



Back Country Horsemen of British Columbia

A Trail Rider's Handbook

Level 1 • Trail Rider Level 2 • Overnight Rider
Level 3 • Packing Rider Level 4 • Wilderness Rider

This book belongs to _____

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Photos by Hugh Martell and Rose Schroeder

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4 Levels of Skills

This Handbook offers a progressive series of skills that are considered essential to becoming a competent recreational Trail Rider. There is room to involve horsemen of any age or level of accomplishment.

It has been divided into 4 levels based on the CHA Trail Program and allows learning to be obtained by groups or individuals at their own pace from any level of the program and using any qualified or knowledgeable sources.

Evaluation and Certification awards are available through the Certified Horsemanship Association (www.ahse.org) if desired.

For lists of qualified instructors and other sources of information go to Back Country Horsemen of BC (www.bchorsemen.org), Certified Horsemanship Association (www.cha-ahse.org), Horse Council of BC (www.hcbbc.ca) and Equine Canada (www.equinecanada.ca)

Your First Steps

towards
confidence
and
safety

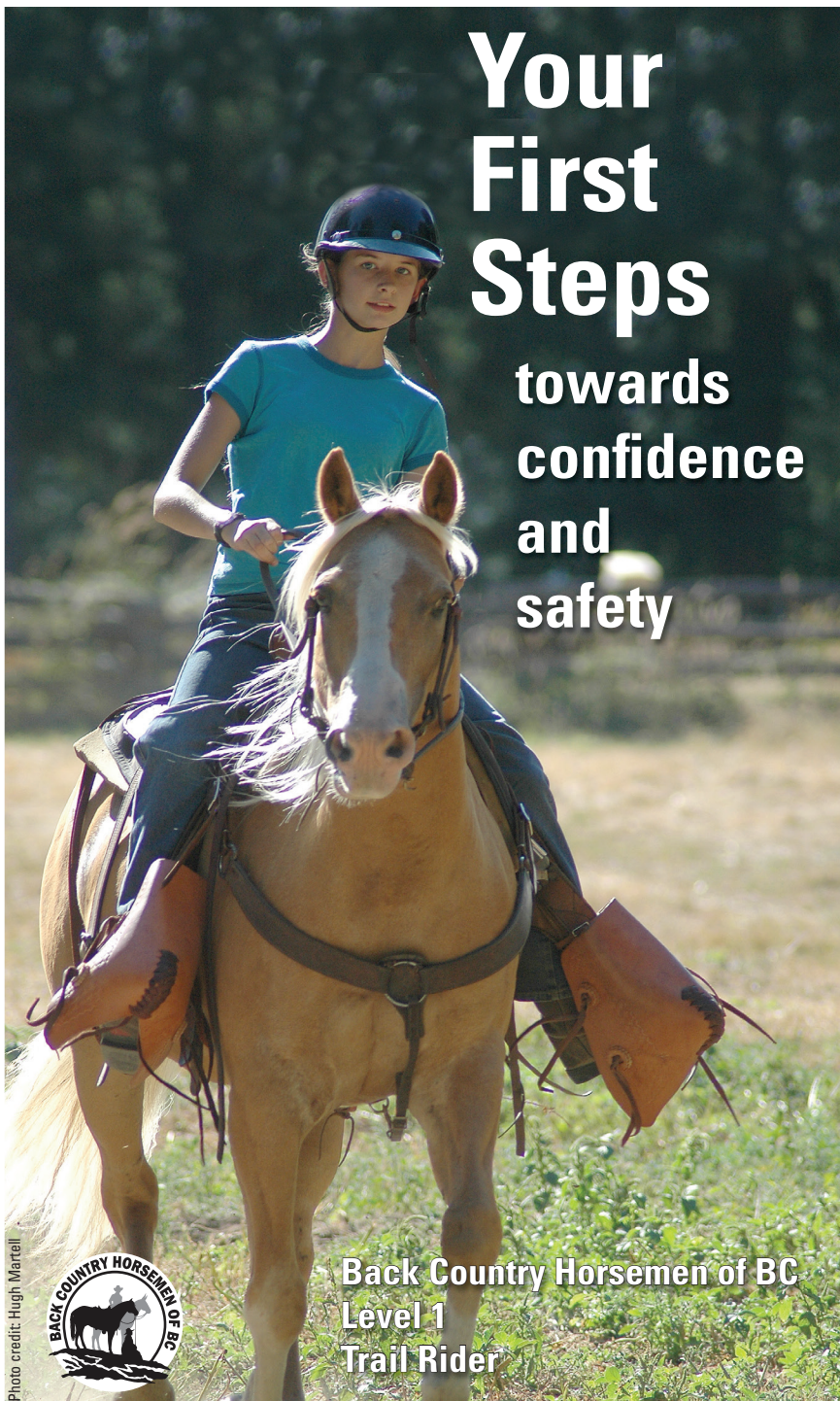


Photo credit: Hugh Martell



Back Country Horsemen of BC
Level 1
Trail Rider

