



RDA CARRIAGE DRIVING



CARRIAGE DRIVING VOLUNTEERS HANDBOOK



Role of Volunteers

*Thank you for the huge part you play in RDA Carriage Driving sessions.
Without volunteers to help in our groups, our drivers could not benefit from, and enjoy, our wonderful sport.*

Eileen Cornish CD Lead

Volunteers help with any, or all, of the following, depending on which aspects you are green-carded for - each and every role is important for your group and your drivers:

- Checking the equine before harnessing, which may include grooming.
- Bringing the carriage and other equipment to the working area.
- Harnessing the equine.
- Head holding.
- Putting-to. Bringing the carriage to the equine and completing all harnessing up.
- Assisting driver, who may have mobility problems and may include wheelchair users, into the carriage. Wheelchair users may use a ramp built into the carriage itself, or an independent ramp, or hydraulic platform lift.
- Balancing the carriage, where applicable.
- Clamping the wheelchair into the carriage.
- Accompanying the equine and carriage (called the 'turnout') when working in arena, in field, on road or on tracks.
- Assisting the driver out of the carriage.
- Taking the equine out of the carriage.
- Unharnessing the equine.
- Checking equine after work, cooling the equine.
- Cleaning harness, carriage and equipment.
- Putting carriage, harness and other equipment away.

General Guidance

- **DRIVERS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A CD COACH IN THE CARRIAGE AT ALL TIMES.**
- **AT NO TIME SHOULD A TURNOUT BE LED FROM THE GROUND WITH NO COACH ON THE BOXSEAT. The turnout will not be under safe control.**
- **No driver can be allowed to drive an unapproved equine or vehicle.**
- **Any person, except the driver, on the carriage, including parent/carer, must be able to get on or off the carriage without assistance, and will hold a green card for Carriage Driving.**
- **No volunteers or Trainee Carriage Driving Coaches can be in charge of a carriage, with a participant on board, until they are assessed as competent.**
- **Only turnouts that have been fully assessed and approved may be used.**

Working at your venue.

It is your responsibility to keep yourself and others safe.

Appropriate Dress and Footwear for RDA work

Your group will talk to you about what is involved when working around carriage driving equines and carriages.

DO:

- Wear outdoor clothing suitable for the weather conditions.
- Wear strong boots or shoes to protect your feet.
- Fasten jackets, as flapping clothes can startle an equine.
- Tie long hair back.
- Wear gloves if leading or holding an equine.
- **Wear High Visibility** tabards at all times when the turnout is on a drive, or in another public space. They are not essential in an arena or field.
- **Wear hard hats** of current RDA specification when on the carriage. RDA Coach, Driver, and Backstepper, (who is the person supporting the turnout who stands on a step at the back of the carriage)

In any equine environment you should:

- Not wear dangly jewellery as it may get caught and cause an accident.
- Not wear, or carry, anything valuable that could be damaged.

Suitable behaviour when working with equines

Equines can be upset or frightened by sudden movement or loud noises.

- Always remain calm and quiet in your manner.
- Walk, don't run, talk and let the equine know you're there – remember their vision is particularly restricted when wearing a bridle with blinkers.
- **Do not** walk directly behind an equine. Equines have a blind spot immediately behind and may kick if startled.
- **Do not** make sudden movements with your hand, especially towards the equine's head.
- **Do not** become complacent and take the equine for granted.
- **Do** treat the equine with a confident, calm, firm manner; do not shout at them to control unwanted behaviour.
- Watch the equine's body language and know that ears laid back, swishing tail and restless behaviour resulting from tension or discomfort may lead to a kick, bite or strike out with a front leg.
- When in doubt ask for help; especially if the equine is behaving uncharacteristically.

