

AN ASSESSMENT TO BECOME AN RDA CARRIAGE DRIVING COACH

Please Note: Any part of the Assessment considered unacceptable may be re-assessed by an Assessor not less than four weeks from the assessment date.

1. An RDA Coach should have appropriate paperwork: Trainee Log book, Disclosure Check for your region of the UK, Safeguarding Certificate, and First Aid Certificate if applicable.
2. There is a minimum age of 18 years old to be assessed for becoming an RDA CD Coach. However, 16 and 17 year olds can be green-carded and commence their training from their 16th birthday.
3. Group Organiser should request a Trainee Log book from your Regional Driving Rep. who will then contact National Office and inform CD Lead. No trainee log books will be issued by any other route.
4. Groups should contact their Regional Driving Rep. when assessments/reviews are required. He/she will organise the assessor. The group and assessor can then liaise on suitable dates/times for both.
5. Any qualified Assessor is eligible to assess any Group in any Region when invited by the Regional Driving Rep.
6. This assessment is obligatory for all RDA CD Coaches.
7. Candidates should drive the horse/pony in the Group to which they are attached.
8. A head-holder and 2nd assistant should be available and will remain silent and stationary unless directed by the Trainee Coach. At all times the Trainee Coach is in charge of the turnout and helpers.
9. Leather or synthetic harness may be used.
10. A recognised RDA 2 or 4-wheeled carriage must be used.
11. Attaining the BDS Elementary Competence Test is a useful addition to the skill set.

Syllabus

Harnessing up and Driving

Assemble and Discuss a Single Set of Harness

- Name parts of the harness, and assemble.
- Discuss care and cleaning of all types of harness.
- Be aware of the importance of checking the stitching and condition.
- Know the most vulnerable parts e.g. rein-billets, girth, neck straps.

Harness the Horse/Pony while directing an Assistant to help

- Leave a suitable head-collar on.
- Put harness on, in correct order, and demonstrate adjustment to ensure a correct fit.
- Discuss the suitability of the harness for RDA Carriage Driving, including safety features.

Demonstrate Putting To and Discuss Balance of a 2-wheeler (if the group uses one) or 4-wheeler.

- Put to, in a safe flat place (ideally not in an open field, but may be necessary depending on where the group meets) in the correct manner.
- Be able to instruct a helper on how to assist.
- Understand the balance of 2-wheeled vehicles, and how to adjust for it. If the group has no 2-wheeled vehicles in their group then this is not applicable.
- Discuss balance of 4-wheeler – distribution of weight and position of wheelchair.
- Understand the difference between fixed and independent shafts.
- Discuss types of carriages built for RDA work, with reference to ramps, types and size and number of wheels, ease of entry.
- Discuss vehicle care and storage.

Demonstrate mounting and dismounting the vehicle from both sides.

- Demonstrate correct mounting procedure and taking up of both sets of reins.

Discuss safety awareness of preparing to drive.

- Putting to and taking out require precise instructions from the CD Coach to the team helping him/her, as this is one of the most unsafe parts of carriage driving, where the pony is neither completely in or completely out of the carriage.

Complete a short drive demonstrating rein handling, coachman style.

- Demonstrate good rein handling, e.g. lengthening reins, shortening reins, turns, emergency stops and hand-signals.
- Demonstrate use of whip.
- Show halt/walk/trot and rein-back transitions.
- Use of aids identified.
- Show an ability to drive two-handed when necessary.
- Explain why coachman style rein handling **must** be used in RDA Carriage Driving sessions and why 2-handed driving may be preferable to coachman style in occasional situations, such as demonstrating to the disabled driver for cone-driving purposes.
- Show an ability to drive circles and between cones.

Assisting an Ambulant or Non-Ambulant Disabled Driver into the carriage, with Coach in carriage, with head-holder in place with lead rope attached.

