



## Riding and Road Safety Flatbook



## FOREWORD

In recent years, we have seen some dramatic developments in the world of road safety. These include the advent of Compulsory Breath Testing, speed cameras, and compulsory helmet wearing. However, some things never change and one of these is the constant search for a safer community. Road safety depends on people taking responsibility for their own and other people's safety out on the road.

Horse riders are by and large very safe users of the road. Perhaps it is because of the level of responsibility you take for your horse, its care and management, and the skill required in riding it. Riding Clubs further this professional approach and add to your safety.

Normally three or four riders are injured on our roadways each year, and even though I would prefer these injuries never happened at all, it is pleasing to see the number so low. These incidents are, however, a reminder to us of the dangers traffic can pose to riders and mounts.

Often dangers you face as riders are not of your making. Inconsiderate or unthinking car drivers can create risky situations for you and your mounts. The need to ride defensively is paramount when using public roads.

I commend this booklet to all safe riders.



Superintendent Steve Fitzgerald National Road Safety Manager New Zealand Police

## RIDING AND ROAD SAFETY HANDBOOK FORWARD TO THE 2012 EDITION

It gives me great pleasure to write this forward knowing it will be on the Riding Club web-site; [www.nzridingclubsbridleways.nz](http://www.nzridingclubsbridleways.nz) for the first.

The volume of traffic even on country roads today makes horse riding along them a hazardous business. Therefore the more we can all do to make things easier and safer the better. Not everyone has open spaces in which to ride and even when they have it often means a road ride to reach them.

Children, novice riders and green horses should always be accompanied by more experienced riders. In a group situation have an accompanying vehicle in front and behind you, ride in single file and when crossing the road go all at once to slow or stop traffic as short a time as possible.

We all know riding is a great recreational sport but 99% of the driving public have never ridden a horse and have little appreciation that animals can be spooked very easily. One driver learnt the hard way many years ago when he caused me to be dumped on the road right in front of him; fortunately no-one was hurt.

The Road Code applies to us all, but remember even when you are in the right any vehicle is bigger and potentially more dangerous than you so always be prepared and cautious. Always remember to listen, look, especially behind, and signal. Always be courteous and thank considerate drivers.

Respect pedestrians, as many are wary of horses and they may view them as kicking/biting machines! Cyclists too can be very vulnerable to a horse's panicky movement, as they are usually silent and their sudden appearance can startle a horse.

I sincerely recommend this booklet to you and please share it with your friends especially children. The Riding and Road Safety test can be down loaded from the web-site and is a good 'self test' even if you do not wish to take it formerly. It should be noted that it is available to children and non-riding club members as well as members.

Good luck, good riding and make Riding and Road Safety a reality.  
Evelyn Cooper  
Ex NZRC Committee Member.

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## BEFORE RIDING ON THE ROAD

**1** There are a number of things to consider before a rider can ride SAFELY on a road.

### 1.1 ROAD CODE

A rider needs to understand the Road Code for **all** users but should also have special training in road craft.

### 1.2 COURTESY CODES

- a) Always help other road users and treat them with consideration.
- b) Always acknowledge any courtesy shown to you.
- c) When passing other riders or pedestrians, do so at the walk.
- d) A smile and a thank you to a considerate driver will always be remembered.

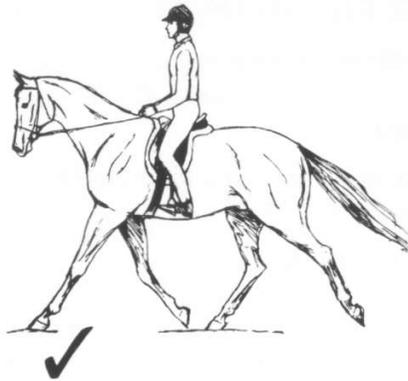
### 1.3 COMMON SENSE

If your horse or pony is nervous in traffic, try and ride with a quiet horse. Wherever possible keep to quiet roads and avoid peak hour traffic. Remember, you are responsible for any damage or accident your horse may cause.

### 1.4 TACK AND EQUIPMENT

Make certain that all tack is safe, fitted correctly and that stirrup irons are the correct size. Except in special circumstances, horses should be well shod. You must always use a bridle while riding on the road.





## TACK ILLUSTRATIONS

### 1.5 CLOTHING

Never ride on the road without a safety approved equestrian helmet. White helmets are recommended for higher visibility, and/or reflector hat covers are obtainable. Care should be taken that the hat is fitted correctly. Wear boots or shoes with hard soles and low heels. Long sleeves to protect your arms are recommended.

