

ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION OFFICE  
**HORSE SENSE  
FOR RIDERS  
& MOTORISTS**



# Follow the Off-road Horse riding Code of Conduct

- Respect pedestrians and other countryside users
- Keep to designated trails and approved areas
- Go slower in areas of reduced visibility
- Do not ride on crops or poach up the surface
- When the ground is very wet...wait for another day
- Ride slowly past livestock/wildlife
- Leave gates as you find them
- Do not bring dogs along while on horseback
- Tell someone your route and when you should return
- Wear a properly fitted approved standard riding hat, with appropriate riding boots
- Carry a switched off mobile phone, hoof-pick and twine
- Take special care on roads, wear fluorescent reflective clothing
- Ensure tack is sound and properly fitted
- Take all litter home; don't *muck* up the carpark

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# SECTION 1

# ROAD SENSE

# FOR RIDERS

## **Riding & Road Safety**

Nobody rides on the road from choice, but for many there is little option. So it is vital that all riders seek proper training to enable them to cope with the ever-increasing volume of traffic and its movement. It is also vital that all riders wear bright, fluorescent and reflective clothing at all times and in all weather conditions when riding on the road. This could save both your life and that of your horse/pony!

The British Horse Society Ireland organises Riding & Road Safety Training and Tests to ensure that you are prepared.

## **Publications available from the BHS Safety Department**

Riding and Roadcraft Manual

Dates List & Guidelines (send s.a.e)

Health & Safety Guidelines

Horse Sense for Motorists Video

Safer Rider 10 point checklist (send s.a.e)

Protective Headgear Leaflet (send s.a.e)

Body Protectors Leaflet (send s.a.e)

Horse Sense for Motorists Leaflet (send s.a.e)

BHS Guide to Towing Trailers

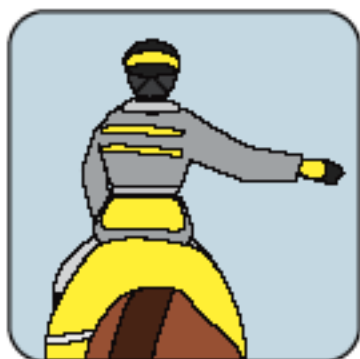
(There is a charge for publications not marked send s.a.e.)

For further information please contact: The British Horse Society Ireland  
Tel. 028 9268 3801

BHS Road Safety Rep  
[www.bhsireland@aol.com](mailto:www.bhsireland@aol.com)

BHS Safety Department  
Stoneleigh  
Tel. 08701 201921  
[www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk)

## Signalling



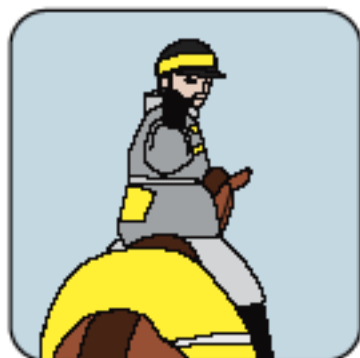
I am turning right



I am turning left



Please slow down



Please stop

As a rider you will often be able to hear and see further ahead than motorists. If you are aware of potential danger or if you sense an impending action or reaction from your horse, you may request a motorist to slow down or stop.

### Moving Off

- A When it is safe to do so, take up position at the roadside. Look over your right shoulder to see if there is any traffic approaching. Signal your intention to move off, with the right arm fully extended and when it is safe to do so, move off with both hands on the reins giving a final **LIFE SAVER** look behind. Always allow adequate room between the horse/pony and the kerbside so that you do not have to walk in the roadside rubbish or over drain covers.

