para Dressage Department at 343-308-5323, or by e-mailing para dressage Coordinator, Jamie-Ann Goodfellow, at jgoodfellow@equestrian.ca.