

Carriage Driving COVID-19 Protocols

Introduction

This document provides measures for participants when carriage driving with people from other households.

These protocols should be read alongside the latest Government regulations. RDA Groups should refer to the RDA Getting Road to Restart Guidance at <https://www.myrda.org.uk/runningyourgroup/getting-started-after-lockdown/> Wherever possible, the relevant UK Government social distancing guidance should be adhered to when undertaking activities that are not explicitly listed in these protocols. In circumstances where social distancing is not feasible, mitigations should be implemented in line with the advice within this document.

This document has drawn on guidance for England but is relevant to all UK home countries when restrictions allow driving to proceed under these protocols. Please keep an eye on the Road to Restart page for updates on when different home countries will permit carriage driving to commence.

These protocols are subject to change in response to the current COVID-19 local restrictions, alert Level, community prevalence of COVID-19 and/or updated UK Government guidance.

Essential first steps

All participants/volunteers prior to driving with people from other households

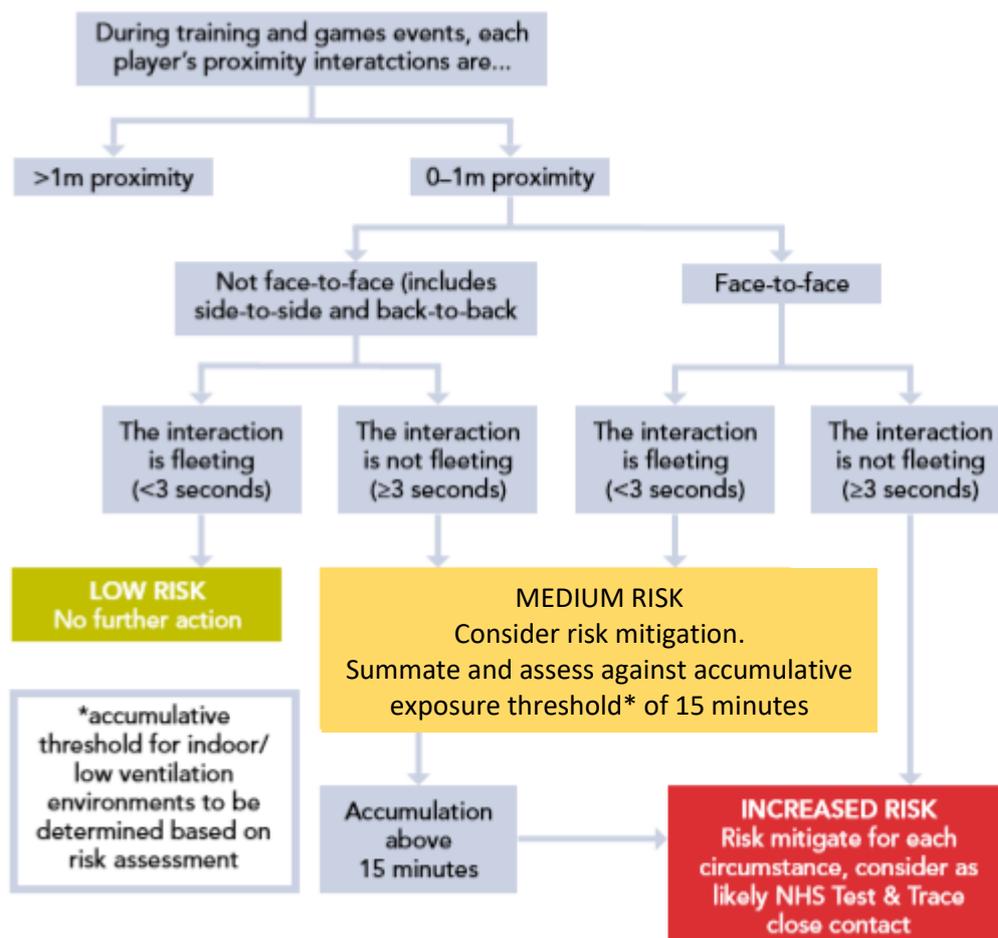
- Self-symptom check before leaving home
- Assess personal risk and that of other participants, coaches and volunteers
- Conduct quiet corner/grooming sessions/ practise driving scenario
- Conduct all pre/post drive briefings socially distanced off carriage
- Arrive dressed to drive where possible
- Sanitise hands on arrival and prior to touching any shared surfaces

RDA Groups and Carriage Driving Coaches prior to any reintroduction of sessions should make sure that:

- The group has been signed off to restart by National Office
- A risk assessment for driving activities has been completed and signed
- The equine assessment and induction form available on the MyRDA website has been filled in for each equine used.
- Carriages are serviced, safe and clean, harness in good repair and clean.

