



Australian Carriage Driving Society

ABN: 28 794 114 302 – Incorporation No: AO1028



NEW MEMBERS' and Interested Parties **HANDBOOK**

Edition 2

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DISCLAIMER

The ACDS has taken all care in preparation of this handbook but accepts no responsibility. Readers are recommended to seek professional advice before taking part in activities set out in this handbook.

ACDS HORSE WELFARE POLICY

The Australian Carriage Driving Society places the utmost importance on the welfare of the Horse as the primary consideration in all carriage driving activities.

Horse welfare must never be compromised by competitive or commercial interests and all ACDS members are expected to accept and abide by this principle.

ACDS Rules, Guidelines and Risk Management Policies are intended to improve Horse welfare standards. The Rules, Guidelines and Policies are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure effective promotion and implementation of best-practice Horse welfare by ACDS Members.

Regardless of the carriage driving activity or discipline, the following over-arching Horse welfare principles apply:

- ***At all stages during preparation, training and use of carriage Horses & ponies, welfare must take precedence over other demands.***

This includes ensuring good Horse management; using training methods which are appropriate to the physical and mental capabilities of the Horse and which do not result in pain or fear; use of harness and carriages which are correctly fitted and do not cause pain or injury; a high standard of farriery and foot care; and appropriate methods of transport.

- ***Horses & ponies must be fit, competent and capable and in good health, appropriate to the type of activity and the specific demands.***

This includes ensuring an adequate level of fitness for the activity, applying appropriate Horse-health and bio-security practices; and allowing adequate recovery time following veterinary treatment.

- ***Activities must not prejudice Horse welfare.***

Venues, stabling / yards, courses and their components must be designed and maintained with the safety of the Horse in mind. Competitions and activities must take into consideration the best interests of the Horses involved. The effects of extreme weather must be taken into account and mitigated as appropriate.

- ***Every effort must be made to ensure Horses & Ponies receive proper and humane treatment during their lives.***

This includes provision of adequate veterinary and health care; the prompt and appropriate treatment of injury or illness; sympathetic and humane treatment during retirement; and where necessary, appropriate methods of euthanasia to minimise suffering.

The ACDS supports the ongoing awareness and skills development of its members in relation to Horse welfare and encourages all those involved in equestrian sport to attain the highest levels of knowledge in relation to care & management of the Horse.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Purpose of the Code

This Code of Conduct is intended to outline the behaviour expectations for Members of the Australian Carriage Driving Society Inc. (ACDS) and those associated with Members at ACDS activities. Federal Council recognises that the ACDS is made up of incorporated bodies and Clubs in each State of Australia and that each State has laws that may be relevant to a Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct is intended to set broad over-arching principles, which shall be incorporated into each State's/Club's Code of Conduct, subject to these principles complying with the laws applicable to the relevant State.

This Code of Conduct is to be read in conjunction with the Rules and Regulations of the ACDS and other policies of the ACDS and its State bodies as applicable from time to time.

Expectations

Members of the ACDS and their associates are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the best interests of the ACDS and is commensurate with the expectations of the broader membership, community standards and the law. Members are encouraged to develop and maintain an inclusive environment that promotes participation.

Behaviour, which may be considered as discriminatory, bullying, intimidatory, violent or of a harassing (sexual or otherwise) nature will not be tolerated. Unjust or intemperate criticism of other members or behaviour that brings the Society and/or sport into disrepute is similarly not acceptable.

Of principle expectation for all ACDS Members and those associated with Members, is compliance with the Rules and Regulations of the ACDS and the Society's Horse Welfare Policy.

More Specifically:

Competitors/Participants and their Associates are expected to behave in a courteous, respectful and sporting manner; comply with the rules of the relevant activity and any reasonable direction from an official. Horse welfare considerations shall always take priority over competitive or commercial interests.

Officials and Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves professionally; be respectful towards participants and other officials/volunteers; take all reasonable steps to ensure activities are conducted in a safe and fair manner and comply with the ACDS's Conflict of Interest Policy.

Office Bearers at a Club, State and Federal Level are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner; take all reasonable steps to ensure the ACDS is meeting its legal and constitutional obligations; declare any conflict of interest that may arise in the course of fulfilling their role and, in all decisions, act in the best interests of the ACDS and its membership.

Coaches and Trainers are expected to adhere to and promote best-practice in Horse Welfare; at all times act in the best interests of their client, comply with the ACDS's Conflict of Interest Policy and take all reasonable steps to ensure the training process is conducted in a safe and positive environment.

Compliance with the Rules and Regulations of the ACDS, State Branch and the respective affiliated Club is a condition of Membership.

Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action against the member in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Rules and Regulations.

Non-members who are deemed to have breached the Code of Conduct, may be asked by a representative of the Society to leave the ACDS activity and may be refused entry to future ACDS activities.

THE AUSTRALIAN CARRIAGE DRIVING SOCIETY INC.

The Australian Carriage Driving Society Inc. (ACDS) was formed in 1971 by a group of harness enthusiasts who saw the need to gather together those with similar interests. It continued as a society based in NSW until 1982 when the Constitution was changed to allow the ACDS to become an association of harness Clubs throughout Australia. HRH the Duke of Edinburgh accepted our invitation to be Patron of the ACDS. It was originally known as the Australian Driving Society until it changed its name to the ACDS in 2000.

The ACDS is incorporated in the Australian Capital Territory.

The ACDS structure is as follows:

- Federal Council
- State Branches
- Clubs
- Members

There are Clubs in all States except the Northern Territory.

The ACDS has a Federal Council that is made up of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and a delegate from each state. All of these people are volunteer members. Broadly defined, the Federal Council has the responsibility of ensuring the ACDS is run in accordance with its rules and relevant legislation, whilst meeting the needs and wishes of the membership and ensuring sound financial management and appropriate levels of organisational governance.

The ACDS is involved with all forms of horse and pony driving with the exception of trotting and pacing. Briefly, the objectives of the ACDS are:

- To promote the interests of, and to encourage and educate those persons interested in the driving of horses and ponies and in the restoration of vehicles (carriage, jinker, cart);
- To act as the national governing body to whom other bodies can refer for guidance in all aspects of harness work; and
- To promote the training of officials for the various sections of harness competition.

The sport is funded from member subscriptions and entry fees for competitions. From these a proportion is passed to the Federal body and to State branches to cover basic administration expenses, the production of a journal, insurance, marketing and running of the sport. In this way all members of affiliated Clubs are members of the ACDS, covered by the ACDS insurance, receive the ACDS journal and are able to attend the various seminars and schools organised by the ACDS throughout the year.

Instructional schools and workshops are organised by the ACDS, with local and overseas instructors, judge's schools and examinations and training for drivers. All internal training schools for officials is free to members, but normally, driving instructions from qualified overseas instructors and ACDS qualified coaches would attract a fee.

The ACDS journal is issued four times a year. This has been found to be an important way of keeping members informed of recent happenings, forthcoming activities, of passing on the finer points of harness and trends overseas. It has helped greatly to keep up the enthusiasm of members. Clubs also issue their own newsletters to their members and other Clubs.

The ACDS has a website at www.australiancarriagedrivingsociety.org, which provides information for all interested parties. There is a separate members' only section, which has a number of manuals and other key information for members. You need to register to gain access to this members' only section.

Australia has been represented at numerous World Equestrian Games, World Four-in-Hand Championships, World Pairs Championships and World Single Championships. It is hoped the trend for international competition will continue, with overseas drivers competing in Australia.

General Safety Recommendations for Carriage Driving

Accidents can happen simply and quickly when out driving or when putting the horse/pony to, or taking out of, a carriage. These hints may help in preventing mishaps.

DOs

- If you are just starting out, seek assistance from an experienced harness person.
- Keep your attention focussed on your horse/pony – avoid getting distracted.
- Secure your horse/pony to an immovable object or have a capable person at their head holding the halter and lead when putting to or taking out of the carriage.
- Join the ends and/or sit on the ends of the reins when in the seat in case one should be dropped when you are driving.
- Always have an active and capable person with you when driving an inexperienced horse/pony.
- Work your horse/pony regularly prior to taking it out in public.
- Always remember to signal to other traffic before stopping or turning. Give way to traffic where required. **On public roads, remember the road rules apply to you also.**
- Remember to be watchful of your horse's/pony's body language, especially their ears, which may give warning of their alarm at something they have seen or heard.
- Carry a whip of useful length – it is an essential safety aid and should reach the shoulder of the horse/pony.
- Always take great care when passing another vehicle and only do so when you can see a clear path/road in front.

- Check regularly your harness and vehicle for wear and damage and have repairs done as necessary by a competent person.
- Persons under 18 must wear a safety helmet approved for equestrian use whilst on a carriage

DON'Ts

- **Do not** try to put on blinkers/bridle on a horse/pony when away from their home stable without first securing them with a rope around their neck or, preferably, a halter.
- **Do not** start to harness the horse/pony to the vehicle without first having the reins fastened to the blinkers/bridle.
- **Do not** try to back a horse/pony between shafts that are lying on the ground. Bring the shafts to the horse/pony.
- **Never** take the blinkers/bridle off while the horse/pony is still attached to the vehicle, not even when he has a halter under the blinkers/bridle.
- **Never** take the reins off blinker/bridle while horse/pony is still in the carriage.
- **Do not** leave a nervous horse/pony unattended, unless it is safely contained in a suitable yard.
- **Never** leave your horse/pony tied up and unattended once it is in the carriage – as soon as possible you must be in the seat holding the reins.
- **Do not** start to harness/unharness a horse/pony in unfamiliar surroundings without a capable person at their head or tying up the horse/pony securely.
- **Never** allow anyone to sit in the carriage before the driver has taken their place and are holding the reins
- When you are driving, never leave the vehicle before all the passengers have got out.
- **Avoid** driving past another vehicle at a fast trot – out of courtesy ask the other driver's permission to pass.
- **Avoid** driving too close to the vehicle in front – be mindful of distance and carriage widths when driving in company.
- **Do not** overfeed and underwork your horse/pony.
- **Do not** take a completely green horse/pony to a show or driving event. First find out how they behave when being driven in company with other vehicles.
- **Do not** use your mobile phone when driving your horse/pony except in an emergency (remember, a driven carriage on a public road is subject to the road rules)
- **Do not** drive you horse and carriage after consuming alcohol (remember – road rules)

When driving out, it is recommended that you always carry a halter and lead. Other things you may carry are some strong cord or rope, a leather punch or knife, mobile phone for emergencies.

