



Introduction to Driving

Linda Knutson, Kathy Jo Hanson, Katie Connolly,
Bettie Lyman, Liz Dussol, Gail Smida, Gail Olsen,
Joan Berg, and Heather Thoele

We are excited to share this introduction to carriage driving.

Benefits of Carriage Driving to Participants

Many of the benefits of carriage driving are similar to horse back riding

- Physical
- Emotional
- Cognitive

Many of the physical, emotional and cognitive benefits of carriage driving are similar to therapeutic horse back riding.

These include:

Improved core strength, balance and fine and gross motor coordination

Opportunity for developing relationships

Fostering independence and social interaction

Improved communication with the volunteers, instructors, and the horse

Building self-confidence

And improved cognitive skills of sequencing, following directions, and differentiating between left and right

We will watch a video of one of program's participants Manny talking about carriage driving experience. You will see our carriage's wheelchair lift in action.

At the end of the video, the mother of another participant Marco, shares a few word.

Marco has been riding with our program for over 10 years.

A couple years ago, following a surgery, he was unable to ride. Carriage driving allowed him to continue to participate in our program.



Link to video: <https://youtu.be/Z1IPdLebVak>

Benefits of Carriage Driving for EAS Programs

- Provide an alternative for individuals who are unable to ride due to weight or other limiting condition
- Offer unique lessons such as harnessing and ground driving
- Provide a different type of activity for the horse

Carriage driving allows our program to be more inclusive and serve participants with a wide range of special needs.

Many of our participants would not have been eligible for our riding program due to their weight or other medical condition.

Lessons can include learning about the harness and ground driving, like you will have the chance to practice later.

And it's something different for our 3 driving horses that are also in our riding program.

Vehicles



Adapted Carriage with Wheelchair Lift

As you saw in the video, this adapted carriage with the wheelchair lift is our primary vehicle. It is 20 years old and was custom built. In these photos, it is pulled by a 20-year old Norwegian Fjord Horse named Tanner.

Vehicles



Easy Entry Cart

For our more independent drivers, this easy entry cart provides more movement than the smoother ride of our 4 wheeled carriage. A new cart like this costs around \$4,000. The Frey Carriage Company in Wisconsin offers a similar cart in a variety of sizes.

Vehicles



The Bird-in-Hand Wheelchair Accessible Carriage has a removable right-side front seat for a driver who uses a wheelchair. The rear ramp can be stored in an upright position. Volunteer assistant(s) can sit on the side seats in the back of the carriage.



Manufactured by Bird-in-Hand Carriages in Pennsylvania

Other options include carts and carriages with a ramp for wheelchair access. These vehicles range in price from \$10,000-\$15,000.

Vehicles



The Bellcrown Freedom Therapeutic is a comfortable, lightweight two-wheeled cart and is approved by the British Riding and Driving for the Disabled Association.



Manufactured by Bellcrown Carriages in Pennsylvania

There are also a couple European companies with options for people who use wheelchairs.

Carriage Driving Lessons Activities

Transitions

Cones Course

Circle, Diagonal, Serpentine, Figure 8

Dressage Pattern

Trails

Cones Course + Dressage Pattern + Trails = Combined Driving Event

There are many activities for our lessons. Today we will work on transitions, reining through cones and circles.

Resources to Learn About Carriage Driving

PATH Intl. Website – Driving Certification Page and Handbook

Local Driving Clubs

Trainer for Lessons and Clinics

National Driving Associations

Online Classes, Videos, Books and Articles

Facebook Groups - **PATH Intl. Driving Instructors, Beginning Carriage Driving

Below is a list of resources including local driving clubs. This is a good place to start to find a local trainer for lessons.

Also check out the national driving societies for clinics and a wide range of articles and videos.

Carriage Driving Resources

Driving Equipment

IVC Carriage – provides excellent educational articles

<https://www.ivccarriage.com/>

Big Black Horse

<https://bigblackhorse.com/>

Driving Essentials – ask for 5% discount for PATH Intl. centers

<https://www.drivingessentials.com/>

Carriage Driving Essentials

<https://www.carriagedrivingessentials.com/>

Online Classes

Coachman's Delight – Andy Marcoux

<https://coachmansdelight.com/>

*Has video and plans how to build a reinboard

Lucky Three Ranch - Meredith Hodges

<https://www.luckythreeranch.com/lucky-three-ranch-training/video-training-tips-all/training-tips-by-category/training-tips-ground-driving/>

National Driving Associations

The American Driving Society, Inc. (ADS)

<https://www.americandrivingsociety.org/>

Carriage Association of America

<https://www.caaonline.com/>

United States Driving for the Disabled, Inc.

