



THE BRITISH DRIVING SOCIETY, 83, NEW ROAD, HELMINGHAM, STOWMARKET, SUFFOLK, IP21 5QZ  
TEL: 01 473 892 001 E-MAIL: [email@britishdrivingsociety.co.uk](mailto:email@britishdrivingsociety.co.uk) WEBSITE: [www.britishdrivingsociety.co.uk](http://www.britishdrivingsociety.co.uk)

JUNE 2010(provisional syllabus)

## **CODE OF PRACTICE FOR DRIVERS OF HORSE DRAWN VEHICLES WORKING ON THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY**

### **PROVISIONAL SYLLABUS FOR**

***CANDIDATES AND ASSESSORS PLEASE NOTE:  
THE CURRENT CODE OF PRACTICE IS STILL UNDER REVISION WITH THE  
DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT. THIS DOCUMENT REPRESENTS THE CURRENT,  
INTERIM SYLLABUS, FOR USE PENDING FINAL APPROVAL.***

### **DRIVING HORSES ON THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY ( Road Driving Test for Commercial harness horse drivers)**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.** The Code of Practice Assessment is designed for drivers and operators of horse drawn vehicles, especially those who use such vehicles for commercial purposes, such as providing hackney carriage services. It may also be taken by those providing horse drawn wedding and funeral services, and passenger rides at theme parks, historic houses, etc.
- 2.** It is the minimum Industry Standard of competence necessary to operate commercially upon the public highway, and as such is subject to renewal.
- 3.** It must be re-taken at least once every 5 years.
- 4.** Some Local Authorities require it to be renewed more frequently for the purposes of issuing a Hackney Carriage Licence; Candidates should check the requirements of their Local Authority.
- 5.** There is no legal requirement to hold a qualification or to obtain a licence in order to drive a horse drawn vehicle on the public highway, except when operating a `taxi' service. Local Authorities normally require evidence of Driver and Operator competence to drive horse drawn vehicles on the public highway, plus an annual inspection of horses, harness, vehicles and public liability insurance, before granting a Hackney Carriage Licence.
- 6.** The Code of Practice is not itself a license to operate.
- 7.** Local Authorities have no facility for granting licenses to horse drawn wedding and funeral service providers, as this is outside their remit.
- 8.** Drivers and Operators of commercial horse drawn services should ensure they apply for training and qualifications which are appropriate to their activities. Information about the range of Qualifications and Training Providers is available from the BDS Office, contact details above.
- 9.** The emphasis is on the safety of the Driver, Groom(s), passengers, other road users and the horse(s), plus on minimum requirements for the general welfare of harness horses
- 10.** The Code of Practice Road Driving Assessment is designed to be taken using the operator's own horse(s), harness and vehicle, and on the type of route(s), which will be normally used for operational purposes.
- 11.** Where the candidate is a Driver employed by an operator, the Assessment should be taken using the normal horses and equipment provided by the operator for the Driver's use.



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- 12.** A candidate who does not own, or have access to, a driving turnout may use one supplied by a training provider for the purposes of taking the road driving test.
- 13.** However, please note that the annual inspection of harness and vehicle(s) **must** be carried out using the harness and vehicles normally used by the operator or driver for providing the commercial service. Hired-in equipment may not be used for this purpose.
- 14.** Where a hackney carriage licence is required, the operator will be required to identify to the Assessor one or more routes which have been approved by the Local Authority as suitable for granting a licence to operate a horse drawn passenger carrying service, and the Road Driving Assessment must take place on one of these routes. ( *NB: A candidate may take the Road Driving Assessment on a route for which Local Authority approval is pending*).
- 15.** Operators of horse drawn passenger carrying services should be aware that some Local Authorities have their own additional requirements for applicants for a hackney carriage licence, which may include an annual medical for each driver, plus an annual veterinary check for each horse.
- 16.** In some cases, it is a Local Authority requirement that each horse used to operate the service is also microchipped, and that a log book of the hours worked per day and rest periods is kept and made available to the Local Authority on request. Candidates are advised to check requirements with their Local Authority before deciding whether they require a Local Authority Licence to operate. Operators will need a separate licence to operate in each Local Authority Area.
- 17.** Candidates for Assessment are advised to obtain pre-assessment training, in order to enable them to reach the required standard. Details of training courses are available from BDS Training Office, 83, New Road, Helmingham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 6EA; tel: 01 473 892 001; e-mail: [email@britishdrivingsociety.co.uk](mailto:email@britishdrivingsociety.co.uk) ; or visit the BDS website Training and Education pages at [www.britishdrivingsociety.co.uk](http://www.britishdrivingsociety.co.uk) .

