



Para and Federation Dispensation/Classification Certificate Riders Field Guide

Para riders (DR 301) are athletes with a permanent/verifiable/measurable physical or visual impairment, who have been classified and have a Grade. They have obtained a Para Federation Dispensation/Classification Certificate (with Grade/Compensating Aids listed) which must be submitted with their entry. They can compete in FEI Para classes and regular classes at national shows. There are Five Grades: Grade I - walk only, Grade II - walk/trot, Grade III - walk/trot, Grade IV – walk, trot, canter, Grade V – walk, trot, canter. Para athletes must ride in their allocated Grade.

Riders (not classified/no grade) with a Federation Dispensation/Classification Certificate and those with a temporary impairment (Presidential Modification) cannot compete in FEI Para classes/are not covered by DR 301. Riders with a diagnosed permanent disability who require the use of compensating aids or adaptive equipment must comply with DR119.12-14.

Documentation: copies must be provided with the judge’s test, to the TD, as well as the equipment checker.

Horses/Levels - minimum of six (6) years of age to compete in a FEI Para Dressage class and are limited to a maximum of two Dressage rides per day including non-Para FEI, USEF, or USDF tests. (DR119.2) There are no consecutive levels requirement for FEI Para/USEF National/FEI tests. Normal DR level rules apply the horse is not competing in FEI Para Dressage tests.

For Freestyle tests, see DR 304 and FEI Para Freestyle test sheets.

Arenas: Arena sizes must be stated in the prize list (PL). Grades I-III (small arena (20m x 40m), unless management has elected a standard arena (20m x 60m) in the PL. Grades I-III Freestyles must in a 20m x 40m arena, and Grades IV-V must be in a 20m x 60m arena. For designated national qualifying competitions, the USEF National Para-Equestrian Championships and Para Dressage Selection Trials, all tests for Grades I – III are in a small arena and Grades IV - V are in a standard size arena. See DR126.1f.14. 5.

Dress: For FEI Para tests refer to DR 306.1-8. Athletes abusing the Horse with their spurs, whether intentionally or not may be asked to remove the spurs by the TD.

When Para Athletes compete in **able-bodied tests and classes**, DR Subchapter 1 rules take precedence for those classes, including permitted bits/bridles/dress. To use their compensating aids during these tests, they must provide their Certificate.

Blind and visually impaired Athletes are required to wear a distinctive color arm band (supplied by the athlete) at all times while mounted and in areas where other Athletes are present. They may remove this armband during execution of their dressage test.

Compensating Aids (CA): There are Standard CAs and Non-Standard CAs. The Certificate lists the CAs that the Para rider can (but may elect to not) use in either national classes or FEI competitions.

Dispensation Certificate (Graded)	Dispensation Certificate (Non Graded)	Presidential Modification
Standard Compensatory Aids	Only what is listed on their certificate as Compensatory Aids	Only what is listed on the Pres Mod
Non-Standard Compensatory Aids		

Standard CAs (Standard CAs are CAs that a **Para rider(with a grade)**, can elect to use and they do not have to be listed on the Para Certificate). 1. Voice (Grades I-III), 2. Salute with Head only, 3. Sitting or rising trot, 4. Gloves optional, 5. Spurs optional, 6. Saddle – any type, 7. Deep saddle, 8. Soft (flexible) hand hold, 9. One whip, 10. Breast plate and/or neck strap, 11. Reins, including split rein on double bridle, 12. Elastic inserts in reins, 13. Elastic bands on stirrups, 14. Enclosed stirrups, 15. Magnetic stirrups, 16. Safety vests, including inflatable.

Non-Standard Compensating Aids - must be stated on the Para Certificate.

Saddlery and Equipment: Regular saddlery rules with exceptions noted below:

1. Snaffle or double bridles - If it appears to be abusive (intentionally or not), the TD, in consultation with Comp. Mgt., can ask for changes. Bits follow DR 121 but may be covered with latex for FEI Para tests only.



