

RIDERS ROUNDUP for SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2004

Rosies Rambles

Daylight Saving starts next weekend, so that really does tell us that summer is here. The horses are moulting, the weather is unsettled, and foals are beginning to pop up like daisies.

A new addition to participating in NITE, and hopefully SITE will follow suit, is the introduction of riders wearing medical armbands. If you are already out competing, you will no doubt have your own band by now. I had to wear mine for the first time a couple of weeks ago, and all round the cross country course I held it tightly in my hot little hand as the d..... thing wouldn't stay up on my arm. I've learnt that I will have to have it on tighter. It's a good feeling knowing that if you do come off and can't speak for yourself, basic health information is available to help medical staff right there on your person. One person I know moaned that they didn't know their blood group, that's easily fixed, ask your doctor or better still become a blood donor. Then you can have a key ring with your blood type clearly displayed so that you will not forget.

Clubs are starting to wind up for the summer season, with plans for NITE and SITE well under way. An entry form for NITE is included with this newsletter, SITE is being planned for Easter weekend 2005 in Canterbury. ([Click here to see the NITE entry form - ed.](#))

Please Clubs ... if you have a gripe, let National Commmittee know. How can we help if no one bothers to tell us of their problems. And yes, you are allowed to talk, ride, communicate, socialize etc etc with non-affiliated Riding Clubs and their members. How this piece of misinformation ever started I don't know, but NZRC are not going to tell you who your mates can and cannot be. We are not your mother!!

Well, I think that's my lot,

Happy horsing
Rosemary

CLUBS ROUND-UP

SELWYN/RAKAIA:

Running their In Hand show. Plenty of classes to cater for all horse breeds. Just had their AGM, a new member discovered that one can go from an unknown to a position of responsibility in a very short membership time - 10 minutes in fact!

OARS:

Preparing to celebrate their 10th year as a Riding Club
Party on the Saturday night followed by an Anniversary Rally next day - hangover compulsory!

HORSE:

October ride to be "Gamblers United". All riders put in \$1.00 at the start of the ride. As they ride around the area they will stop at 5 places where each rider will pick up a playing card. End of ride, cards revealed, best Poker hand wins. (Will be allowed to discard a card if they take the gamble on a sixth card.) Winner takes all.

TAUPO:

Running a Derby Day.
Reminding members that all riders competing in Pony Club, Horse Trials will need to wear a medical armband. This is also going to be advocated for NZRC events.

DUNSTAN:

Ready to start their season with their first ride following their AGM and like most clubs, on the hunt for ideas.

CANTERBURY:

Starting preparations for 2005 in the planning of Harris Trophy, Derby Day and SITE.

On the ball

Are you right up to speed on the towing regulations, and your obligations when towing a horsefloat? Neil Clarkson seeks some answers.

The rumours circulated at dizzying speed. You will no longer be able to tow a horsefloat with a car; only four wheel-drives will be legal with a two-horse float; the regulations are getting so tough that even some four-wheel-drives won't be up to the job.

Not so long ago, the rumour mill would have us believe that the horse float was on its way to extinction. Today, the rumours have run out of steam. However, the obligations imposed on those pulling a light trailer - and that includes a horsefloat - are strict, and specific. Have you ensured you're meeting all requirements on the road?

Horsefloats are classified as light trailers. Horse floats will normally fall into the TB class - that is, a trailer with maximum loaded weight of between 0.75 tonnes and 3.5 tonnes. The manufacturer of the float will normally specify this weight, which is technically referred to as the maximum gross vehicle mass. Your local weigh station or rubbish transfer station may allow you to weigh in with your horses on board. My local rubbish transfer station charges a few dollars for the privilege.

It is important that you know the laden weight of your float for two reasons:

- . To ensure that it is within the float manufacturer's requirements.
- . To work out whether it is legally within the parameters of the towing vehicle.

Before we deal with towing weight, the braking issue needs to be addressed. There is one essential braking requirement for all vehicles towing a trailer: it must be able to stop from 30kmh within 7m. This applies whether your float has brakes fitted, or not. Brakes are mandatory on trailers with a laden weight greater than 2000kg, which will cover most tandem horse floats. It is unlikely any unbraked two-horse float will pass the 7m test, no matter how good the brakes of the towing vehicle.

So, armed with the laden weight of your float, you can now determine whether you are legal to tow it. Chances are you will find the definitive weight for your vehicle in its handbook. A couple of things to note:

Towing weights are given for braked and unbraked trailers. They can vary between automatic and manual transmissions within the same model. Sometimes, manufacturers might specify tow coupling positions required to meet the towing maximums. The limits given assume that the brakes of the vehicle and the trailer - where fitted - are in good working order. It is important to remember that even if you meet the load requirements of your vehicle manufacturer, you are still required to be able to stop from 30kmh within 7m.

Your float's lighting is looked at during its warrant of fitness, so we won't go into detail here. However, it is important that you understand the situation with towballs. If you have a problem, your warrant garage should already have brought it to your attention, and resolved it.

However, it always pays to check. There

are two sizes for tow balls: the old 7/8ths of an inch, which has a diameter of 47.5mm, and the newer 50mm ball. Drivers need to be very careful using the smaller imperial-measurement ball with a newer coupling, as there is a risk they can come apart. Some couplings are designed to deal with both ball sizes. Your ball and coupling should be marked clearly. If you're in any doubt, get your garage to check it out.

In terms of overall dimensions for your float, some of these can only be checked when your float is attached to your towing vehicle. Hook it up and check it against this diagram from the Land Transport Safety Authority.

It is also important that you can complete a 360degree turn within a 25m circle: While doing this, no part of the float or vehicle may touch, apart from the coupling.

