

## Additional Information

Helpers 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 Helpers to be familiar with the RDA guidelines on driving.

All coaches should have a current First Aid Certificate.

There **MUST** be a First Aider present at every driving session.

It is also useful if helpers 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.

### **ACCIDENT**

***Be prepared, be quick, be calm***

***In the event of an accident***

**Assess the situation**

**Make safe: stop it getting worse**

**Give emergency First Aid**

**Get HELP**

Expanded from an initial idea by The Brae RDA Group, with thanks

## **RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION**

### **CARRIAGE DRIVING HELPERS HANDBOOK**



## **RDA CARRIAGE DRIVING**

### **Role of Helpers**

*Helpers are required to help with the following elements:*

- Bringing the carriage and other equipment to the working area
- Harnessing the horse
- Head holding
- Putting-to
- Loading Driver in wheelchair/helping ambulant driver into carriage
- Balancing the carriage, where applicable
- Clamping the wheelchair onto the carriage
- Accompanying the turnout when working in arena, field road or tracks
- Unloading wheelchair or ambulant Drivers
- Taking horse out of carriage
- Unharnessing the horse
- Check horse after work, cooling the horse
- Cleaning harness and equipment
- Putting carriage, harness and other equipment away

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

The objectives in an emergency are to **STOP** the turnout, **control/hold** the horse and either **dismount** the Driver quickly, safely and calmly or, if necessary and if thought the safer option:

1. *Separate the horse from the vehicle with Driver and Coach still on board. Horse holder at horse's head.*
2. *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.*
3. *Undo **traces** (detaches carriage). Either at collar end or from swingle tree. Ensure traces are clear of trace-carriers*
4. *Helpers support **shafts** as horse is moved forward out of vehicle.*
5. *Driver releases their **reins**; Coach allows reins to slide out as horse is moved away from the carriage. Helper controls horse by reins as soon as Coach lets go.*
6. *Allow the horse's tail to clear the crupper as he moves forward.*

## Cyclists

- **Helpers on bicycles** must be clearly visible to all road users as must those people on the RDA turnout.
- Use hand signals as per the Highway Code; remember you are meant to inform other road users rather than direct traffic.
- A good communication system is needed between all concerned.
  
- **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 horse 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 and can check the road is clear at junctions.
- As far as possible keep an eye on the RDA turnout behind you.
  
- **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 vehicle to give sufficient reaction time to stop without running into the back of the carriage!
- Please, rear cyclists, never allow your bike to touch the turnout in front of you; it can put you off balance and frighten the horse.
- Rear cyclists can 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 horse and carriage) quickly and help the turnout.
  
- **Cyclists beside.** It is inadvisable to cycle too close beside the turnout.
- Even the steadiest horse 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 horse before and during passing.

## Working in the Stable Yard

**It is your responsibility to keep yourself safe**

### Appropriate Dress and Footwear for RDA work

*Look at what is involved when working around horses and vehicles. It is advisable in any horsey environment not to wear dangly jewellery, anything valuable that could be damaged and to tie long hair back.*

- Wear outdoor clothing suitable for the weather conditions.
- Wear strong boots or shoes to protect your feet
- Jackets must be fastened, flapping clothes can startle a horse
- Wear gloves if leading or holding a horse
- **High Visibility** tabards should be worn by **All Helpers** when on the road
- **Hard hats** of current RDA specification must be worn by everybody riding in a horse-drawn vehicle

### Suitable behaviour when working with horses

*Horses 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 horse know you're there – remember his vision is restricted when wearing a blinkered bridle.
- **Do not** walk directly behind a horse. Horses have a blind spot immediately behind and may kick if startled.
- **Do not** make sudden movements with your hand, especially towards the horse's head.
- **Do not** become complacent and take the horse for granted.
- **Do** treat the horse with a confident, calm, firm manner; do not shout at him to control unwanted behaviour.
- Watch the horse's body language and know that ears laid back, swishing tail and restless behaviour result from tension or discomfort and might lead to a kick, bite or strike out with a front leg.
- When in doubt ask for help; especially if the horse is behaving uncharacteristically.