### **APPLYING FOR ASSESSMENT, ASSESSMENT, AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

- Candidates should apply to the British Driving Society (BDS) for a Code of Practice Road Driving Assessment.
- An application form can be downloaded from the BDS website at [www.britishdrivingsociety.co.uk](http://www.britishdrivingsociety.co.uk) ( follow the links to training, education and forms), or by post from the BDS Office, 83 New Road, Helmingham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 6EA ( Tel: 01 473 892 001: e-mail: [email@britishdrivingsociety.co.uk](mailto:email@britishdrivingsociety.co.uk) ) – please send a stamped, addressed envelope to receive an application form by post. Completed Application forms should be sent to the BDS Office, together with the Assessment Fee. An application form, plus full details of the fees and costs can be found at **ANNEX A**.



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## **THE CODE OF PRACTICE ROAD DRIVING ASSESSMENT**

Assessment is normally carried out at the operator's premises, using the horse(s), vehicle and harness normally used by the operator for the purpose of providing commercial horse drawn services. Where the operator intends to apply for a Local Authority Hackney Carriage Licence, the Assessment must take place on the route(s) approved by the Local Authority for operating this service. **An Assessment Fee ( see details below)** is payable to the British Driving Society, which includes the Assessor's Fee and cost of Certification, but which DOES NOT include Assessor's travelling expenses, ( 40p per mile by car, or at cost for public transport)

Where the Assessment is carried out at a different venue from the operator's premises and/or not using the approved route(s), then a separate inspection of the approved route must also be carried out by an Assessor. Where the route inspection is carried out at a different time from the Road Driving Assessment, an additional fee of £95 plus Assessor's travelling expenses, is payable.

### **THE ROAD DRIVING ASSESSMENT MAY BE TAKEN USING A SINGLE, PAIR OR TEAM OF FOUR HORSES, AND IN EITHER A RURAL, or URBAN or COMBINED RURAL/URBAN ENVIRONMENT.**

**In order to achieve a Certificate, the candidate must be Assessed driving either a Single, Pair or Team of Four horses, and, if successful, will be awarded a Certificate for the specific turnout and environment Assessed ie:**

- **Single**                      **Urban; Rural; or Urban/Rural combined test**
- **Pair**                        **Urban; Rural; or Urban/Rural combined test**
- **Team of Four**            **Urban; Rural; or Urban/Rural combined test**

Candidates must ensure they are separately Assessed for competency with each type of turnout ( Single, Pair or Team of Four) they anticipate using, and in the environment or environments in which they anticipate operating. A Competency Certificate to drive a Single horse will not imply competency to drive a Pair or Team of Four; competence to operate in a Rural environment will not imply competence to operate in an Urban environment.

Successful Candidates should also be aware that the Code of Practice Certificate of Competence is the minimum level of competence provisionally agreed with the Department for Transport for the purposes of providing commercial passenger carrying services. Whilst the Driver will be Assessed for competence for communicating effectively with the Harness Horse Grooms, the Code of Practice Certificate DOES NOT confer or imply any competence or qualification in training Grooms, nor in teaching others to drive, nor for supervising other harness horse drivers, nor for training horses to work in harness, nor for training or schooling horses for specialised work. Drivers wishing to carry out any of these activities should take the relevant Qualifications. Details of all relevant harness horse qualifications, for both Drivers and Grooms and harness horse Trainers, are available from the British Driving Society Office.



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**Candidates will be assessed as competent to drive in either a Rural Environment, or an Urban Environment.** Candidates intending to drive in both Rural and Urban environments will need to be Assessed for each Environment.

**A 'Rural Environment'** means on quiet country lanes with minimal motorised traffic. Candidates with a Rural Environment Certificate will also be deemed competent to drive in an enclosed off-road area ( ie: the grounds of an historic house, or grounds of a theme park).

**An 'Urban Environment'** means on roads in a town with a moderate amount of motorised traffic, and will include an enhanced awareness of other road users, road signs, traffic lights, roundabouts, etc. The Urban Environment will normally be a town where the Candidate normally operates the horse drawn vehicle. Where the Urban Environment does not include features such as traffic lights and roundabouts, simulation may be used.

Where possible, the Rural and Urban Environment tests may be carried out simultaneously by driving from an Rural area into an Urban area ( or vice versa).