Level 1 Trail Rider Progress Sheet

Name _____ Date _____

☐

Riding and horse handling:

- ___ Approaching and catching a horse
- ___ Leading safely
- ___ Basic knots, rope safety (*Bowline, Quick Release*)
- ___ Grooming
- ___ Parts of the horse and tack
- ___ Horse sense and safety
- ___ Saddling and bridling
- ___ Safety tack check
- ___ Safe mounting, dismounting
- ___ Basic seat and balance
- ___ Use of aids
- ___ Basic control (*on the ground*) using only the pressure and release concept, move your Horse forward, back, left, right, up and down. (*mounted*) same as above but from the saddle with a bridle.
- ___ Rating horse's speed
- ___ Sitting trot
- ___ Posting trot
- ___ 2 point seat (*Half Seat*)
- ___ Basic school figures
- ___ Ring test level 1
- ___ Transitions between gaits
- ___ Untacking safely

☐

Trail skills:

- ___ Trail safety and etiquette guidelines
- ___ Passing and being passed
- ___ What to take on a day ride.
- ___ Riding up and down hills
- ___ Crossing hazards
- ___ Securing horses on the trail
- ___ Basic first aid for horse and rider
- ___ Simple navigation skills

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Trail experience:

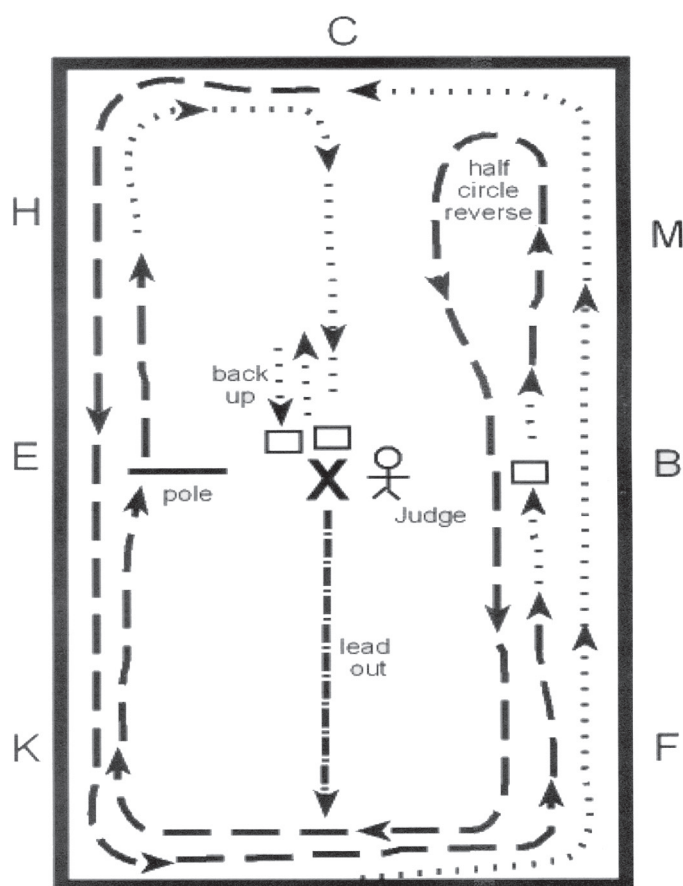
- ___ Participate in at least two group trail rides which were organized and operated according to the standards incorporated into this program.

