

BRITISH DRIVING SOCIETY



**DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT
CODE OF PRACTICE FOR COMMERCIAL
OPERATORS**

Produced July 2019

The British Driving Society Ltd

Hoste House

Whiting Street

Bury St Edmunds

Suffolk, IP33 1NR

www.britishdrivingsociety.co.uk | 01284 630591

Published by the British Driving Society. All rights reserved. No part of this publication can be reproduced without written approval by the society.

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').

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 2 or 4 wheeled modern carriages, 2 or 4 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.

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

Knowledge and understanding

1. Correct fitting of harness
2. Dangers of inappropriate procedures and adjustments to harness
3. Safety precautions to be taken when handling horses
4. State of feet and the effect on pulling power
5. Implications of the Road Traffic Act when preparing vehicle
6. Importance of safety checks
7. Mounting and dismounting procedures
8. Why is it important to adopt the correct driving position?

Section B: Carry out road driving manoeuvres**Performance criteria**

1. Horse and vehicle are driven smoothly at a speed appropriate to road conditions
2. Obstacles encountered during driving are safely negotiated
3. The vehicle is correctly positioned on the road for safe and effective driving
4. Road safety procedures are adhered to at all times
5. Agreed cooling down procedures are followed on completion of work
6. The health, safety and security of horse, self and others is maintained throughout

Knowledge and understanding

1. Horses' reactions when working alone and in company
2. Importance of returning a horse 'cool' from work
3. Effects of weather on road surfaces
4. Operating limits on vehicles
5. Application of the Highway Code and Road Traffic Acts
6. Use of the whip
7. Procedures in the event of a road traffic accident
8. Types of hand signals

Section C: Attend to horse and vehicle after driving**Performance criteria**

1. Vehicle is parked and secured at designated location
2. Horse is unhitched from the vehicle, harness removed and returned to relevant location
3. Approved cooling down procedures are implemented before horse is returned to stables
4. Control of the horse is maintained at all times
5. The health, safety and security of the horse, self and others is maintained throughout

Knowledge and understanding

1. Safety procedure when unhitching
2. Recommended cooling down procedures
3. Methods of braking and securing vehicles
4. Circumstances when assistance is required
5. Correct storage and security of vehicle