



The American Driving Society, Inc.

General Driving Safety List

Best Practices

- Teach your horse to “whoa” and “stand” before attempting a drive away from home.
- Vehicle and harness should be in sound condition and adjusted to fit the horse properly, and be suitable for the type of terrain to be covered.
- Never remove the horse’s bridle while the horse is put to a carriage.
- Never leave a horse unattended while it is put to a vehicle.
- Never tie a horse to a fixed object (wall, trailer, hitch post) while it is put to a vehicle.
- Never tie a turnout to another turnout, or tie another horse to a turnout.
- Do not lead the horse from the ground while it is put to a vehicle.
- When the horse is put to the vehicle, a knowledgeable driver needs to be in the vehicle with the reins and whip in hand.
- The driver is the first person in the vehicle and the last one out. Do not leave a passenger in the vehicle unless he is capable and takes control of the reins.
- Do not get out of your vehicle once the horse is put to, except for minor adjustments and unhitching. A loose horse with a vehicle attached is very dangerous.
- Reins must be attached to the bit and passed through the saddle terrets while the horse is put to the vehicle. One rein at a time may be adjusted.
- Sit on bight (end) of reins or use the finger loop. Do not let loose end dangle and risk getting caught in legs or wheels.
- Do not snap the reins for a forward cue. Use your voice and the whip.
- Leave at least one turnout’s length between turnouts at all times.
- Call out to another driver to ask to pass. Do not blow past another turnout.
- If a driver meets a rider, stop the carriage. Riding horses are often afraid of moving wheels. Allow the riders to determine how to safely pass.
- Most states require a Slow Moving Vehicle sign if you drive on public roads. It must be visible and three feet above the ground.



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- If driving on the road, drive in the middle of the lane. Look for places to get off the road safely.
- If driving a pair, you need a groom. Do not drive two or more horses by yourself.

Additional Recommendations

- Use a full noseband/cavesson for a bridle with blinkers to keep the cheeks from gaping away from the sides of the horse's head.
- Consider using a gullet strap, or braid your horse's mane into your bridle to prevent your small-eared equine from rubbing their bridle off.
- Wear appropriate clothing, including sturdy footwear, driving gloves, and well-fitted equestrian helmet.
- Carry a fully charged cell phone on your person. Know the drive manager's number.
- Consider a safety vest, leg reflectors and/or a bicycle flag and lights for better visibility.
- Have a Spares Kit including halter(s) and lead(s), and a First Aid kit for horses and humans.
- Stay on marked trails. Watch the trail ahead for turkeys, deer, and other animals. Avoid being out during hunting seasons.
- Do not let your horse nibble on plants along the trail. Some may be poisonous.
- Go from light to dark areas slowly so horse's eyes can adjust.
- Cross roadways as quickly as reasonably possible. Cross perpendicular to railroad tracks.
- Cross bridges with care. Observe the condition of the bridge before you cross.
- Descend steep grades slowly. Balance your horse, especially with metal shoes on pavement.

****The most current ADS Rulebook supersedes this document at all ADS Recognized Events.***