Where a Candidate wishes to be Assessed for driving more than one type of turnout ( ie: Singles, plus Pairs; Singles plus Teams of Four; Pairs plus Teams of Four; Singles, Pairs plus Teams of Four), in both Rural and Urban Environments, they need be Assessed for driving only the largest number of horses in the Urban Environment - ie: A Candidate who wishes to:

- Drive Singles and Pairs in both Rural and Urban environments may drive the Single in the Rural environment and the Pair in the Urban Environment
- Singles plus Teams of Four in both Rural and Urban environments may drive the Single in the Rural environment and the Team in the Urban Environment
- Drive Pairs and Teams of Four in both Rural and Urban environments may drive the Pair in the Rural environment and the Team in the Urban Environment
- drive Singles, Pairs and Team of Four in both Rural and Urban environments may drive the Single and the Pair in the Rural Environment and the Team in the Urban Environment

there is no need to drive all types of turnout in each environment.

## **Preparation**

### **The Candidate:**

Candidates should present themselves for Assessment in clean and appropriate clothing, including personal protective clothing as appropriate. Candidates should also ensure that Grooms are dressed appropriately. It is not necessary for Candidates or Grooms to wear livery for the Assessment, clean, casual clothing is acceptable, but appropriate footwear is essential (ie: full length boots; jodhpur boots; or other sturdy footwear suitable for working around horses; sandals and trainers are not suitable). Assessors may refuse to carry out the Test if, in the opinion of the Assessor, Candidates and/or Grooms are inappropriately dressed.

## **SECTION A - Harness**



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- The harness used must be the harness which the candidate normally uses when working
  - Harness will normally be traditional English leather harness, either full collar or breastcollar.
  - Harness made out of synthetic materials is not prohibited, provided it fits the horse correctly and comfortably, and is fit for purpose.
  - Metalwork may be either brass or white metal
  - All harness used for the test must be clean and in fit condition for use.
- A1.** The Assessor will observe the candidate carrying out a complete check of every part of the harness for wear, tear or damage. The Assessor will ask the candidate to identify random parts of the harness and to explain their function, and also to explain the risks of using worn, torn or damaged harness.
- A2.** Candidates who are unable to identify correctly and/or explain the function of the harness will **FAIL** this section.
- A3.** Candidates who are unable to correctly fit the harness will **FAIL** this section
- A4.** Candidates providing Harness which, in the opinion of the Assessor, is not fit to use due to wear, tear or damage to all or any part, and/or is unacceptably dirty will **FAIL** this section.

**Harness which fails Section A4 cannot be used for the Road Driving section of this Assessment.** The candidate is strongly advised to ensure that their harness will meet the criteria before Assessment takes place. If, in the Assessor's opinion, the harness is not fit for purpose, the Assessor will advise the candidate that the harness is not safe to be used ( either for the purposes of Assessment nor for driving horses for any other purpose).

**PLEASE NOTE: IF THE CANDIDATE IS UNABLE TO PROVIDE HARNESS WHICH IS CLEAN, SAFE AND FIT FOR PURPOSE, THE ASSESSMENT WILL BE HALTED AT THIS POINT. THE CANDIDATE WILL BE RECORDED AS HAVING FAILED ASSESSMENT ( on the grounds of faulty harness), WILL FORFEIT THE ASSESSMENT FEE AND ASSESSOR'S TRAVELLING EXPENSES, AND MUST RE-SUBMIT A FULL APPLICATION IF THEY REQUIRE A NEW ASSESSMENT.**

Candidates should note that they may not be covered by the terms and conditions of their insurance policy if they use harness which has been Assessed as not fit for purpose.

*Recommended reading:*  
*The encyclopaedia of Driving by Sallie Walrond*

- A.1.1. All harness must be in clean condition at the commencement of Assessment.** The minimum standard is that all parts of the harness must have



been washed clean of any dirt, grease, sweat, etc, and saddle-soap or other suitable dressing applied as appropriate ( *NB: the criteria is that the harness be supple so that it is comfortable for the horse to wear, and that straps are flexible enough to be capable of being done up and undone without undue effort*). There must be no rust on any metal part and no verdigrise ( encrusted green deposit) on brass fittings. The Assessor will prefer to see that leather, patent leather and metal fittings have been polished ( *NB: candidates will not be failed solely on the grounds of providing unpolished harness, although this may be a contributory factor to the Assessor concluding there is an overall lack of general care of equipment*).