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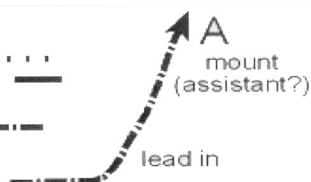
Knowledge Check-up:

- ___ You have 60 min to complete the Level 1 exam. Discuss your answers as a group or individual with your coach or instructor. The appropriate CHA manual can be used to reference correct answers during the discussions.

Level 1 Ring Test



walk
trot
stop
lead



Level 1 Ring Test Score Sheet

(each maneuver is scored on 10 points)

Remember: the goal of Level 1 is a good foundation of safe, secure and simple basics

Name: _____

Place: _____ Date: _____

Letter	Directions	Scored on	Points	Comment
Entry to A	Lead horse saddled	Leading safely and correctly		
A	Check tack and mount	Safety tack check, safe mounting and control		
A	Enter at walk, turn right, continue to C	Position, seat, use of aids, control and corners		
C	Trot, posting to B	Balance, position		
B	Halt through walk	Control, timing, use of aids		
B-M	Sit trot through walk	Balance, position, check and release		
M-B	Half circle reverse	Knowledge of figure, control balance, use of eyes and aids		
B-H	Trot, over pole	As above, 2 point seat		
H-C	Walk, turn right at C, continue to X	Use of aids, balance, control		
X	Halt, back 4 steps come forward to X, dismount, leave arena leading	Control, use of aids, safety preparing and leading safely		

Scoring: 0 = not performed

1 = very bad

2 = unsatisfactory

3 = poor

4 = insufficient (not good enough)

5 = sufficient (fair)

6 = satisfactory

7 = fairly good

8 = good

9 = very good

10 = outstanding 70% is considered passing

Total score _____

Passing: Yes _____ No _____ Instructor's signature _____

A New World

camping
with
your horse



Back Country Horsemen of BC
Level 2
Overnight Rider

Photo credit: Hugh Martell

Level 2 Overnight Rider Progress Sheet

Name _____ Date _____

☐ **Riding and horse handling:**

- ___ Knowledge of Western and English tack and adjustments
- ___ Horsemen's terms
- ___ Colours, markings and breeds
- ___ Gaits and footfalls
- ___ Pressure and release
- ___ Trot, posting correct diagonal
- ___ 2 point vs. 3 point seat
- ___ Balance and position at canter (*Lope*)
- ___ First aid certificate
- ___ Equine first aid
- ___ Feeding basics
- ___ Stabling basics
- ___ Ring test level 2

☐ **Trail and camping skills:**

- ___ What to take on an overnight ride
- ___ Riding on the road
- ___ Trail challenges (*wildlife, wasps, terrain*)
- ___ Water purification
- ___ Navigation – map reading
- ___ Ponying
- ___ Horseshoe removal, lost shoe options
- ___ Highlining
- ___ Bear Aware
- ___ Firecraft
- ___ Seven Principles of LNT – Participate in a Leave No Trace Awareness Session
- ___ Knots (*Square, Butterfly, Sheet Bend, Clove Hitch*)