Leading the equine

- Wear gloves and, preferably, a hard hat.
- Clip the lead rope onto the head collar, not the bit. Ensure the open side of the clip hook points to the rear.
- Do not wrap the lead rope around your hand or wrist, but do not allow it to trail on the ground.
- When leading, move the equine's head away from you if they encroach on your space. The equine may tread on you or barge you if pulled toward you.
- Do not let the equine wander along behind you, nor march off ahead, and drag you around. They must work with you, rather than dictate pace and direction. Ideally lead the equine from between their head and shoulder.

Grooming

Always tie the equine up using a quick release knot. The use of bailer twine to tie the rope through should be risk - assessed by each group with each equine. In the case of an equine pulling back it rarely breaks.

- Feet – pick out hooves first, check for loose or worn shoes. Check the hooves for warmth or smell.
- Use a rubber curry comb or dandy brush to remove dried mud, dirt and loose hair.
- Cleaning the brush with a metal curry comb, use the body brush to clean the body, face, mane and tail.

- Sponge round eyes and mouth.
- Using a different sponge, do the same under the tail to ensure the area is clean where the crupper lies.
- Sweep up loose hair, mud, hoof-pickings and put on muck heap.
- After the equine has finished work brush off or sponge down sweat marks; rug in a suitable rug depending on conditions, as required.
- Check for any galls or rubs where there has been pressure from the harness: the crupper, the girth, the collar and the mouth and lips.
- Consider if the equine is happy during grooming or if any unusual behaviours are shown.

Do report to your Group Organiser if you have any concerns about the equine.

Tools and Environment

- Return all tools and equipment to their appointed place. Untidiness causes accidents.
- Ensure wheelbarrows are stowed vertically against a wall in a safe area.
- Always secure doors in the stable.
- Keep arena, field and yard gates closed.
- If using a commercial yard, work according to that yard's rules and their Health and Safety Policy.

Head Holding

Always face the turnout when you are holding an equine attached to a carriage.

- Wear a hard hat and gloves (to improve grip and prevent rope burns if the equine pulls back).
- Never wind the rope around your hand or wrist, but do not allow it to trail on the ground.
- Clip the lead rope to the head collar ring in the middle behind the chin, not to the bit.
- Unclip the rope and stand aside **when asked to do so** by the RDA Coach.
- Learn to recognise when your help is needed.
- **BE ALERT.** Don't be distracted by your mobile phone.
- **BE ALERT.** Don't be distracted by chatting to other volunteers, or eating and drinking.
- Stay at the equine's head, directly in front, to prevent the equine moving forward, during and after putting-to/taking out, and until the RDA Coach asks you to unclip and move aside as the drive commences.
- At the end of the drive be ready to clip the lead rope back on to the headcollar and return to the head holder position.



When to hold the reins

- The head holder should hold the lead rope, and **only hold the reins** when requested by the CD Coach. For example, when the equine is being put to, and until the RDA Coach has mounted the carriage and picked up the reins, and also when the RDA Coach dismounts.
- Holding the reins gives you more control over the equine than a rope alone: if there is no one sitting in the carriage holding the reins, you are the person in control of the equine.
- **As soon as a turnout is harnessed up the coach should immediately mount the carriage – a turnout with only a head-holder and no-one on the box seat is DANGEROUS.**
- Face the equine and hold a rein in each hand just behind the bit. Do not hang onto the mouth or pull the reins so much that the bit rings, or sides of the bit, dig into the equine's lips. This may make the equine uncomfortable and more likely to be restless or play up.

