

USPEA Para Dressage 101 Classification Summary

(Updated Feb 2017)

There are two categories of classification, National and International. Both follow the FEI Para Equestrian Classification manual.

National Classification is required: to compete in FEI Para Equestrian Test of Choice classes and to use approved compensating aids in USDF & USEF tests (*as USEF rules allow) at USDF/USEF licensed shows. It is also required to to earn USDF Para Dressage awards, work toward qualifying for USEF Para Dressage National Championships; and to apply for USEF Para Dressage Developing Program. **All Athletes must obtain or renew a USEF Dispensation Certificate yearly as this is used for proof of classification and allowed compensating aids for competitions.**

International FEI Classification is required: for competing in CPEDI's (International) competitions, applying for the USEF Elite Para Dressage Program, and to work toward qualifying to be a member of a USA Para Equestrian Team including CPEDI3*, North American Junior Young Rider Championships (NAJYRC), World Equestrian Games (WEG) & the Paralympic, (Athletes must meet all requirements as set forth the USEF Selection Criteria)

FEI Classifications are maintained by the FEI and kept on a Master List that is used for FEI Para Equestrian competitions. **Athletes with an active FEI Classification must obtain/renew a USEF Dispensation Certificate yearly for competing at USDF/USEF licensed competitions and in order to use their approved compensating aids. (*as USEF rules allow)**

*USEF rules apply regarding use of certain compensating aids when competing in USEF tests at licensed shows. (Example: A Double bridle with split reins may not be used when showing USEF Training through Third Level test)

USEF Dispensation Certificate Information can be found at:

<https://www.usef.org/IFrames/Searches/SiteSearch.aspx?q=dispensation+certificate+application>

The purpose of the Classification system is to promote participation in sport by people with Eligible Impairments by minimizing the impact of the Impairment on the outcome of competition (IPC Handbook, Section Chapter 4.4, 2009). As a result of the Classification procedure the Athlete is placed into Grades according to how much their Impairment impacts on the core determinants of success in the sport. Classification is undertaken to ensure that an Athletes' Impairment is relevant to performance on the horse. Classification provides a framework for fair and equitable competition.

Classification is a statement of fact, not a test, and the judgment of the Athlete's ability on the horse is the function of the Competition, not the classification. The purpose of the Competition

is to reward skill; classification must therefore not penalize those who have achieved a high skill level.

An athlete must meet the criteria for an eligible permanent measurable physical impairment (a deficiency in or loss of body function or structure) as defined by the FEI Para Equestrian Dressage Classification Manual.

Eligibility Requirements

All Athletes with a disability who intend to be classified must produce a Certificate of Diagnosis stating their full medical diagnosis. Each Athlete must have an Eligible Impairment that leads to permanent and verifiable activity limitation, which can be measured objectively.

*Those Athletes with a minimal impairment must meet the Para-Equestrian **Minimal Impairment Criteria** in order to compete in Para-Equestrian Events. Eligible impairments include:*

Hypertonia, ataxia, athetosis; impaired passive range of movement; impaired muscle power; limb deficiency; leg length difference; short stature, vision impairment.

If an Athlete does not have an Eligible Impairment or has an Eligible Impairment that does not comply with the Minimal Impairment Criteria, he or she will not be eligible to compete within Para- Equestrian sport. If an Athlete is not eligible to compete he or she will be allocated a Grade "Ineligible"

Classification Process

National USEF Classification

1. Request for Classification is made by the Athlete to the USEF Para Equestrian Director. (Laureen Johnson lkjohnson@usef.org)
2. An approved Classifier is contacted and follows up with the Athlete regarding required paperwork and classification opportunities. The Classifier may request additional medical information from the Athlete as needed to verify Eligibility for Classification.
3. Athletes send all relevant medical documentation, including but not limited to a Certificate of Diagnosis and additional medical reports, medical records and diagnostic information, which relate to the Athlete's Impairment to the USEF Para Equestrian Director.
4. If the Athlete meets the Criteria for Eligibility for Classification and has a physical impairment an Evaluation is scheduled. An athlete with a visual impairment provides ophthalmologic medical records that are forwarded by the Classifier to a IBSA Classifier for Determination of Eligibility.
5. Prior to undergoing an Evaluation for the purpose of Classification, each Athlete needs to sign a Consent for Classification form

6. During the Classification, only the necessary personnel shall be present: the Athlete and one other person who is familiar with the Athlete's Impairment and riding history. National Classifications require one approved Classifier from the US. FEI International Classifications require two approved FEI Classifiers; one from the US and one from another country. Additional Classifiers may be present for training or collaboration.
7. All Athletes are encouraged to be as able as possible during the Athlete Evaluation
8. The Athlete Evaluation involves: Athlete presentation and interview, Athlete assessment consisting of a Physical assessment (bench test of muscle power, joint range of motion and/or coordination); and Observation assessment of the Athlete performing specific skills required of the sport during training and/or at first appearance in the Competition.
9. On completion of the Athlete Evaluation, including the provision of all required medical documentation as required, the Classifier will determine the following:
 1. • The Athlete's Profile, Grade and Grade Status.
 2. • The sanctioned compensating aids the Athlete is allowed for FEI Para-Equestrian tests and Competitions.
 3. • Review Date (for athletes determined to have a Status of Review)
10. National Classification information will go to the USEF Adapted Sports Committee for review and issuing of a Dispensation Certificate, which is required if competing in USEF Licensed competitions.
11. Note: Athlete must apply yearly to USEF for a current USEF Dispensation Certificate.