### **A.1.2**

**The harness must be checked for wear, tear and damage prior to harnessing up the horse(s).** The candidate must check over every part of the harness for signs of wear, tear or damage. The harness may either be taken apart and checks carried out as it is re-assembled, or it may be checked over fully assembled ( *NB: if the harness is already assembled, then the Assessor will expect to see visual checks made of both sides of the harness, and under buckles*). A visual check of each part of the harness is the minimum standard, with the candidate looking for any cracks, splits or stretching in the leather ( especially around holes), broken, worn or frayed stitching, and signs of damage or wear to metal parts. Each item of harness should be checked over on both sides. Be aware of the dangers in areas where leather is bent or folded around any part of the harness ( rein billets, for example), where the leather may become shaped or ' moulded' with constant usage, and may be creased or misshapen. Check all keepers. Any piece of harness which does not pass inspection must be replaced by the Candidate prior to the Test.

## **SECTION B - The vehicle**

- The vehicle may be traditional ( either antique or reproduction) or modern.
- The vehicle must be designed for the intended purpose, ie: for weddings, funerals, or general passenger carrying. ( *NB: it is normal to take the road assessment test using the vehicle the candidate proposes to use for the purpose of proving a commercial service, however, it may be felt inappropriate to use a horse drawn hearse for the purpose of Assessment in which case another vehicle may be substituted. Where a substitute vehicle is used for Assessment, this must be similar in length and weight to the vehicle normally used by the operator. Cross-country, ' marathon' type vehicles are not suitable for the purposes of the Code of Practice Assessment. Candidates proposing to use substitute vehicles, which they do not normally use for providing a service to customers, should discuss this with BDS Awards Board when applying for Assessment. BDS Awards Board will advise the Assessor of the proposed substitution; the Assessor's decision on the suitability of the vehicle provided for the purposes of this Assessment will be final*).



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- B.1.** The Assessor will observe the candidate carrying out a full vehicle check before putting-to the horse(s). The Assessor will ask the candidate to identify random parts of the vehicle and to describe their function.
- B.2** Candidates unable to identify and explain the functions of parts of the vehicle will **FAIL** this section of the Assessment.
- B.3.** Candidates providing a horse drawn vehicle which, in the opinion of the Assessor, is unsafe for use due to wear, tear or damage to all or any part will **FAIL** this section.

**Any horse drawn vehicle which fails Section B3 cannot be used for the Road Driving section of this Assessment.** The candidate is strongly advised to ensure that their vehicle will meet the criteria before Assessment takes place. If, in the Assessor's opinion, the vehicle is not fit for purpose, the Assessor will advise the candidate that it is not safe to be used ( either for the purposes of Assessment nor for driving horses for any other purpose).

**PLEASE NOTE: IF THE CANDIDATE IS UNABLE TO PROVIDE A HORSE DRAWN VEHICLE WHICH IS SAFE AND FIT FOR PURPOSE, THE ASSESSMENT WILL BE HALTED AT THIS POINT. THE CANDIDATE WILL BE RECORDED AS HAVING FAILED ASSESSMENT ( on the grounds of faulty equipment), WILL FORFEIT THE ASSESSMENT FEE AND ASSESSOR'S TRAVELLING EXPENSES, AND MUST RE-SUBMIT A FULL APPLICATION FOR A NEW ASSESSMENT.**

Candidates should note that they may not be covered by the terms and conditions of their insurance policy if they use equipment which has been Assessed as not fit for purpose.

- B.1.1.** **The horse drawn vehicle must be in clean condition at the commencement of the Assessment.** The minimum standard is that all parts of the vehicle must have been washed clean of any dirt, grease, sweat, etc, and lubrication applied to turntables and axels as appropriate. The vehicle must be of a suitable size and weight for the intended horse(s), and have a suitable seat for the Driver and Groom(s). Shafts and pole must fit the vehicle correctly and securely and be of the correct length and height for the proposed horse(s). The vehicle should not show any overall signs of wear, tear or damage, and there must be no signs of rust on metal parts or damp or woodworm or rot damage to wooden parts. A full vehicle checklist is included at **Annex B** ( *NB: the full vehicle check is a separate, annual inspection; whilst the full vehicle inspection is NOT part of the Code of Practice Road Driving Assessment, candidates are advised to check that their vehicle complies with these safety requirements*). The Assessor will prefer to see that paintwork and varnish is in reasonable condition (*NB: candidates will not be failed solely on the grounds of flaking paint, although this may be a contributory factor to the Assessor concluding there is an overall lack of general care of equipment*). Brakes are not compulsory, but must be in working order if fitted. Red reflectors must be fitted to



the rear of the vehicle. Lamps ( traditional or battery-operated) showing a white light to the front and a red light to the rear must be used if driving between dusk and dawn on the public highway