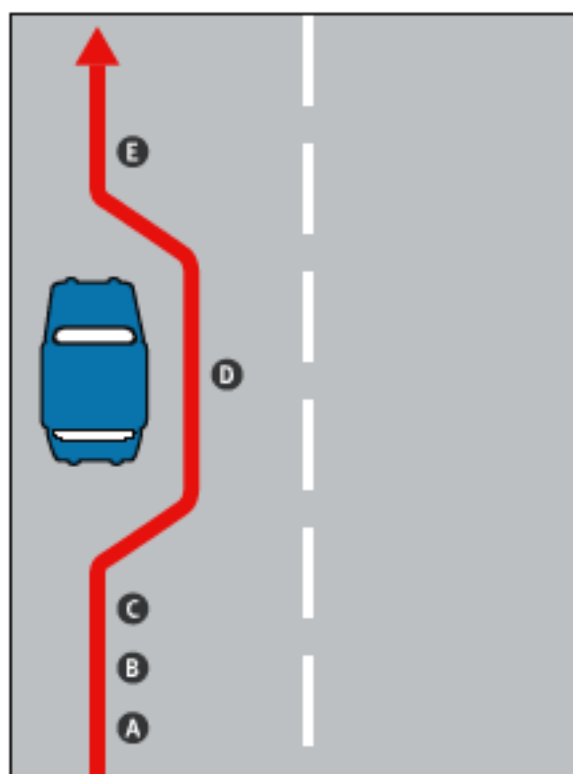
### Stopping

- A With both hands on the reins, look behind and note any following traffic.
- B If necessary, signal your intention to pull in.
- C Give a **LIFE SAVER** look behind and stop at the roadside. With both hands on the reins, stop.

**LIFE SAVER LOOK:** Always give a last look behind before a manoeuvre.

### Overtaking Parked Vehicles or other Hazards

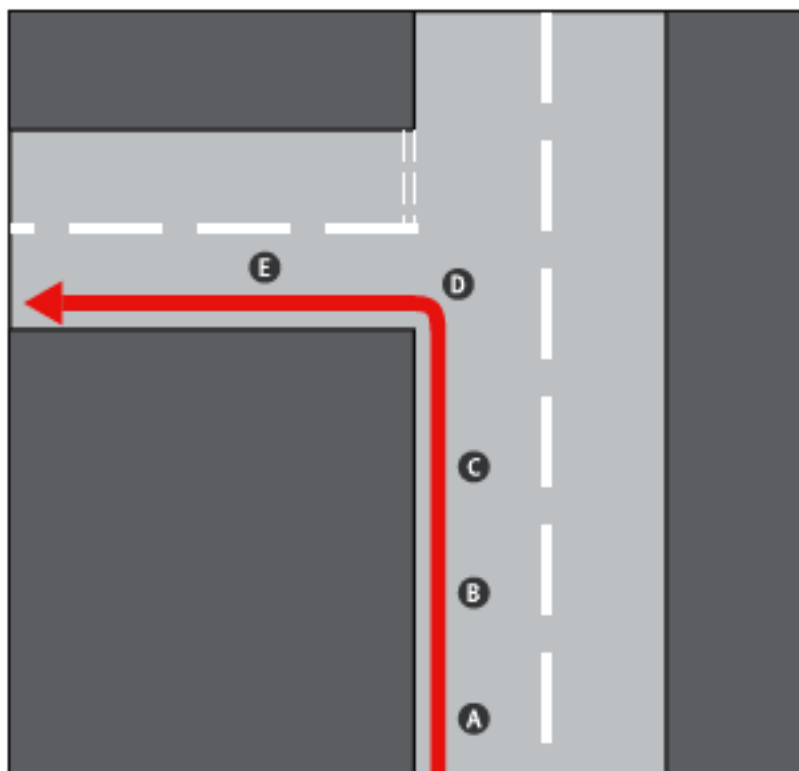
- A Approach the hazard in the correct position on the road.
- B Look behind to see what traffic is following, or about to overtake you.
- C Return both hands to the reins, give a **LIFE SAVER** look behind and gradually move out. **DO NOT** 'cut out'.
- D Leave plenty of room between you and the parked vehicle or hazard so that if a car door opens or there is a sudden movement in the car, you will avoid being caught out.
- E Return to the correct road position, **DO NOT** 'cut in'.  
A signal is not required.



## Left Turn

### *Uncontrolled junction – major to minor*

- A Approach the junction in the correct road position.
- B Look behind, if safe give a clear 'I intend to turn left' signal.
- C Return your hand to the reins and look all around for traffic. Be prepared to stop if necessary.
- D If safe, give a **LIFE SAVER** look and ride into the junction, keeping both hands on the reins, staying parallel to the kerb or verge.
- E Continue along the road, or, if you are stopping, use the proper procedures, (see page 3).



