



Association of British Riding Schools

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SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A HACK including ROAD SAFETY and PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT

Proprietors are responsible for ensuring that the Instructors/Escorts allocated to a particular ride are capable and experienced enough to supervise a ride. No one under the age of 16 years is allowed by law to supervise a ride - Riding Establishments Act 1964 (as amended in 1970) Section 1, sub-section (4A) sub-paragraph (b).

The number of riders per escort must not exceed safe limits, 4 - 6 is usually considered a reasonable number. Larger numbers than this will necessitate at least 2 escorts.

The less experienced the riders, the more escorts required.

The pace/gait should be kept to that of the least capable rider.

Horses and ponies should be matched to riders in terms of ability, size and temperament. All tack, especially girths and stirrups should be checked before leaving the yard. Check that all riders have securely fastened and well fitting protective headgear and suitable footwear. Jackets and anoraks should be buttoned/zipped up, and long flowing hair controlled! Prior to riders embarking on a hack a short length of time should be spent in a schooling area where they can familiarise themselves with the horses and the escort can assess the degree of control.

- Escorts should be smartly turned out and their horses/ponies should be well mannered and quiet in traffic. Escorts should at all times wear fluorescent tabards as should the first and last rider in the ride.
- Ensure that all escorts carry lead reins, and that they are capable of taking a horse or pony on a lead rein if required.
- The leading escort must give riders plenty of warning of change of pace/gait or terrain, also warning of hazards ahead i.e. low branches, holes, cattle grids and the like.
- If there is a large ride, the rear escort will find a whistle useful to maintain contact with the leader (Provided horses are used to it!).

The escorts, as well as carrying lead reins, should carry a First Aid Pack - included should be money for the telephone. They should know the location of public telephone kiosks or private dwellings, smallholdings and farms where they may use the telephone in an emergency. They must know the number of the Riding Establishment, the Veterinary Surgeon and know how to dial 999 for the Emergency Services (Ambulance, Police or Fire). These numbers should be written down and also kept in the First Aid Pack. NB Some District Councils now insist that the principal escort carries a mobile phone. It is strongly recommended that they do so and that they are aware of any areas where the signal is weak or non-existent. Mobile phones should be for EMERGENCY USE ONLY.

The First Aid Pack, as well as including the basic emergency items, should include a hoof pick, a flat pocket knife and any other items the proprietor thinks is relevant. The escort should know the rudiments of basic first aid.

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ROAD SAFETY

- Ride on the LEFT of the road and keep the ride tidy.
- DO NOT ride more than 2 abreast.
- Make sure the ride knows the drill for getting into single file quickly.
- During the ride, the escort should keep a close watch to front and rear and give guidance to traffic coming from both directions.
- At all times traffic should be prevented from dividing the ride.
- Try to keep away from busy main roads as much as possible.
- It must be remembered that the ride is a single unit and must be kept as such. Making a turn across the road is a single manoeuvre conducted 'as a ride'.

Courtesy should always be extended to motorists and pedestrians.

Fluorescent tabards should be worn by escorts and the first and last rider at all times. Fluorescent leg-bands for the horses are also an extra safety feature.

Be safe

Be seen

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PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT

When an accident occurs...

- KEEP CALM AND KEEP CONTROL.
- Halt the ride in an orderly manner and in a safe place.
- Dismount and hand your horse over to a responsible person.
- Delegate control procedures:-
 - If on a road, post someone at each side of the accident to slow down and control traffic.
 - If there is a loose horse, send someone to catch it.
 - If out of sight advise the police of the problem.

Go quietly to the injured person. If he is conscious, tell him to remain still. Ask if there is pain in any particular area. If there is pain or he cannot move fingers and/or toes on no account move him until skilled help arrives. Cover with a coat or blanket. On NO account give any liquid to drink. Stem obvious serious bleeding by applying light pressure to the wound with a clean piece of material made into a pad. Keep talking to reassure him. If a person is unconscious, make sure there is no blockage in the mouth, watch the breathing carefully, cover with a coat, loosen clothing. Send for skilled help. Do NOT leave the casualty alone.

For advice on First aid, refer to the current edition of the Highway Code.

It is for the Instructor/Escort to sum up the situation quickly and efficiently: to assess the degree of injury; to know whether to allow the rider to remount and continue the ride or to send a message to the stables asking for transport to take the rider back if there is a slight injury or to send very quickly for emergency service (999 call) to summon skilled help in the event of serious injury. On no account should a person be allowed to continue to ride if he/she has been unconscious - no matter how quickly the recovery may appear to be. Transport should be sent for, and the rider taken for a check up. Circumstances will dictate whether the ride continues or returns to base.

In the case of an injured horse, assessments have to be made to the same pattern. He may be able to be led back to the stables from another horse, a box may have to be summoned and the vet alerted to be at the stables on the horse's arrival, or veterinary assistance may have to be summoned to the scene of the accident.

In all cases, reassurance and a calm, workmanlike approach is very comforting, not only to the casualty but to the other riders as well.

On returning to the stables, make out a report in the Accident/Incident Book while everything is fresh in the mind. Take statements from other riders who were witnesses to the accident. The insurance company and EHO District Council should be notified of any injury to a person, or damage to property, motor vehicle or the like which could result in a claim.