- B.1.2 The vehicle must be checked for wear, tear and damage prior to harnessing up the horse(s).** The candidate must carry out a routine check-over of the vehicle for signs of wear, tear or damage prior to putting horses to the vehicle. A visual and manual check of all parts of the vehicle is the minimum standard, with the candidate looking for signs of wear, tear or damage ( often indicated by cracks in paintwork); rust on metalwork; fatigue or cracks in welds; rot and woodworm on woodwork; loose and missing screws and bolts; loose panels. The candidate will carry out manual checks for looseness of fittings, panels, tyres, spokes, etc. Turntables must be capable of turning freely; brakes ( where fitted) must be in working order. Vehicles which fail the routine pre-driving check cannot be used for the purposes of the Code of Practice Road Driving Assessment.

Candidates are strongly advised to ensure their vehicle meets the required standards before Assessment, and should be aware that vehicles which do not meet the standards may not be covered by the terms of their insurance policy or License to Operate.

## **SECTION C - The horse(s)**

- All horses used for the purposes of the Code of Practice Assessment must be at least 6 years old, have been trained to be driven in harness on the public highway and have at least 18 months experience of being driven regularly in harness. Candidates may be asked to show the Horse Passports to the Assessor. Horses which, in the opinion of the Assessor, are under-age, or are inadequately trained or experienced, and/or temperamentally or behaviourally unsuitable, to be driven safely on the public highway cannot be used for the purposes of this Assessment.
- All horses used for the purposes of the Code of Practice Assessment must be sound in wind and limb, groomed, and must be adequately shod. Horses which, in the opinion of the Assessor, are unsound, inadequately shod, or otherwise unfit for the purposes of this Assessment, cannot be used for the Assessment.
- Where a horse is found to have become unsuitable on the day of Assessment ( ie: unexpected lameness or illness; lost or loose shoe(s), etc), the Assessor may permit the candidate to provide a substitute horse, providing this can be obtained within a reasonable time-frame. In some circumstances, BDS Awards Board may permit the Assessment to be postponed to a later date, in which case a £25 postponement fee will be charged to cover administrative costs, and the candidate will be required to pay all Assessor's travelling fees, but will not be penalised by having to pay the full Assessment Fee again.
- Where, in the opinion of the Assessor, a horse or horses are not adequately trained or experienced for the purposes of driving safely on the public highway, and/or have pre-existing issues of soundness or ability, and/or are inadequately shod, and/or are unsuitable to be used for any other reason, the candidate will **FAIL** this section of the Assessment,



will forfeit all Assessment fees and expenses, and will need to re-apply to take the Assessment at a later date with a suitable horse or horses . Candidates are strongly advised to ensure the horse(s) they provide for the purposes of Assessment are adequately trained to be driven safely on the public highway, physically sound, and recently shod.

- Operators of horse drawn vehicles may wish to obtain veterinary advice on the physical suitability of any equine intended to be used to provide horse drawn services prior to Assessment ( NB: A vet's letter will not be eligible as evidence of soundness if the horse is visibly unsound at the time of Assessment).

**C.1.** The Assessor will observe the candidate carrying out a routine visual and manual check of each horse used for assessment, to check the following :

- shoes** – should not show excessive signs of wear; must not be loose; no risen clenches
- hooves** – frogs must be free of stones, etc; hooves should have been recently picked out and clean
- coat** – no mud, grass or stable stains; should have been recently brushed; may be clipped or unclipped
- mane and tail ( including feathers where present) –**  
no dirt, twigs, droppings, etc; should have been recently brushed out; tail should not be excessively long ( ie: must not touch the ground); mane may be unplaited or plaited; pulled or unpulled ( NB: manes should not be so excessively long that they risk tangling in the harness)
- eyes, nose, mouth and dock :**  
clean with no signs of discharge; bars of mouth should not show signs of damage or bruising
- overall:** check for recent cuts, sores; no signs of harness sores on any part of body; ( minor nicks, surface scratches, and scars and healed-over wounds and blemishes are acceptable, provided they are not aggravated by the movement of the harness). Horses must be in reasonable physical condition – neither excessively thin or fat. Where a horse has any obvious physical issue, then a letter from a vet should be supplied confirming that working in harness is not detrimental to the horse's welfare ( ie: sweet itch; melanoma, etc)
- Soundness:** must not be visibly lame at walk or trot. Must not show signs of respiratory difficulties.

