

COMMON ACCEPTED SAFETY PRACTICES AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION FOR DRIVING HORSES

By Myrna Rhinehart, ASHA Secretary and accomplished driver

- The vehicle and harness should be in sound condition and adjusted to fit the horse properly.
- The vehicle and harness should be suitable for the type of terrain to be covered.
- Never remove the bridle while the horse is put to the vehicle.
- Reins must be attached to the bit and passed through the saddle terrets while the horse is put to the vehicle. One rein at a time may be adjusted.
- When the horse is put to a vehicle, a driver needs to be in the vehicle with reins and whip in hand. The whip should not be in the whip socket.
- Sit on bight (end) of reins or use the finger loop. Do not let loose end dangle and risk getting caught in legs or wheels.
- Don't snap the reins for a forward cue. Use the whip.
- Do not get out of your vehicle once the horse is put to, except for minor adjustments and unhitching. A loose horse with a vehicle attached is very dangerous.
- Do not lead a horse that is put to a vehicle without a driver on the "box seat". See above.
- The driver is the first person in the vehicle and the last one out. Do not leave a passenger in the vehicle unless he is capable and takes control of the reins.
- Never leave a horse unattended while he is put to a vehicle.
- Never tie a horse to a fixed object (wall, trailer, hitch post) while it is put to a vehicle.
- Never tie a turnout to another turnout, or tie another horse to a turnout.
- Leave at least one turnout's length between turnouts at all times.
- Approach ridden horses with extreme care. They can be afraid of moving wheels.
- A Slow Moving Vehicle sign needs to be visible on the back of the vehicle three feet above the ground when driving on public roads. Wear bright clothing for visibility.