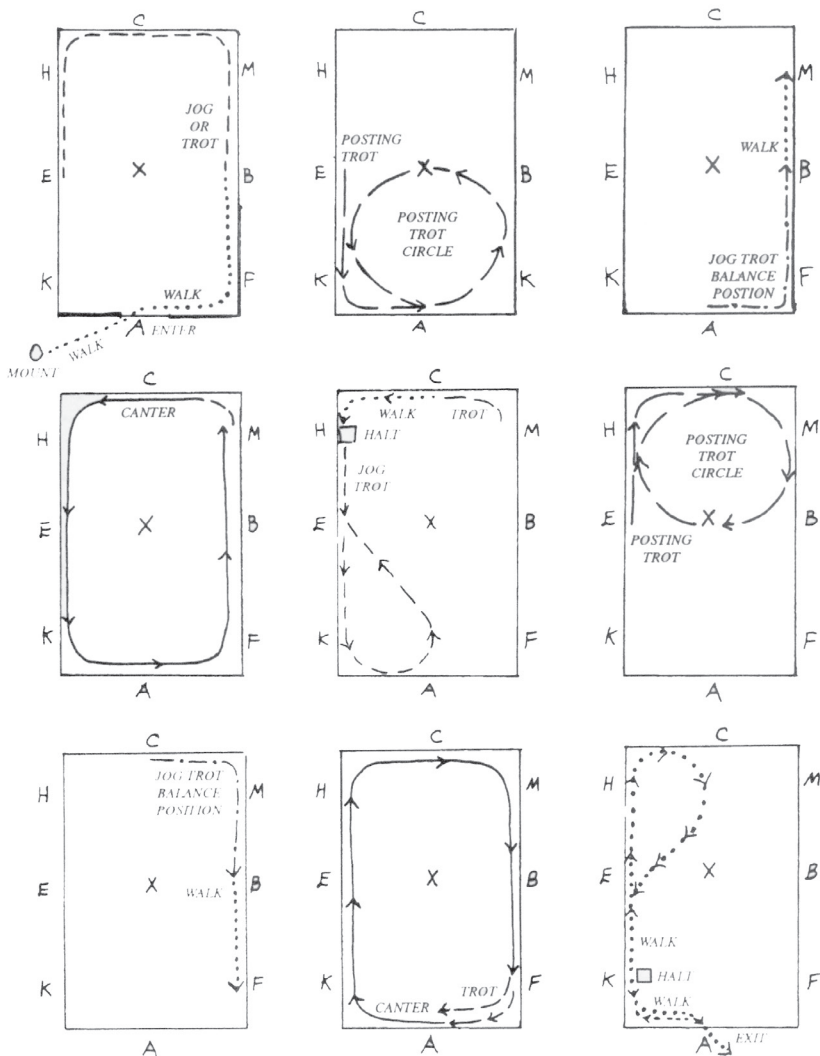
☐ **Trail experience:**

- ___ Participated in at least one overnight trail ride which was organized and operated according to the standards incorporated into this program.
Overnight may be at vehicle.

☐ **Knowledge Check-up**

You have 60 minutes to complete the Level 2 exam. Discuss your answers as a group or individual with your coach or instructor. The appropriate CHA manual can be used to reference correct answers during the discussions.

Level 2 Ring Test



Level 2 Ring Test Score Sheet

(each maneuver is scored on 10 points)

Name: _____

Place: _____ Date: _____

Letter	Directions	Scored on	Points	Comment
O	Check tack and mount Tighten girth if needed Adjust stirrups or check length	Mounting correctly Safety check of tack Not disturbing horse Correct stirrup length		
A	Enter ring at walk Turn to the right along rail to B	Seat, position and control at walk and sitting trot		
B	Trot or jog, sitting Continue to E at jog or trot	Staying on rail Not breaking or cutting		
E	<i>(Posting trot on correct diagonal)</i> <i>(Western may continue at jog)</i>	Posting well Correct diagonal Control during circle Not breaking gait		
A	Circle left, width of ring <i>(Posting trot, on correct diagonal)</i>			
A	Jog or trot, <i>(in half seat)</i> Continue along rail to B	Balance, position and control Half Seat		
B	Sit down and walk	Aids, seat and control during canter or lope		
M	Prepare to canter or lope	Not breaking gait		
M-M	<i>(may jog if necessary)</i> Lope or canter Continue once around ring back to M	Correct lead desirable but not required		
M	Jog or trot	Control stopping from lope or canter		
C	Walk <i>(prepare for the halt)</i>	No unnecessary roughness		
H	Halt, pause 5 seconds Continue at jog or trot			
K	Sitting trot or jog Reverse at sitting trot or jog	Control Not breaking during reverse		

Level 2 Ring Test Score Sheet

(each maneuver is scored on 10 points)