### 1.6 RIDING AFTER DARK

If you must ride on the roads after dark, BE SAFE - BE SEEN. It is recommended that you use reflective leg bands and a reflector vest and carry a light, which shines white in front, and red behind. Any reflective item or light you carry should be in your right hand or attached to your right stirrup or on the right legs (off-side) of the horse.

## ROADCRAFT

### 2.1 COURTESY

You should always show courtesy and consideration to other road users. You should also thank anyone who slows down or is considerate to you. Be careful when you pass pedestrians, as horses can frighten some people. A friendly word or smile can reassure them.

### 2.2 RIDING ON THE ROAD

You must always be aware of the situation around you. This means you must always look, listen and think ahead. Hazards can appear from anywhere, but from behind you can be the most dangerous. You must always avoid getting into a situation where you or your horse is in danger or difficulty. If you see trouble ahead then go around it if you can. You must not upset your horse in traffic; the road is no place to teach your horse discipline.

Ride on the left side of the road and as far to the left as is practicable. Keep your horse on the grass verge or road margin whenever possible, but do not ride on a footpath, lawn or garden. (However, check your local bylaws as in some places you cannot ride on the verge). Use your legs to keep your horse straight, and to prevent its quarters from swinging into the path of traffic. Your reins must be at sufficient length to keep your horse under control. Always ride using both hands (unless signaling).

Always ensure you can see the road ahead CLEARLY as well as behind. If you are approaching a blind corner or the brow of a hill, slow down to a walk until you can see clearly again. Also watch the sides of the road; be careful not to get trapped against an embankment. With some tight corners it is recommended that you walk around the outside of the corner, being careful to cross the road a safe distance from the corner. Note: Walk and trot are the recommended paces when riding on the road.

Remember that you are not the only road user. You must always make certain that other road users are aware of what you intend to do before you do it.

## 2.3 RIDER'S SIGNALS

Riders use a range of arm signals to influence other road users rather than to simply inform them of their proposed actions.

Before signaling, you must listen, look behind, and check the situation carefully. Gain the attention of other road users, and then signal your intention clearly. You need to allow enough time for other road users to react to your signal and to take any necessary action.



Turning Left

Stopping

Turning Right

## 2.4 TURNING

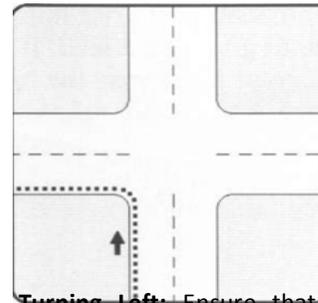
Before turning, signal clearly. You should avoid signaling too far away from an intersection, as the situation may change by the time you reach it. Before turning right, whether it is on a major or a minor road, make sure you are not about to be overtaken and, when it is clear, walk or trot briskly and calmly on. Before turning left check that your left hand side is clear and when it is clear walk or trot briskly and calmly on.

## 2.5 INTERSECTIONS

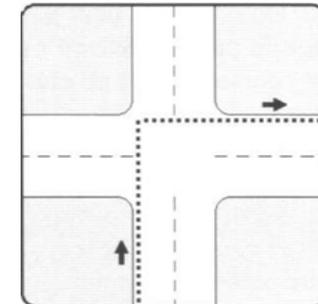
When approaching an intersection, position yourself as close to the left as is possible so that you are not 'sandwiched' by traffic from behind and in front. However in some circumstances this may not be possible (i.e. when there are lanes for turning traffic).

Select your crossing point so that all traffic is visible. Search the traffic, in particular from behind, then walk straight across (taking the shortest path). Look around while crossing. When there are lanes for turning traffic, a rider should continue to ride as far to the left as is possible while still keeping completely within the correct lane.

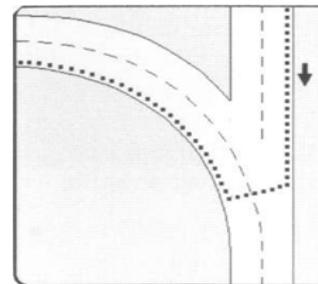
When negotiating a roundabout a rider should keep to the left side of the road, paying particular heed to traffic turning left. Ensure you signal clearly when you are going to leave the roundabout.