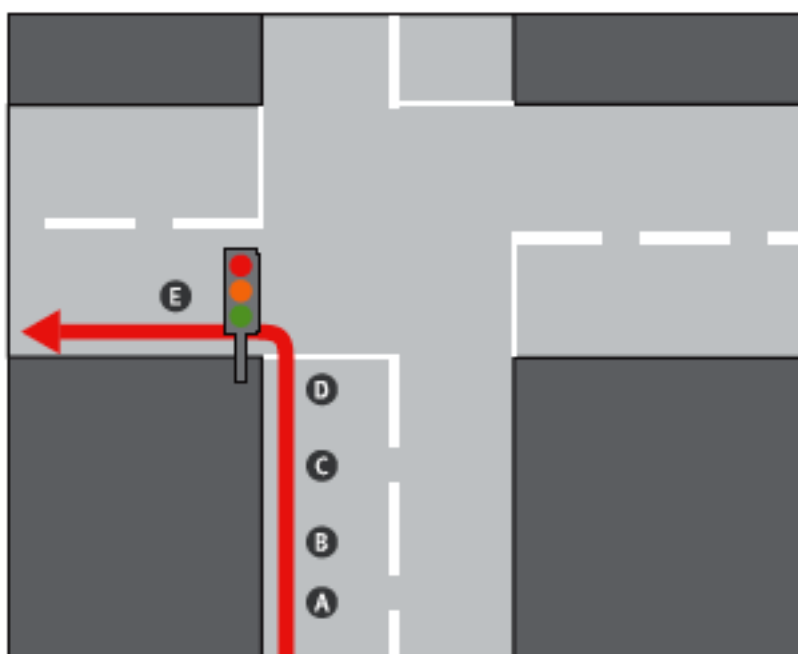
## Left Turn

### Traffic lights

- A Approach traffic lights in the correct road position.
- B Look behind, if safe give a clear 'I intend to turn left' signal.
- C Return your hand to the reins and look all around for traffic and be prepared to stop.
- D If lights show red/amber, **STOP** at the stop line. Look behind and if safe, give a clear 'I intend to turn left' signal. Return your hand to the reins. When traffic lights turn green, look right, left, right and if all clear; give a **LIFE SAVER** look and move off.

If the lights are on green on approach, follow procedures for the uncontrolled left turn manoeuvre.

- E Continue along the road, or if stopping, use the proper procedure (see page 3).



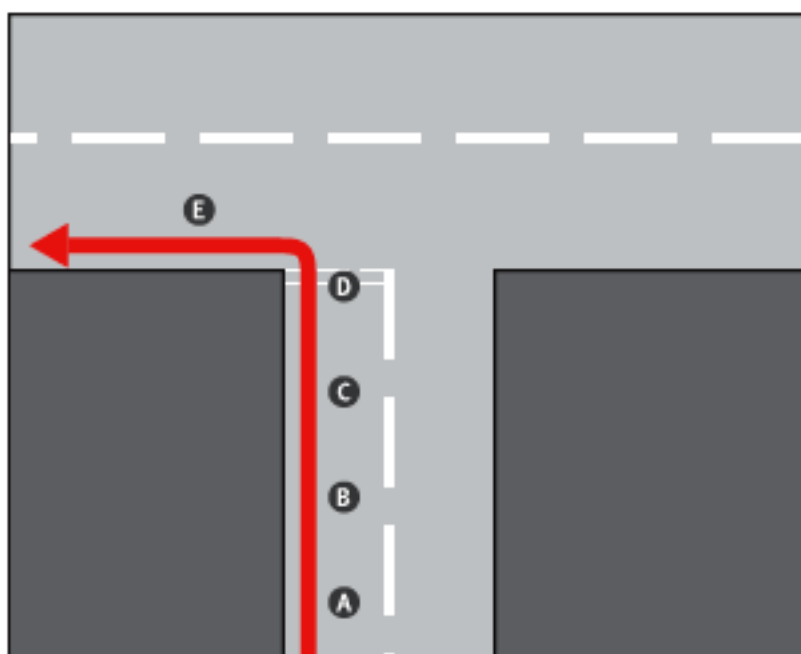
## Left Turn

### Uncontrolled junction – minor to major

- A Approach traffic lights in the correct road position.
- B Look behind. If safe give a clear 'I intend to turn left' signal.
- C Return your hand to the reins and look all round for traffic, give a **LIFE SAVER** look and be prepared to stop.
- D If you are at a **STOP** junction you **MUST STOP** at the stop line marked on the road. Look behind, if safe, signal and return your hand to the reins. Look behind and listen for traffic. Move off, only when safe to do so.

If the junction is a **GMEWAY** junction, look all round for traffic on your approach and look behind. If it is safe, continue on course, if not then follow the procedure described for the **STOP** junction above.

- E continue your ride, or, if stopping, use the proper procedure (see page 3).