## **SECTION D - Harnessing up and putting-to**

**D.1.** The Assessor will observe the candidate harnessing up the horse(s), using the harness which has previously been identified and checked ( **Section A**). All items of harness must be correctly fitted for safety and for the comfort of the horse.

**D.2.** The candidate must select a suitable area for harnessing up, and must restrain the horse(s) correctly and appropriately ( *NB: the horse(s) will normally be tied up to a*



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*tying-up ring, using a correctly fitting headcollar, rope and quick release knot. Alternatively, an assistant may hold the horse during harnessing up, using a correctly-fitting headcollar and rope, and in-hand bridle where appropriate).*

- D.3.** The candidate must select a suitable area for putting the horse(s) to the vehicle, and will normally have positioned the vehicle correctly before harnessing up the horse(s).
- D.4.** The horse(s) will be led to the putting-to area ( if more than one horse is being used, the candidate may make use of assistant(s) for this purpose). The horse(s) must be correctly positioned in relation to the vehicle ( Singles – directly in front of the shafts with their back to the vehicle; Pairs and Team Wheelers – one each side of the pole; Team Leaders in front of the Wheelers), and the candidate must direct their assistant(s) to maintain control of the horse(s) whilst putting-to. The Assessor will observe the candidate putting the horse to the vehicle.
- D.5.** the candidate will carry out a complete visual and manual check to ensure that each horse is correctly and safely put to the vehicle
- D.6.** The Assessor will ask questions designed to test the candidate's knowledge and understanding of safety and welfare and correct procedures.
- D.7.** Candidates who harness up and/or put-to incorrectly will **FAIL** this section. Candidates failing Section D will forfeit all Assessment fees and expenses, and will need to re-apply for a new Assessment, paying the full fee. Candidates are strongly advised to ensure they have the required levels of competence, knowledge and understanding prior to applying for Assessment. Details of training courses are obtainable from the BDS Office ( address above)

## **SECTION E - Driving the horse(s) and vehicle**

The Candidate should discuss and agree the proposed road driving route with the Assessor at the commencement of Assessment. ( *NB: where Assessment takes place at the Candidate's own premises, or normal venue of operation, it is likely that the candidate will be much more familiar with the area than the Assessor. The Assessor needs to have some idea of the route, in order to carry out a viable Assessment. Candidates may either provide a map and explanation of salient features, such as gradients, junctions, traffic volume, etc, or may arrange for the Assessor to inspect the route by car prior to Assessment*). Where the route does not include features such as traffic lights, pedestrian crossings, and roundabouts, the candidate and Assessor should agree safe and effective methods of assessing these by simulation. Where reversing/backing up and turning a semi-circle/U-turn cannot be performed safely on the public highway, or without causing disruption to other road users, these may be assessed off-road in simulation, and cones may be used to represent gate posts.



Please note that all **Assessments in Sections E1 – E4 and Section G** are either **PASS** or **FAIL**.

Please note that where a candidate has, in the opinion of the Assessor, failed to maintain safety of self, Groom(s), horse and others ( including the Assessor), the Assessor may abort the Assessment immediately. Where the Assessment is aborted on safety grounds, the candidate will be recorded as having **FAILED** the whole test, will forfeit all Assessment fees and expenses, and will need to re-apply for Assessment, paying the full fee again.

**E.1 – 4**      **The candidate will harness up, put to and drive the horses on the public highway in either a rural or urban environment. The candidate will drive with consideration towards other road users, and the safety of self and others and the welfare of the horse(s). The candidate will drive with regard to the provisions of the Road Traffic Acts, and legislation relating to horse drawn vehicles on the public highway. The candidate will be able to approach and negotiate road junctions safely and drive up and down hill. The Urban environment candidate will be able to approach and negotiate roundabouts, traffic lights, pedestrian crossings, and drive horses safely in urban traffic conditions. The Rural environment candidate will be able to control the horse(s) when encountering farm livestock, machinery and wildlife. ALL CANDIDATES WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE EFFECTIVE USE OF GROOMS THROUGHOUT.**

**E.6.**            the Assessor will ask relevant questions, and ask the candidate to explain reasons for procedures during Assessment, in order to Assess the candidate's underpinning knowledge and understanding.