ACDS Policy on Junior Drivers (i.e. Under 18)

Applicable to all ACDS driving activities excluding Combined Driving Events (Level 1-4)	
Junior definition	A person who has not attained the age of 18 years
Youngest driving age (Single horse or pony)	A Junior driver aged 6-7 years inclusive must be accompanied in the vehicle by an ACDS adult member (an experienced driving person) seated alongside at all times and holding a second pair of reins attached to the bit.
Additional restrictions	A Junior driver aged 8-15 years inclusive must be accompanied in the vehicle by an ACDS adult member (an experienced driving person) who must be facing forward.
Stallions	Junior Drivers under 18 years of age are not allowed to drive stallions at ACDS events.
Multiples	Junior Multiple drivers – a Junior driver aged 16-17 years inclusive may drive a pair or tandem or team of ponies. They must be accompanied in the vehicle by an ACDS adult member (an experienced driving person). A Junior driver cannot drive a horse multiple (pair, tandem four-in-hand) until they turn 18 years of age.

Table 1 – Junior Drivers

The minimum age for driving at ACDS activities is listed above in Table 1:

ACDS Policy on Helmets

All Junior persons (being under 18 years of age) driving or riding in a carriage must wear protective head gear designed for equestrian use whilst at an ACDS activity.

Where helmets are worn at ACDS activities they must comply with at least one of the following codes and its proviso(s):

- Australian or New Zealand – AS/NZS 3838 2006 onwards and provided they are SAI Global marked
- British – PAS 015: 1998 or 2011, VG1 01.040: 2014-12 – provided they are BSI Kitemarked
- European – VGI 01.040 2014-12 - provided they are BSI Kitemarked
- American – ASTM F1163: 2004a or 04a onwards provided they are SEI marked or SNELL E2001 marked

Helmets that are certified to EN 1384 only will not be accepted for use at ACDS activities.

Types of Carriage Driving Activities

The ACDS supports a number of types of driving activities, including

1. Showing

Showing of harness is well known, as most agricultural shows include harness classes. Show driving is explained in more detail at Annex A.

2. Combined Driving Events (also known as CDE's)

CDE's are carriage driving's answer to three-day eventing and can take place over two or three days; although some shortened one-day competitions are becoming popular. Competitions consist of Driven Dressage, Marathon (or cross country) and Cones obstacle driving (in place of jumping). The Marathon phase includes up to eight obstacles that are driven in an alphabetical sequence and against the clock. The Cones obstacles are driven in a numerical sequence; where drivers are expected to manoeuvre through the course without knocking down balls set on measured cones. The Marathon and cone obstacle driving phases are of most interest to spectators. More information is at Annex B.

3. Driven Dressage

Driven dressage is the same as ridden dressage except in driven dressage, you are driving in the carriage behind the horse rather than sitting on the horse's back. The driver drives a standard dressage test and the driver is marked out of 10 for each movement with additional marks for such things as presentation, control of the horse, etc. The aim of driven dressage is to encourage the correct training and development of the horse while offering achievable goals for the driver to enable the progression through various levels. More information on Driven Dressage is at Annex C.

4. Pleasure and Endurance

A pleasure drive can be simply a drive down a country lane, rail trails, a picnic or campfire shared with like-minded people held on one day, a weekend or even for a week on public reserves or private property. It is a great way to see the countryside, socialise, swap tips and educate a horse. Other activities, which you can enjoy under the pleasure driving banner include navigation drives, endurance driving and good old-fashioned fun days where Club members get together for a great social event. Endurance drives are similar to pleasure drives except they are normally a much longer distance. For example, the annual Henry Lawson Endurance Drive covers some 150 kilometres. More information on P & E driving is at Annex D.

5. Historical

Australia has many people who are interested in the history of horses and carriages and own old vehicles or alternatively, the old vehicles are on display at various museums around Australia, e.g. Swan Hill in Victoria. If you are interested in restoration of older vehicles, there is a very brief description of how to do it at Annex E.

6. Indoor Competition

The Indoor competition is based on the British Indoor driving series and is run during the winter season. It was originally designed to be run in an indoor arena of 50m x 20m, however, many Clubs run it outdoors on the same size arena. The format is made up of a precision and paces test, obstacle driving and marathon obstacles. In many ways it is a smaller version of a CDE, which is described above.

7. Fun Days, Three Phase Events, Obsthons, Etc

Many Clubs run a number of different activities to enable competitors to compete at a lower level of scrutiny and to keep the fun in carriage driving. It is not possible to describe all of these and how they are run so we suggest that you speak to your prospective Club about the different types of activities they provide for members.

The Cost of Carriage Driving

A very important issue in carriage driving is the cost. Every person's ability to pay is different and many factors come into what a person can afford to do. Equine sports are expensive. Sometimes the initial cost is only a small amount of the total cost of the sport.

Typical set up costs include:

- Cost of the horse
- Cost of the carriage
- Cost of the harness
- Cost of safety equipment – helmets and safety vest (if desired),
- Horse float and car to tow it, or alternatively, horse truck

Ongoing costs include:

- Farrier to trim/shoe the horse's feet every 6 weeks
- Feed
- Stabling; if appropriate
- Horse dentist annually
- Horse rugs (several as they are different in summer and winter)

On top of this, if you are going to events, there are:

- Entry fees
- Appropriate clothing for the competition
- Cost of getting to the event

- Depending on the location, there may be separate stabling fees
- Many events are over several days, so there is the cost of accommodation (if you don't want to sleep in the float like many people do), food, etc.

Buying Your First Horse

You have decided to buy your first horse and have little or no experience with horses or ponies. Like buying anything, you need money, so check your finances first. It would be advisable to seek the help of an experienced carriage driving person so we suggest you enquire at your nearest Club for assistance. Also, keep in mind that buying the horse maybe the cheapest part of owning a horse.

Things to consider:

- Purpose/use you want to put the animal to, such as pleasure driving, local Club activities, combined driving events or showing. Your purpose will determine what 'type' of horse or pony you purchase and also the price you would expect to pay for such an animal.
- Your 'purpose' will also determine the type of carriage and harness that you purchase also.
- Where will you accommodate your animal? Do you need to find agistment? What will be the costs involved in agistment? Horses and ponies need constant care and supplementary feeding. You must allow the time to regularly visit, preferable daily, to care and exercise your animal.
- There are extra items of equipment you will require, such as a halter, lead ropes, grooming equipment, rugs, feed and water buckets etc.
- Horses and ponies need regular hoof care, whether it be shoeing or barefoot trimming.
- Other regular expenses are worming, vaccinations, hay and other supplementary feed, teeth and back checks.
- If you want to go away from home, how will you transport my horse – do you need a horse float? Do you have a motor vehicle that will tow the horse float safely? Do you have a horse truck?

Once you are prepared to make the financial commitment, contact a reliable horse person who can help find the type of horse you need. A good source is through the many driving Clubs throughout Australia. Some members may have a horse that is superfluous to their requirements. If you are considering buying through an agent or dealer, be accompanied by an independent and accomplished friend.

We would suggest that you purchase your horse first, before you buy the harness or carriage. There is no point having a good harness and good carriage and then find the horse you wish to buy will not fit into the carriage or the horse simply does not want to do carriage driving.

Purchasing a Vehicle (also known as a Carriage, Jinker, Cart)

The old saying is 'never put the cart before the horse'. As you have now obtained your horse or pony, it is time to look for a vehicle.

The first important point to decide is what part of carriage driving do you wish to participate in.

This is important as some types of activities have standard wheel widths for vehicles, which can also be dependent on the size of your horse and some types of carriages are more appropriate for different activities. For example, there are no minimum wheel widths for the show ring. However, if you wish to compete in Combined Driving Events and your pony is not exceeding 121cm in height, you need a wheel width of at least 125cm wide (measured from the outside of and the bottom of each wheel) for all activities – Dressage, Cones and Marathon. If your horse/pony is more than 121cm in height, then you need a minimum wheel width of 138cm for Dressage and Cones phases of the CDE. If you drive pairs, you will need a minimum wheel width of 138 cm for ponies and 148cm for horses and 158cm for a horse team in the Dressage and Cones of the CDE. In the Marathon section of the CDE, all carriages, regardless of horse/pony combination are permitted to compete with a wheel width of 125cm.

If in doubt about what type of activity you wish to participate in, think ahead and get a vehicle with an "adjustable axle" that can be adjusted to either 125cm or 138cm (this means it can be made smaller or larger to suit the requirements).

Traditionally, two-wheel carriages were used in carriage driving activities. More recently, four-wheel carriages have become popular. There are several builders of carriages within Australia and a number of people import carriages into Australia, primarily from Europe.

More recently, carriages have brakes but this was not always the case. Carriages without brakes rely on the breeching part of the harness to slow/stop a carriage. If possible, purchase a vehicle with brakes as some carriage driving activities require the carriage to have brakes.

The most important point is the vehicle must fit the horse and the driver. What is the point of a good looking vehicle that is not comfortable for you or the horse?

When looking at a vehicle, take an experienced carriage driver and a tape measure with you to ensure it is the correct size for your horse/pony. The vehicle must be structurally sound, have a swingle tree, be not too heavy for the horse/pony and most of all it must fit the horse/pony.

Definitions of Vehicles



Figure 1 – Jogger

A **jogger**, shown in Figure 1 above, is a two wheeled, unsprung, pneumatic tyred vehicle, usually for training or pleasure.



Figure 2 – Buggy

A **buggy**, shown in Figure 2 above, is a four wheeled, hard tyred vehicle, pulled by one horse or a pair and can be single or two seated. The type of buggy shown would be used primarily in the show ring.



Figure 3 – Sulky

A **sulky, gig or jinker**, shown in Figure 3 above, is a two wheeled, hard tyred vehicle and seats one or two people. A sulky can be drawn by a single horse and also for a tandem (one behind the other – leader and wheeler).



