

Safety Rules and Guidelines

Revised January 15, 2026

OBJECTIVE: To ensure the SAFETY of all individuals and equines involved with any driving activities. Everyone must be aware of SAFETY, first and foremost.

1. GENERAL

- 1.1. All drivers must provide proof of membership with their provincial sports association (AEF or provincial equivalent) *ACDA Rule*
- 1.2. Any person or equine exhibiting unruly behavior will be excused from the activity.
- 1.3. Cruelty or abuse to an equine will not be tolerated.
- 1.4. Drinking & Driving do NOT mix & will not be tolerated. Good judgment and body coordination are extremely important aspects of driving safety.

2. EQUINE

- 2.1. The equine must be under control at all times.
- 2.2. The equine must be physically fit and in good condition to participate in an activity.
- 2.3. Never take an equine that is green broke or unsafe to any driving activity.
- 2.4. Keep a watchful eye on your equine to ensure safety and welfare of all.

3. DRIVERS

- 3.1. An adult MUST accompany junior drivers under the age of fourteen in the vehicle at all times.
- 3.2. All juniors 18 years of age and under must wear properly fitted, approved ASTM head gear. It is strongly recommended that all participating juniors wear a body protector when in the vehicle.
- 3.3. Always be the first in the vehicle and the last to get out keeping your reins in hand.
- 3.4. The whip must be in hand or handy to use as a driving aid.
- 3.5. When driving a green equine always have someone experienced with you.
- 3.6. One capable groom is required for a horse/pony/VSE pair or tandem and VSE four-in-hand, and two grooms for horse/pony four-in-hand and unicorn hitches.
- 3.7. Wearing an approved helmet is required. Wearing gloves is recommended.
- 3.8. When driving in the ring or on a road; the same rules as traffic apply. Oncoming vehicles pass left shoulder to left shoulder. Pass vehicles on the left or the inside of the ring taking care not to cut others off and call out to pass.
- 3.9. Any thoughtlessness or discourtesy by one driver to another will be severely penalized by the activity organizers.

4. HITCHING AND UNHITCHING

- 4.1. The Bridle & Reins MUST always be attached when hitched to a vehicle. Failure to do so will result in the driver being asked to leave the activity. **When unhitching do not take reins & bridle off before unhooking the vehicle.**

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- 4.2. When hitching; it is recommended to have a halter (preferably), neck strap or rope attached to your equine and secured to something sturdy, [e.g. your trailer attached to your truck]. If equine cannot be secured; a person heading is mandatory. Be aware that someone holding the halter or neck strap may not be able to control the animal if they become frightened & bolt.
- 4.3. Harness, bridle and attach reins; then hitch up, keeping the reins in hand.
- 4.4. After you are hitched it is a good practice to walk around your turnout to ensure buckles, straps & reins are secure and clear of any obstruction. The reins must be in hand before untying.
- 4.5. Keep reins in hand as you mount your vehicle & have someone untie for you.
- 4.6. Never back an equine between shafts that are lying on the ground. Hold them up as you pull the vehicle toward them so as not to poke them with the shaft ends.
- 4.7. The equine MUST NEVER be left unattended while hitched to a vehicle.
5. **VEHICLES AND HARNESS**
 - 5.1. Ensure that your vehicle is in good repair. Check the spokes, metal welds, single/double trees, bolts and anything that could cause a problem.
 - 5.2. The harness should fit your equine properly and be checked before each use. Check all buckles and look for any wearing, cracking or tearing of harness material. Do not risk the chance of anything breaking during your drive.
 - 5.3. Take particular care to ensure your bridle is properly fitted and the reins are in good condition.
 - 5.4. Vehicle must be equipped with lights or reflectors when driving at night and a "Slow Moving" sign if driving on roads.
 - 5.5. Always carry a properly equipped spares kit on your vehicle. It should contain a spare trace and rein splice, sharp knife, strong cord, tape, hole punch and wire. Halter(s) and shanks must be carried at all times.
6. **PETS:** If your pet has to attend, it MUST be under the direct control of the owner; either on a leash, caged or confined to your trailer at all times.
7. **SAFETY OFFICER:** When a designated safety officer is in attendance at any driving function, they have the authority to ensure the safety of all participants and individuals by enforcing these safety rules. All activity organizers should constantly be on the watch for unsafe actions by anyone. Unsafe harness and vehicles should be reported. The Head of the Jury and the Show Committee must excuse any unsafe vehicle or any unruly, uncontrollable equine.

These Safety Rules and Guidelines are for the purpose of preventing injury to one and all!

Always refer to the Events prize list for site specific safety rules

COMMON SENSE AND HORSE SENSE ARE ESSENTIAL.

In addition, review the suggested safety checklist.