Preparing to Drive

Harnessing Up (Photo kindly donated by Equifor.com)

- The equine is clean and the harness ready on a harness rack, or other suitable place, such as a gate or stable door. Remember to check the harness for fit as the equine may have changed condition during the season.
- Put the **driving head collar** (underhalter) on the equine – this is compulsory for RDA Driving. The headcollar (underhalter) may be worn under or over the bridle depending on where it sits best without interfering with the bridle, reins or bit.
- Start harnessing by putting the **breast collar** on the equine; either turn it upside down, place over the equine's head, turn collar in the direction of the mane and push down into position or undo the neck strap, lay over neck in front of the wither and buckle in place.
- Fit **saddle or pad**, secure girth loosely to start with, fasten bellyband on loosest hole if using a fixed shafted carriage.
- If not already attached to the pad, fit **breeching, backstrap and crupper**. Buckle crupper, protecting the sensitive skin from the buckle and ensuring no hairs are caught between the crupper and fine skin of the tail. Check the correct fitting of the backband (there should be a 4-finger space between the backband and the equine's rump).
- Attach **traces**, (if not attached to the breast collar) to the breast collar, feed back inside the bellyband and store over the equine's back. Or feed traces through trace-carriers and secure using free end of the backstrap through the holes or shackles at the end of the traces. If quick release clips are fitted these can be clipped to the terrets or through the seat of the breeching.
- Fit **RDA Coach's reins** through the **terrets** with enough slack to reach the bit and then store by buckling back to the pad terret. Secure the surplus length of the reins through backstrap.
- Fit the **Driver's reins** through the terrets in the same way. Store behind the RDA Coach's reins. Know which set of reins is which.
- Both sets of reins should be on the equine and taken up by the driver as they mount. However, between drives, and when there is no participant driver in the carriage, but the coach is on the carriage with their reins in their hand, the driver's reins may be changed to suit the next participant driver.
- Fit the bridle over the equine's head and attach the RDA Coach's reins to the appropriate bit setting; do the same with the driver's reins, attaching them to a milder setting on the driving bit or to the driving head collar, or rein rail according to the competence of the driver. *The RDA coach will confirm how the coach's reins and the driver's reins are to be attached to the bridle.*
- The RDA Coach in charge of the turnout must check the harness for safety and fit before putting to.



Putting To

The range of carriages used within RDA Carriage Driving groups has expanded in recent years to include 4-wheeled carriages as well as 2-wheeled. There is now a corresponding variation in techniques used for putting-to depending on whether shafts are fixed or independent. However, the basic safe practice is followed with whichever type of carriage is used.

Fixed shafts, sliding backband, single tug-stops.

- Stand the equine on firm, level and clear ground.
- The head holder holds the equine by the headcollar rope, and/or reins as required. The carriage is brought up behind the equine; do not back the equine into the shafts. Warn the equine the carriage is coming up from behind.
- With a volunteer each side, slide the shafts into the tugs and take forward until the tugs meet the tug stops.

- Attach **traces** to the hooks or loops on the **swingletree** and check the correct length of the trace. In order to do this the carriage must be in draft. Push the carriage back so that the traces are taut, and the tugs sit in the middle of the pad. Adjust the length of the traces, as needed, to achieve this.
- Fasten breeching straps through the **dee** on the shaft; some RDA turnouts use **parrot clips** to attach the ring at each end of the seat of the breeching to the breeching strap. The parrot clips will have been attached to the shafts previously. Put the carriage in draft (as above) and check there is a 4-finger space between the seat of the breeching and the equine's rump.
- Check the equine's girth, tighten if necessary.
- With a fixed shaft 2-wheeled carriage, adjust the **bellyband** so that there is room for around three fingers between the girth and the bellyband, to allow the carriage freedom to balance. With a fixed shaft 4-wheeled carriage adjust the **bellyband** as above, but there is no need to balance it as the carriage is already stable on its 4 wheels. However, it may become unbalanced if the backstepper is too heavy – the front wheels may lift and affect the steering, which is very dangerous.
- Traces can be either inside or outside the belly band on a carriage with fixed shafts depending on which gives the best line of draft from carriage to breastcollar, interfering with the bellyband.
- ***Check the balance once the 2-wheeled carriage has the RDA Coach and driver on board; a correctly balanced two-wheeler should weigh about two pounds in the hand when the shaft is lifted by a volunteer, with the driver and RDA Coach in place.***

Fixed shafts, sliding backband, double tug-stops or loops.

