



UNITED STATES EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION

DRIVING

INCIDENT PROTOCOL

FOR COLLECTIVE IN THE RING DRIVING CLASSES



PHOTO: AVERY WALLACE/US EQUESTRIAN

INTRODUCTION

The United States Equestrian Federation (“US Equestrian”) Driving Competition Incident Protocol (“Protocol”) has been designed to provide general guidelines for managing serious driving incidents in the event that one occurs at a US Equestrian Licensed Competition. It is intended to be read in concert with the broader USEF Incident Resource Guide, your specific Emergency Action Plan, and all applicable and/or breeds rules. Those rules can be found at usef.org.

Disclaimer: The safety of all equine and human participants is paramount to US Equestrian. This Resource Guide is provided solely as an informational and educational service to US Equestrian Licensed Competition organizers. Each competition’s policies, procedures, and protocols are the responsibility of the individual organizer. As such, US Equestrian cannot and does not accept responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of any information or material provided herein. This Resource Guide is not intended to nor does it constitute medical, veterinary, or legal advice or legal opinions and should not be relied upon as medical, veterinary, or legal advice or opinion. By using this Resource Guide you agree to this disclaimer and recognize that it may be necessary to seek the advice of an attorney licensed to practice in the appropriate jurisdiction.

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Pre-Competition Driving Safety Meeting

- When Competition Management determines the schedule, caution should be used in scheduling riding and driving horses/classes when possible.
- In addition to the pre-competition meeting required by GR846, prior to the competition, Competition Management and Licensed Officials must have a Driving Safety Meeting with announcers, ringmasters, gate keepers, stewards, paid staff, volunteers, trainers and competitors to discuss and review this Protocol.
 - » This meeting should include the following topics, as well as any others of specific importance to driving classes:
 - ▶ Review the USEF Safety Rules and Procedures
 - ▶ Identify all personnel involved in the event management and discuss their roles in the Protocol.
 - ▶ 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.).
 - ▶ Designate the announcer(s), who has the most complete 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.

Driving Incident Response

These recommended practices are offered with the understanding that each incident is unique and may require a different approach based on the venue and circumstances.

- The announcer shall ask for everyone's attention and to follow their instructions
 - » Direct closure of all perimeter exits, if appropriate for the venue.
 - » Direct attendees, including spectators, to step back for safety and not enter the area.
 - » In an enclosed area, 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 horse(s) and direct that they calmly move away from the area of the incident.
 - » Direct all drivers to remain in the vehicle and in control of their horse(s).
 - ▶ Permit grooms or driver's assistants to head the horse(s) if they can do so safely.
 - ▶ For classes involving junior drivers who are accompanied by adults in the vehicle, instruct the juniors to hand the reins to the adults as soon as it is safe to do so.
 - ▶ No one should exit the vehicle unless instructed by an official in charge.
- Notify officials, Competition Management and medical and veterinary personnel and ask that appropriate personnel respond to or near the location of the incident so long as they can do so safely.

- Notify willing assistants (preferably experienced professionals) to wait for directions from the official in charge, and at the appropriate time, enter the area carefully.
- Provide immediate attention and protection to any individual who is down or injured.
- When in an enclosed area, ringmasters or other experienced professionals should encourage loose horse(s) to stay near the rail and away from the other horses or individuals until the loose horse(s) slows down.
 - » Do not push loose horse(s) too close to the rail where the vehicle could hit a rail or post and overturn.
 - » As the horse(s) slow down, it may attempt to join the other entries in the center. They may come down to a walk or a halt and can be caught.
- Keep in mind that loose horse(s) may not be aware of the width of their vehicle and may try to “escape” through perceived openings that are too narrow. This includes the area between people trying to catch the horse(s) and any fencing.
- Avoid approaching the horse(s) from the front due to risk of injury.
- Avoid action(s) that would unnecessarily frighten or stress the horse(s) further.
- Establish reliable control of the horse(s)’s head before any harness parts are undone.
 - » Once the horse(s) is caught, the person at the head of the horse(s) is in command of all the people assisting.
 - » If unharnessing is necessary, coordinate to unhitch as quickly, orderly and quietly as possible.
 - ▶ Never remove a bridle before the horse is out of the shafts.
 - » If there is more than one horse, do not remove any horse from the immediate area until all are free and have reliable head control.
 - » Unless directed by the official in charge, do not open the event area gates to let the loose horse(s) out.
- Other entries in the vicinity or enclosed area should be moved to a safe location before any ambulance enters the area.

After the Incident

- Contact USEF within the time frames set forth in GR849 and GR850. Call 859.810.8733 during business hours or 859.312.5186 on evenings and weekends.
- Steward or Technical Delegate to submit Accident/Injury Report(s) within required time frames.
- Check on any individual involved in an incident to ensure they receive proper care and assistance.
- Evaluate the incident to determine whether different or additional measures should be taken in future incidents.