Land Transport Safety Authority Guidelines for towing light trailers

Trailer brakes -* Trailer includes a caravan, boat trailer, garden trailer or horse float.

There are three types of brakes:

- 1. Service brakes** - Indirect trailer service brakes (for example, overrun brakes) apply themselves when the towing vehicle brakes. Direct trailer service brakes are directly operated by the driver of the towing vehicle from inside the vehicle.
- 2. Breakaway brakes** - these brakes will apply themselves automatically if the trailer is accidentally disconnected from the vehicle.
- 3. Park brake** - these brakes are applied by hand and are useful for holding the trailer when it has been disconnected from the towing vehicle.

Although trailers with a laden weight of less than 2,000 kg are not required by law to have any of the above brakes, the law does require that every light vehicle and trailer combination must be capable of stopping within a distance of 7 m from a speed of 30 km/h. In effect, this means that the maximum allowable weight of an unbraked trailer is limited by the weight and braking ability of the vehicle towing it.

As a guide, the Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) recommends that the laden weight of an unbraked trailer should not exceed 3/4 of the unladen weight of the towing vehicle and then only if the towing vehicle's brakes and tyres are in excellent condition. A trailer heavier than this may prevent the vehicle combination from meeting the 7 m from 30 km/h brake performance requirement. If the trailer is equipped with brakes, it may be possible to safely tow a trailer heavier than 3/4 of the unladen weight of the towing vehicle, but the 7 m from 30 km/h brake performance requirement still applies.

Most vehicles have tow ratings given to them by the manufacturer specifying the trailer weight that the vehicle can safely tow. Although the law does not require these tow ratings to be followed, it is recommended that they be taken into account.

Trailers with a laden weight between 2000 kg and 2500 kg must have a service brake (direct or indirect) and either a breakaway brake or twin crossed safety chains that are

strong enough to prevent the trailer breaking away if the coupling fails. Park brakes are not required.

Trailers with a laden weight of 2,500 kg or more must have all three types of brakes, and service brakes must be of the direct type.

Safety chain

Trailers with a laden weight under 2000 kg must be fitted with at least one safety chain. The chain must be short enough to prevent the trailer tow coupling from hitting the ground if the coupling breaks.

The LTSA recommends that safety chains be bolted. In some situations welding is acceptable, provided it meets Warrant of Fitness requirements.

<http://www.ltsa.govt.nz/road-user-safety/motorists/towing-light-trailers.html>

SAFETY

- . If you're pulling only one horse in a tandem float, always put the animal on the right (centreline) side of the float.
- . If you're loading two horses, put the bigger animal on the right (centreline) side.
- . Moving horses can cause the float to sway, and this will have an impact on your braking ability..

SPEED

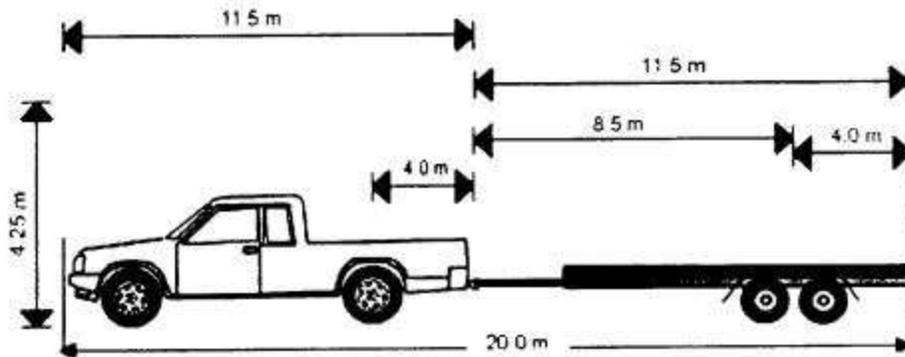
Did you know that some bigger vehicles once restricted to 80kmh can now go faster? This will explain why some trucks might end up tailgating you on the open road.

The speed limit for horse float and other light trailers remains at 80kmh, and there are no plans to alter them.

It is important that those towing pull over wherever reasonably possible to allow faster traffic to pass.

HIRING

If you borrow or hire a float, it is the driver's responsibility - not the owner's - to ensure that the float is safe and meets all legal requirements. Be careful. Check that the coupling is in good order and that there is no chance of the float lifting off.



Disorder in Court!

We are turning into a very litigious society, and the court system is under increasing pressure.

We took a trip down to the local court recently to see how it all works (we didn't really!) and were amazed by some of the intense questioning.

Here are a few examples:

Q: What is your date of birth?

A: *July 15*

Q: What year?

A: *Every year.*

Q: What gear were you in at the moment of impact?

A: *Gucci sweats and Reeboks.*

Q: How old is your son, the one living with you?

A: *Thirty-eight or thirty-five, I can't remember which.*

Q: How long has he lived with you?

A: *Forty-five years.*

Q: What was the first thing your husband said to you when he woke up that morning?

A: *He said "Where am I, Cathy?"*

Q: And why did that upset you?

A: *My name is Susan.*

Q: ALL your responses MUST be oral, OK? What school did you go to?

A: *Oral.*

Q: The youngest son, the twenty-one-year old, how old is he?

If a dog was a teacher

(THIS IS SOME GOOD ADVICE!)

If a dog was the teacher you would learn things like:

When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.

Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joyride.

Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy.

When it's in your best interest, practice obedience.

Let others know when they've invaded your territory.

Take naps. Stretch before rising.

Run, romp and play daily.

Thrive on attention and let people touch you.

Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.

On warm days, stop and lie on your back on the grass.

On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.

When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.

No matter how often you're scolded, don't buy into the guilt thing and pout... run right back and make friends.

Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.

Eat with gusto and enthusiasm. Stop when you've have enough.

Be loyal. Never pretend to be something you're not.

If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.

When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle them gently.