



ROAD SAFETY FOR MOTOR VEHICLES & EQUESTRIANS

For hundreds of years horses were a common sight on roads, as they provided the primary source of transportation. Today, horses, riders, and carriage drivers are usually seen on roads only when they need to traverse from one trail to another. They do have a right to be there (unless it is a highway) and it is important that automobile drivers know how to share the road with equestrians.

Horses are skittish animals. A horse's first impulse is to jump or run away from any object perceived to be dangerous. While the sight or sound of a vehicle is not something their instincts tell them to fear—horses are more likely to be afraid of a dog or a sinister-looking lawn ornament than a car—they may jump into a car's path to avoid the scary object they spot on the side of the road.

It is the responsibility of the motor vehicle operator to slow down when passing horses and riders, or when necessary, to stop to be sure the rider has the horse under control before passing. You can be held liable if your careless driving causes an accident involving a horse or carriage. Just a few seconds patience on your part can help to prevent a tragedy from happening.

For Motor Vehicle Operators:

- Slow down when approaching a horse and rider or horse and carriage.
- Pass with a wide berth, at least 6 to 8 feet from the horse.
- Do not pass on hills or curves.
- Resist blowing your horn!
- When approaching a horse from behind, let oncoming traffic pass the horse first.
- Drive a minimum of 20 feet behind a horse and cart when following on the road. Wait until the oncoming lane is completely clear before passing (with a wide berth, 6–8 feet).
- When returning to the traffic lane, do not cut quickly in front of the horse; give plenty of room.
- Stop and wait if the rider is having a difficult time controlling the horse.

For Equestrians:

- Observe all traffic regulations. Stop at stop signs. Signal turns when there are motorists behind you.
- Ride or drive at a walk on the right shoulder, single file with the flow of traffic. (When leading your horse, walk against traffic, like a pedestrian.)
- Riding on roads at night is risky. But if you do so, riders and carriage drivers are required to display a light, visible at least 200 feet to the front and rear, between a half-hour after sunset and a half-hour before sunrise.
- Brightly-colored clothing is helpful any time of day.
- Horses and carriages are not allowed on limited access highways.
- When a car approaches on a dirt or narrow road, stop to let the car pass.
- Do not intentionally impede the flow of traffic.
- If you want traffic to slow down, wave your hand palm down.
- Acknowledge courteous drivers.