Figure 4 – Viceroy

A **Viceroy**, shown in Figure 4 above, is a four wheeled vehicle with pneumatic tyres and typically seats one person. It has an elevated seat raised on narrow timber and steel sections, or a box wagon, which has a small box similar to that of a piano box buggy.



Figure 5 – CDE Vehicles

A **CDE vehicle** is a two wheeled (Figure 5, left) or four wheeled (Figure 5, right) hard tyred modern steel vehicle with adjustable wheel widths.

Basic Light Harness with a Freestyle Breast Collar

Most newcomers to driving will only have one set of harness which is used for work and for 'best'. To obtain the best value for money, many will purchase synthetic harness. Caution should be exercised when buying second-hand harness as it has sometimes been incorrectly stored or excessively worn, resulting in it becoming unsafe.

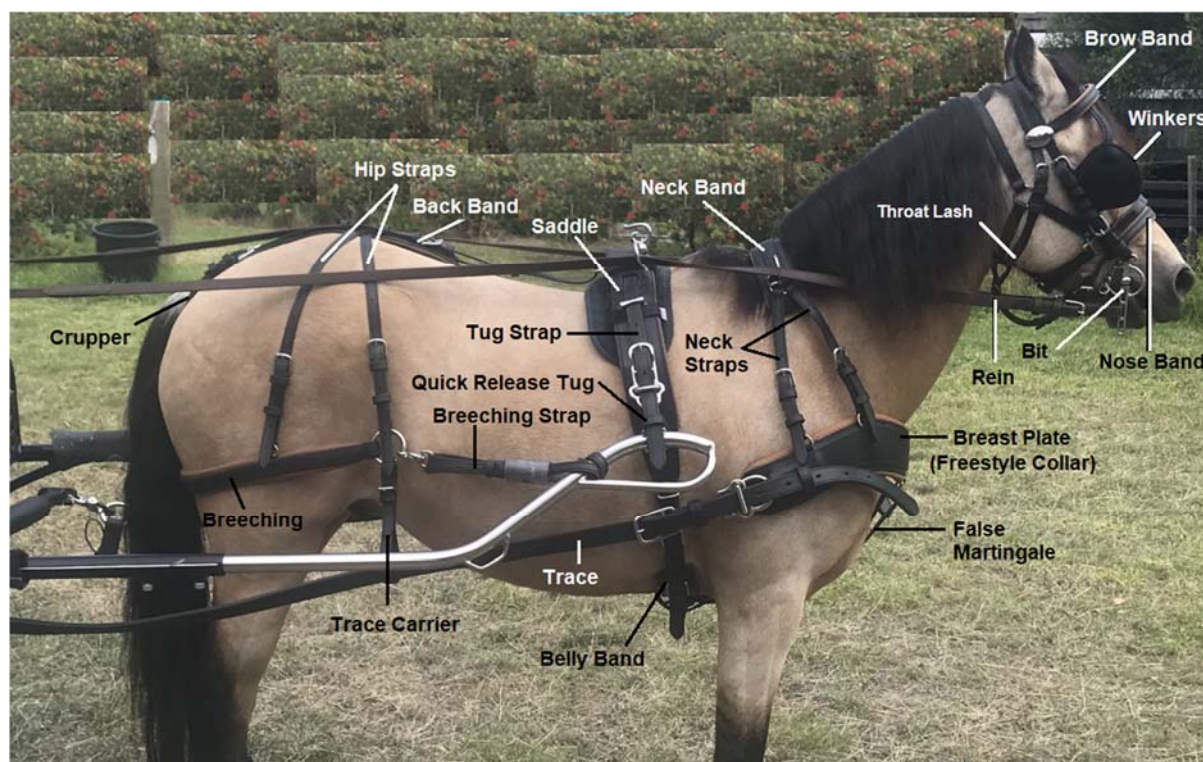


Figure 6 – Basic Harness

The basic harness and its components are shown in Figure 6 above.

Fitting harness correctly is very important. If possible, get a coach or knowledgeable person to assist you with fitting the harness, or attend a school organised by a carriage driving Club. Before fitting the harness, examine it carefully for wear. Particular areas to examine are the girth (belly band), where the reins and bridle connect to the bit, both ends of the traces and breeching straps. Broken harness can cause accidents.

The breast collar should be adjusted so that it fits just above the point of the shoulder. It is better if it is a little high than too low.

The saddle is fitted just behind the wither. Like any saddle, no portion of it should come in contact with the horse's spine. The belly band is firm, but not as tight as for the girth of a riding saddle. The belly band should allow for some movement.

The breeching acts as the brake. It should be about half way between the dock and hock; low enough not to interfere with the horse's tail and high enough not to interfere with hind leg movement.

There are a lot of videos on the Web that shows the correct procedure for fitting and checking the harness for a proper fit. As an example, look at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RJs_tdlIM



Figure 7 – Driving Bridle

A driving bridle, as shown in Figure 7 above, has three main components – winkers, noseband and bit. The winkers should be adjusted so that the centre of the winker is adjacent to, but not in contact with, the eyeball. The noseband performs two functions. It should hold the cheek pieces close to the horse's head so that the horse has no vision to the rear and, it assists in keeping the horse's mouth closed. A properly mouthed horse will respond better to a 'kind' bit rather than a harsh bit. The bar bit is normally kinder than a jointed snaffle. The Liverpool bit is a common, but not a mandatory driving bit. Should a horse start resisting the bit, check its teeth to see if they are the cause of the problem.

Note also in Figure 7 that underneath the driving bridle is a headstall. It is common practice, especially in the Marathon section of a CDE for a headstall to be worn under the driving bridle and a lead rope readily available in case there is a need.

If you wish to use leather; be aware it will need constant care. After use, a damp cloth will quickly remove dust, grime and sweat. Pay particular care to buckle areas. Show harness needs similar care after use. Always wash with saddle soap before storing. It is preferable to hand wash harness, particularly when storing for long periods.

Synthetic harness can be simply washed with detergent and water, also some cleaners suitable for vinyl will give it a shine.

It is absolutely necessary to check harness on a regular basis. Neglected harness is dangerous.

Measuring for a Harness

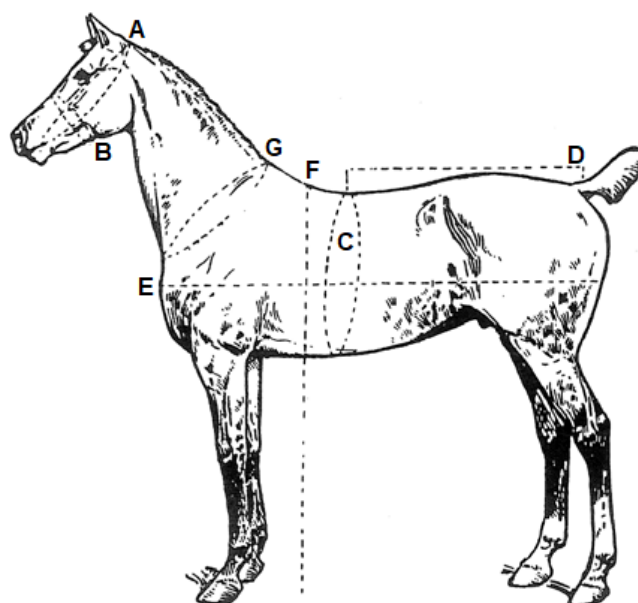


Figure 8 – Harness Measurement

Measurements, together with the body weight and type of horse and the style of vehicle the harness is intended for will enable the harness maker to satisfactorily fill your order.

When asking for measurements for harness fitting, the specific measurements the harness maker or retailer will require are shown in Figure 8 above and are:

- A. From corner of mouth, over the poll, to other corner of mouth
- B. Length around nose, taken about two fingers width below the prominent cheek bone
- C. Length of girth
- D. Length of back from position of harness saddle to base of tail
- E. Length of horse, from point of shoulder to buttock
- F. Height at wither.

Measurements for a Collar

- G. Length from top to base of neck at proper position of collar (Figure 7). Line should be straight, not conforming to horse's body.

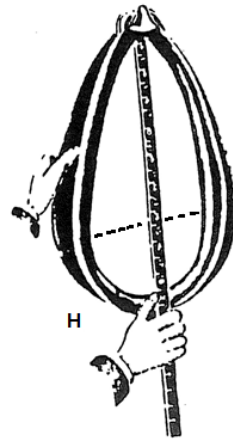


Figure 9 – Collar Measurement

H. If possible, measure a collar which fits the horse, using the inside dimension of the collar, as shown in Figure 9 above.

Bits

It is ACDS policy that bitless driving is not allowed.

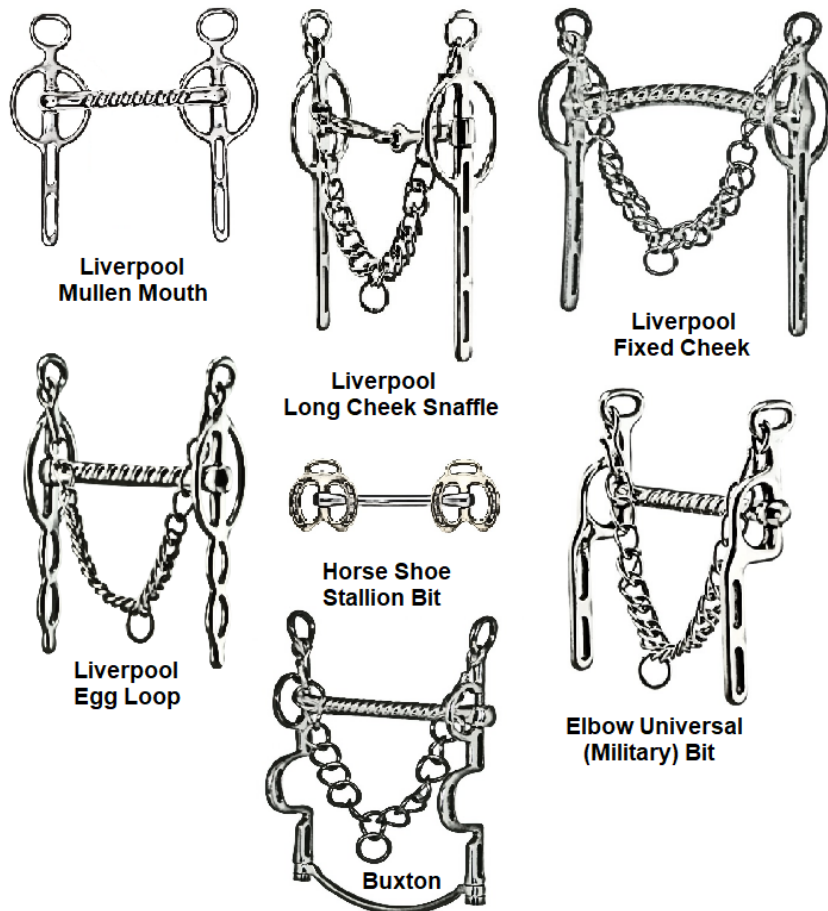


Figure 10 – Driving Bits

A configuration of driving bits is shown at Figure 10. The most popular bits used are variations of Liverpool bits.

