



Code of practice for horse drawn vehicles

This Code of Practice contains guidance jointly reviewed and agreed by the following organisations:

The Department for Transport

The British Driving Society

The British Horse Society

The Heavy Horse Driving Committee

The Joint National Horse Education & Training Council

International League for the Protection of Horses

Further copies of the Code of Practice can be obtained from:

The Department for Transport,
Transport Technology and Standards,
Zone 2/04,
Great Minster House,
76 Marsham Street,
London SW1P 4DR.
Tel: 020 7944 2078
Fax: 020 7944 2196

Introduction

Due to the increasing popularity of horse drawn vehicles on the road, a working group was set up which includes organisations experienced in the use of such vehicles. The main aim of the group was to produce a Code of Practice which could be used by drivers and operators of horse drawn vehicles, and especially those who use such vehicles to carry paying passengers.

The Code provides a simple but authoritative guide to the recommended minimum levels of competence (the 'road driving assessment') for drivers of horse drawn vehicles. The Code also includes full details of vehicle safety checks (the 'carriage check list').

Note

This Code of Practice should not be treated as a legal document. The emphasis is on the safety of the driver and passengers, carriage and horse(s) and other road users. Every effort has been made to provide true, helpful and accurate information.

Scope of the Code

The Code applies to all types of horse drawn vehicles used on the road but it is primarily aimed at those vehicles carrying paying passengers (ie vehicles used for 'hire and reward'). The type of vehicles referred to in the Code are: two or four wheeled modern carriages, two or four wheeled traditional carriages and horse drawn passenger carrying vehicles. The Code applies to these carriages whether driven to a single horse or pairs or teams of horses.

Objectives

The Code's objectives are:

- To provide guidance for new and existing drivers of horse drawn vehicles carrying paying passengers
- To summarise the road driving assessment for single, pair and teams of horses
- To provide details of a recognised carriage safety check list

The Road Driving Assessment

This test is the recommended minimum competence for driving horses/ponies and vehicles carrying paying passengers on the public highway. The assessment is not a compulsory requirement for those wishing to drive horses but may be required if an operator wants to receive a local authority licence to operate a passenger carrying service. Applications for an assessment may be made either to the British Driving Society or the Heavy Horse Training Committee who appoint a panel of assessors. There is a small fee for the assessment and on satisfactory completion a certificate of competence (Road Driving Certificate) will be granted.

The practical driving section of the assessment, which can be carried out at the driver or operator's premises, may be taken with a single, pair or team and will carry the relevant certification. The harnessing and underpinning of knowledge must include a single and a pair.

Grandfather rights for this assessment can be retained by attaining a certificate of Approved Prior Learning. This certificate can only be issued by a group of approved and qualified assessors, namely the Harness Horse Training Board, the British Driving Society or the Heavy Horse Training Committee.

Method of Inspection

The competence will be assessed by direct observation of practical performance and oral questioning of underpinning knowledge. The assessment will be in line with safe yard practice and will take approximately 2 hours.

The British Driving Society Proficiency Test and the Heavy Horse Training Committee Road Driving Assessment test are directly accreditable.

The Carriage Check List

This is a comprehensive list of safety checks that should be carried out to ensure that the carriage and its fittings are safe and in good working condition. The checks can be carried out either by the driver/operator or by a panel appointed by the British Driving Society or the Heavy Horse Training Committee.

The Road Driving Assessment

Section A: Prepare horse and vehicle for road use

Performance Criteria

1. Control of the horse is maintained at all times
2. Harness is selected and fitted to the horse for road use
3. Horse is safely hitched to the vehicle following laid down procedures
4. The controlling position adopted is appropriate to the vehicle in use
5. The health, safety and security of the horse, self and others is maintained throughout