<http://usdfd.org/>

Driving Digest Magazine

<http://www.drivingdigest.com/>

Local Driving Clubs

St. Croix Horse and Carriage Society

Region: Minnesota (Twin Cities metro)

Find on Facebook

Northwoods Harness Club

Region: Northwest Wisconsin

Contact Person: Candis Hankins

Phone: 715-413-1049

Email: drivingbits@gmail.com

Find on Facebook

Dairyland Driving Club

Region: WI, IL, IA, MN

Contact Person: Howard Kietzke

Email: hkietzke@tds.net

<https://www.dairylanddriving.com/>

HUB Club

Region: IL, WI, IA

Contact Person: Krista Ziec

Phone: 815-342-4819

Email: kristat40@gmail.com

<https://www.hubclubdriving.com/>

Red River Harness and Saddle Club

Contact Person: Polly Thorsness

Region: MN, ND (Fargo)

Phone: 701-361-9726

Email: ilovemules@icloud.com

<http://www.redriverharnessandsaddleclub.com/>

Four Gold Rules of Carriage Driving

1. NEVER remove the bridle from the horse while still hitched to a carriage
2. NEVER remove reins from the bridle of a horse still hitched to a carriage
3. NEVER leave a horse that is still hitched to a carriage tied up by itself
4. ALWAYS have the able-bodied whip enter the carriage first and be the last to leave the carriage

These 4 Golden Rules are not only for people's safety but for the welfare of the horse. Failure to follow these rules will result in an automatic failure at the PATH Intl. driving certification.

NEVER remove the bridle from the horse while still hitched to a carriage

NEVER remove reins from the bridle of a horse still hitched to a carriage

NEVER leave a horse that is still hitched to a carriage tied up by itself

ALWAYS have the able-bodied whip enter the carriage first and be the last to leave the carriage

The 3 Aids Used in Carriage Driving

- Reins - to communicate, direct and support the equine through the bit. For therapeutic driving, we use 2 sets: 1 for instructor and 1 for participant.
- Voice - to direct, encourage, calm and praise the equine.
- Whip - to aid us in turning and bending the equine as well as encouraging forward movement. The whip is the driver's equivalent to the rider's leg.

Our reins, voice and whip are the aids we use to communicate with our driving horse. On display at the far end of the arena, we have the Equicizer pony harnessed to show how we have 2 sets of reins, 1 for instructor and 1 for participant.

Steps to Certification - Level 1

Phase 1

- Be 21 years of age or older
- Obtain PATH Intl Professional Level Membership
- Purchase PATH Intl. Driving Level 1 Application and Student Manual
- Submit a completed Driving Instructor Equine Management Skills Checklist
- Proof of current adult and child CPR and first aid certifications
- Successfully complete the PATH Intl. Standards course and exam

Optional, but recommended to audit a PATH Intl. on-site Driving Instructor workshop OR attend a Demo Only workshop prior to starting your teaching hours

Katie Connolly is an instructor in training with our program. She is nearing the completion of the certification process and will share her experience.

Steps to Certification - Level 1

Phase 2

- Successfully complete online proctored Driving Instructor exam with a minimum score of 90% after the workshop and before certification.
- Have completed at least ONE of the below within the last 2 years:
2 public driving clinics; 6 hours of private lessons; competed in 1 sanctioned Arena Driving Trial at the preliminary level, Combined Driving Event at the preliminary level, pleasure or breed show in the driving division; or competed in harness racing or distance driving.
- Have a minimum of 25 hours teaching driving to able-bodied students.
- Have a minimum of 200 hours experience driving 2 or more different equines.
- Have a minimum of 25 hours working with individuals with disabilities.

Steps to Certification - Level 1

Phase 3

- Attend an on-site PATH Intl. Driving Level I workshop and certification event.

Full details and Driving Level I Instructor Certification Program Handbook are on the PATH Intl. website.

Starting Your Driving Program

- Horse – Guidelines in PATH Intl. Standards Manual
- Vehicle and Harness – Avoid carts with bicycle tires
- Other Equipment – Adapted reins, ring on bridle, signaling devices (walkie-talkies), straps to secure wheelchair to vehicle
- Volunteers – Extra required training including emergency procedures and securing participants who use wheelchairs.
- Participants – Determine minimum and maximum range for height and weight for participants based on vehicle.

The certification process covers what you need to start a driving program including guidelines on horse selection.

After you find the right horse, we recommend synthetic harness for easier cleaning, although we prefer leather for some of our harness parts including the collar.

Also we suggest starting with a 2 wheeled cart but avoid carts with bicycle tires.

We use different reins based on a participant's abilities.

We have about 20 volunteers in our driving program who have received extra training including harnessing and unharnessing, like you will practice today, as well as emergency procedures and securing participants who use wheelchairs.

This might take 3-6 months to be ready to start lessons for your participants.

Next we will break into these activity stations:

On this end of the arena by the rein board, Katie will be leading rein handling and answering your certification process questions.

At the ground driving and standing station, Bettie will be leading with horse Pepper. Please meet by the orange cones on that side of the arena.

On the other end of the arena, I'll be leading the long-lining station with horse Pippi.

Finally at the far end of the arena, Linda will be leading the harnessing station with horse Bronco.