

Horse Sense for Motorists

Motorists and horse riders have an equal right to use the roads. They also share a responsibility to consider each other's needs. Horse riders prefer not to use the roads, but still need to reach bridleways and other off-road facilities

As a motorist you should be considerate of the following.

General rules:

- Look out for horses being led or ridden on the road
- At left-hand bends and on narrow country roads – take extra care and keep your speed down
- When you see a horse rider on the road – slow down
- When behind a horse rider – give them plenty of room and be ready to stop
- Do not sound your horn or rev your engine – horses are powerful but vulnerable animals easily scared by noise and may panic around large or fast moving vehicles
- Horses may well be alarmed by things the motorist would not notice e.g. pigeons 'clapping' up out of a hedge. Also man-made objects that the horse doesn't understand e.g. a roll of carpet dumped in the ditch. Each of these can cause the horse to suddenly skit sideways.
- Motorists should realise a horse prancing up & down or moving sideways means the rider is struggling to pass something the horse doesn't like. So slow down to get past if there's enough room. Or better still stop until the problem is solved. The rider will be very grateful.
- When overtaking – pass wide and slow and don't accelerate rapidly once you have passed
- Remember on wet days water splash can unsettle a horse
- Horse riders are often youngsters – so take extra care
- For increased safety, riders may ride in double file when escorting a young or inexperienced horse rider
- Watch out for horse riders' signals and heed a request to slow down or stop. Riders are often able to see and hear further ahead than a motorist. Riders should signal their intentions but drivers should be aware that horses are unpredictable and a rider on a young or frightened horse may have their hands full

At junctions:

- Look out for horse riders turning right
- Horse riders keep to the left of the road even when turning right – it is unsafe for them to position a horse between lines of traffic where they can panic, sandwiched with no escape route

At roundabouts:

- When on a roundabout, horse riders will normally signal right only when approaching exits they DO NOT intend to use. Horse riders will keep to the left within the roundabout until reaching their exit, when they signal left

Horse riders should wear Hi-Viz clothing

The British Horse Society recommends the wearing of hi-viz clothing on or off the road at all times regardless of the time of day, season or weather conditions. Wearing hi-viz can give vehicle drivers a valuable **three** seconds of extra reaction time that could save the life of both the rider and the horse.

Mutual courtesy and care between motorists and riders is important to prevent intolerance and improve safety. A horse rider should acknowledge a courtesy, however a wave or acknowledgement is not always possible as two hands are often needed to keep control of the horse, but a nod and a friendly smile are the least you should expect

Treat all horses as a potential hazard and expect the unexpected!

(Sources - The British Horse Society / Department of Transport/ Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents /)

Bob Clarke/Mary Mackie, January 2017