



BRITISH
DRIVING SOCIETY

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2022

Competency Check for Carriage Driving
Introductory Assessment

Competency for Carriage Driving :

Introductory Safety and Competency Assessment

Purpose of Assessment:

The objective of this assessment process is to ascertain whether a driver and their turnout are sufficiently competent and safe to take part in any Public Outing organised by the British Driving Society.

Assessment Procedure:

The candidate is asked to produce their equine, harness and Carriage for inspection, harness up and to carry out a simple driving test. They can be questioned to get an insight into their basic knowledge but unlike a test, is not required to talk themselves through all their procedures.

The Assessor should feel free to give helpful advice where necessary.



The British Driving Society are the official advisory body for Carriage Driving to the Department of Transport

PART 1 : Inspection of the Equine, Harness and Carriage

1.1 Initial Safety Assessment:

Assess Equine is secured at all times

Observation and advice:

Safe practice, tying up and leading.

1.2. Condition of Equine:

Assess Condition of Equine

Observation and advice:

Cleanliness particularly important under harness.

Check for sores and rubs.

Condition of feet and shoeing.

Correct fit of any boots used.

1.3. Suitability of Equine:

Assess suitability of equine for required activity

Observation and advice:

Soundness, temperament and experience - especially with other turnouts.

1.4. Assess Harness:

Assess harness inspected for suitability, cleanliness, condition, wear and tear.

Observation and advice:

Use of under halters and gullet straps discussed.

Sound knowledge of harness being used.

Correct fitting of any harness pads.

Sliding backband with two wheeled Carriages and fixed backhand with independent shafts.

The use of quick release tugs with loop ended shafts.

1.5. Assess Carriage:

Carriage inspected for suitability for the work required and size/weight in relation to the equine.

Condition and wear.

Observation and advice:

Loose nuts and bolts, slack wheels, brakes functioning as they should.
Quick release clips functional and of appropriate size.
Swingle tree fitted if using a breast collar.
Spares kit carried suitable for the turnout.

1.6. Competent Groom:

Use of competent groom, given clear instructions.

Observation and advice:

Groom to be familiar with their role whilst putting to, be able to warn driver of any traffic and be able to react in the case of an emergency.
To be familiar with the spares kit and its uses.

PART 2 : Harnessing up and correct fitting of Harness

2.1. Assess Harnessing

Harness up in correct sequence

Observation and advice:

Collar/traces, saddle, reins, bridle.
Aware of danger of tying up with bridle on.

2.2. Assess Fit of Harness

Checking correct fit of harness

Observation and advice:

Importance of correct fitting collar, breeching, bridle and bit.
Adjust where necessary.



PART 3 : Putting Equine to Carriage

3.1. Assess control of Equine:

Equine under control throughout procedure.

Observation and advice:

Equine with bridle on and reins attached.

Position of groom at equine's head until driver is mounted and gives clear instruction that they are ready.

3.2. Assess suitability of environment:

Suitable place.

Observation and advice:

Level, awareness of surroundings, especially if in a Equine box park.

3.3. Assess Putting To procedure:

Correct sequence of putting to.

Observation and advice:

Tugs, traces, breeching straps, belly band.

3.4 . Assess Adjustments:

Adjustment of Carriage and harness to fit Equine.

Observation and advice:

Length of traces, breeching, distance of Equine from Carriage.

Height, length and width of shafts.

3.5. Assess Mounting

Mounting of Carriage by driver (should be nearside).

Observation and advice:

Taking up reins, mounting safely, position on seat, whip.

3.6. Assess balance of Carriage:

Balance of Carriage with driver and groom on board.

Alterations for groom on backstep.

PART 4 : Safe Driving Techniques

Carry out a series of movements on both reins including walk, trot, and halt with some up and down hill included if possible.

A few sets of cones or simple obstacle to be driven to show the ability to negotiate gateways and accurately manoeuvre the turnout.

4.1. Assess Aids & Controls:

The use and understanding of the aids, the control of the Equine at the halt, walk and trot using any style of driving.

4.2. Assess Reactions:

The reaction of the Equine and driver to other turnouts, potential hazards, variable terrain and motorised vehicles.

4.3. Assess Highway Code observance

Demonstration of the appropriate hand signals according to the Highway Code.

4.4. BDS Policies and Procedures

Discuss procedures when driving in company and appropriate whip signals to other carriage drivers. Keeping a safe distance from other drivers and not to pass another driver without pre warning them and until it is safe to do so. Discuss BDS safety guidelines.



PART 5 : Take out and Unharness

5.1. Assess Control of Equine:

Equine under control throughout procedure

Observation and advice:

Position of groom at equine's head.

5.2. Assess Dismount:

Driver dismounting

Observation and advice:

Put down whip, reins in one hand, dismount safely, put up reins.

5.3. Assess Disconnection of Equine from Carriage:

Disconnecting of harness in correct order and Equine taken out.

Observation and advice:

Belly band, breeching straps, traces, tugs.

5.4. Assess removal of Harness:

Equine led away and harness removed.

Observation and advice:

Bridle and reins to be removed first. This allowing the Equine to see the rest being removed.

5.5. Assess aftercare of Equine:

Care of Equine after work.

Observation and advice:

Cool down procedure.

Check for any rubs or harness galls, brushing injuries, loose or worn shoes.





Develop your driving skills with the comprehensive BDS training programme



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