## Leading the horse

- Wear gloves
- Clip lead rope onto head collar, not bit. Ensure the open side of the clip hook points to the rear.
- Do not wrap the lead rope round your hand or wrist.
- When leading, push the horse away from you. The horse may tread on you or barge you if pulled toward you.
- Do not let the horse wander along behind you nor march off ahead and drag you around. He must work with you rather than dictate pace and direction.

## Grooming

*Always tie the horse up using a quick release knot*

- Feet – pick out hooves, check for loose or worn shoe.
- Use a rubber curry comb or dandy brush to remove 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 this area is clean where the crupper lies.
- Sweep up loose hair, mud, hoof-pickings and put on muck heap.
- After the horse has finished work brush off or sponge down sweat marks; rug in a suitable rug depending on conditions if 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.

**Do report to Group Organiser if you have any concerns about horse**

## Tools and Environment

- Return all tools and equipment to their appointed place. Untidiness causes accidents.
- Always secure doors in the stable and keep arena, field and yard gates closed.
- If using a commercial yard, work according to that yard's usual manner and Health and Safety Policy.

## Guidelines for Drive Out

**The Coach** is in charge of the turnout and Helpers and must:

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

## Helpers

- Every turnout must have a minimum of 3 helpers available at ALL times, first being the Coach, second at pony's head and third needing to assist. A fourth helper is needed if the driver drives from a wheelchair or needs two helpers to assist with mounting and dismounting
- A Helper may ride in with the Driver and Coach when a larger vehicle is used.
- Helpers must each know their job as Horse Helpers or Driver Helpers.
- The **Horse Helper** always carries a lead rope which must be attached to the horse's head collar when the turnout is stationary. This Helper's priority is the horse.

## ***Communication***

*There must be an agreed communication system for all concerned; this may vary according to the type of activity, the capability of Helpers 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 Coach will then:**

- Make sure the Driver is comfortable, secure and feels safe, hands the second pair of reins to the Driver

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### **Unloading wheelchairs**

The Coach remains seated and in control of the horse; a Horse Holder is at the horse's head with the rope attached to the head collar.

### **The RDA Driver's Helpers:**

- Undo rear clamps, forward clamps may need to be undone after the ramp is down to keep chair secured until Helpers are ready.
- Lower the back of the vehicle, if applicable and ramps.
- Helpers take the weight of the wheelchair.
- Ensure the wheelchair brake is disengaged and carefully unload it, pulling it well clear of the vehicle. *Two helpers at least; .*
- Raise ramps, back and stands, where applicable, as quickly as possible. The horse may be upset if he moves with the ramps dragging on the ground. Do not be complacent about this.

### **Loading Ambulant and Semi-Ambulant RDA Drivers**

Team: Coach and two Helpers

- Coach to be seated with the reins and whip in hand in total control of the horse.
- Horse Holder is at the horse's head with the rope attached.
- Second Helper assists the Driver to mount and dismount the vehicle.
- For a semi-ambulant driver, additional Helpers and extra steps may be used if necessary.
- As soon as the Driver is seated, the extra steps must be removed.
- An Ambulant Driver may be capable of mounting the vehicle unaided but a Helper should be on hand. A Helper may be needed to guide the Driver to and away from the vehicle.

### **Preparing to Drive**

#### **Harnessing**

- The horse is clean and the harness ready on the rack.
- Put **driving head collar** on the horse – this is compulsory for RDA Driving.
- Start harnessing by putting the **breast collar** on the horse; either turn it upside down, place over the horse'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 vehicle.
- If not already attached to the pad, fit **breeching and crupper backstrap**. Do up crupper ensuring no hairs are caught between the crupper and fine skin of the tail.
- Attach **traces** to the breast collar, feed back inside the bellyband and store over the horse'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.
- Fit **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 handpart of the reins through backstrap.
- Fit the **Driver's reins** through the terrets in the same way. Store behind the Coach's reins. Know which set of reins is which.
- Some Groups use additional large clips or rings to carry the Coach's reins which give the Driver's reins a free run through the terrets.
- Fit the bridle over the horse's head and attach 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 according to Group practise.
- Coach checks the harness for safety and fit before putting to.