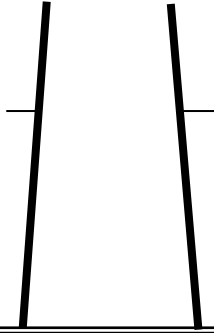
The procedure is as above except that the shafts cannot slide in and out with the speed and safety of a more traditional single tug-stop.

- Instead, **Quick-release tugs** must be used; these open out to wrap round the shaft and nestle between the double lugs of the tug stops, or pass through the loop at the end of a shortened shaft as it is drawn up alongside the equine's pad.
- The traces can be outside **or inside the bellyband**, whichever gives the best line of draft without interfering with the bellyband.

Independent shafts, fixed backband, double tug-stops or loops.

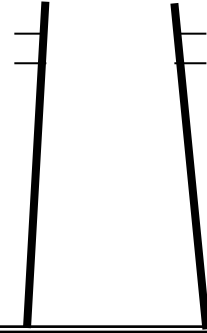
- These shafts are hinged individually on the fore carriage of the vehicle. When putting to, the **shafts** are folded back onto the vehicle, not laid on the ground.
- Stand the equine in front of the vehicle; ensure **quick-release tugs** are ready to receive shafts.
- A volunteer on each side brings the shafts down and wraps the tug round the shaft between the lugs of the double tug-stop or through the loop end and secures it; the bellyband may go through a **keeper or staple** on the lower panel of the pad and, once it is secured, tighten the **bellyband** until firm.
- The intention is that the shafts are held in situ on the equine's sides; the fixed backband prevents the shafts from sliding up or down, the firmer bellyband and grip of the tug stop them bouncing about.
- Proceed as usual with **traces** and **breeching**. The traces can be outside **or inside the bellyband**, whichever gives the best line of draft without interfering with the bellyband.

SHAFTS AND TUG-STOP ARRANGEMENTS



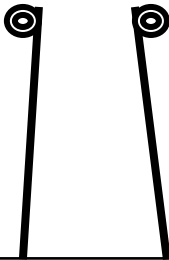
Single tug-stops with fixed shafts.

The shafts can be pushed through as far as the stop and removed safely and quickly. There is a long distance between tip of shaft and stop. Open tug suitable.

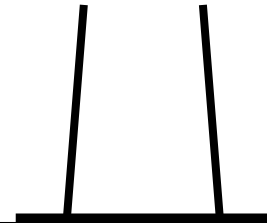


Double tug stops with fixed or independent shafts.

Short distance between tip of shaft and stop makes it safer to have two stops. Quick Release tugs are safer and easier for these.



Short shafts with loop-ends for competition or traditional 4-wheeled carriages with independent shafts. Use Tilbury type tugs and a fixed backband.



Shafts on a 4-wheeler which are mounted on a framework hinged to the fore-carriage are treated as fixed shafts. They need a sliding backband. Open or Quick Release tugs are dictated by the shaft design.

Fixed shafts are attached to the body of a two or four -wheeled carriage.

Independent shafts are attached to the fore-carriage (front axle framework) of a four-wheeler, allowing the equine to steer the carriage by moving the front axle.

Taking Out

Taking the equine out of the carriage is the reverse process to putting to.