Understanding the risk

With carriage driving, particularly mounting and dismounting of participants with wheelchairs, there will be particular times where you will likely come into closer contact with those you are driving with. This may be for a relatively short period of time or it may be for longer. If the interaction is relatively fleeting or short-term, the risk is relatively low. However, if the interaction is for a longer period of time and face to face, the risk is much higher, and mitigations will need to be considered to lower the risk of transmission of COVID-19. It is important that all participants/carers/families/volunteers and staff take personal responsibility for evaluating any potential risks to themselves or others. To correctly assess the risk of each participant it may be worthwhile considering starting with grooming sessions, quiet corner (where participants get to spend one to one time with equines to familiarise themselves and regain confidence) or to mimic a carriage driving scenario so you can demonstrate what kind of best practise is required. Some drivers may have had a year or more away from an RDA group and could be nervous or over excited at restarting which could affect their normal behaviour.



Risk Assessment Framework – taken from British Equestrian, Return to Equestrian, Team Sports Action Plan. Based on DCMS framework.

Mitigation Steps

| No. | Mitigation | Applies To | Conducted By |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 1 | Pre-attendance symptom check | All participants/ coaches/volunteers | All participants/ coaches/volunteers |
| 2 | Normal social distancing rules to be followed outside of carriage | All participants/ coaches/volunteers | All participants/ coaches/volunteers |
| 3 | Whilst assisting with mounting/dismounting of carriage with wheelchairs, face coverings must be worn | All participants/ coaches/volunteers | All participants/ coaches/volunteers |
| 4 | Where possible organise manoeuvres to maximise social distancing and avoid any face to face contact | All participants/ coaches/volunteers | All participants/ coaches/volunteers |
| 5 | Between each drive all equipment should be sanitised (see RDA Road to Restart page for guidance) | Coaches Volunteers | Coaches Volunteers |
| 6 | At the end of each drive and more frequently where practical, practice good hand hygiene | All participants/ coaches/volunteers | All participants/ coaches/volunteers |
| 7 | Maintain records of all participants/volunteers contact details for 21 days | RDA Group | RDA Group |

Test & Trace Contacts

Based on our risk assessments, the RDA believe that the following should be considered as close contacts for the purpose of test & trace in the context of carriage driving.

1. Those who have sat within 1 m of each other on the carriage.
2. Those who have assisted with mounting/dismounting of carriage with wheelchairs at the same time for a total of more than 5 minutes.
3. Those who have had a non-fleeting (>3s) face-to-face interaction within 1 m of another person.
4. Those who have had to attend to an emergency situation where any of the above apply.

Risk Assessment for driving with people from different households

| Activity | Total number of people involved | Proximity to each other | Face to Face | Interaction time | Risk Level | Additional Mitigation | Risk level after mitigation |
|---|---------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Help a participant who is ambulant or semi ambulant to mount the carriage | Coach plus two helpers | <1m | No | <5 minutes | Medium | Face coverings | Medium |
| Help a participant who is non-ambulant mount the carriage | Coach plus three helpers | <1m | Yes | >5 minutes | Increased | Face coverings for coach and helpers Face covering for participant (if poss.) Gloves Minimise time within 1m | Medium |
| Clamp a wheelchair into the carriage | Coach plus three helpers | <1m | Yes | <5 minutes | Increased | Face coverings for coach and helpers Face covering for participant (if possible) Gloves | Medium |
| Drive safely with ambulant or semi ambulant participant | Coach plus two helpers | Dependant on driver capability, size of carriage, <1m – 1m | No Side to side | Dependant on driving route – generally >15 minutes | Increased | Minimum distance between driver and coach should be 0.5m nose to nose at all times. Carriages that do not permit this should not be used. All activity to take place outdoors or in a well-ventilated covered arena (sometimes termed ‘indoor arena’) Face coverings for coach Face covering for participant (if poss.) Gloves | Medium |

| Activity | Total number of people involved | Proximity to each other | Face to Face | Interaction time | Risk Level | Additional Mitigation | Risk level after mitigation |
|--|---|--|--------------------|--|------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Drive safely with another volunteer – for equine exercise or for coach assessment purposes | Coach plus volunteer | Dependant on driver capability, size of carriage, <1m – 1m | No Side to side | Dependant on driving route – generally >15 minutes | Increased | Minimum distance between individuals should be 0.5m nose to nose at all times. Carriages that do not permit this should not be used. All activity to take place outdoors or in a well-ventilated covered arena (sometimes termed ‘indoor arena’) Face coverings should be worn by both individuals in the carriage unless there is a medical reason not to. In this case one individual must wear a face covering. Gloves | Medium |
| Drive safely a non-ambulant participant | Coach plus three helpers (backstep, bicycles) | Dependant on driver capability, size of carriage, <1m – 1m | No Side to side | Dependant on driving route – generally >15 minutes | Increased | Face coverings for coach Face covering for participant (if poss.) All activity to take place outdoors Minimum distance between driver and coach should be 0.5m nose to nose at all times. Carriages that do not permit this should not be used. Gloves | Medium |
| Help a participant who is ambulant or semi ambulant dismount the carriage | Coach plus two helpers | <1m | No | <5 minutes | Medium | Face coverings for coach plus helpers Face covering for participant (if poss.) Gloves | Medium |
| Help a participant who is non-ambulant | Coach plus three helpers | <1m | Yes | >5 minutes | Increased | Face coverings for coach plus helpers Face covering for participant (if poss.) | Medium |