## Right Turn

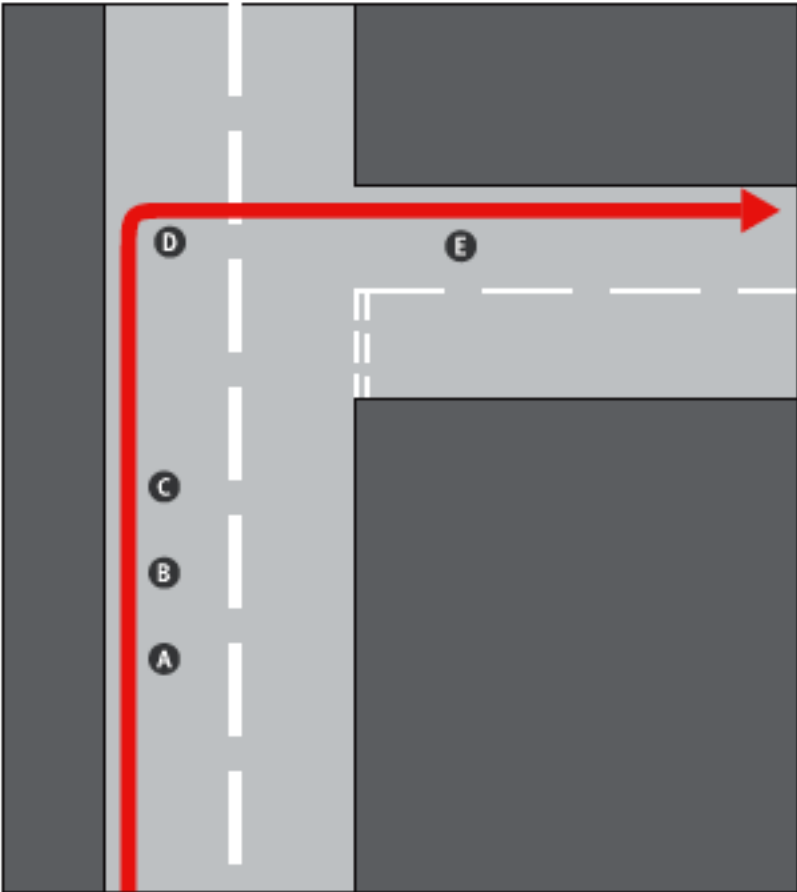
### *Uncontrolled junction - major to minor*

Unlike other road users, horse riders must stay to the left side of the road before turning right.

- A Approach the junction in the correct road position.
- B Look behind and if safe give a clear 'I intend to turn right' signal.
- C Return hand to the reins and look carefully for approaching traffic – be prepared to stop.
- D If safe, give a final **LIFE SAVER** look and ride into the junction without cutting the corner.
- E Continue your ride, or if stopping, use the proper procedure (see page 3).

**NOTE:** Where it is necessary for the rider to stop because of traffic, the rider must look behind and signal, give a final **LIFE SAVER** look, before turning and completing the manoeuvre.

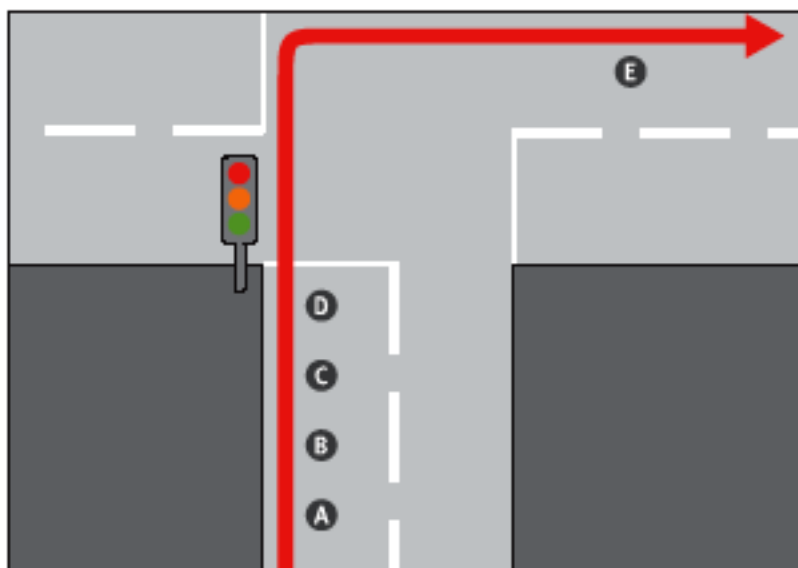
**REMEMBER:** When approaching a right turn you should remain on the left hand side of the road throughout the manoeuvre.



## Right Turn

### Traffic lights

- A Approach the traffic lights in the correct road position.
- B Look behind and if safe give a clear 'I intend to turn right' signal.
- C Return hand to reins and look all around for traffic. Be prepared to stop.
- D If lights are showing red/amber **STOP** at line. Look behind and if safe give a clear 'I intend to turn right' signal. Return hand to reins. When traffic lights turn green, look right, left, right and if all clear give a **LIFE SAVER** look and move off into the junction. Turn without cutting the corner.  
If lights are on green on approach, follow the procedures for the uncontrolled right turn manoeuvre.
- E Continue to ride, or if stopping, use the proper procedure (see page 3).

