

Advice on Responsible Riding and Carriage- Driving in England and Wales

The
British
Horse
Society

The law and management of public access rights vary widely between the four countries of the United Kingdom. This advice note is written for England and Wales and although elements of the advice may be applicable in Scotland and Northern Ireland this cannot be assumed.

More advice is available on www.bhs.org.uk/accessadvice.

Enjoyment and Respect

Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work with courtesy, care and consideration for others and for the land.

- Leave only hoofprints and guard against fire.
- Wear hi-viz aids, even off-road, to help other users to see you and have more time to react. Consider hi-viz on your horse and carriage as well as you; it can help locate them more quickly in an incident.
- Keep dogs under close control. This usually means on a short lead which is not possible from horseback so it may be best to leave dogs at home. Dogs in a carriage should be on a lead.
- Observe byelaws where displayed at the entrance to a site.
- Take the BHS Ride Safe training if you ride on roads.

Care for the land

- Keep to the bridleway or byway unless on land with designated open access for horses. If in doubt, check BHS Advice on Where to Ride and Carriage-drive..
- Do not jump fences, hedges or walls — you may cause damage.
- Horses' hooves can damage surfaces in wet conditions. Avoid routes where this happens if possible.
- On common land or coasts with equestrian access, avoid areas with heritage or conservation value which may be very fragile.

Courtesy to other users

- Pass others at walk and slow down well before you reach them; they may be frightened of horses or uncertain how to act.
- Give dog walkers time to recall their dog and have it under control.
- Be able to stop in the distance that you can see ahead.
- Acknowledge courtesy shown by other users.
- Adopt the 'Be Nice, Say Hi' and 'Share the Trail' ethos. Each encounter with another user is a chance to build cooperation—a smile and a short chat can work wonders.
- Politely encourage cyclists to call out when approaching horses. Many cyclists are unsure what to do around horses and think only to get by as quickly and quietly as possible.

Consideration for farmers

- Ride or drive slowly past all livestock.
- Leave gates as you find them.
- Do not ride on crops or cultivated land (except on public rights of way), including stubble (which may be sown with a new crop) and young grass. Rights of way for carriage-drivers should never be cultivated.
- Keep to walk if faster paces may damage the ground.

Be prepared

An incident can occur even on your shortest local ride or drive so always be prepared. Consider what you would need to deal with an emergency.

- Have a headcollar and rope in case you need to tie your horse
- Carry a fully charged mobile phone with your 'In Case of Emergency' (ICE) contact immediately accessible
- Consider tracking apps so a nominated friend or partner can know your location
- Consider smartphone apps such as What3Words so that you can quickly and easily give a location to emergency services
- On longer rides or in unfamiliar terrain, carry emergency food such as a high energy bar and drink

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