

# What The Heck Is A “Spares Kit”?

## Why Every Horse-Drawn Vehicle Should Carry One!

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When horse driven vehicles were a part of everyday life, the saying was a whip [driver] should always carry “a knife, a shilling and a piece of string”.

Every horse-drawn vehicle should carry a well-equipped spares kit. Similar to a tool kit or roadside emergency kit commonly carried in motorized vehicles, a spares kit contains important tools and safety items that may be required in an emergency situation.

The kit should be carried on your cart/carriage at ALL times. Equipment failure and accidents while driving a horse-drawn vehicle are always a very real risk. Broken traces, reins or other harness parts can occur any time. Without the proper tools and supplies handy to make a speedy repair, you just might have a long walk home...or worse.

There are essential items that every spares kit should contain: a knife, leather hole punch, screwdriver,

pliers, hammer, hoof pick, rein splice or an extra rein, trace splice or an extra trace, a leather string (or shoe lace, an extra hame strap (if appropriate), an adjustable wheel wrench, as well as a halter and lead for each horse.

Your spares kit should also be customized to your individual needs based on your horse(s), equipment and the type of driving you partake in (pleasure driving, trail, shows, combined driving, etc).

There are many handy items that can be added:

- ◆ Duck tape/electrical tape (a 1001 uses!)
- ◆ Spare whip
- ◆ Rain gear
- ◆ Horse shoe nails if your horses are shod
- ◆ Whistle: to signal for help in an emergency
- ◆ Zip-ties: for quick harness/carriage fixes
- ◆ Flyspray (for horse and human)
- ◆ Flashlight and/or small reflector/strobe light for night time driving
- ◆ First aid supplies

### A Customized Spares Kit.

A hammer can be used to nail on a lost shoe or to fix a broken cart/carriage.

A good, strong leather punch is essential for adjusting harness for a proper fit, or to re-punch & fix broken straps.

Pliers and/or a wrench to fix axle nuts

Leather string/shoe lace to repair broken harness. A heavy cord rope can be used to fashion a halter in an emergency.

Rein & trace splices to repair a broken rein or trace (saves having to carry a whole extra rein or trace)

Hoof pick can be essential for the soundness of your horse.



Electrical tape or duck tape has a 1001 uses as a 'quick-fix'

Quality knife (remember to keep it sharp!) should always be carried. It can be used to fix broken harness, or in case of a wreck it can cut a trapped horse loose.

Whistle to signal for help in case of an emergency.

Screwdriver to tighten loose screws on a vehicle

Carabineer/Fireman's hook is handy for a number of things and can be used to fix harness and/or your cart/carriage.

- SPARES KIT:
- |                       |                 |                              |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Hole Punch         | 5. Trace Splice | 9. Fireman's hook/carabineer |
| 2. Hammer             | 6. Rein Splice  | 10. Screwdriver              |
| 3. Pliers             | 7. Hoof Pick    | 11. Knife                    |
| 4. String or Shoelace | 8. Whistle      | 12. Electrical tape          |

WHAT THE HECK IS A SPARES KIT?



Photo courtesy of E. Eddington

**Above & Below:** A home-made spares kit can be fashioned out of any kind of case as long as the items inside are easily accessible and secured. A case that's too large might make for a noisy addition to your vehicle if the items inside are left free to bounce.



Photo courtesy of D. Bolen



Photo courtesy of T. Chmilar

**Above:** Without the proper tools and supplies handy to make a speedy repair, you just might have a long walk home...or worse.

If you plan on competing in one of the many different types of driving competitions, be sure to check the rules regarding spares kits.

Different competitions can have different rules specifying what you must have in your spares kit, depending on what association or governing body the competition is being run under.

For example, the Pleasure Driving Competition section of the American Driving Society (ADS) Rulebook reads:

ARTICLE 65: SPARES & APPOINTMENTS

1. Spares and appointments must be carried on each vehicle during a pleasure drive. They are as follows:

- Wheel wrench to fit axle nuts
- Knife
- Cooler/Quartersheet for each horse
- Leather punch
- Length of rawhide, string or wire
- Screwdriver
- Rein splice or spare rein
- Pliers
- Trace splice or spare trace
- Small hammer
- Hame strap (if appropriate)
- Hoof pick
- Halter and lead shank per horse

2. One penalty point will be assessed for each item omitted. Complete omission of spares will receive 20 penalty points. Spares must be checked prior to the start of the pleasure drive. To insure that each vehicle actually carries the required spares, provision for random recheck at either the rest stop or immediately following the drive may be made (if explained in the Omnibus / Prize List)

The Combined Driving section of the ADS Rulebook reads:

“Competitors may carry whatever spares they require.”

Equine Canada has different requirements and states that the following items must be present in competitor’s spares kits:

- a) Spare trace or trace splice
- b) Spare rein or rein splice
- c) Leather punch
- d) Halter and lead shank for each horse
- e) For full collar harness: spare hame strap
- f) For pairs: spare whippetree
- g) For teams: spare lead bar

As a competitor, be sure you’re familiar with the rulebook and spares requirements for each competition you enter.

Spares kits can be purchased as completely stocked cases or you can buy an empty case to fill yourself. Specially made spares cases are available that have space to secure all of your supplies. Or you can get creative in finding your own case and stocking it with items you have around the barn and garage. Either way, it’s all about being safe!

*Make sure that all of your spares and tools are suitable and the correct size for the harness and vehicle you will be using it with!*