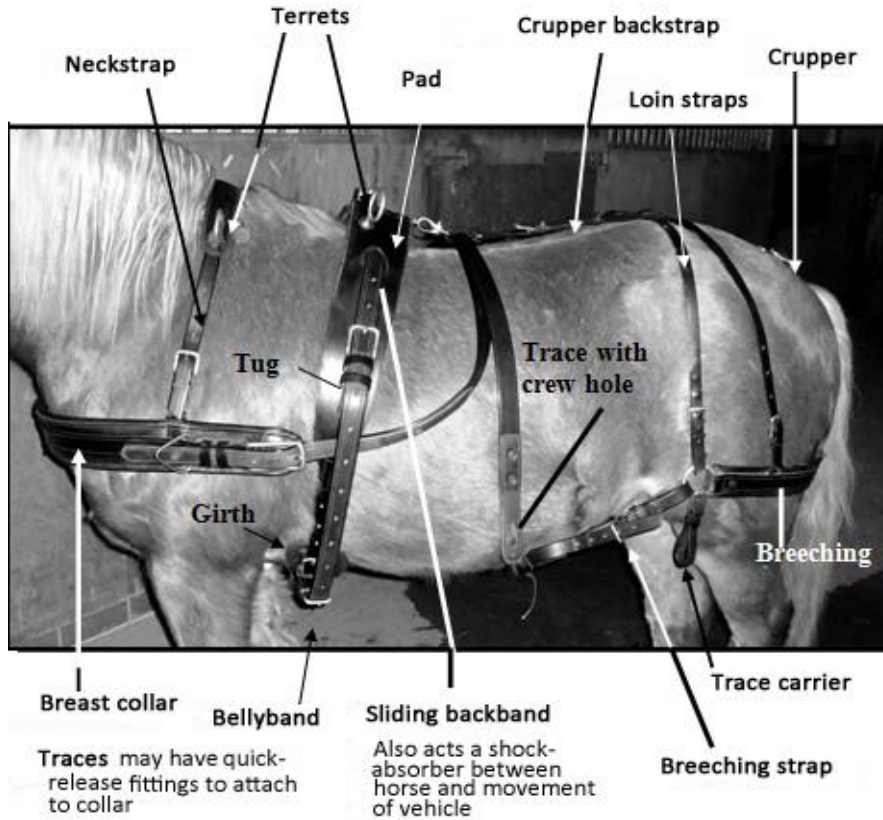
Remember NEVER to take the bridle off the equine whilst they are still attached to the carriage.

- When the driving session has ended and the driver and the RDA Coach have got out of the carriage the reins are safely stowed through or under the backband.
- The head holder, standing facing the equine and directly in front, in order to prevent the equine moving forward, holds the lead rope attached to the headcollar, and the reins, if required.
- With a volunteer either side of the equine, the belly band is undone or released from the near side (i.e. the left side of the equine).
- The breeching straps are unbuckled or unclipped and removed from the dees on the shafts.
- The traces are unclipped from the swingle tree on both sides and stowed safely.

- The side volunteers hold the shafts and carefully push the carriage backwards until well clear of the equine.
- The equine is now ready to be taken forward and unharnessed.

Harness

This a basic set of leather/synthetic harness. It can be 'customised' to include quick-release shackles on the traces and parrot clips to attach the crupper backstrap, breeching straps and trace-carriers.



Reins are not shown but are threaded through the terrets from rear to front.

The Driving Bridle



This equine has a Liverpool bit, which allows for two sets of reins to be attached to the bit. The second set may instead be attached to the head collar

TYPES OF TUG

Open tug, sliding backband.
Bellyband usually lies outside shaft.

Quick release tug,
sliding or fixed backband.

Self-tightening or Tilbury Tug:
FIXED back band.
The terrets are screwed on through the backband.
Bellyband lies against pad panel, inside shaft.



Assisting a Non-Ambulant Driver into the carriage

Volunteers required - RDA Coach and a minimum of three volunteers.

- 1. The RDA Coach** will check round the whole turnout, then pick up both sets of reins, mount the carriage, sit down, whip in hand and in control of the turnout. The head holder is at the equine's head with the rope attached to the head collar.
2. When requested by the RDA Coach, the volunteers will assist the driver and will:
 - Lower any stands or jockey wheel if applicable, lower back of carriage (for some models, not all) and pull out or attach ramps, depending on type of carriage.
 - One volunteer pushes the wheelchair up the ramps assisted by at least one other volunteer at the side, and positions it within the carriage, ensuring wheelchair brakes are applied.
 - Raise or remove ramps, back and stands.
The vital part here is to ensure the ramps are removed and the back is up as quickly as possible.
 - Attach front clamps to wheelchair as soon as possible. Adjust later.
 - Check balance of two-wheeler or weight distribution of a four-wheeler; adjust wheelchair position and clamps.
 - Secure wheelchair in position with front and back clamps. Try not to leave an unsecured wheelchair in place with the ramp down - far better to secure front clamps, then raise ramp, then secure rear clamps.
 - Different vehicles will have different procedures but all must be as safe as possible for the driver.