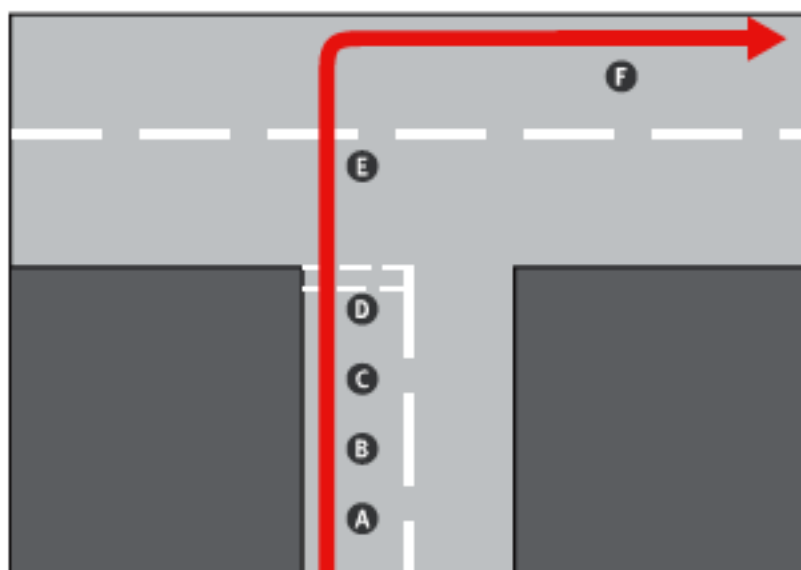


## Right Turn

### *Uncontrolled – minor to major*

Unlike other road users, horse riders must stay to the left side of the road before turning right.

- A Approach the junction in the correct road position.
- B Look behind and if safe, give a clear, 'I intend to turn right' signal.
- C Return hand to reins and look all around for traffic – be prepared to stop.
- D If the junction is a **STOP** junction, **STOP** at the stop line. Look behind, signal, return hand to reins, look for traffic, give a **LIFE SAVER** look and move only when it is safe to do so.  
If the junction is a **GIVE WAY** junction, look all around for traffic on approach, if safe give a **LIFE SAVER** look and continue. If it is unsafe, follow the procedure for a **STOP** junction.
- E When safe, ride into the junction without cutting the corner.
- F Continue your ride, or if stopping, use the proper procedure (see page 3).



### **Negotiating a Roundabout**

At the entrance to a roundabout, always give way to traffic coming from your right and which is already on the roundabout.

#### *Turning Left*

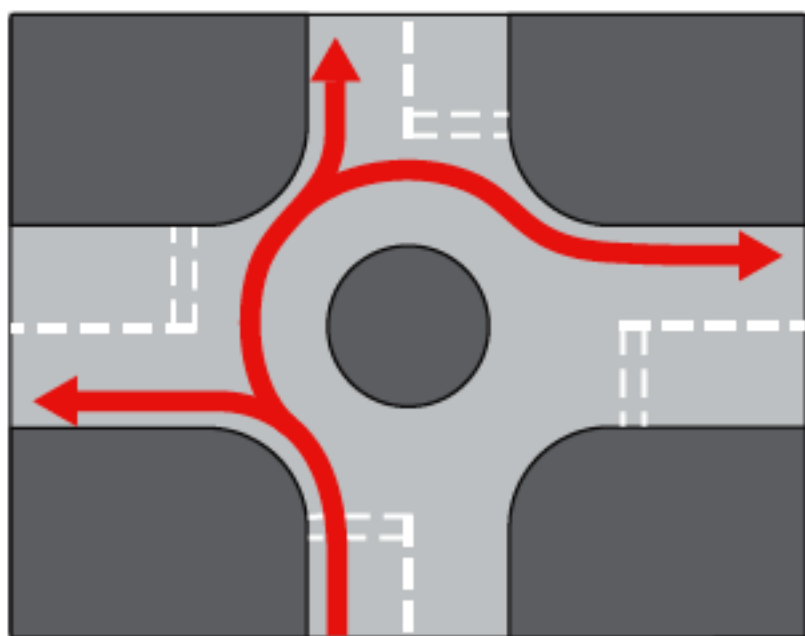
Approach as if you are turning left, look behind and signal as required for turning left.

#### *Straight Ahead*

Approach as for turning left, but keep to the outside of the roundabout (left hand side) and **LOOK BEHIND**. As you pass each exit signal right to communicate to other road users your intention to carry on round and just before your intended exit you must signal left.

