

Rules of the Southern Carriage Driving Club



Version 1.1, February 2026

The rules specific to the Club are listed in this document. These rules supersede the British Carriagedriving Rule book at Club Events and for Club matters. The British Carriagedriving Rule book should be referred to if the resolution to an issue is not listed below.

Safety Rules

The following are the important rules that everyone should observe at all times

1. Drivers and backsteppers on a carriage will be required to wear hard hats of a current safety standard. Additionally back protectors must be worn whilst driving obstacles (includes Outdoor, Indoors and World cup style events).
2. Anyone riding a horse or pony at an event, whether in an official capacity or not, is required to wear a properly secured hard riding hat.
3. Never leave a horse or pony harnessed to a vehicle without either a driver in control of the reins or a groom holding the bridle.
4. Never tie up a horse or pony while harnessed to a vehicle.
5. Never remove the reins or any part of the bridle of any horse or pony while it is harnessed to a vehicle.
6. A competent driver must be on the box and in full control of the reins before anyone else gets on board and until everyone else has alighted from the vehicle.
7. Do not put your horse to until you are ready to drive and take it out as soon as you have finished driving. The traces should always be secured before and undone after, the breeching and any other connections.
8. Always proceed at a walk in the horsebox park and any other crowded areas.
9. Be aware of others putting to and taking out in the horsebox park. If possible, halt and wait for them to complete before passing them.
10. Check your harness before every event to ensure it is sound and unlikely to break.
11. Always get your harness and vehicle properly adjusted before coming to the event: you should know it is going to fit properly as soon as you put it on.
12. Always remember that a horse or pony which has limited experience of coming to events is likely to get excited: there is a lot going on that is unfamiliar to it so do not assume it will behave as predictably as it does at home! Try to pick a quiet corner of the horsebox



park if your animal is inexperienced. Speak to the organiser who should help facilitate this for you.

13. If you have the misfortune to get tipped out during the competition concentrate on keeping a hold on the reins: so long as you have them in your hands, you have some chance of regaining control.
14. Never strap anyone into a vehicle, especially small children.

Conduct of Members and Supporters

15. Members and Supporters are encouraged to lend a hand wherever possible to help make our events a success - whether by volunteering themselves or by recommending a suitable adult who can assist.
16. Members and Supporters should not behave with incivility or contempt, or use abusive or threatening language, towards a judge, official or any other competitor or attendee.

Driver Class Classification

For Club events, the below classification is used to identify which class a driver should enter

17. Club Novice Driver

- a. Drives a single horse or pony
- b. Has not taken part in any Regional / National Horse Driving Trial event (as a novice, open or multiple)
- c. Has not won 3 times at any events (organised by any club) prior to January of the current year (e.g. Jan 2019)
- d. Has not competed as an Open Driver at any events (organised by any club) prior to January of the current year (e.g. Jan 2019)

18. Club Open Driver

- a. Has competed with a multiple at any Club, Regional or National event (not including showing)
- b. Has competed at any Regional or National Horse Driving Trial event (as a novice, open or multiple)
- c. Has won 3 or more times at any event (organised by any club) prior to January of the current year (e.g. Jan 2019)
- d. Is an approved driving assessor for the club
- e. Has received payment to train carriage horses for a client, has undertaken paid commercial carriage driving work or been paid to provide tuition to carriage drivers.

If a Member meets the criteria of a Novice but want to enter as an Open for an event that is permitted. However once a member steps up to Open, they cannot step back down again at Club events.



19. Club Multiple Driver

- a. Drives more than one horse or pony (pair, tandem, team or other combination)
- b. Same criteria as Club Open Drivers apply

20. Small Pony Driver

- a. Drives a single or multiple ponies, all are 11hh or under
No difference between Novice or Open drivers within the Small Pony classes
- b. Where a Small Pony class is not offered then Club Novice, Open and Multiples criteria apply.

General

- 21. Members agree for appropriate photographs containing their image to be used by the club for promoting the purposes of the club. Images will be managed within the GDPR principles.
- 22. A groom or passenger must be carried in all competitions and on all Club events. For small ponies it is possible for a suitable groom to be on foot.
- 23. Juniors from the beginning of the year they reach the age of 10 to the end of the year they are 18 may compete in singles classes, provided they are accompanied by a competent adult aged 18 or over who is capable of taking control in an emergency and must be on the vehicle at all times whilst the junior is in control, whether competing or not.
- 24. All persons under the age of 18 travelling on a vehicle on which neither parent nor guardian is present must have signed, written authority of a parent or guardian.
- 25. Drivers of motorised vehicles at the Event must be in possession of a current driving licence appropriate to the vehicle being driven, in accordance with the Road Traffic Act must also be covered by third party insurance. If the driver fails to comply with either requirement, they will be required to stop driving the vehicle immediately. Riders of motor cycles, mopeds, ATVs etc. must wear helmets. Only authorised disabled competitors and officials may drive any kind of motor vehicle at the venue of an event except in the designated horsebox park and on public roads.
- 26. In order to protect the good relationships with the landowners who very kindly permit us to use their land and other facilities, the owners of dogs must keep them on a lead at all times when they are not confined within a secure enclosure. The owners of dogs found roaming around at any event may be excluded from taking any further part in the event. This rule applies to dogs brought to events by competitors, grooms, stewards, judges, helpers, spectators or anyone else who is present in connection with the event.