- Demonstrate the attaching of dual reins and discuss their position on the bit, headcollar or terrets.
- Instruct an adequate number of helpers to assist ambulant disabled driver into the carriage.
- Instruct at least three helpers to assist a non-ambulant disabled driver in a wheelchair into the carriage.
- Identify suitable areas for ambulant or non-ambulant drivers to get into and out of the carriage.
- Discuss the importance of RDA Coach and helper competence when assisting non-ambulant disabled drivers in wheelchairs into the carriage. Discuss security of wheelchairs, e.g. clamps/straps, use of lap-belts, footrests on wheelchair, or independent footrest on floor of carriage.
- Discuss all aspects of assisting ambulant disabled drivers into the carriage including their security when seated; use of cushions or other supports to aid balance, and use of footrests.

Preparation to Carriage Drive with Disabled Driver

- Discuss rein adjustments and adaptations. Rein bars, looped reins, ladder reins, non-slip reins, or coloured tape on disabled driver's reins (red on right and white on left for identification when left/right concept is not known).
- Demonstrate Coaching of disabled driver – holding the reins (may be different for drivers with varying abilities), and use of reins to steer or stop. Use of voice commands to ask horse to move off, go up or down a pace or stand.
- Particular attention to manner and attitude towards disabled driver.

Demonstrate Taking Out

- At the end of the practical driving session, demonstrate taking the horse/pony out of the carriage and unharnessing, using the reverse procedure for putting to.

The Role of the CD Coach (The Coach is in charge of the whole turnout at all times.)

Discuss the use of helpers and their roles.

- Number of helpers required to assist the turnout.
- Position and role of helpers when on a drive. Use of helpers on bicycles. Use of backstepper on a 4-wheeled carriage.
- Position and role of helpers when turnout is in an indoor or outdoor arena when driving around the arena, or doing dressage, or cones.

Discuss Activities to be enjoyed by Disabled Carriage Drivers

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| • Coaching sessions | • Endurance driving |
| • Cone driving | • Picnic drives |
| • Basic knowledge of dressage arena
(size and letters) | • Driving for leisure |

Discuss safe places to drive (being mindful of the load the horse/pony can pull on various surfaces – see weight chart guidelines).

- Flat or undulating ground, Indoor or Outdoor Arenas, Roads, Tracks or Fields.

Recognise how much/little to help the disabled driver, and understand it is essential to allow them to drive as much as possible themselves. You are there as a safety precaution to prevent difficulties arising.

Discuss relevance to progression with different drivers.

Safety

- Use of hard hats and gloves
- Correct size of Horse/Pony, Coach, Disabled Driver
- Recognise signs of impending trouble.
- Horse/Pony: Ears, Agitation, Sudden change of pace.
- Disabled driver: Signs of stress, discomfort, slipping, getting cold, etc.

Accident Procedure

- Must have the knowledge and experience to react correctly and efficiently.
- Must know how to restrain a horse/pony as required.
- Must know how to release a horse/pony quickly in an emergency situation.
- Must be able to take charge and instruct each helper confidently and concisely in such a situation.
- Be aware of Group Policy on Safety.

First Aid (A current First Aid Certificate is recommended but not essential)

- Know your First Aid card holders in your Group and ensure that at least one is present at your driving session.

Horse Care

Basic Handling

- Put on a headcollar and lead in hand.
- Tie up safely using a quick release knot.

Grooming and Foot Care

- Identify all items of a grooming kit.
- Discuss and demonstrate their use.
- Demonstrate foot care.
- Discuss shoeing, and know when to call a farrier.

Grass Kept Pony - Care and Feeding

- Discuss the requirements of a grass kept horse/pony - water, fencing, area requirements, and poisonous plants.
- Supplementary feeding requirements, e.g. use of hay, haylage, feed mixes, horse/pony nuts, clean wheat straw and oats.
- Know how to tie up a hay-net.

Travelling

- Prepare horse/pony for travelling.
- Put on rugs and tail guard.
- Load and unload from a trailer.

Minor Accidents and Injuries

- Know when influenza and tetanus injections should be given.
Recognise the symptoms of when a horse/pony is unwell e.g. coat, ears, runny eyes.
- Know the normal temperature, and how to take it.
- Recognise lameness.
- Discuss possible injuries associated with a harness horse or pony.
- Discuss basic Equine First Aid (e.g. bathing, bandaging, when to call a vet).