



Driving Competition Accident Guidelines

Pre Competition Safety Meeting

- Prior to the competition, Organizers and the Driving Officials should have a **Driving Safety Meeting** with announcers, ringmasters, gate keepers, stewards, paid staff, volunteers, trainers and competitors to discuss and review this Protocol.
- It should be noted that caution should be used in scheduling riding and driving horses/classes whenever possible.
- The meeting should:
 - Review the USEF Safety Rules and Procedures
 - Identify all personnel involved in event management and discuss their roles in the Protocol.
 - Organize a team, directed by a designated official and/or management (with driving experience) with the responsibility for directing the conduct of all participants in the competition area (show rings, obstacle courses, dressage rings, marathon courses, etc.).
 - Grant responsibility to stewards, technical delegates and organizers for directing the conduct of all people and animals outside the primary event areas, including warm-up areas, stabling areas, parking areas, etc.
 - Designate the announcer(s), who has the best over view of the event area, to deliver information with a calm, yet authoritative demeanor.
 - Assure safety equipment including a suitable halter and lead is present at the primary event area in a location known by all event personnel.

During the Accident

- All individuals need to understand every incident is unique and has a life of its own.
- The announcer shall ask for everyone's attention, and:
 - Direct inexperienced persons, including spectators, to step back for safety and not enter the area.
 - Inform everyone to avoid stepping in front of the running animal.
 - Notify willing assistants to wait for direction from the official in charge.
 - Direct the closure of all perimeter exits.
 - In an enclosed arena, ask all entries to walk and move to the center of the ring.
 - In an open area, notify other drivers of the direction of the loose animal(s) and direct that they calmly move away from the accident area.
 - Direct all Drivers to remain in the vehicle and in control of their animal(s).
 - Suggest grooms or driver's assistant head the animal(s).
 - Encourage only experienced horsemen enter the area carefully.
 - Direct juniors, accompanied by an adult horseman on the vehicle, to hand over the reins as soon as it is safe. Juniors should not exit the carriage unless instructed by an official in charge.



During the Accident (continued)

- Immediately notify officials, the event office, announcers, medical and veterinary personnel of the incident even if there are no obvious sign of injuries.
- Provide immediate attention and protection to any person down on the ground or obviously injured.
- When in an enclosed area, Ringmasters and other experienced horsemen should assist in keeping the loose animal(s) out by the rail and away from other animals or down personnel until they obviously tire.
- Avoid approaching the animal(s) in front to avoid personal injury.
- Do not force or move the animal(s) too close to the rail as that could cause the vehicle to hit the rail and overturn.
- As the animal(s) tires, they may attempt to join the other entries in the center. They may often come down to a walk or a halt and can be caught at that point.
- Keep in mind driving animal(s), may not take the width of their vehicle into account when judging where they can travel. Many situations are made worse when animal(s) try to 'escape' through perceived openings that are narrower than their vehicles. That includes the area between people trying to catch them and a fence.
- Nothing should be done that would unnecessarily scare the animal(s) more.
- Unless directed by an official, do not open event area gates to let animal(s) out.
- Once the animal(s) is captured, the person at the head of the animal(s) is in command of the animal(s) and all the persons assisting.
- Establish reliable control of the animal(s)'s head before any harness parts are undone.
- If unharnessing is necessary, coordinate to unhitch as quickly, orderly and quietly as possible.
- If there is more than one animal, do not remove any animal from the immediate area until all are free.
- Often the driver may be in shock and it should not be assumed he or she is capable of making good decisions.
- Turnouts in the vicinity, or in the arena, should move to a safe location before the ambulance is allowed in the area.

After the Accident

- Evaluate the accident for future reference.
- Prepare the required paperwork and documentation.
- Check back with involved persons to assure they have received proper care and assistance.

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