

HORSE RIDER SAFETY

Look at it from my
point of view...



As a horse rider you form part of the complex traffic mix on our roads.

You should do all you can to protect yourself and your horse from the dangers that can exist when riding out.

Remember car drivers and other road users may know very little about horses and their behaviour; so think about how you can help so that everyone stays safe.

- ▼ Give other road users the chance to see you early and therefore react accordingly. Wear fluorescent/reflective clothing and fit similar items to your horse. One of the most visible areas of the horse to a driver is the legs – fluorescent leg wraps are ideal.
- ▼ Most drivers want to pass slowly and safely, giving you and your horse room. To enable drivers to do this slow to a walk and ride single file when traffic needs to pass. It is then easier for other road users to pass slowly, giving you plenty of space.
- ▼ If you do have to stay two abreast, walk and keep in to the side to give vehicles enough space to pass safely.
- ▼ Try not to use the roads after dusk when you will be difficult to be seen by others. However if you do have to do this always wear reflective clothing and carry lights if possible.
- ▼ Carry a mobile phone with you for use in an emergency; however, remember it is not safe to use your phone whilst riding out on the roads. Keep it for emergencies only.
- ▼ Remember to use hand signals to make other road users aware of your intentions to manoeuvre, particularly if you are going to pull off the road to a safe place and would like the driver to wait for you to do so.
- ▼ Let the driver know that you are aware of his presence by making eye contact with him so he knows you have seen him.

- ▼ Always show courtesy to other road users by acknowledging consideration given to you. A nod of thanks or a smile will achieve this even if you are trying to control your horse and are unable to take your hands off the reins.
- ▼ Remember, your horse may be fine in traffic but a 'thank you' to courteous drivers goes a long way to helping the next horse and rider they meet receive the same courtesy.
- ▼ There is room for everyone provided a little courtesy and consideration is shown for each other.

For further advice on accident prevention or to report an equine incident go to www.horseaccidents.org.uk

About GEM Motoring Assist

GEM is a road safety organisation, established in 1932. Our aim is to improve safety for all road users through the sponsorship and initiation of accident prevention measures in the UK and to provide motoring and safety information to our members.

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Horses on the road can be unpredictable despite the best efforts of the most experienced rider.

Always treat all horses as a potential hazard and drive slowly with caution.

Give horses as much room as the road allows when passing and slow right down to a speed at which you could stop suddenly if required to.

Horses are 'flight' animals; if they become scared they will want to run away from the perceived danger. They can be startled by many things, noise, flapping objects, dogs barking, a vehicle splashing through a puddle etc.

As a driver you may not be aware of these distractions but the rider and horse will be. They can make a horse more difficult to control and cause it to 'shy' suddenly, possibly into the path of traffic.

Look out for the rider's signals and always take notice of a request to slow down or stop – they may be aware of something happening with their horse that you are not.

Do not accelerate either as you pass the horse or immediately after. This can sometimes cause it to panic, which may pose a problem for the rider and/or other road users.

On narrow country roads keep your speed down, especially on bends. If you meet a horse on a bend or are unable to pass right away, slow down and stay well back at least one and a half car lengths from the horse until it is safe to pass giving it at least the room of a small car as you do so.

Sometimes riders do need to be two abreast on the road. If they have a young or novice horse or rider or they are leading another horse, it is safer to have these animals on the inside with a more experienced horse and rider on the outside.

Be patient and courteous to horse riders they have as much right as you to use the road.



Protect yourself.
Protect your car.
Protect horses and riders.

When Passing horses

- ① Slow down to 15mph
- ② Be patient, don't sound your horn or rev your engine
- ③ Pass horse wide (at least a car's width)
- ④ Drive slowly away

#thinkhorsethink15

Vehicles with air-brakes, or vehicles towing trailers or caravans etc. can pose additional problems. They are noisy and unusual vehicles to some horses. If possible stop and allow the horse and rider to get out of the way before pulling away slowly. In this situation the rider may sometimes wish to move their horse off the road to allow you to pass safely, please be patient and give them time to do this.

Most riders are polite and will thank considerate drivers, however if they are trying to control their horse they might not be able to wave 'thank you', this doesn't mean that they do not appreciate your safe driving.

There is room for everyone provided a little courtesy and consideration is shown for each other.