#### *Right Turn*

Approach as for a left turn and signal at the exit before the one to be taken. Remember to **LOOK BEHIND** as you pass each exit from the roundabout.



Always watch for faster traffic turning across your path. Keep to the outside of the roundabout throughout the manoeuvre. **DO NOT** take any chances and constantly keep your eyes and ears open for approaching traffic.

### Remember before you go out onto the Road

1. Always wear a current BHS Approved Standard Hat that has been correctly fitted by someone who has been on a hat-fitting course. Make sure it is in good condition. If you fall off have your hat checked – it might need replacing.
2. Always wear riding boots with a solid heel with one quarter of an inch of room to each side of the boot in the stirrup.
3. Always check your tack before leaving home to see that nothing is broken and stitching is in good order, especially stirrup leathers and girth leathers.
4. No matter what time of year, time of day, or weather conditions, always wear bright coloured, fluorescent and reflective clothing on both you and your horse.
5. Make sure you have change for a telephone call in case of an emergency. Better still carry a mobile telephone – but make sure it is switched off and only use in case of emergency, never whilst you are actually riding along on your horse!
6. Always carry identification and the telephone number of someone who can be contacted in case of an emergency.
7. Always have the name and telephone number of your vet with you. Remember that the Police have a special emergency telephone number so that they can contact a vet in an emergency.
8. Read and learn the latest edition of the Highway Code, particularly the sections referring to horse riders (extracts included in this brochure).
9. Make sure you have valid third party public liability insurance – Gold members of the BHS are automatically covered.

10. Always show courtesy to other road users – a smile or nod of thanks is all that is necessary and you do not need to take your hands from the reins.
11. Learn some basic emergency first aid for horse and rider.
12. Train for and take the British Horse Society Riding and Road Safety Test – one day the knowledge could save the life of you and or your horse.

**FINALLY REMEMBER:** Always give a lifesaver look before you manoeuvre. Don't be a dark horse – be seen, be safe, be sensible.

# RULES ABOUT ANIMALS

The Highway Code for Northern Ireland states:

## *Horseriders*

### **Rule 34. Safety Equipment**

- Children under the age of 14 **MUST** wear a helmet which complies with the Regulations. It **MUST** be fastened securely. Other riders should also follow this advice.

### **Rule 35. Other Clothing. You should wear**

- boots or shoes with hard soles and heels
- light coloured or fluorescent clothing in daylight
- reflective clothing if you have to ride at night or in poor visibility.

### **Rule 36. At night**

- It is safer not to ride on the road at night or in poor visibility, but if you do, make sure your horse has reflective bands above the fetlock joints. Carry lights which show white to the front and red to the rear.

## *Riding*

### **Rule 37. Before you take a horse on to a road, you should**

- ensure all tack fits well and is in good condition
- make sure you can control the horse.

Always ride with other, less nervous horses if you think that your horse will be nervous of traffic. Never ride a horse without a saddle or bridle.

**Rule 38. Before riding off or turning, you should**

- look behind you to make sure it is safe, then give a clear arm signal.

**Rule 39. When riding on the road, you should**

- keep to the left
- keep both hands on the reins unless you are signalling
- keep both feet in the stirrups
- not carry another person
- not carry anything which might affect your balance or get tangled up with the reins
- keep a horse you are leading to your left
- move in the direction of the traffic flow in a one-way street
- never ride more than two abreast and ride in single file where the road narrows or on the approach to a bend.

**Rule 40. You should not take a horse on to a footpath, footway or cycle track.**

**Rule 41. Avoid roundabouts wherever possible. If you use them you should**

- keep to the left and watch out for vehicles crossing your path to leave or join the roundabout
- signal right when riding across exits to show you are not leaving
- signal left just before you leave the roundabout.



# SECTION 2

## HORSE SENSE FOR MOTORISTS

Motorists and horse riders both have a right to share the road. They also share a responsibility to consider each other's needs. It is important that they also understand each other's problems.