Name: _____

Place: _____ Date: _____

Letter	Directions	Scored on	Points	Comment
E	(Posting trot on correct diagonal)	Posting, correct diagonal		
C	Circle right width of ring	Circle		
C	Jog or trot, (balancing in half seat) Continue to B	Balance, position and control		
B F F-F	Sit down and walk Prepare to canter or lope (may jog if necessary) Lope or canter Continue once around ring, back to F	Aids, seat, control Not breaking Correct lead desirable but not required		
F A K	Trot or jog Walk (prepare for the halt) Halt, pause 5 seconds, Walk on	Control without unnecessary roughness		
H A	Reverse at walk Exit ring at walk	Aids, smoothness Control during reverse		

Total = 120 pts

A score of 70% is considered passing

Note: 10 means outstanding, not perfect (10 is a possible score, though rare).

Scoring: 0 = not performed

1 = very bad

2 = unsatisfactory

3 = poor

4 = insufficient (not good enough)

5 = sufficient (fair)

6 = satisfactory

7 = fairly good

8 = good

9 = very good

10 = outstanding

Total score _____

Passing: Yes _____ No _____ Instructor's signature _____

Mountain Journeys

far
and
free!



Back Country Horsemen of BC
Level 3
Packing Rider

Level 3 Packing Rider Progress Sheet

Name _____

Date _____

☐ **Riding and horse handling:**

- ___ Horse behavior
- ___ Emergency stops
- ___ Leading pack horses
- ___ Fitting and maintaining tack
- ___ Loading and trailering

☐ **Trail and camping skills:**

- ___ Knots (*Bowline with a Bight, Trucker's Hitch, Half Hitch left and right*)
- ___ Wrapping and Frapping
- ___ Hobbling
- ___ Picketing (*staking out*)
- ___ Camping
- ___ Outdoor cooking
- ___ Navigating with map and compass

☐ **Packing skills:**

- ___ Packing with hard panniers and soft packs
- ___ 3 hitches
- ___ Mantying
- ___ Box Sling, Barrel Sling

Trail experience:

- ___ Participated in at least one overnight trail ride which was organized and operated according to the standards incorporated into this program, camping away from vehicles and facilities.

☐ **Knowledge Check-up:**

- ___ You have 60 min to complete the Level 3 exam. Discuss your answers as a group or individual with your coach or instructor. The appropriate CHA manual can be used to reference correct answers during the discussions.

The Ultimate

knowledge
confidence
leadership



Back Country Horsemen of BC
Level 4
Wilderness Rider

Level 4 Wilderness Rider Progress Sheet

Name _____

Date _____

☐

Riding and horse handling:

- ___ Selecting stock for the trail
- ___ Training stock for the trail
- ___ Horse behavior problems
- ___ Preventive care
- ___ Introducing green riders and stock to the trail
- ___ Emergency shoeing and hoof care
- ___ Wilderness Equine First aid

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Trail and camping skills:

- ___ River and bog crossings
- ___ Night riding
- ___ GPS
- ___ Emergency planning
- ___ Cooking on a campfire
- ___ Feeding stock on extended trips
- ___ Leave No Trace (Plan and present a LNT awareness session)

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People skills:

- ___ Group control and organization
- ___ Evaluation of horse and rider
- ___ Demonstrated ability to manage wilderness trips
- ___ Demonstrated mentoring of Trail Level 1, 2, 3 participants.

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Trail experience:

- ___ Organized and led at least five group trail rides, 3 overnight trail rides (overnights may be at vehicle), and one overnight trail ride (camping away from vehicles and facilities) which were operated according to the standards incorporated into this program.

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Packing skills:

- ___ Advanced packing
- ___ 4 hitches
- ___ Stringing and Tail Tying
- ___ Pack animals
- ___ Leading a pack string

☐

Knowledge Check-up:

- ___ You have 60 min to complete the Level 4 exam. Discuss your answers as a group or individual with your coach or instructor. The appropriate CHA manual can be used to reference correct answers during the discussions.



BCHBC promotes the inclusion of educational events within a fun and social atmosphere in order to foster safety, camaraderie and the enjoyment of learning.

For more information: www.bchorsemen.org