| Activity | Total number of people involved | Proximity to each other | Face to Face | Interaction time | Risk Level | Additional Mitigation | Risk level after mitigation |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| dismount the carriage | | | | | | Gloves | |
| Emergency Take Out Procedure | Coach plus all available helpers | <1m | Yes | Dependent on situation | Increased (only in emergency) | Face coverings for coach plus helpers Face covering for participant (if possible) Gloves | Medium – Increased (only in emergency) |
| Before and after drive briefings | Coach plus all helpers | >2m | No | <5 minutes | Low | No face coverings to be worn to assist in communication All debrief to be undertaken off carriage to ensure 2 m social distancing | Low |

The risk associated with the handling and transfer of equipment in the sport

There are various items of equipment involved with carriage driving which have been identified below. When thoroughly sanitising and preparing your environment and equipment it is important to consider the use of appropriate cleaning materials, which are not only proven effective against Coronavirus, but also safe to use around both horses and humans. In conjunction with the British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA), RDA has identified a selection of products from several companies which meet these criteria, and which will not bleach or stain tack. You will find more information on this at <https://www.myrda.org.uk/runningyourgroup/getting-started-after-lockdown/>

| Item | Material | Clean When? | Use by | Other Mitigations | Risk level |
|-------------|--|--|-------------------------------|--|------------|
| Harness | Leather/Synthetic | At end of day | Helpers/Coach | As few people as possible to fit harness Gloves Regular hand sanitising | Low |
| Reins | Leather/Synthetic | Wipe with sanitiser between drivers. Must be completely dry before next driver uses the reins. If not possible a separate set of reins must be used. | Helpers Coach Participants | Regular hand sanitising Gloves | Medium |
| Carriage | Stainless Steel Metal Wooden parts | Seating area after each session | Helpers Coach Participants | Regular hand sanitising Gloves | Medium |
| Riding Hats | Plastic/Glass fibre Polystyrene | After each use | Participants | Encourage participants to have their own hats. Fully sanitise and leave hats to dry completely before next use. If possible leave hats 48 hours between uses | Medium |

Equipment not permitted

Face shields are not permissible during driving as these are not designed for impact if an accident occurred. You should also not attach anything to your helmet as this may affect the level of protection of the helmet if an accident occurred. The carriage must not be modified in any way (e.g. installation of a screen between driver and coach) as this presents a significant health and safety risk if an accident occurred.

Phased return of drivers

It is recommended to undertake a phased return of drivers, starting with those where the risk can be minimised. We appreciate this may disappoint some drivers as they will have to wait longer, but this is to protect the health of our coaches, volunteers and participants. You can decide how you phase your participants back, but we would recommend considering the following:

- More independent drivers who require less support from the coach whilst driving to reduce the risk of coaches having to face the participants to provide detailed and frequent instructions whilst driving. Drivers should always be briefed before the session off the carriage in socially distanced way first.
- Those participants who are comfortable and able to wear a face covering whilst driving.
- Those participants who need less support on mounting/dismounting the carriage to minimise the number of helpers required to breach social distancing (if required).
- Those participants who need less support on mounting/dismounting the carriage to reduce the duration where these helpers may be in closer contact with the driver.

Under these protocols it may not be possible to welcome back drivers who need support that mean that specific mitigation is not possible. For example, if a coach is unable to communicate effectively with a driver when wearing a face covering then it would not be possible for that driver to return yet. If a driver is known to spit, again we would not recommend they come back to sessions just yet as this would increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission. If there is a low to medium risk of this, mitigation would be that in addition to wearing a face covering, eye protection to EN166 should be worn as COVID-19 can be transmitted to the eyes. These should ideally be medium impact rated in case of an accident and should form a seal on the face to protect the eyes, these are often referred to as 'spoggles'.

You may choose at the outset to keep the part of the session where the actual driving (not mounting/dismounting) takes place to 15 minutes with other elements such as preparing the pony and any discussions about the planned drive or debrief after the session socially distanced off the carriage. This is not mandatory but something you may wish to consider at the start.

These decisions are up to you as a group, coach or volunteer and we are clear that these protocols allow carriage driving to take place in a way where risk can be reduced. However, if any participant, coach or volunteer does not feel comfortable with undertaking any activities they are not required to do so.