

# The National Drive Safety Checklist

Drivers should review the following checklist prior to the National Drive. It is easy to overlook something in your hurry to pack before traveling to an event. Some things can be checked at home, others should be re-checked again, and others are last minute items, and may be easily overlooked during pre-event jitters.

## Check the Horse for:

1. General condition
2. Shoe Condition if shod (shoes should be tight)
3. Girth Sores
4. Signs of injury, distress or poor hitching that can cause the above.
5. Signs of vision in at least one eye.

## Check the Harness for:

1. Cleanliness
2. Fit
  - a. Breeching and Breast collars relative to the haunches/shoulder. Brest collars should neither obscure the movement of the forelimbs nor impinge upon the trachea. The breeching should not sweep the hind legs from the horse/pony when in use, and it should not slide up under the dock when not in use. It should also be tight enough to act as a breaking mechanism (about a hands breadth of space is recommended).
  - b. Blinders – The eye should be centered, the cheek pieces should be tight enough so that they do not gap, allowing the horse to see between his cheek and the blinders, but not too tight that they cause the blinders to press against the eyes. It will be noted if using an Open bridle or no blinders.
  - c. Crown piece – should fit securely so the bridle won't slip off over the ears.
  - d. Throat latch – should not be too tight, if there is concern for the bridle to come off we suggest adding a gullet strap.
  - e. Nose band – Should fit snugly, but not too low to inhibit breathing.
  - f. Bit – should fit correctly in horse's mouth. Horse can get tongue over bit if positioned to low in mouth.
  - g. Reins - reins should be in the proper position. Reins in the bottom slot may be indicative of a problem.
3. Condition
  - a. Excessive wear - Harness should not show any evidence of excessive wear or cracking.
  - b. Buckles - Should not show evidence of wear.
  - c. Reins - Should not show any signs of wear at the attachment to the bit.
4. Buckles - All buckles should be buckled and all straps should be in keepers.
5. Quick Releases - Are quick releases appropriately applied and are pull tabs/straps/cords set up to reduce chance of snagging and releasing inadvertently? Check that quick releases are turned with the pull to the inside.
6. Safety Belts - Are safety belts appropriately fastened to carriage and releasable in case of emergency. Note: Drivers with disabilities may have special requirements for safety harness.
7. Connections to Vehicle - Are connections to vehicle taped where appropriate? Note: Excessive taping is NOT desirable.
8. Spares (optional) - Should be in good condition. Rein and trace punches/splices should be appropriate to the material that the harness is made of.
9. Pole straps or chains - Should be proper length and properly fastened.
10. Full Collar - If full collar is used, it should be the proper size and fit.
11. Breast Collar - Should be used with a carriage that has a single tree.

12. Saddle - Be positioned correctly, without pressing on horse's spine. With a 2 wheeled vehicle, the saddle should be wide enough to carry the addition weight on horses back.
13. Tug Stops - Be properly adjusted, wrap straps and over girth should not be excessively tight.
14. Back strap - Be adjusted to proper tightness to keep saddle in place and crupper in proper position.
15. Shafts - Be adjusted at the proper height.

**Check the Vehicle for:**

1. Wheels - Are they solid with all hub bolts present?
2. King bolts and singletree bolts - Should be in good condition.
3. Shafts/poles/singletree - Should be in good condition.
4. Shaft couplings/pole housings - Should be secure.
5. Brakes - If applicable, are they working properly? How you check the brake fluid?
6. Bolts - Should be tight, check for missing bolts.
7. Harness - Check for any unattached harness or improper hitching.
8. Balance - Is carriage balanced correctly?
9. Shafts - Are shafts proper length?
10. Distance between horse and carriage.

**Check the Driver for:**

1. Helmet(s) not required but encouraged for all persons on the carriage.
2. Driver and passengers have sign Waiver of Liability.
3. Control - Do you feel your horse/pony is sufficiently trained for this event?