## Putting To

*The range of types of vehicle used within RDA has expanded in recent years, there is now a corresponding variation in techniques used for putting-to. The basic safety precautions remain. The illustrations over leaf may be helpful.*

### **1. Fixed shafts, sliding backband, single tug-stops**

- Stand the horse on firm, level and clear ground.
- The horse holder holds the horse by the reins.
- The carriage is brought up behind the horse, do not back the horse into the shafts. Warn the horse the carriage is coming up behind.
- With a Helper 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**.
- 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 latter will have been attached to the shafts previously..
- Check the horse's girth, tighten if necessary.
- Adjust the **bellyband** so that there is room for around three fingers between the girth and the bellyband to allow the vehicle freedom to balance.

Check the **balance** *once the vehicle is loaded*; a correctly balanced two-wheeler should weigh about two pounds in the hand when the shaft is lifted by a helper with the driver and coach in place.

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

- The procedure is as above except 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 horse's pad.

## When to hold the reins

- Unless otherwise requested, the helper **only hold the reins** when the horse is being put to and until to the Coach has mounted the vehicle and picked up the reins and also when the coach dismounts.
- Holding the reins gives you more control over the horse than a rope alone: if there is no one sitting in the vehicle holding the reins, you are the person in control of the horse.
- Face the horse and hold a rein in each hand just behind the bit, very slightly to the side and slightly back towards the horse's shoulder. Do not hang onto the mouth or pull the reins out so much on a swivel-checked bit like a Liverpool that the front of the rings digs into the horse's lips. Both methods make the horse uncomfortable and more likely to be restless or play up.

## Loading and Unloading Wheelchairs

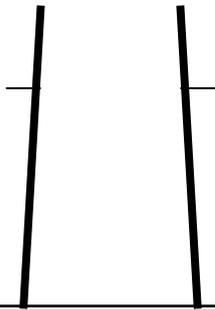
Team: Coach and a minimum of three helpers

**1. The Coach** will check round the whole turnout, then pick up the reins, mount the carriage, sit down, whip in hand and in control of the turnout. The Horse Holder is at the horse's head with the rope attached to the head collar.

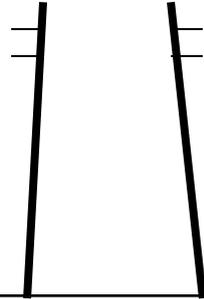
**2. The Helpers** assist the Driver and will:

- 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 vehicle.
- One helper to push the Wheelchair up the ramps assisted by at least one helper at the side and positions it within the carriage, ensure brakes are applied.
- Raise or remove ramps, back and stands. *The essential bit 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.

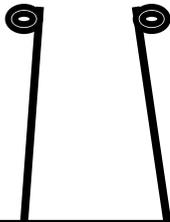
## SHAFTS AND TUG-STOPS



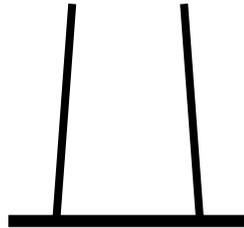
**Single tug-stops**, fixed shafts.  
The shafts can be pushed through as far as stop and removed safely and quickly. Long distance between tip of shaft and stop. Open tug suitable.



**Double tug stops**, fixed or independent shafts  
Short distance between tip of shaft and stop makes it safer to have two stops. QR tugs safer and easier for these.



**Short shafts** with **loop-ends** for competition or traditional 4-wheel vehicles, both with independent shafts use Tilbury type tugs & 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, choice of tug is dictated by the shaft design. Open or QR.