If your horse or pony persists in carrying their head too high (star gazing), or too low and near their chest (overbent), or to the side constantly or continually throws their head about, you should at least consider the possibility that their mouth is uncomfortable.

Firstly, have their teeth checked by either a vet or an equine dentist.

Secondly, check that the bit you are using fits the horse (is not too wide or too narrow) and that it is in the correct position in the animal's mouth. If it's too low, there is a chance of them getting their tongue over the bit and if it's too high; it is just plain uncomfortable.

Thirdly, if it is curb-bit, make absolutely sure that the curb-chain is lying FLAT, not twisted and not too tight.

In order to fit the curb-chain correctly, attach it to the hook on the off-side and then (from the near-side) turn the chain clockwise until all the links are lying flat. Then attach the bottom of the last link to the hook on the near-side allowing the chain to lie in the chin groove and still flat. The chain should not be too tight and should allow the reins to pull the cheek piece of the bit to an angle of about 45 degrees with the line of the mouth. The lower the reins are fitted on the bar of the bit the looser, not tighter, the chain should be. If you move the reins down to the middle-bar, the rule should be to let the curb-chain out by at least a link at the same time.

Not all horses and ponies need a Liverpool bit. Drivers must try to discover which bit suits their pony best and then by trial and error, discover the best height in the mouth for that particular pony and that particular bit. No horse or pony will work really well if his mouth is hurting, so it is well worthwhile to take some trouble in making them comfortable.

Another aspect to consider is your hands. Not all of us are perfect in this respect and a little elasticity and give and take instead of a rigid hold can work wonders!

Hints for Beginners

The ideal way to learn to drive is to begin with a good quiet horse and to have an experienced driver or accredited coach supervise you. Unfortunately, there are numerous pitfalls along the way and often it takes an experienced eye to see them. In many cases, after you have been driving for some time, you realise that some lessons from an experienced coach early on would have provided much further education to you than you realised at the time. Bad habits you and your horse have developed could have been eliminated early on in your driving career.

You must have a safe vehicle, strong harness and familiarity with the functions of each piece of harness. Learn the correct procedure for harnessing the horse and putting the horse into carriage and taking the horse out of the carriage. If you always do this the same way, then hopefully you will never commit such grave mistakes as undoing the reins or removing the winkers while your horse is still harnessed to the carriage (No steering – no control).

Once the horse is in the vehicle you should immediately gather the reins and take your seat as you can only fully control your horse from the seat with the reins in your hands. You may think you have control while holding the reins on the ground but if the horse gets a fright you could be knocked down and find there is little you can do to stop them running away with the vehicle. Always make sure you are seated in the vehicle and in control of the horse before taking on any passengers. At the end of the journey, make the passengers dismount before you relinquish control of the horse.

The essence of good driving is to help and guide your horse to transport you properly and safely. You should concentrate on the horse whilst driving and try to anticipate their reaction to anything alarming. Used softly and firmly, your voice can be a very valuable aid but excess shouting rarely does any good. It is better to drive very positively past something frightening rather than to hesitate and let the horse take the initiative. The driver's hands should provide the horse with firm, tactful control and guidance; especially when negotiating slippery ground, going down-hill or travelling at speed. It is essential to maintain sufficient contact to help the horse to keep their balance and footing.

To negotiate any steep down-hill grade, steady the horse at the top and have them fully under control before they have to take the weight of the vehicle. It is very easy to destroy a horse's confidence by failing to give them support when they need it.

Regretfully there are a number of animals that have not been taught to rein-back. Not understanding what is required of them, they often resist rather violently when they are forcibly pulled back by the mouth. This is a sure way to teach them to rear in harness. Try to teach your horse what you expect of them before you put them in the vehicle. Even when they understand rein-back in long reins, they still have to be given confidence that when they are in the vehicle, they are able to push it back as well.

Be patient. What you are doing probably does not make a lot of sense to the horse. Sometimes it may help to stop in front of a gate, which opens back towards the horse – it may enforce some sense in reining back in this situation. Don't ask them to rein back uphill or on a heavy surface.

Try to be reasonable in what you ask of your horses and ponies, especially when they are young and inexperienced. If you are patient and don't ask too much too soon, they will reward you a thousandfold later on. Remember, it is all too easy to ruin a horse or pony; but it's something to be proud of to train a good one.

With the benefit of some help and advice, the application of your own common sense and the co-operation of a good horse, it is possible to learn to be a capable, considerate driver. The way is then open to many avenues of involvement; whether you choose the finesse of the show ring, the fruition of training in a dressage arena, the excitement of combined driving or the pleasure of Club outings, you will have discovered an immensely enjoyable way to share the company of your horse or pony.

Holding the Reins

Holding the reins properly is an important part of driving your horse and is the contact or major communication between you and your horse. Using the reins properly, along with voice and the use of a whip as an aid, are essential parts of controlling your horse.

Many drivers hold their reins where there is no 'locking' of the rein to ensure that it stays in place.



Figure 11 – Locking the Rein

If your reins continually slip through your fingers, there won't be a steady, even contact with the horse's mouth. To best control the length of the reins as well as ensuring there is a constant connection with your horse, place the rein on your forefinger and lock it into place using your thumb, similar to that shown in Figure 11 above

There is a need to create an even level line from your elbows, through the hands and all the way to the horse's mouth. Your shoulders need to stay relaxed and at your sides, so that your elbows are at a ninety-degree angle. This will enable you to create a horizontal line to your horse's mouth.

There are many ways to hold the reins and guidance from an experienced coach will put on the path or righteousness.



Figure 12 – One Handed Grip

One of the configurations is shown in Figure 12 above. This is a one-handed grip and it is probably best to use this one after a fair degree of experience.

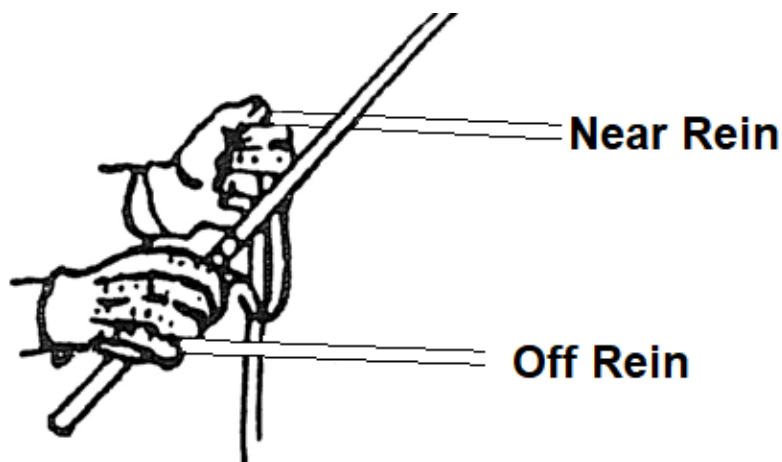


Figure 13 – Locking the Reins

Figure 13 above shows a grip that most beginners would use. The rein is locked on the Near Rein as described previously and the off rein is locked in between the little finger and one next to it and up over the forefinger and locked in by the thumb and the whip. It is best to practice holding the whip at all times. Drivers cannot use their legs like they do when riding and the whip is used to gently stroke the horse to give direction. Along with voice control and use of the reins, it is used to control your horse.

In Graded Driven Dressage, when driving obstacles in the Marathon section of a CDE or driving Cones, it is compulsory for drivers to have their whip in hand.

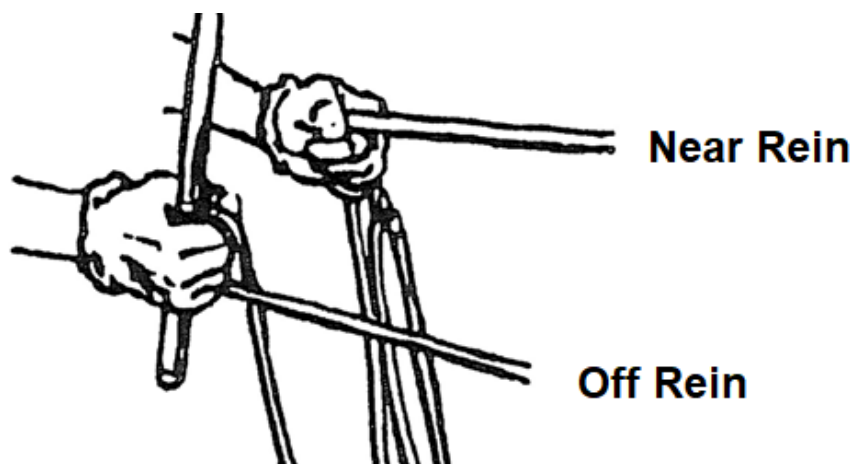


Figure 14 – Alternative Method

An alternative method of holding the reins is shown in Figure 14 above. It is similar to that shown in Figure 13, except the hand holding the off rein has the whip in a vertical position. Your thumb and your forefinger will be carrying the weight of the reins and defines the length that is needed for proper contact with your horse.