**E.5.**            Candidates who, in the opinion of the Assessor, do not reach the required level of driving competence during Assessment, and/or do not have the required level of knowledge and understanding, will **FAIL** this section. Candidates failing **Section E** will forfeit all Assessment fees and expenses, and will need to apply for a new Assessment, paying the full fee again. Candidates are strongly advised to ensure they are able to drive horses to the required level of competence, and also that they have the required underpinning knowledge and understanding before applying for Assessment. Details of training courses are available from the BDS Office ( address above)

## **SECTION F -      Ending the drive**

**F.1.**            at the agreed end of the Assessment drive, the horse(s) should be taken to a suitable area for taking out ( this will normally be the same area where they were put-to). Horses should be taken out of the vehicle correctly, unharnessed and made comfortable following the drive.



- F.2.** the candidate should discuss the care procedures appropriate for the horse at the end of the drive. Appropriate care procedures will depend on various circumstances, including temperature, weather, thickness of coat, etc. Procedures may include: walking the horse until cool, or until sweat has dried; or, after unharnessing, sponging off sweat marks; washing horse down; brushing off minor sweat marks under harness; using sweat rug; drying horse after working in the rain or after washing; procedures to cool down or warm up, stabling, feeding, watering and turning out after work
- F.3.** When at taking-out area, Driver dismounts and horse is taken out of vehicle correctly, whilst Groom maintains control from the ground; horse is unharnessed; and made comfortable
- F.4** The vehicle and harness should be checked over for signs of wear, tear or damage following the drive
- F.5.** The harness and vehicle should be stored correctly, and the horse stabled safely.

## **SECTION G KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**

In addition to the practical driving element of the Test ( Section E), Candidates must also pass an oral knowledge and understanding section ( Section G). Candidates should ensure they have a sound underpinning knowledge of harness, vehicles, horses and driving, and are able to explain and describe various procedures and methods to the Assessor. Section G, Knowledge and Understanding, is Assessed orally ( ie: the Assessor will ask verbal questions for the Candidate to answer).

### **SECTION G                      KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**

The Assessor will test the Candidates knowledge on a selection of the following. Some elements ( marked) are relevant to **Heavy Horses** only, and need not be covered by Candidates using Light Harness Horses/Ponies. Assessors may test Candidate’s knowledge separately, or in discussion with the Candidate during any appropriate part of the practical element of the Test. Where the Assessor is of the opinion that the Candidate has demonstrated sufficient knowledge and understanding by virtue of the actions taken during the Practical element of this test, the Assessor may confirm this by making a note in the Assessor Comments box at the end of this section. However, Candidates must be able to satisfy the Assessor that they have sufficient underpinning knowledge and understanding to operate safety and correctly.

Element	
<b>1</b>	Name the parts of the harness and identify the functions
<b>2</b>	Name the main parts of the vehicle



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<b>3</b>	Explain how to check each part of the harness fits the horse correctly and comfortably for work
<b>4</b>	Explain how to adjust breeching correctly, and outline the dangers of it being too high; too low or too loose
<b>5</b>	Explain how to check the horse is at the correct distance from the vehicle during putting-to
<b>6</b>	Explain why the ridger chain should be vertical to the shafts ( <i>heavy horses only</i> )
<b>7</b>	Explain the dangers of removing the bridle before taking the horse out of the vehicle
<b>8</b>	Give a list of spare harness which it is advisable to carry with the vehicle in case of breakages.
<b>9</b>	Explain safe procedures for dealing with breakages whilst driving
<b>10</b>	Explain the purpose of harness checks, and explain how to recognise whether each part of the harness is sound and fit for use
<b>11</b>	Outline the most common areas of wear and tear on the harness
<b>12</b>	Explain how to choose harness which fits the horse correctly and comfortably ( especially the collar)
<b>13</b>	Explain the dangers of driving with slack reins
<b>14</b>	explain how to balance a two wheeled vehicle correctly
<b>15</b>	Describe actions to be taken if a horse shies for any reason
<b>16</b>	Describe actions to be taken if a horse falls whilst being driven
<b>17</b>	Describe procedures for approaching and driving up and down hills, and outline the risks of trotting downhill
<b>18</b>	Describe procedures for driving on slippery surfaces ( whether due to wet, ice, snow, etc)
<b>19</b>	Explain the importance of checking the horse's shoes and feet before and after work
<b>20</b>	Summarise the risks of driving with (a) loose shoes, (b) badly worn shoes
<b>21</b>	Describe procedures for dealing with a horse which reverses/back up at speed
<b>22</b>	Explain why the ends of the shafts should not be behind the collar
<b>23</b>	Outline the requirements of relevant legislation as it applies to driving horse drawn vehicles on the public highway
<b>24</b>	Explain the use of a seat belt for the Driver ( <i>heavy horses only</i> )
<b>25</b>	Describe signs of harness sores, and explain how these may be prevented
<b>26</b>	Explain how to treat harness sores
<b>27</b>	Explain the function and correct use of brakes on a horse drawn vehicle
<b>28</b>	Explain the function and correct use of the drag shoe on a vehicle
<b>29</b>	Describe safe procedures for meeting and passing ridden horses on the public highway
<b>30</b>	Describe safe procedures for meeting and passing other road users, including: motor cars; motorbikes; bicycles; pedestrians; invalid carriages ( compulsory for Urban Environment candidates)
<b>31</b>	Describe safe procedures for controlling horses when encountering farm livestock, farm machinery, and wildlife ( compulsory for Rural Environment Candidates)
<b>32</b>	Describe safe procedures for minimising risks if horse runs too fast whilst being driven
<b>33</b>	Describe methods of coping with a given emergency situation
<b>33</b>	Describe safe procedures for instructing Groom(s) to assist with controlling horses from the ground