Assisting a Non-Ambulant Driver out of the carriage

The RDA Coach remains seated and in control of the equine; the head holder is at the equine's head with the rope attached to the head collar.

The RDA driver's volunteers:

- Undo rear clamps, forward clamps may need to be undone after the ramp is down to keep chair secured until the volunteers are ready.
- Lower the back of the carriage, if applicable, and position ramps as necessary.
- Volunteers take the weight of the wheelchair.
- Ensure the wheelchair brake is disengaged and carefully take it down the ramp, pulling it well clear of the carriage. *At least two volunteers are required.*
- Raise ramps, back and stands, where applicable, **as quickly as possible**. The equine may be upset if they move with the ramps dragging on the ground.
- **Do not be complacent about this – for safety it needs to be a well-practised and slick manoeuvre.**

Assisting an Ambulant or Semi-Ambulant Driver into or out of the Carriage.

Volunteers required - RDA Coach and a minimum of three volunteers.

- The RDA Coach to be seated with both sets of reins, and whip in hand, in total control of the equine.
 - The head holder is at the equine's head with the rope attached.
 - Second volunteer assists the driver to mount or dismount the carriage.
 - For a semi-ambulant driver, additional volunteers and extra steps may be used as required.
 - As soon as the driver is seated, the extra steps must be removed.
 - An ambulant driver may be capable of mounting the carriage unaided but a volunteer should be on hand. A volunteer may be needed to guide the driver to and away from the carriage.
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- ***Hydraulic Platforms may be used provided that they are assessed.***
 - ***It is permissible to mount the CD Coach and driver into a four-wheeler before putting to, following training and assessment.***
 - ***Groups must practice the procedure of mounting/dismounting a driver in a wheelchair to ensure that the very vulnerable period of time spent with the ramp down is kept to a minimum.***

Unharnessing

This is completed in the reverse order to harnessing up. The head holder must be in place at all times, standing in front of the equine holding the lead rope attached to the under headcollar. Any buckles which are to be undone are on the nearside.

Reins - With a volunteer at each side of the equine remove the reins, unbuckling at the bit and taking them back carefully through the neck terrets, then the saddle terrets (turning the buckles over so that they slide easily). If two sets of reins are in use remove each set separately and stow safely.

- Bridle - Remove the bridle by undoing the curb chain, noseband and the throatlash. Then place one hand under the bit and the other under the headpiece and **gently** pull the bridle forward off the equine's face. Be careful that the bit does not knock against their teeth.
- Traces - Bring traces forward and unbuckle from the breast collar (if required).
- Crupper, Breeching and Pad - Undo the crupper buckle and remove from under the tail on the nearside. Then undo girth. Carefully remove breeching and the pad.
- Breast Collar - Undo the neck straps and remove collar or turn collar in direction of mane and **carefully** lift over the equine's head to remove.
- Place all harness on a rack after removal for checking and cleaning.
- Check equine over carefully to look for signs of rubbing or soreness. Sponge or brush to ensure he is made comfortable.

Guidelines for Driving Out, either as a single turnout, or more than one.

The RDA Coach is in charge of the turnout and volunteers and must:

- Check round the turnout prior to use.
- Take up both sets of reins, mount the carriage, be seated, take up the whip and have a light contact with the equine's mouth until the driver is seated and takes up the reins.
- Signal to the head holder at the equine's head to release the rope once all is ready to go.
- Drive or encourage the driver to drive at a sensible speed while avoiding sharp turns.
- Be alert to any difficulty encountered by the driver.
- Remain seated and in control until the driver dismounts the carriage.