International FEI Classification

All Athletes with an eligible impairment who intend to enter FEI Para-Equestrian competitions must proceed through the FEI Classification procedure as below:

1. Request for FEI Classification is made by the Athlete through USEF by sending the FEI Classification Request Form, Completed and signed FEI Consent for Classification, and Completed and signed FEI Certificate of Diagnosis along with and additional supporting medical documentation to USEF Para Equestrian Director. . (Laureen Johnson lkjohnson@usef.org) ***Request should be sent to USEF 7-8 weeks prior to the international competition at which the athlete requests to be classified.***
2. USEF forwards all above documentation, 6 weeks (required by FEI) prior to the international competition at which the athletes requests to be classified, to the FEI for the FEI Classification Working Group to determine if the athlete has meet the Eligibility Criteria and will either approve the request or not approve. A request for additional medical documentation may be requested before a decision is made. Decision will be sent to USEF in writing from the FEI with a reason if not approved.

3. For approved Classifications the FEI will inform USEF at which competition the athletes evaluation can occur. They will also inform the Organizing committee (OC) and the Chief Classifier of the competition in order to schedule classification and to make sure classifiers have access to medical information of the athlete.
4. Athlete undergoes evaluation by a Classification Panel at the designated competition. A member of the athletes National Federation (NF) may be present.
5. The Athlete's classification will be sent to the FEI Classification Working Group for approval. Once approved the Athlete's details will be added to the FEI Classification Master List.
6. Note: Athlete must apply each year to USEF for a USEF Dispensation Certificate, which will list the Athlete's details from the FEI Master List listing both allowed standard and approved compensating aids needed for proof of classification for Licensed USEF Competitions.

Compensating Aids or Allowances Summary

Below are the standard compensating aids available to all Grades:

(FEI Para Dressage Rule Book January 2017)

Salute with head only	1 whip
Sitting or rising trot	Split reins on double bridle*
Gloves optional	Elastic inserts in reins
Spurs optional	Elastic bands on stirrups
Saddle any type	Magnetic stirrups
Soft (flexible) hand hold	Enclosed stirrups
Breast plate and/or neck strap	Safety vests including inflatable
Deep saddle	Voice for Grades I, II, & III

Standard Compensating Aids As Determined by Classification process:

Voice – Grades IV & V	Electronic communication devices
Offset spur	Raised pommel or cantle
Seat saver	Hard (firm) hand hold
2 whips	Non conventional or curved whip
Loop reins	Foot reins
Connecting rein bar	Reins through ring in saddle
Velcro - amount	Strap stirrup leather or stirrup iron to girth
No stirrups	Commander (to call test)
Use of sign Language	Callers (for athlete with Visual impairment)
Beacon beeper	Seat Saver

(Specific requirements regarding the above aids can be found in the FEI Para Equestrian Dressage Rules and will be explained by the Classifier as needed.)

Aids or equipment not listed above MUST be supported through the Classification process and approved nationally by the USEF Adapted Sports Committee, Internationally by the FEI Compensating Aids Panel. International request must be sent from USEF.

It is the responsibility of the Athlete: to ensure that all compensating aids used at a competition are approved and listed on their USEF Dispensation certificate for USDF/USEF licensed competitions and on the FEI Master List for FEI Para Dressage competitions.

Note: Athletes must not be held in position by any mechanism that does not automatically release in the event of an accident.

For complete and the most up to date most information on Classification & Compensating aids please refer to:

FEI Classification: <http://inside.fei.org/fei/disc/para-dressage/classification>

Where you will find the following:

- FEI Para Equestrian Classification manual

http://inside.fei.org/sites/default/files/FEI%20Para%20Equestrian%20Classification%20Manual_January%202017%20Markup_0.pdf

- Standard and Non-Standard Compensating Aids Summary

<http://inside.fei.org/system/files/Standard%20and%20Non%20Standard%20Compensating%20Aids%20Summary%202017.pdf>

- FEI Classification Request Form and other Classification forms and information

Other important information can be found in the FEI & USEF Para Dressage Rules

FEI Para Dressage Rules:

http://inside.fei.org/sites/default/files/PED%202017_rules_Nov_2016_Final%20Clean.pdf

USEF Para Dressage & Dressage rules (Para dressage rules are found in and are part of the dressage rules.)

<https://files.usef.org/assets/Q1HPh8up0hc/08-dr.pdf>

Material in Italics is taken from the FEI Para Equestrian Classification Manual - January 2015

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