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<b>34</b>	Outline correct order of putting-to/hitching in and taking out of vehicle and explain the dangers of using incorrect methods
<b>35</b>	Outline the correct order in which driver, grooms and passengers should mount and dismount the vehicle whilst the horses are put-to, and explain the dangers of using incorrect methods

## **BDS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

The BDS is committed to providing equality of opportunity in all training, assessment and qualifications. The BDS is an Awarding Organisation regulated by Ofqual ( the Government Regulators for Education), and by the Department for Transport, and DEFRA.

We do not discriminate in any way on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, colour, religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, age ( except where there is a legal minimum age requirement for eligibility to take a qualification), social or economic status, or physical or mental ability. BDS Training and Assessment is open to any candidate who fulfils the pre-entry requirements where applicable.

### **Pre –entry requirements for the Code of Practice Assessment:**

1. Candidates must have reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday by the date of Assessment

### **Reasonable Adjustment Policy**

Reasonable adjustments can be applied for by Candidates with certain physical or mental issues. Reasonable Adjustments are granted at the discretion of the BDS Verifier, and include:

1. Using steps or a mounting block to access the Driver's seat
2. Using a raised footrest when driving
3. Bridging the reins
4. Allowing extra time to harness up or put-to for candidates with mobility or dexterity issues

The Code of Practice Assessment is wholly practical and oral in content ( ie: there are no written tests ). Candidates with difficulty in hearing or speaking should arrange to contact the BDS Office to determine methods for addressing these issues.

Whilst we make every effort to remove barriers to certification, and have no intention of discriminating against any candidate on the grounds of physical issues, it is difficult to see how a candidate who is confined to a wheelchair or registered blind or has severe vision or manual dexterity issues, or is frequently subject to seizures of any type, could meet the safety requirements of this test. Candidates with severe physical issues should contact the BDS Office to discuss.

### **SPECIAL CONSIDERATION**

Candidates and Assessors who consider that external circumstances, or circumstances beyond the Candidate's control, adversely affected the result of the Assessment, may apply for Special Consideration.



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Special Consideration is applicable where:

1. Recent death of close family member or partner has affected their normal performance ( normally no more than 30 days prior to the date of Assessment)
2. Illness ( however, candidates who are aware of any illness prior to Assessment are advised to contact the BDS Office to obtain a postponement)
3. Injury to the candidate ( however, candidates who are aware of any injury prior to Assessment are advised to contact the BDS Office to obtain a postponement)
4. Illness or injury experienced on the day of Assessment must be reported to the Assessor immediately – Candidates will not be permitted to claim special consideration for illness or injury which they believe may have affected their performance if they do not mention this until after Assessment is finished.
5. External influences – such as excessively bad weather conditions arising on the day or during assessment and/or unusual or unexpected events. However, no candidate may claim for encountering normal traffic, or normal road users; candidates taking the Urban Test cannot claim special consideration for encountering heavy traffic, lorries, buses, motorbikes, bin bags, etc, since these are to be expected in the urban environment. Candidates taking the Rural Test cannot claim for encountering farm machinery, farm livestock, or bird scarers or shooting in the vicinity, since these are to be expected in a rural environment.

## **APPEALS**

Any Candidate who fails and who believes their Assessment was unfairly conducted in any way should contact the BDS Office to discuss their right to appeal.

Candidates have 30 days from the date of Assessment to appeal against the result. Appeals must be submitted in writing. The fee for appeal is £150, which is refundable if the appeal is upheld.