Now that you have proper hold of your reins, you can concentrate on driving your horse properly.

You must be able to easily collect your reins if they are dropped. Most drivers will place the loop at the end of their reins through their little finger, as shown in Figure 14 above, or they will sit on the end portion of the reins, allowing enough movement to control the horse but be able to retrieve the reins if needed.

Driving Multiples

For More Experienced Drivers

Any 'single' driver who has ever tried driving a well-trained multiples combination knows how challenging it can be. Getting to know your horses before putting them together as either a pair, tandem or team is a great advantage.

Driving a multiple should be a great pleasure and not an exhausting struggle as often seen.

It is highly recommended that if you are contemplating driving multiples of any type, then you need to at least get some experience driving a single horse or pony, then acquire some lessons from an experienced coach on the intricacies of driving multiples.

Matching the horses can quite often prove the most difficult task of all; the multiple has to be evenly matched in size, general conformation, temperament and stride. Putting a short striding horse together with a long striding horse can often result in annoying problems, either causing the long striding horse to slow down to a snail's pace, or even more frustrating, causing the short striding horse to break pace to keep up. Multiples should be moving as a unit, with harmony and rhythm.

Get to know each individual horse, either by driving as a single, by lunging, long reining or by riding. If you are dealing with a pair, experiment which side they go best on. A tandem or a team must have forward moving horses as leaders; quite often nervous horses settle down and go better when they are with other horses. Once going, you find the position that suits each horse, however, it is important to change positions occasionally to prevent stiffness or bad habits. When problems arise, try to nip them in the bud. They tend to grow if you are not careful.

Many problems with pairs, tandems and teams are caused by incorrect adjustment of the reins. There are a lot of combinations of reins and again, it is best to get some insight into this from an experienced driver or coach.

Your coach may discuss with you the need to adjust your reins several times during a drive and with practice this can be carried out in seconds. The coach may suggest a set of reins that have sufficient holes for adjustment – 11 holes, 4 cm apart or that you need to set the reins in a neutral position, with the coupling rein 12 cm longer than the outside rein for horses and 8 cm longer for ponies (13 – 14 hands). It can be confusing.

A well-trained multiple, with all horses responding, are a real pleasure to drive. Be prepared to invest many long, hard hours of training to achieve this goal. It certainly is well worth the effort.

The Single Horse – Gaits at a Glance

The Halt

At the halt the horse should be motionless, yet attentive and ready to respond promptly to the driver. They should stand straight, with weight distributed evenly on all four legs, fore and hind legs side by side.

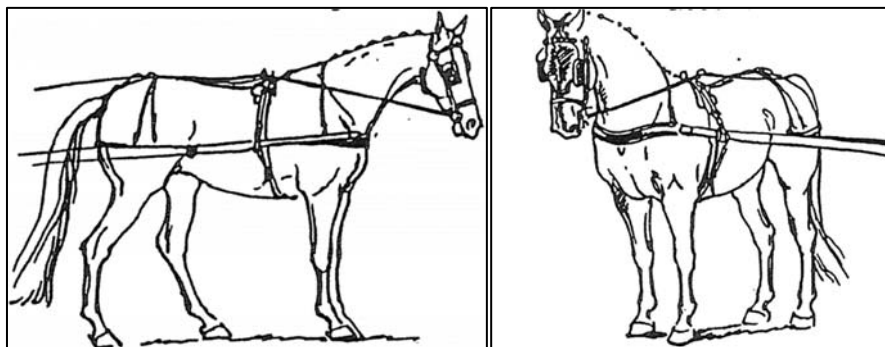


Figure 15 – Halts

Figure 15, left, shows a poor example of a halt – the halt is not square, whereas Figure 15, right, is a good example of a halt – square and attentive

The Rein-Back

The aids for the rein-back, or backing up, in harness are the verbal command, “back” and a light pull on the reins. In a correct rein-back the horse engages its hindquarters and takes clearly defined backward steps. To do this well the horse must first be on the bit and at least “thinking forward” at the halt. If the horse is inattentive at the halt and not on the bit, it is likely to go back crooked and get above the bit.

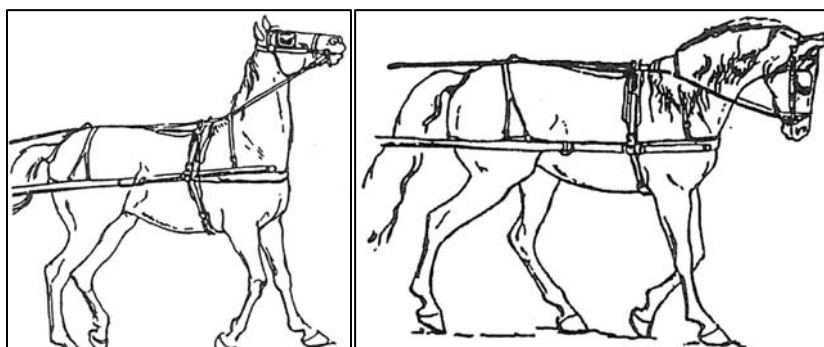


Figure 16 - Reinback

Figure 16, left, is showing resistance to a rein-back, whilst Figure 16, right, shows a rein-back that is properly executed.

The Walk

A regular unconstrained walk of moderate length. The horse, remaining in a light steady contact with the bit walks energetically, but calmly with even and determined steps with the hind feet touching the ground in front of the footprints of the forefeet. The walk is a marching pace in which the footfalls of the horse’s feet follow one another in a maintained four-time beat. A free, regular and unconstrained walk of moderate extension is required. Ambling and/or pacing, when both legs on the same side (lateral pairs) move in unison, or approximate unison must be heavily faulted. It is neither a true walk nor trot.

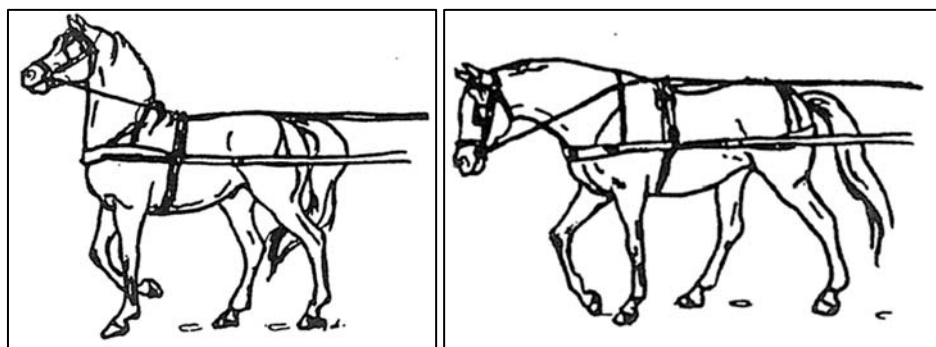


Figure 17 – Walk

Figure 17, left, is an example of a short restricted walk; there's no relaxation and the hind foot does not step into or over the print of front foot. Figure 17, right, shows a free forward walk; hind foot oversteps the print of the front foot, head is down and working through the hind quarters.

The Working Trot

The working trot should be forward moving, straight and even with knee action. Plenty of hind leg action using hock to complement front movement and not just appearing to be running behind.

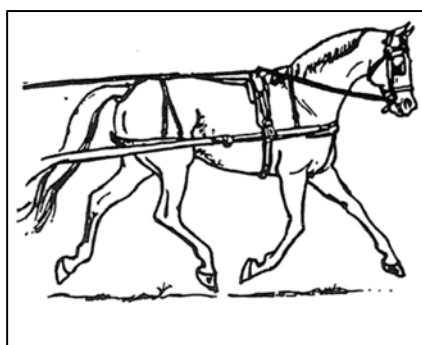


Figure 18 – Working Trot

Figure 18 above shows a good working trot, with the horse working through its hind quarters and showing good leg action

Extended Trot

The horse lengthens his stride to cover as much ground as possible as a result of greater impulsion from the hindquarters. The driver allows the horse, remaining "on the bit" without leaning on it, to lengthen its frame to gain ground, with the nose slightly in front of the vertical. The hind feet must clearly over-track the prints made by the forefeet.

The horse must remain in balance while maintaining the same rhythm with steps of equal size. Going faster is not asked for and is a severe fault. The horse needs to lengthen its stride. A light contact is desirable. The neck is extended and as a result of greater impulsion from the hindquarters, the horse uses their shoulders, covering more ground at each step without action becoming higher. Hind legs must be as strongly engaged as the forelegs. If the horse runs, they must be slowed down and the rhythm corrected, however horses must show some engagement of hindquarters otherwise they will be penalised for running.

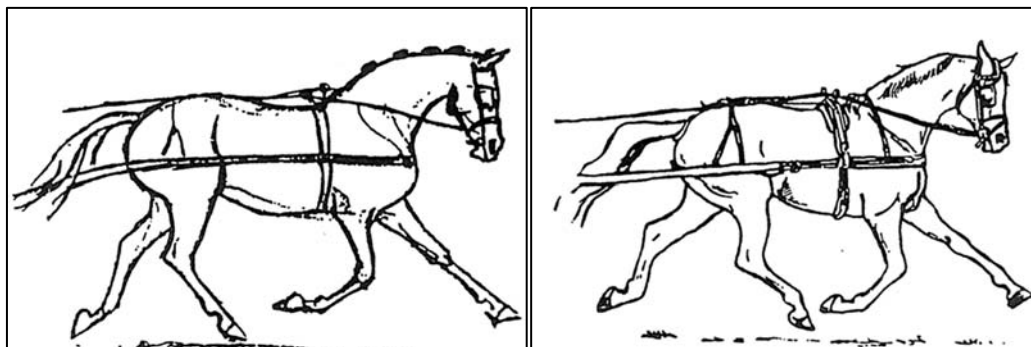


Figure 19 – Extended Trot

Figure 19, left is a false extension. The horse lacks hind end engagement, where Figure 19, right shows good hind quarter engagement.

A BRIEF GUIDE TO SHOWING

Show driving events, often termed harness classes, can be seen at most agricultural shows, including Royal Shows and are often divided into light and heavy horse sections.