**Turning Left:** Ensure that your left side is clear, and then follow the road around to the left.

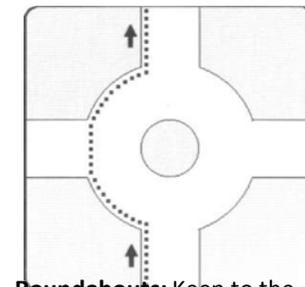


**Turning Right:** Ensure that you are not about to be overtaken, then walk forward and turn right.



**Intersections on Bends:**

When negotiating any intersection take the shortest route across the road.



**Roundabouts:** Keep to the left side of the road; ensure you signal before you leave the roundabout.

## 2.6 PASSING STATIONARY VEHICLES

Before you pull out to pass a stationary vehicle on your side of the road, you must listen, look behind and check the situation carefully before signaling. In particular, check the vehicle you are about to pass - look for such things as doors opening, and movement in the vehicle. Be sure to give the vehicle enough clearance in case a door does open. If there are people around the vehicle, give them a verbal warning that you are there.

## 2.7 HAZARDS

Whenever you approach a possible hazard, try to attract the attention of any people involved. Where consideration to you is shown, you should always acknowledge it. If you think your horse may shy at an object on the side of the road, turn your horse's head away from it. If there is something approaching from behind, turn the horse's head towards the centerline. So that if the horse does shy its quarters will not swing into the path of traffic.

Do not try to pass a hazard when traffic is approaching. If your horse will not go past the hazard by itself, get another horse to give you a lead. If you are by yourself and if all else fails, dismount and lead your horse past the hazard.

## 2.8 DISMOUNTING AND REMOUNTING

Never dismount unless you have to. The safest place for you is on the horse's back.

If you have to dismount, do so quickly in the normal way. Always run your stirrups up - simply crossing them is insufficient. If you have a martingale, leave the reins over the horse's neck. When you remount, make sure that the horse's quarters do not swing into the road. Where possible make use of gateways, verges etc to remount safely.

## 2.9 LEADING

Leading horses and ponies when mounted is not recommended. However, if you have to do this, the law states that you must ride on the left-hand side of the road with the led horse on your left, away from the traffic. The led horse should have a bridle on for better control.

When leading a horse on foot on the road, place yourself between the horse and the traffic. Keep the horse as close to the left side of the road as possible.

## 2.10 RIDING IN PAIRS OR GROUPS

Never ride more than two abreast and, if on a narrow road or in heavy traffic, ride in single file. An experienced, safety-conscious person should always be in charge, riding at the head of the group. Another experienced rider should bring up the rear. These two people should give all necessary signals for the group. The pace should be suitable for all members of the group.

Whenever crossing roads and intersections, it should be done in a controlled group. Close up on the leading file, halt and, at the signal of the leader, when the road is clear, ALL CROSS TOGETHER. This holds up the traffic for the minimum time.

If taking a large group on a trek of any sort, notify the Police of your route, the number of riders and the times you expect to be on the road. This is particularly necessary if you intend to pass through a built up area.



## **ACCIDENTS - WHAT YOU SHOULD DO**

If an accident on the road involves a horse or horses, the instructions in the Road Code section on crashes apply. It is a good idea to have the number of your doctor and veterinary surgeon available - for example written on the label inside your hat or preferably on an armband. Do not remove the patient's helmet but others present may have the information. When out riding you should always take a pocket first-aid kit and mobile phone on silent/vibrate mode or switched off, or money or a phone card for a telephone.

### **3.1 AT THE SCENE**

The first priority is always to make the situation as safe as possible. Loose horses must be secured well away from the road. Station someone on each side of the accident to slow down oncoming traffic and prevent a further incident. Don't panic – keep calm. Assess what has happened and, if necessary, follow the first aid plan below and phone **111**.

## **3.2 FIRST AID PLAN**

### **3.2.1 Airways & Breathing**

Check that the airway is open and clear and that the patient is breathing. If there is no breathing, try mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

### **3.2.2 Back Injuries**

If a rider has fallen, his back may be injured. Do not move him unless you have to. In particular, do not attempt to move anyone who complains of any pain or discomfort in the back or neck, or a feeling of pins and needles in the legs. Tell the casualty to keep still, and loosen any tight clothing. Get help as quickly as you can.

### **3.2.3 Consciousness**

If a casualty appears to be unconscious, place him in the recovery position unless you suspect spinal or back injury. In that case, leave them where they are and get someone to stand by them until help arrives. Do not remove the casualty's helmet without a neck brace but loosen the strap if there is any danger of choking. Concussed riders should not be allowed to ride again that day and preferably not for three weeks.