Volunteers for each turnout (including when a turnout drives in convoy with another)

Every turnout must have a minimum of 3 volunteers available at ALL times. The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th may be cyclists accompanying the turnout.

- 1st - The RDA Coach.
- 2nd - The head holder who always carries a lead rope which must be attached to the equine's head collar when the turnout is stationary. The head holder's priority is the equine.
- 3rd - to assist where necessary.
- 4th - is needed if the driver drives from a wheelchair or needs two volunteers to assist with mounting and dismounting.
- A backstepper, who should be the head holder, may ride on the backstep of a 4-wheeler if the weight guidelines are adhered to.

Communication

There must be an agreed communication system for all concerned; this may vary according to the type of activity, the capability of volunteers and drivers and the conditions under which the turnout is working. The system must be effective, quick and safe. It must not distract the users, nor should it confuse others, for example, motorists or cyclists on the Public Highway. Correct hand signals as specified in the Highway Code should be used to inform non-RDA road users.

- The RDA Coach will make sure the driver is comfortable, secure and feels safe, then hand the second pair of reins to the driver.
- Cyclists - Volunteers on bicycles must be clearly visible to all road users as must those people on the RDA turnout. Wear Hi Viz.
- Use hand signals as per the Highway Code; remember you are meant to inform other road users and not direct traffic.
- A good communication system is needed between all concerned, particularly if the backstepper is watching for traffic behind the turnout, as well as liaising with the rear cyclist and the CD Coach.
- Cyclists at the front of the convoy must keep a safe distance ahead of the RDA turnout; at least the length of a turnout ahead. You must allow for any inadvertent surge forward by the equine as well as give yourself sufficient space to pull over and stop if necessary.
- Lead cyclists check the road ahead, warn other road users, may set the pace as agreed with the RDA Coach, and will check the road is clear at junctions.
- As far as possible the RDA Coach should ensure correct distance is maintained between their turnout and others, and are solely responsible for their turnout.
- Cyclists behind the turnout must keep back, do not ride right up behind the carriage. You must be close enough to see and hear but keep enough space between you and the carriage to give sufficient reaction time to stop without running into the back of the carriage!
- Rear cyclists must never allow your bike to touch the turnout in front of you; it can put you off balance and frighten the equine.
- Rear cyclists should check for traffic coming up behind, warn the occupants of the turnout, thank motorists for slowing down and can see and react instantly when the turnout needs help.
- In the event of an emergency, warn lead cyclists, deposit your bike (well away from the equine and carriage) quickly, and help the turnout.
- Do not cycle too close beside the turnout.
- Even the steadiest equine may be upset by cycles overtaking too close, for example on a narrow track or lane. However, there may be occasions where this is necessary in an emergency.
- If there is a need to pass the turnout, ensure there is enough room, warn the occupants of the turnout and speak to the equine before and during passing.
- **Cyclists at road junctions:** Some Groups keep 'the flow' going by the lead cyclists stopping and checking the road as the turnout waits, and the rear cyclists, if there is room to do so safely, move

forward into the lead when the turning and the road are clear. The new leaders in place, the turnout moves off and the original leaders fall in behind.

Emergency Procedure

All volunteers should be familiar with the harness and with the Emergency take-out procedure. Plan who will do what – and practice; the equine must also be familiar with the procedure so it should be included in the practice sessions.

The aim in an emergency is to **STOP** the turnout, **control/hold** the equine and either **dismount** the driver quickly, safely and calmly or, if necessary and if thought the safer option, to remove the equine from the carriage. The latter is possible with a 2-wheeled carriage, provided that a volunteer holds the shaft horizontally as the equine is being taken out and away. A 4-wheeled carriage will remain stable on its 4 wheels, though it will need a volunteer to prevent it moving backwards or forwards if on a slope.