Programs typically include classes for turnouts, for horses and ponies and for drivers. In turnout classes the horse, vehicle, harness and general appearance are judged, whilst the other classes concentrate on the performances of the horses/ponies or on the drivers.

Classes for light harness horses and ponies are usually divided into height groups and may also be divided by breed such as hackney and non-hackney. Horses and ponies are judged according to the way they perform at different paces in their individual workouts. Vehicles often used in the light harness show ring include viceroys and buggies (4 wheelers) and sulkies, jinkers and gigs (2 wheelers).

Heavy horses are catered for in the Business and Delivery classes, with divisions of classes often made according to trade or to the type of heavy horse. Tradesman's carts and vans, breaking in gigs, delivery wagons and drays are typically seen and can be pulled by a single horse as well as pairs and teams.

For people interested in showing, the ACDS has prepared Competitor's Code of Conduct, Rules for Show Driving Competitors and Accident Prevention documents for judges, drivers and interested people. They can be found on the ACDS website at:

www.australiancarriagedrivingsociety.org

A BRIEF GUIDE TO COMBINED DRIVING

Combined Driving Events (CDEs) can take place over two or three days although some shortened one day competitions are becoming popular. Competitions consist of driven dressage, marathon (or cross country) and cones obstacle driving. The marathon phase includes up to eight obstacles, which are driven against the clock. The marathon and cones obstacle driving phases are of most interest to spectators.

If the CDE is run over 2 days, typically on Day 1, the dressage and cones obstacle driving is held (you drive dressage and then immediately drive cones obstacles) and then on Day 2, you drive the marathon phase. Most CDEs in Australia are run over 2 days

National and State Championships are classified as Level 1 CDEs and are typically run over 3 days. During a three day event, on Day 1, the dressage is run, on Day 2, the marathon is run and on Day 3, the cones obstacles are run.

For people interested in participating in a CDE, you should be aware that there is an ACDS Rule Book that you must be familiar with. It is the driver's responsibility to be familiar with the rules, not the groom/s or anyone else assisting you. You should download your own set of rules and learn them. Many states/clubs run updates for members to become familiar with the Rules. Be aware that Rules can be updated on an annual basis.

One way that potential participants can learn about CDEs is to offer to groom for someone in your club (there are always drivers looking for grooms) or to come along and volunteer to assist at an event. Once again, organising committees are always looking for assistance.

To be a groom or assist the organising committee, you don't need to be a member of the ACDS and the ACDS insurance will cover you if the event is sanctioned, i.e. minuted by the club.

Fitness Training

It takes at least eight weeks for a horse to become fit enough for a marathon, assuming that the horse is brought in straight out of the paddock. However, it is not possible to give hard and fast rules or set a standard training program to follow, as much depends on variable factors – the type of terrain where the event will take place (will it be a rough, hilly course, or flat and easy going?), the season of the year, the daily weather, the time available to the driver in which to exercise the horse, the previous experience of the horse and driver, etc, etc.

Before commencing training make sure the horse is in good health. It is a good idea to have your Vet check them over, give them a worm drench and rasp their teeth if necessary. Do not start their training until they are shod and do make sure that you have a competent farrier.

If you are inexperienced, seek advice on the types of feed to feed your horse, how often to feed and how much to feed. Also, ask them for advice on what to watch out for when feeding the horse.

All this costs money, but there should be no penny-pinching where good health and a fit horse are concerned.

The overriding consideration in any training program should be to do things gradually. For the first few days don't ask your horse to do much more than 20 minutes work and half of that should be at the walk. Remember that they will be using muscles, especially those used in load pulling, which may have not been used for a while. Gradually build up to longer times and more trotting, so that by the end of week six, more time can be spent trotting than walking.

Be careful not to trot fast on hard roads until they harden up; it is easy to produce lameness this way.

Fresh water must be available at all times, though a word of warning here: don't allow free access to water while your horse is still hot after work. Just a few sips at first, then let them cool down, then half a bucket, otherwise colic could result. For those horses that are fussy and won't drink the strange water when you arrive at an event, try a 'little bit of molasses in the bucket' trick for a week before you go away and continue it when you get there.

The trainer should study the indicators by which the fitness of the horse may be determined. The main ones that may actually be counted are the heart and respiration rates, the relationship between the two, and the time it takes for them to return to normal after hard work. The easiest way to count the heart rate is with a stethoscope. The heart is best heard low down on the left side of the chest wall near the girth area. Practice on yourself! Time it with the second hand or a stopwatch for a full minute. The respiratory rate can be readily counted just by observing the movement of the ribs. Watch your horse when you return from a training run. The respiratory rate should never equal or be greater than the heart rate – or you have a very unfit or sick horse.

Your powers of observation and your knowledge of your own horse are so important. Do they eat up all their feed? Observe them at rest and then, say, 15 minutes after hard work. Are they still puffing and breathing rapidly? Are they sweating profusely? Do they look tense, anxious and distressed, or relaxed and calm? Watch the corners of their mouth and girth for signs of rubbing; the neck strap, breast collar and saddle all take strain and could cause rubbing, especially in a horse fresh out of the paddock.

Well padded harness is good insurance. They will not pass the vet inspection if they have raw areas where harness is in contact with skin, nor, of course, if they are lame; so, don't get carried away with heart rates and neglect your general good sense, horsemanship and powers of observation. Your horse is your friend; treat them as such with all the thoughtfulness and consideration that you can and you will both be well rewarded.

Advice to Grooms

Someone has asked you to be a groom in a CDE; it can be enjoyable or something you may never want to try again. If you happen to be a family groom, some of the jobs before the event will be easier to organise. If not, some time will have to be spent in planning how and when certain jobs will be done. Make sure that you talk to the driver to find out exactly what they want you to do. Many drivers will want to do everything themselves as in the end, they are the person responsible if something goes wrong.

The preparation for the event will involve the horse, the vehicle, harness and any other incidentals like food. These responsibilities will have to be worked out and jobs allocated, so you can eliminate the "I thought you were going to ..." panics at an event.

Assuming that you are grooming for a single, make sure you get to know the horse, leading it, picking up feet, grooming and harnessing up. If you really want to make friends, feed them, either meals or little tidbits for rewards. Also try to learn any quirks of character or phobias. At an event you may be left 'holding the baby' for instance while, being measured, or at a vet check.

Next, find out if you will be responsible for harness. If you are, there are unfortunately no short cuts to getting it looking good (see Presentation). The easiest way to keep harness clean is to wipe it over quickly after each outing. This is easier with synthetic harness. The vehicle should also be hosed down after each use. Never let mud dry on a vehicle if possible. Also try not to dust just with a duster, use a moist chamois or a cloth with a furniture polish; dry dust can scratch painted surfaces.

You should practice with the stopwatch or other timepiece you will be using on the marathon and ensure you are familiar with the times when you commence the various stages of the competition. Decide what to take with you and check each item as you pack it away. The list should include harness and spares, tools for the vehicle, shifting spanners, screw drivers etc, brake fluid (if your vehicle is fitted with hydraulic brakes), grooming gear, buckets, hay nets a bucket and any veterinary needs for your horse.

At the venue, either the driver or you will be handed a 'competitor bag' containing starting times for all competitions, a map and diagrams of the obstacles and a competitor number along with any meal tickets and badges or stickers. Don't lose it. Do make yourself familiar with all information. Make sure you know how to get to the Presentation area. In larger events or events combined with ridden events, this can be difficult.

On the marathon course inspection, you should have checked all start and finish places and walked the obstacles with the driver several times, making sure you know which way the driver intends to drive the obstacle so that if the driver forgets their way, you can advise them. Make sure you discuss with the driver any instructions they wish you to give them and whether they will be giving you any instructions, such as what they will tell you if you need to get down off the vehicle to repair or check equipment. You will be handed a time card – keep it dry and in a pocket that can be buttoned or under your helmet.

Helmets are compulsory in Australia and it is recommended you buy your own helmet rather than borrow one as out on the marathon, you can be wearing one for 1 1/2 hours and if it is not comfortable, you will know about it. If you are going to buy a helmet, check the Australian safety standard for equestrian use.

In case you have to cut a horse out of their harness in an accident, make sure you have a sheath or pocket knife you can get at quickly and easily. Note which straps to undo.

When you get to the final competition, Cone Obstacle Driving (or the Cones), grooms are not allowed to walk the course. Do not give the driver any indication of the course or they will be awarded 10 penalty points (or 10 seconds if it is a time competition)

Presentation

When preparing a turnout for Presentation, pay attention to many aspects of your exhibit. These include condition and appearance of horse, cleanliness of vehicle, and correct dress of driver and grooms.

1. Horse

To prepare your horse for Presentation, start with rugging and grooming them daily. Approximately a week before the event, shampoo the horse at least three times. Trim excess hair from fetlocks, bridle path, ears and muzzle areas to help outline the finer points of your horse. This naturally depends on the breed as with some breeds it is correct to retain hair in the areas mentioned. Some horses' manes should be plaited – a job made easier if the mane has been thinned by pulling. Small plaits, ending up with an uneven number, are ideal. Depending on the breed of your horse, running plaits and flowing manes are also acceptable. Tails should not be plaited.

Shoeing is important. All shoes should be in good condition and tight fitting. They must be able to stand up to a full Marathon. The frog area should be cleaned out and painted with hoof oil. The hoof area itself should be thoroughly cleaned and hoof clear or blackener may be applied to enhance appearance.

2. Harness

Presentation harness should be matching, clean and a good fit. Never use oil or grease dressing on the harness. Saddle soap is very good. After using saddle soap, simply apply a good quality shoe polish and then buff off with a good brush.

Brass buckles look better if cleaned the day before the event. Brass polish or brass wadding cleaner is ideal to get that shine. A vehicle with brass furnishings should be matched with brass harness, and similarly nickel with nickel.

When fitting harness to your horse, it should not be necessary to use the first or last hole of any main strap, both in case of parting at a hole or of needing further adjustment. All straps should be in their keepers.

3. Vehicle

The Judge will be looking for a nicely painted and clean vehicle. The vehicle must be in sound condition and suit the horse. If lamp brackets are fitted to the vehicle, lamps should be fitted, complete with candles and matches. In traditional lamps, the wick of any lamp should be 'burnt' – it will be one thing a judge will look for.