2. Saddles – well-fitting, maintained saddle suitable to horse and rider (no requirement to be dressage), must allow rider to fall free (even with adaptations), not deeper than 12 cm-measured from seat to middle of line between pommel & cantle. At halt, there must be clearance of 3 cm between any means of support and the rider's trunk. Athletes must not be held in position by any mechanism that does not automatically release in the event of an accident.
3. Other allowed exceptions: 1. Soft or rigid handhold – no more than 30 cm wide, 10 cm high above pommel - rigid must be on Certificate, 2. Whips – one okay, two whips must be on Certificate, 3. Elastic bands feet to stirrups, 4. Magnetic stirrups, 5. Enclosed stirrups, 6. No stirrups – must be on Certificate, 7. One leg can ride one stirrup, if have a prosthesis must use both stirrups, 8. Breast plates, neck straps, 9. Velcro – must be on Certificate, total amount not to exceed 50 cm², overlap Velcro not to exceed 3 cm x 6 cm, should be in "V" shape for safety.
4. Paras ride with both hands, unless that is their disability. If using foot reins, they may not use their arms/hands on the reins.
5. Forbidden reins and other attachments: Martingales, blinkers, side, balancing, running, bearing and similar reins. Any rein adaptation that produces a similar effect to these forbidden reins is not permitted.
6. Any rein from any bit in the horse's mouth must be in direct contact with the Athlete. If riding in a double bridle the two (2) reins on one side must either both go to the Athlete's hand(s) or be connected into one rein before reaching the Athlete (split reins). Elastic insert reins are allowed. Foot reins are only allowed when no other reins are going to be controlled by arm(s) or hand(s)/fingers from the upper part of the body of the Athlete. See DR117.4-5.
7. If a rein is not used in a conventional manner, it must be in as straight a line as possible from the Athlete's point of contact on the reins to the Horse's mouth. For Athletes with two very short arms, reins may be run through rings that are attached to the front of the saddle by leather straps. These rings must not be in a fixed position, but must be loose and noted on the certificate.

Competition parameters:

1. **FEI Para Tests:** must be carried out entirely from memory, except with a Certificate allowing a Commander (reader) or Caller (living letters).
2. **Commanders** must read in English and are only allowed to read the test. They may repeat each movement once but no other instructions or comments are allowed.
3. **Earphones and/or other electronic communication devices** are strictly prohibited in the arena, unless a Commander or Caller is designated on their Certificate. Athletes qualified to use a Commander (Reader), who are also deaf or hearing impaired as (identified through the classification process) may use sign language and/or a radio head set during all tests. This will be stated as a compensating aid on the Certificate. It is the responsibility of the Athlete to provide a fully functioning headset with an extra receiver to enable the TD or their designated representative to listen to all communication going from the Commander (Reader) to the Athlete during the test. If this is not the case, the Athlete will not be permitted to use the equipment and must ride the test without it. The test may be called.
4. **Callers (Living Letters)** may only call the name of the letter(s), center and quarter lines. Only the lead caller (who may also Command (Read) where approved) may be in the center of the arena. All other Callers must be positioned outside the arena, and may move from one marker to another, provided they do not obscure the judge's line of vision. There shall be no more than thirteen (13) Callers in a 20 x 60 meter arena and nine (9) Callers in a 20 x 40 meter arena. Athletes with visual impairment are encouraged to use as few Callers as possible. The Caller at C may be exchanged for a beacon or beeper which is to be provided by the Athlete.
5. **Athletes with Callers.** May enter the arena prior to the start of their test/make one pass of the arena/once in each direction, in order to familiarize themselves with the callers and the arena. After completion of familiarization, the Athlete may leave the arena and await the judge's signal to re-enter and begin their test OR may halt and stand quietly just within the arena at A to be given the signal to begin their test from inside the arena.
6. **A trainer or representative for safety** - Athletes in Grade I, II, III and Profile 36 (totally blind) may be accompanied around the outside of the arena before the Test starts. They may be led but must not be schooled from the ground. This person may stand



outside the arena on the field of play during the Test, but back from the arena. If needed, they may relay the Judge's instructions. Some athletes with mental impairment may need this additional communication.

7. **Helpers placed in corners** - For Grade I, II and III, for safety reasons may be placed in corners outside the arena but must be back from the arena. In an emergency, they may give physical assistance. A companion Horse may stand adjacent to (but back from) the arena in an area designated and approved by the TD.

8. **Horse leaving the arena completely**, (all four (4) feet/willful manner), causing the Athlete to lose control, will be eliminated. However, if the Athlete directs the Horse to the outside of the arena or the arena is not fully boarded, the Horse is not automatically eliminated. The Judge at C is responsible for this decision.

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