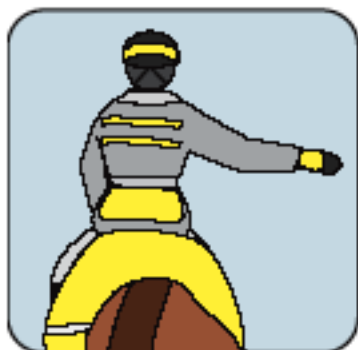
### Advice to Motorists. You should

- drive slowly past horses
- give them plenty of room and be ready to stop
- slow down immediately when you see a horse, even though you may have plenty of room to pass, another vehicle could be approaching at high speed
- slow down or stop if signalled to do so by a rider
- do not scare horses by sounding your horn or revving your engine, horses are unpredictable - sudden noise or movement can frighten them
- horses should be ridden on the left-hand side of the road, so watch out for them being ridden or led on your side of the road
- horse or pony riders are often children, so take extra care, remember riders may ride in double file when escorting a young or inexperienced horse or pony rider
- take extra care and keep your speed down at left-hand bends and on narrow country roads
- watch out for horses on unfenced roads
- if a road is blocked by a herd of animals stop, switch off your engine and wait until they have left the road
- be equally considerate to the drivers of vehicles towing a horse box, they cannot swerve or brake suddenly without throwing the horse about and causing it serious injury.

### Signals from Horse Riders

Riders should signal their intentions but drivers should be aware that horses are unpredictable and a rider on a young or frightened horse may have their hands full.

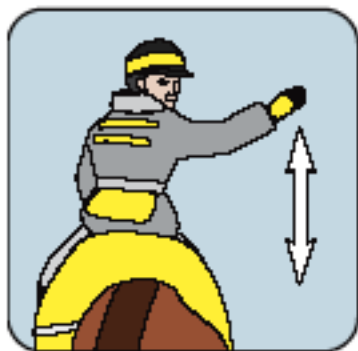
Mutual courtesy and care between motorists and riders is important to prevent intolerance and improve safety. A horse rider should acknowledge a courtesy, however a wave or acknowledgement is not always possible as two hands are often needed to keep control of the horse, but a nod and a friendly smile are the least you should expect.