4. Dress

Overall, the outfits worn should blend with the horse and vehicle. It should present a harmonious appearance. Drivers should wear neat, practical street attire with hat, gloves and apron (or knee rug). A whip of suitable length is essential.

Grooms (or passengers) should wear riding clothes or neat, practical street attire, with hat and gloves. Note: – period costume is not suitable for Combined Driving Events.

Training for Dressage

What is Dressage?

Dressage is the training of a horse – a means of strengthening and suppling the whole body of the horse and of perfecting their movements and their obedience.

You will be surprised to be told that your training for dressage should take place every time you drive your horse. In the past there seemed to be an attitude that divides dressage from the rest of driving (it's a bit like going to the dentist – only done under protest), when in reality it should be an integral part of that driving. In fact, it is the very foundation upon which everything else is built.

This does not mean that you should go into the dressage arena everyday – far from it. What it does mean is that all of your driving should incorporate dressage. There is no doubt that obedience and deportment are the important end results of dressage and the dressage test simply tries to find out how far advanced your horse's training is, while at the same time trying to discover how well you are able to drive them. Maybe if everyone understands this, they will enter the dressage arena with a more positive attitude and in a more relaxed state and the results will consequently be better.

Before going on to find out how the above may be achieved, it is essential that you know your dressage test when you go to a competition. If you do not know where you are going, there is no hope of you driving well. The test should follow on from one movement to the next and it cannot do that if you are constantly wondering where to go next.

The next thing you must think of is the way you sit in the vehicle you drive at competitions. If you do all your preliminary work in a jogger it is not going to be much help to your driving. The reason is that you are usually down behind your horse where it is impossible to sit properly. The seat in driving is important, just as it is in riding. You should be able to sit up straight supported by your own spine (not by the back of the seat) and with your feet placed on the foot-rail or foot-board of the vehicle. When sitting like this, you should be able to see where you are going and you should also be able to achieve a direct contact with your horse's mouth; not an indirect contact with the reins running over the rein-rail or over their rump.

The way to better driving is to practice better driving, just as the way to better dressage is to practice dressage each day in whatever driving you are doing. In this way your horse will find nothing surprising in being asked to do everyday things at a competition and you will be so used to doing things correctly that the test will hold no terrors for you either.

How is this Achieved?

It seems that a lot of people when getting their horses fit before an event, tend to think of training purely in terms of the kilometres covered, not the quality of movement that goes into covering those kilometres. If you practise your own correct driving and try to get correct movement from your horse, you will be achieving much more. Try to do this in conjunction with smooth transitions from one pace to another; halts executed at the exact place you have mentally chosen on the route and maintained for as long as you choose. Rein backs can be practiced at gateways, where the gate opens towards you (so that the horse may better understand what is required of them). Put all this together and you are well on the way to mastering the rudiments of the test.

As their fitness and your competence improve you can begin to ask for a few lengthened strides (the beginnings of extension) and then come back to working trot with a smooth transition. When you feel he is muscling up really well and working with true impulsion, you can begin asking for collection, but again only for a short distance and always concentrating on maintaining impulsion and achieving a smooth transition back to working trot or to walk. You can also practice driving straight at all times and this involves keeping your horse 'straight' on corners as well as on straight lines.

This may seem like a contradiction in terms, but it is what judges look for in the arena – a straight horse – i.e. one which is straight from their nose to their tail on straight lines and curves in the direction in which they are going on curves.

Many horses are stiffer on one side than the other and while they will curve nicely in one direction; they will resist going the other way. This is something you must try to rectify by means of groundwork to supple the horse. For you to do this properly you really need to learn from an expert. You cannot learn only by reading. People who are involved with ridden dressage can be very helpful, as can others who are really competent riders. It is interesting to note that in Europe, the best harness horses are ridden as well as driven. Sometimes it is much easier for a rider to teach a horse what is wanted than it is for a driver. Try to get someone who knows about dressage (and if possible, also about driving) to watch you and your horse working and to tell you how you are progressing. It is almost impossible to improve without the help of an observer/teacher or a video camera or both.

Other things to remember are to have your horse's teeth checked regularly (about every six months) and filed if necessary. Many horses resist the bit and they can never be a pleasure to drive, or do well at dressage, while this is the case. Sometimes the resistance is caused by pain from sharp tooth edges and sometimes by the bit, which does not suit the horse. It is well worth taking the trouble to try and find the bit that suits. Unfortunately, it would be true to say that sometimes the resistance is caused by the totally unsympathetic hands of the driver. Be honest with yourself and try to decide perhaps you could be at fault here.

To help your accuracy in the arena try marking out a 20 metre circle in a suitable area. Remember that the dressage arena is 40 metres across and so the centre line gives you one edge of your 20 metre circle. When entering the arena make an effort to drive a straight line to X. You cannot do this if you make a hurried entry or not bothering to line yourself up first and you cannot maintain a straight line if you do not drive your horse forward into their bridle.

Important points to remember:

- Try to observe horse movement at every opportunity.
- Always remember that in a working trot, the foot print of the hind foot should fall in the print of the forefoot
- In collected trot, the stride is shorter but it has a great deal of impulsion.
- In extended trot, the stride is lengthened but the rhythm remains the same.
- Regularity is a requirement throughout all tests and at all paces. Obedience is imperative, as is accuracy.

What is Impulsion?

If a horse is to move well, the all important impulsion must come from behind. It must come up through the hocks to the immensely powerful and muscular quarters, along the back and through the neck to the mouth holding the bit. The hands holding the reins attached to the bit in the horse's mouth can then control that power. For the power to come through the horse's back, the horse must have a rounded top-line, not a hard, stiff angular top-line such as is too often seen.

This rounded top-line is especially important if collection is to be achieved. Many people seem to think that collection comes from pulling the horse's head in and going more slowly, but it is the opposite. Collection may be attained by pushing the horse up into a resisting hand. This is not a pulling hand. The horse must have plenty of impulsion to begin collection and that impulsion must be maintained.

Dressage – a Point of View

The word Dressage simply means the training of the horse. The aim is to produce a calm, obedient, supple animal; making it a pleasure to ride or drive. How is this achieved? The answer is quiet persistence and consistency. You are developing a means of communication with your horse, but because their comprehension is limited and attention span very short, you have to be "on the ball" all the time. It takes concentration. Communication with your driving horse is through three aids – your voice, the whip and the reins.

Your voice is of enormous importance, using it to give commands, to give reward for cooperation, to chastise if doing something unacceptable and as a reassurance in circumstances worrying to the horse. It is necessary to persist continually when asking your horse to do something and reward with your voice immediately they show signs of cooperation. Likewise, show your displeasure with your voice while they are doing something incorrectly. They will come to understand when he is "not getting it right" and usually try to be co-operative. Displeasure with your voice does not include loud outbursts of frustrated fury!

When not pulling a vehicle, horses can do beautiful movements that are asked of them, however, we add a load and expect the horse to produce movements on command. The horse has to cope with the handicap of a load, plus understand in our language what we want of them. It is up to us to develop a set of signals and sounds that he can understand. It is also up to us to understand their signals. For a good partnership, two-way communication is a must; so, be observant and know when your horse is telling you something too.

To start with, dressage tests can be very nerve wracking, but do persist. The tests will become familiar and you and your horse will improve. Do get help from fellow drivers, schools, ridden dressage, etc.

Driving the Marathon

This is probably the most important part of a Combined Driving Event (CDE) and is invariably the most exciting. You will be keyed up and anxious to be on the move, but there will be less anxiety if you have done your homework well.

Official inspections are often not possible, particularly if the course goes through private property. Try to inspect as much of the course as you are permitted to as this will reveal hazardous areas and good going; the location of kilometre and directional markers and compulsory turning flags (CTF); physical features such as trees, gates, sheds etc, in relation to markers or flags. You should note particularly the location of the start and end of each Section and note the danger areas such as stones, logs, holes etc, which could easily overturn a vehicle travelling at speed.

It is essential that the Marathon obstacles are inspected in detail, at least twice (many people will walk the obstacles up to six times). When the driver and groom(s) determine the best route to take, it should be recorded on the obstacle sheet.

The shortest route possible is not always the fastest and must be determined according to the capability of the horse (or horses) and driver. Care must be taken to ensure that all gates are passed through in the proper sequence, including the start and finish gates. Remember a well maintained steady pace will often beat a fast pace as the horse may be baulked at the obstacle or stop because a turn is too tight.

Before you start you should make the following checks:

- Check your spares
- Check your horse's feet
- Remove lamps etc from the vehicle and in some older style vehicles it can be beneficial to tie down the springs
- If you have adjustable axles, consider adjusting the axles to the minimum allowable wheel width
- Check stopwatches (two at least) – one for Section times, one for hold-ups

You must be ready to start at the time allotted and present yourself about 15 minutes before the start for the gear check. It is advisable to carry the whip at all times as you will be penalised for not carrying the whip through the marathon obstacles, or through the start and finish lines of Sections. Your navigator (groom) will start one stopwatch at the starting time and check the starting time on the time card that is taken with you. Don't lose it.

You have started the Marathon and settled down to a good steady pace. The groom will control the speed according to the terrain allowing you to make up time on the good going and thus have more time for the difficult areas, bearing in mind the need to maintain the average speed calculated. You will have checked the distance from the last kilometre marker to the end of the Section to ensure that the correct time is allowed for that distance and so arrive within the time allowed.

The driver must ensure that their horse maintains the pace required for each Section, for a break of pace unchecked will result in penalties. This is particularly so for the walk sections; but Stewards and Judges may observe breaks of pace on all Sections. A groom dismounting in the walk sections incurs penalties so make sure they remain on board.

In attempting to maintain the speeds required to prevent incurring time penalties, the condition and fitness of the horse needs to be constantly borne in mind. There is no point pushing the horse to prevent time penalties if this results in elimination due to vetting out. At all times your prime consideration should be the welfare of your horse.

During the compulsory 10 minute rest (this information will be in your Competitor Pack), the groom should check the condition of the horse, harness, vehicle, etc. if the horse is sweating and water is available, a sponge down of affected areas is desirable and a small drink may be allowed.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you start the next Section at the proper time. The groom is responsible for carrying the time card and ensuring that the Steward records the correct time taken on each Section and the starting time for the next Section.