### **3.2.4 Bleeding**

Any obvious external bleeding must be stopped quickly. Press a pad of clean material firmly onto the area that is bleeding. If bleeding continues, another pad should be applied over the first one. Bandage the pad(s) firmly.

### **3.2.5 Broken bones**

If you think a casualty has broken a bone, try to support and immobilize the injured area. Do not move the casualty more than is necessary.

### **3.2.6 Shock**

Keep the casualty warm, quiet and lying down (in the recovery position if possible) until skilled help arrives. Keep the patient's lips moist but do not allow him to drink anything.

## **3.3 INJURED HORSE**

Examine the horse/pony for injury and again take appropriate first-aid measures. If necessary send for a veterinary surgeon.

## **3.4 AFTER THE ACCIDENT**

The Police must be informed of any accident that results in injury to people within 24 hours of the accident occurring. It is important to memorize the details of the accident. Reassure the remainder of your group and continue your ride or lesson.

## RIDING AND ROAD SAFETY EXAM

### 4.1 EXAMINERS

This exam currently requires one Riding and Road Safety Examiner (as assessed by the NZRC and the New Zealand Police).

### 4.2 THEORY TEST

Available from the NZRC are four test sheets each containing 20 questions designed to test knowledge of the Road Code and of road craft. To pass this phase a candidate must get 16 or more questions right.

### 4.3 TACK AND TURNOUT INSPECTION

This inspection is entirely for safety. The important things to check are:

- 1) Correct fitting and condition of tack (especially stitching).
- 2) The rider's safety approved equestrian helmet must be a firm fit, sit level and square on the head and not able to be freely rotated in any direction when securely fastened.
- 3) The rider's clothing. Ensure safe and sensible clothing is worn and that the rider is wearing correct footwear.

If anything is found to be unsafe, the candidate cannot continue until it is corrected to the examiner's satisfaction.

### 4.4 SIMULATED ROAD ROUTE

The simulated road route should be as close to an actual road situation as is possible. It should consist of the following:

Must have:

- Straight lines
- Intersections with left turns, right turns and straight ahead
- Give Way and/or Stop signs
- Pedestrian crossing
- Rider must dismount and remount (Mounting block may be provided)
- Parked vehicle
- Hazards (i.e. something that a horse may shy at)

Recommended:

- Lights
- A 'dangerous' corner that will require the rider to ride on the outside of the corner.

Optional:

- Road situations common to your area (e.g. roundabouts)

When laying out the route ensure that a candidate can complete one obstacle or situation before meeting the next. If it is not possible to see the whole route clearly from one place, assistants may be used along the route to mark candidates. It is recommended that the examiner walk the candidates through the route so that they are aware of the route they have to follow. It is important that the candidates realize that the route should be ridden as though they are on an actual road.

When marking this phase, the examiners must satisfy themselves that the rider is safe on the road and is seen to be looking, listening and signaling as the situation demands. **Failure to look behind or to signal when necessary will constitute failure.**

If the candidate is considered unsafe by the examiner he/she may not continue. Candidates must ride the same horse for both the Simulated Road and actual Road Test.

### 4.5 ROAD TEST

The road test should be conducted on public roads with a moderate traffic flow (do not use a busy State Highway). Again, if the examiners cannot see the whole route, assistants may be used, in which case the examiners will need to describe in detail, to the assistants, exactly what they are to look for. A full briefing as to the route will be given to the candidate, after which he will complete the test with out outside assistance. All candidates must be aware that, in the interests of safety, examiners or assistants may have to intervene during the test, in which case they must obey immediately and without question.

The candidate should be observed:

- Moving on to the road
- Turning left
- Turning right
- Overtaking stationary vehicles
- Negotiating intersections

In addition the test should be designed so that the candidate meets oncoming traffic. There should also be an opportunity for the candidate to show courtesy to other road users.

**WHEN RIDING ON THE ROAD, YOU MUST ALWAYS BE ALERT AND AWARE OF THE ROAD SITUATION AROUND YOU. LOOKING BEHIND, LISTENING AND SIGNALLING IS FUNDAMENTAL TO SAFE RIDING ON THE ROAD.**

Copies of The Riding and Road Safety Exam Syllabi and Test Sheets are available at [www.nzridingclubsbridleways.nz](http://www.nzridingclubsbridleways.nz)  
Updated July 2016

*Suggested simulated road situation*

