



American Driving Society, Inc.

Horse Driving Event Emergency Protocols

These are generally accepted best practices. Modifications will likely be necessary to account for local conditions.

Overview

Every incident is unique and has a life of its own.

Controlling driving event areas is a team effort involving organizers, judges, announcers, ringmasters, gate keepers, stewards, technical delegates, paid staff, volunteers and competitors.

Organizers, Judges and Stewards/Technical Delegates and other officials should meet with all personnel involved in event management prior to the start of the event to discuss their roles in emergency protocols.

The organized Team, headed by Judge (or other designated official if there is no judge) has the responsibility for directing the conduct of all participants in the main event area, (show rings, obstacle courses, dressage rings, marathon course).

Stewards, technical delegates and organizers have the responsibility for directing the conduct of all people and equines outside the primary event areas, i.e. warm-up areas, stabling areas, parking areas, etc.

Announcers often have the best over view of the event area. Since they may see incidents developing first and they function as the voice of the management, the Announcer plays a key role in emergency management. A level head and calm, authoritative demeanor will go a long way towards achieving a positive outcome.

At least one suitable halter and lead should be at the primary event area in a location known by all event personnel.

In flight mode, driving horses, with or without blinders, do not take the width of their vehicle into account when judging where they can travel. Many situations are made worse when horses 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.

Enclosed Area Emergency Protocol

For a loose or runaway horses in an event area with a secure wall or fence, the following protocol should prevail:

1. The announcer shall ask for everyone's attention and will inform participants of the situation.
2. All entries should be asked to walk and make their way carefully off the rail and into the center of the ring.
 - a. Drivers should remain on the box, and put down grooms to head their horses.
 - b. Driver's assistants will enter the event area. Remind them to do so with care.
 - c. Juniors accompanied by an adult horseman on the vehicle should hand over the reins as soon as it is safe.
 - d. Juniors should only exit the carriage and event area when instructed by an adult.
3. Provide immediate attention and protection to any person down on the ground or obviously injured.
4. Alert medical and veterinary personnel even if there are no obvious sign of injuries.
5. Ringmasters and other capable horsemen should assist in keeping the loose horse(s) out by the rail and away from down personnel.
 - e. Nothing should be done that would unnecessarily scare the horse(s) more.
 - f. Allow the horse(s) to run on the rail without attempts to corral them against the rail until they obviously tire. Forcing or moving the horse(s) too close to the rail will likely cause the vehicle to hit the rail and overturn.
 - g. As the horse(s) tires, they may attempt to join 'the herd' in the center. They may often come down to a walk or a halt and can be caught at that point.
 - h. Do not open event area gates to let horses out unless the judge or other designated official so orders.
6. Once the horse(s) is captured, the person at the head of the horse(s) is in command of the horse(s), the persons assisting and the unharnessing procedure.
 - i. Establish reliable control of the horse(s)'s head before any harness parts are undone.
 - j. Often the driver may be in shock and it should not be assumed he or she is capable of making good decisions.
 - k. If unharnessing is necessary, unhitch as quickly, as orderly and as quietly as possible.
 - l. Relocate the horse(s) to a safe place away from the event area as soon as possible.
7. If an ambulance is needed, all entries should exit the event area quietly at a walk before the ambulance is allowed in the arena.

Open Area Emergency Protocol

For a loose or runaway horse(s) outside of a secure area, the following protocol should prevail:

1. Provide immediate attention and protection to any person down on the ground or obviously injured.
2. Immediately notify officials, the event office, announcers, medical and veterinary personnel of the incident.
3. Secure perimeter exits.
4. Nothing should be done that would unnecessarily scare the horse(s) more.
5. Turnouts in the vicinity should move to a safe location away from the incident.
 - Grooms/assistants should be at the head of these horses.
6. Once the horse(s) is captured, the person at the head of the horse(s) is in command of the horse(s), the persons assisting and any unharnessing procedures deemed necessary.
 - Establish reliable control of the horse(s)'s head before any
1. harness parts are undone.
 - Often the driver may be in shock and it should not be assumed he or she is capable of making good decisions.
 - If unharnessing is necessary, unhitch as quickly, as orderly and as quietly as possible.
 - Relocate the horse(s) to a safe place away from the event area as soon as possible.
7. If an ambulance is needed, all competitors should exit the event area quietly at a walk before the ambulance is allowed in the area.