Harness & Vehicles

27. Working harness in leather, webbing or other materials may be used in all Competitions, provided it is clean, safe, a good fit and in good condition. Auxiliary reins and martingales attached to reins are not permitted.
28. In competitions with a Marathon and/or Obstacles, horses and ponies must wear head collars / halters under their bridles.
29. Carriages must not carry more people than exceeds its design, safety & horse welfare. The organiser's or committees' decision is final.

Withdrawals and cancellations

30. Cancellation of Events or Training by Club or Organiser
The Club will endeavour to go ahead with planned events and training unless it is not financially viable (e.g. insufficient entries) or safe to do so (e.g. bad weather, issues with venue, insufficient helpers). The decision to cancel/postpone will be made by the organiser in consultation with at least two Club Committee members. The decision will be made at the last sensible moment which will allow for entrants to be notified in good time.
31. Once an Event has been cancelled or postponed, all entrants are entitled to:
 - a. Entry fees (partial) refunded – after any unavoidable costs have been met (e.g. venue cancellation fees)
 - b. Transfer entry fees to another Club event held within the same financial year
32. Withdrawal or non-attendance at events
The Club understands that there are times when entrants have to withdraw from an event or a situation arises where they are not able to attend on the day. The Club will act fairly and appropriately in these situations following the guidelines listed below.
 - a) Members withdrawals or non-attendance
 - Before the Close of Entries date – refund or transfer entry to another Club event held in the same year
 - After entries have closed – refund (or transfer to another Club event held in the same year) by discretion of Organiser and Committee; a doctor's or vet's certificate may be requested.
 - Training – refunded providing the training place can be filled otherwise it is forfeit
 - b) Non-Members withdrawals or non-attendance
 - Before the Close of Entries date – refund or transfer entry to another Club event held in the same year
 - After entries have closed – entry forfeit
 - Training – refunded providing the training place can be filled otherwise it is forfeit
33. The Club committee reserve the right to review an individual situation and act independently of these guidelines.

Members Voluntary Code of Practice



For when we are driving Our Horses Out and About (not only at Club events)

The Club recognise that carriage driving, along with other equestrian pastimes allow participants to enjoy a wide range of activities including driving on the highways, rights of way and open spaces. We also recognise that training and good practice are important for our enjoyment as well as safety.

When we are driving on the highways, rights of way and open land, we will always:

Consider the welfare of our horses:

- By only walking & trotting on hard surfaces and roads
- By taking note of the recent weather conditions and how this affects the surface on the route we plan to use (ice, mud, hard ruts etc.) and driving accordingly
- By selecting routes that our horse is easily fit enough to manage

Consider the safety of ourselves, our horses and our passengers at all times:

- By always having current and appropriate 3rd party insurance - as a minimum
- By checking our harness is safe and well-fitting every time we drive
- By regularly checking and servicing carriages, especially brakes if fitted
- By always driving out with a competent groom
- By making sure that there is a groom holding the horse, preferably with a lead rope, when the driver gets off the vehicle
- By everyone wearing Hi-Viz items, as this allows others to see us, inc. low flying aircraft
- By wearing a current standard hard hat
- By carrying a spares kit - to be able to repair harness or vehicle enough to get home

Consider the safety of others:

- By being the good example, always smiling and saying thank you, even if they haven't slowed down
- By not going above a sensible trot or by appearing to be racing on a public right of way
- By being the good example and slowing to a walk or coming to a halt when passing others, especially other horses
- By setting down our groom should it be in the interests of safety for others as well as us.
- By only going on the highway with a legal carriage, e.g. having reflectors fitted
- By avoiding driving on the highway at dusk, dawn and in poor light (e.g. heavy rain, mist, fog, low sun etc.)
- By using good lights, (white in front, red behind) if we have no option but to drive in the dark
- By not driving faster than the slowest turn-out when driving in company
- By not driving too close to the carriage in front when driving in company