*Fixed shafts are attached to the body of a two-wheeled vehicle or a four-wheeler with closely coupled double axles similar to that on a horse trailer.*

*Hinged shafts are attached to the fore-carriage (front axle framework) of a four-wheeler allowing the horse to steer the vehicle by moving the front axle.*

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

- These shafts are hinged individually on the fore carriage of the vehicle. To put to the **shafts** are folded back on to the vehicle, not laid on the ground.
- Stand the horse in front of the vehicle; ensure **quick-release tugs** are ready to receive shafts.
- A Helper 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, secures it and the bellyband may go through a **keeper or staple** on the lower panel of the pad and, once it is secured, tightens the **bellyband** until firm.
- The intention is that the shafts are held in situ on the horse'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.

### Taking Out

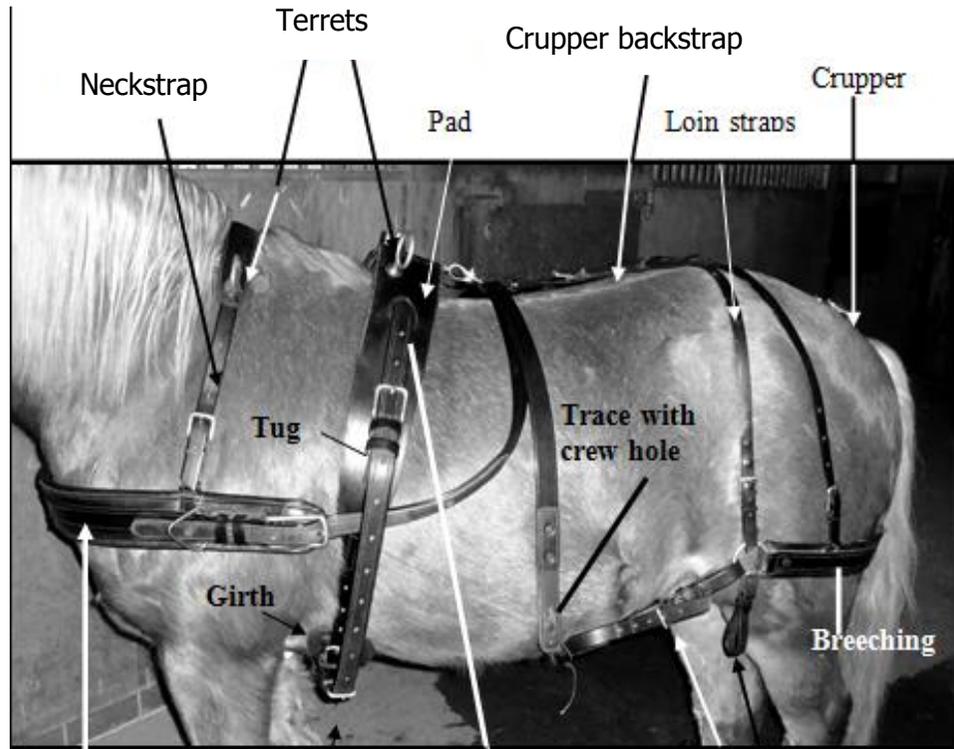
**Taking the horse out of the vehicle is the reverse process to putting to. Remember NEVER to take the bridle off the horse whilst he is still attached to the vehicle.**

### Head Holding

**Always** face the turnout when you are holding a horse attached to a vehicle.

- Wear gloves to improve grip and prevent rope burns if the horse pulls back.
- Never wind the rope round your hand and wrist.
- Clip lead rope to head collar, not the bit.
- Unclip the rope and stand aside when asked to do so by the Driver or Coach.
- Learn to recognise when your help is needed, don't be distracted by chatting to other helpers.
- Stay at the horse's head before, during and after putting-to/taking out.

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.



**Breast collar**   **Bellyband**   **Sliding backband**   **Trace carrier**   **Breeching strap**

**Sliding backband**  
Acts as a shock absorber between horse and movement of vehicle.

**Traces** may have quick release fittings to attach to the collar.

**Reins** are not shown but are threaded through the terrets from rear to front. There may be additional clips from terrets to carry them.

## THE DRIVING BRIDLE



This is a Liverpool bit which allows for two sets of reins to be attached to the bit unless the second set is attached to the head collar.

### TYPES OF TUG

Open tug, sliding backband. Bellyband lies outside shaft.

Quick release tug, sliding or fixed backband.

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