These records should be initialled by the steward and any discrepancies highlighted. This card is to be handed in at the end of the Marathon as a check for the scorer.

Section E is probably the most important phase of the Marathon and it is here that competitions are often won or lost. The groom should record any time held-up, which usually occurs at a marathon obstacle. There can only be one competitor in an obstacle at any time and you may be held up while the previous competitor completes it. The time held-up needs to be recorded and deducted from overall time taken for Section E.

You have already decided which route you will take and the driver (with the assistance of the groom) must ensure that you follow the gates in the correct sequence and in the right direction, including the start and finish gates. The groom will indicate the route to be taken if any confusion arises and while you will be guided by the groom, the final responsibility is yours.

Should it be necessary to put a groom (or grooms) down in an obstacle it is the driver who makes that decision and once down, the groom should remain down until you leave the obstacle. In some obstacles, it is necessary to develop alternatives; say a really fast way if you and the ponies are “firing”, or a conservative, safe way for when a Marathon is going poorly or your pony is tiring.

At the end of Section E, you must report to the vet check within 30 minutes of completion to have your horse passed for fitness – failure to do so will result in elimination. In the interim, ensure that your horse is given every attention necessary for their comfort and if necessary, seek veterinary help.

Remember that while your main aim is to win, you should not let this be at the expense of the enjoyment gained from competing and, above all, at the expense of the welfare of your horse. If you get and keep your priorities right, then you will have endless pleasure from Combined Driving.

Obstacle Driving (Cones Course)

Before you drive the cones, you should know the following:

- The distance of the course and the speed set.
- The time allowed.
- Which cones are measured?
- Whether or not it is a Fault or Time Competition and whether or not a drive-off is intended in the event of an equal first placing.
- The rules and their implications (e.g. any pace is allowed; your groom does not indicate the course or give any advice; you salute the judge before commencing and do not cross the starting line until the bell has sounded. You hold the whip throughout).

It is essential that you thoroughly inspect the course beforehand, walking it one or more times. During your inspection you will decide your strategy. In walking the course, you should walk exactly where the front feet of your horse will go so that you can correctly line up each pair of cones.

It is essential to have the wheels of your vehicle pass squarely through the cones to give the maximum clearance available. It is also essential that your wheels have passed completely through before you turn, otherwise the rear part of the wheel can dislodge a cone should you turn sharply.

As you have determined the exact route you will take during your inspection of the course, you should then aim to drive it accordingly. You should look well ahead and maintain a good, even pace. If you have not lined up an obstacle correctly, by the time you get there it is too late – don't look back to see the damage, it will only put you off line for the next one.

If you wish to record a fast time it is essential to maintain an even pace, but be prepared to go as fast as possible from the last obstacle through the finishing gates. A good extended trot will often be as fast as a rough canter.

You should know your horse or pony thoroughly, especially if you are going to ask them to go faster than a trot. If they get excited, don't, as you may not be able to control or trust them. If they enjoy it and some ponies certainly do, then you can ask them to do what you will, providing you keep at all times the welfare of your pony in mind. This welfare is more important than winning and it's not necessary to pull their head off or use the whip indiscriminately.

A BRIEF GUIDE TO DRIVEN DRESSAGE

The object of the Driven Dressage test is to judge the freedom, regularity of pace, harmony, impulsion, suppleness, lightness, ease of movement and correct bending of horses and ponies on the move. Dressage is basic training

The competitors are also judged on their style, accuracy and general command of their horse(s) and on the presentation of the turnout. The competition may be conducted as part of a CDE or as a stand-alone competition. Set movements and prescribed paces are required to be performed in a defined arena.

Driven Dressage arenas measure 100m x 40m (usually Open and Multiple but not exclusively) or 80m x 40m (usually Novice but not exclusively).

By definition, the object of dressage is the harmonious development of the physique and ability of the horse through progressive training. It seems that many people have now become involved in competitive driving without prior experience of ridden dressage. This means that they may not have a background that would help them with the systematic training of the horse. Rather, they have been thrown in at the deep end and expected to produce the requirements of an open test without knowledge of how to achieve even the basic principles.

The aim of the grading system in driven dressage is to encourage the correct training and development of the horse while offering achievable goals for the driver. The grading system structure is an effort to guide the competitor and the horse through this training in a continuous, systematic and progressive manner to achieve a calm, supple and obedient horse that is also confident, attentive and anxious to please in their work.

Viceroy's are not permitted in dressage at a CDE but are allowed in a Graded Driven Dressage Event (Dressage only) for a single horse/pony only. Passenger/grooms are not permitted.

Presentation, either at the halt or on the move, is permitted at a CDE but is not included in the scoring for Graded Driven Dressage.

For all classes, if driving in a vehicle not fitted with brakes, it must have breeching fitted. The only exception is a Viceroy at a Graded Driven Dressage event.

For people interested in Graded Driven Dressage, the ACDS has prepared an Australian Driven Dressage Rule Book and Guidelines, which includes an Accreditation Scheme for Judges, Movements and Terminology, Judging Driven Dressage Tests and an Aide Memoire for Driven Dressage Judges.

Please enter our website at:

www.australiancarriagedrivingsociety.org

A BRIEF GUIDE TO PLEASURE & ENDURANCE

A Pleasure drive can be simply a drive down a country lane, rail trails, a picnic or campfire shared with like-minded company held on one day, a weekend or even for a week in public reserves or private property. It is a great way to see the countryside, socialise, swap tips and educate a horse.

Other activities that can be enjoyed under the Pleasure & Endurance banner include navigation drives, endurance driving and good old-fashioned fun days where club members get together for a great social event.

You can participate in Park Drives, which gives you the opportunity to dress up and enjoy wonderful venues around Australia at a social outing. These can be described as a "Show on the Move" and are usually held in scenic surrounds such as Botanical Gardens or historical parks and gardens. A Park Drive was originally devised as a gentle competition for "private" vehicles (i.e. Non-tradesman).

Events may cater for several classes and always include at least one Period Turnout class. Vehicles may vary greatly from original through to the modern and any type of horse from the very small equine (VSE) to Clydesdale may be entered. The event is judged at the halt as a turnout and then entrants set off on a leisurely trot around the grounds for several kilometres.

Whilst out on the course, the manners of the horse and the skill of the driver or "whip" can be judged also.

For people interested in Pleasure & Endurance driving, the ACDS has prepared a Pleasure & Endurance Carriage Driving Guide that includes competitive activities, pleasure drives, historical drives and street parades. It can be found on the ACDS website at:

www.australiancarriagedrivingsociety.org

RESTORATION OF A VEHICLE

Most people will restore only one vehicle in their lifetime, so they must carefully consider what type of restoration they will attempt. Take your time in making the decision because your first restoration will be full of frustrations, skinned fingers and aching arms.

There are four types of restoration you have to think about as amateurs – show vehicle, competition vehicle, work vehicle or serviceable knockabout vehicle.

The work involved on the types mentioned is as follows:

- **Show vehicle:** Built to fit an individual horse. Must be well designed to cope with the weight of the driver, be painted and lined to a ribbon-winning standard and faultless in all aspects. After all you will be depending on this vehicle to win in a turnout class.
- **Competition vehicle** are relative newcomers to vehicle builders. A lot of experimental work has been put into building different types. It would be difficult here to describe the trends. There is no standard perfect competition vehicle. Short shafts, low centre of gravity, brakes, light in weight and easy entry are some of the considerations.
- **Work vehicles** are best described as fairly plain, serviceable and with the prospect of extra work on them to make them look good. They can be built up from odds and ends of metalwork, new shafts and either old restored wheels or new wheels and axle. They can be used without the finishing touches such as shaft tread, chrome work, good upholstery, etc. and still be quite safe to drive.
- **Serviceable knockabout vehicles** usually have a jinker body, springs, span irons and car or motor bike wheels. This type is generally used for breaking in and training. Easy to build but nothing much to look at.

Before taking on restoration work ask yourself the following questions. Do I have:

- A space at least 5 metres by 6 metres that can be used for anything up to 12 weeks?
- Endless patience?
- An understanding wife or husband?
- A reasonable amount of money for the job?

The work vehicle, which can be used for pleasure, combined driving, country shows etc., is the logical one for the beginner to attempt.

Supposing you have been lucky enough to find a reasonable vehicle to restore, these are the steps to take:

- Dismantle the vehicle, keeping all the small parts in labelled boxes.
- Check the wheels. If they need attention, send them to a wheelwright. Do not try to save money here. The wheels have to carry you safely for the life of the vehicle.
- Worn axles can be built up and turned down by a machinist.

- Decide on which metal work you wish to plate. The original steel would have been nickel plated but chrome is much easier to maintain. The remaining metal work must be cleaned of all old paint, grease etc. A sharpened posser hacksaw blade can be used as a scraper and then coarse emery paper will provide a good surface.
- Treat all woodwork with scraper and sandpaper until a smooth surface is obtained. The correct preparation from the beginning, that is a smooth surface, will make it much easier to have the perfect finish every restorer aims for.
- Painting. Choose your colour with care – dark red, dark green or dark blue with black upholstery are very suitable.
 - Before you commence, make sure all pieces are free from dust and moisture. An air compressor is an excellent help. Paint all metal work with metal primer. On old woodwork use wood primer. After each coat of paint rub down with fine sandpaper until smooth.
 - After the primer, paint with undercoat tinted with a small amount of your top coat colour. Two coats of undercoat should be sufficient. Next are the top coats. If you desire a perfect surface, six or seven coats will be necessary.
 - Use the best quality enamel paints; it costs a few dollars more for the best but it pays dividends in the end. Apply with a soft quality brush with long strokes. Warm the paint slightly and it will flow more freely.
 - When you are satisfied with the finished paint job, coat with clear lacquer. Once again, warm slightly and apply with a soft brush. This will give your vehicle a lasting sheen and be easy to clean.
- The upholstery can be done by a professional or by yourself. Shaft leather (where the tugs work) must be sewn on top of the shafts.