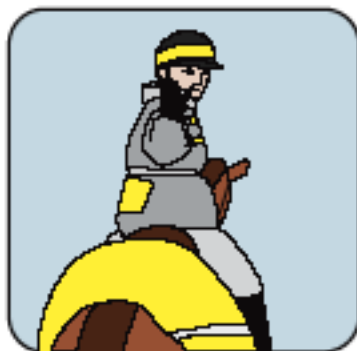
I am turning right



I am turning left



Please slow down

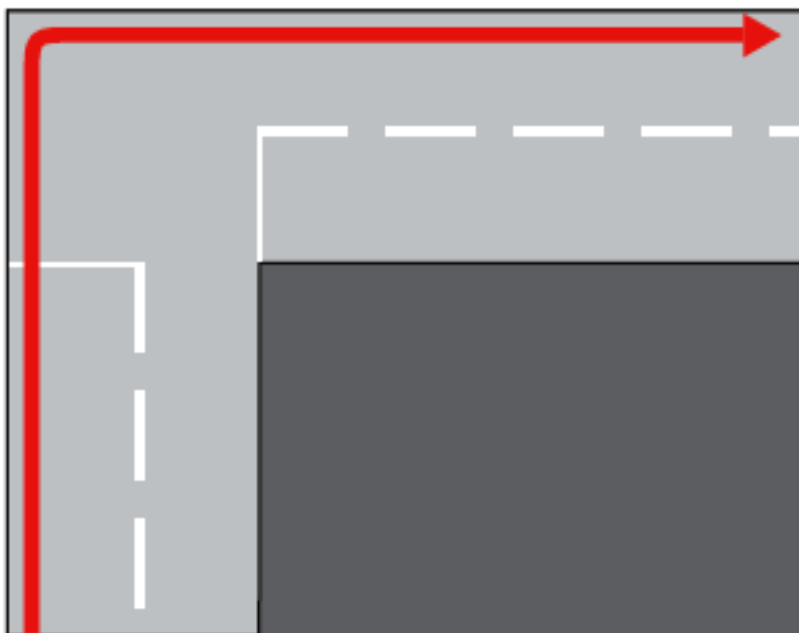


Please stop

**IT IS RECOMMENDED:** That drivers should pass a horse and rider at a maximum of 15 mph.

### Look out for Horse Riders Turning Right

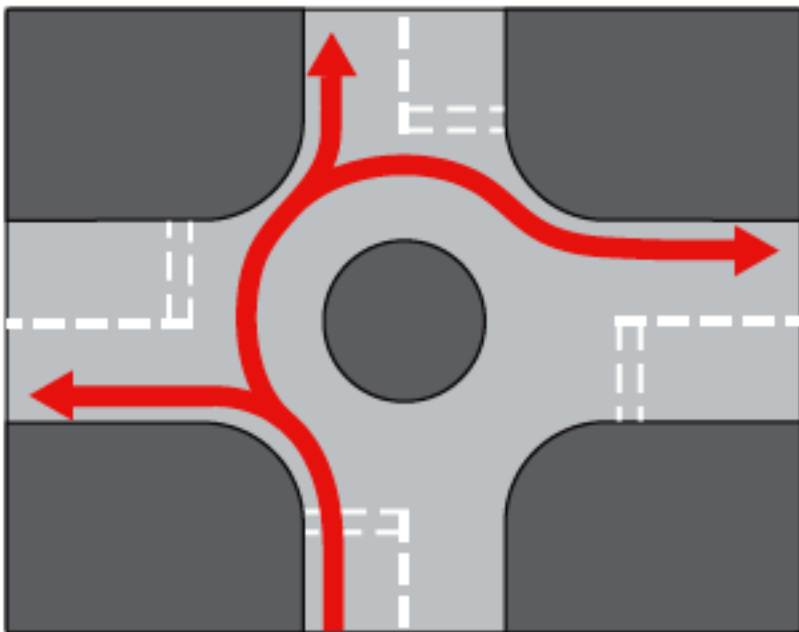
Horse riders keep to the left of the road even when turning right— it is unsafe for them to position a horse between lines of traffic where they can panic, sandwiched with no escape route.



- Don't make any sudden or loud noises!
- Expect to see a horse and rider around the next bend!
- Respect rider's signals.

### Watch out for Horse Riders on Roundabouts

When on a roundabout, horse riders will normally signal right when approaching exits they **DO NOT** intend to use. Horse riders will keep to the left within the roundabout until reaching their exit, when they signal left.



**TREAT ALL HORSES AS A POTENTIAL HAZARD AND EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED.**

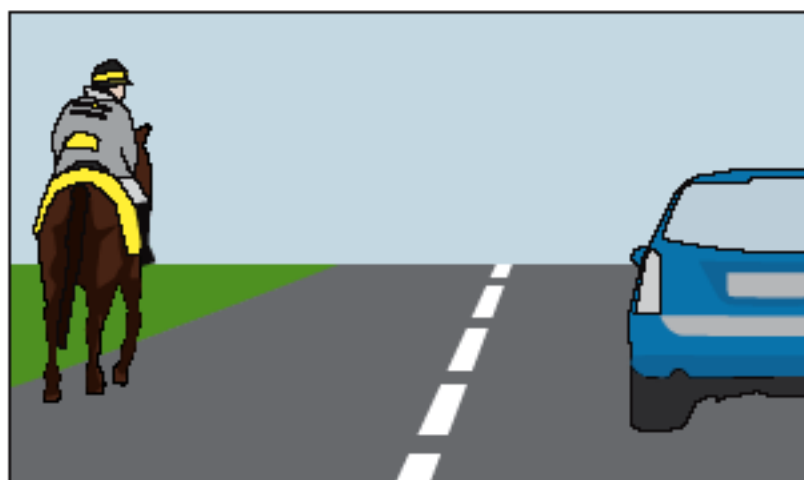
## AS A MOTORIST YOU SHOULD..



Look out for horses being led or ridden on the road. At left-hand bends and on narrow country roads - take extra care and keep your speed down.



When you see a horse rider on the road - slow down.



When overtaking - pass wide and slow. Horse riders are often youngsters - so take care.



For increased safety, riders may ride in double file when escorting a young or inexperienced horse rider.



When behind a horse rider - give them plenty of room and be ready to stop.



Do not sound your horn or rev your engine - horses are powerful but vulnerable animals, easily scared by noise and may panic around fast moving vehicles.

# CONTACTS

Further information on Road Safety may be obtained from the DOE Road Safety Education Offices located at the following addresses:-

## **Belfast Education and Library Board Area**

c/o 40 Academy Street  
Belfast  
BT1 2NQ  
Tel: 028 9050 8181

## **North Eastern Education and Library Board Area**

County Hall  
182 Galgorm Road  
Ballymena  
BT42 1HN  
Tel: 028 2564 4311

## **South Eastern Education and Library Board Area**

Hydebank  
4 Hospital Road  
Belfast  
BT8 8JL  
Tel: 028 9025 3123

## **Southern Education and Library Board Area**

Library Headquarters  
1 Markethill Road  
Armagh  
BT60 1NR  
Tel: 028 3752 0773

## **Western Education and Library Board Area**

Lisnagelvin Crown Building  
2 Crescent Road  
Lisnagelvin  
Londonderry  
BT47 2NJ  
Tel: 028 7131 9319

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The British Horse  
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The Greenways  
Access & Activity Network  
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Ulster Rural Riders  
Association



100% RECYCLABLE