1. The RDA Coach, if able, to take the reins from the driver.
2. Separate the equine from the carriage with driver and RDA Coach still on board. The head holder remains at the equine's head.
3. Detach **Breeching** by either: Undoing the buckle or parrot clip on the backstrap where it is attached to the rear of the pad or undo the breeching straps.
4. Undo **traces** (to detach carriage) either at collar end or from swingle tree. Ensure traces are clear of trace-carriers and assess the volunteer's safety and possibility of a kick from the equine).
5. Volunteers support **shafts** as equine is moved forward out of carriage.
6. RDA Coach allows reins to slide out as equine is moved away from the carriage. Head holder controls equine by reins as soon as RDA Coach releases the reins.
7. Allow the equine's tail to clear the crupper as they move forward.

In the event of an accident

Be prepared, be quick, and be calm.

Assess the situation.

Make safe: stop it getting worse.

Give emergency First Aid.

Get HELP.

Additional Information

- Volunteers must only assist in roles for which they have been trained and which are recorded on the Driving section of the Green Card.
- It is advisable for the Volunteers to be familiar with the RDA guidelines on driving.
- All RDA Coaches should have a current First Aid Certificate.
- All RDA sessions are required to have a current First Aid Certificate holder present, including present with any turnout not within the RDA groups' site.
- It is also useful if volunteers have an up-to-date First Aid Certificate and are familiar with the procedure for reporting incidents and the use of the Group's Accident Book.
- Turnouts should carry a spares kit and a First Aid Kit; know where they are and how to reach them.
- Ensure that, where possible, there is a working **Mobile Phone** available at every session.
- Volunteers should be familiar with the venue risk assessment and relevant session risk assessment. This includes any additional item added to the risk assessment in relation to infection/transmission control procedures. This may include the requirement to carry a suitable face mask and follow sanitary procedures.

Safety Prompts for the Emergency Procedure for taking the equine out of the vehicle Please adapt to suit your own Group.

Kindly donated by Lesley Hurd of Cherry Park Driving Group, who has the guide below enlarged and printed out on A4 sheets for volunteers to follow if, in an emergency, the RDA Coach is incapacitated and unable to give directions.

(Lesley writes: It has certainly given our volunteers confidence around the turnout; I like to think of us as a team at Cherry Park, and aim to involve as many as possible.)

TO TAKE EQUINE OUT OF CARRIAGE SAFELY.

Needed: 3 volunteers - 1 head holder and 1 at each side.

- 1. 1 person is in charge**, preferably the **head holder**.
- The RDA Coach, if able, to take the reins from the driver.
- Undo the belly band** on equine's **left side** by the girth.
- Side volunteers to **undo the breeching**, the straps on the shafts. (We have **quick release clips**.)
- Side volunteers **undo the traces**, the long straps that fix to the carriage. May have **quick release clips**. Tuck these over the seat of breeching.
- Side volunteers lightly **lift shafts** and **push carriage back** removing shafts from the tugs on the pad **slowly**. Push carriage to a **safe place once clear**,
- Lead equine to a **safe place**.
- Remove reins** from bridle, pulling backwards through the collar and pad terrets. Take care not to get them caught. **Hang up safely**.
- Remove the bridle** - undo the **curb chain**, on the left side of equine, undo the **throat lash**, undo the **noseband**.
- Lift** the top of the **bridle gently** and take off equine, allow them time to open their mouth to **remove the bit** - try not to bang the bit against their teeth.
- Hang up safely**.
- Remove **equine** to a **safe place**, preferably into their stable.

The rest of the harness can be removed later, or if anybody feels confident in doing so, just make sure no straps are hanging where equine could tread on them and pull their harness off or break anything.

The Handbook is expanded from an initial idea by The Brae RDA Group, with thanks.

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION