

Donkey carts

Novelty races for adults must only take place in properly and safely fitted out donkey carts so designed and constructed to prevent injury to donkey and passenger or driver.

Safety hats



It is recommended that riders use their own safety hats but, in cases where they are not available, the operator should have an adequate supply which must be in good condition (preferably have the approved safety kite symbol) and correctly fitted with chin straps.

No rider should be permitted to ride without a hat.

Rest period between races

All donkeys should have a minimum of 15 minutes rest between races and no donkey should be worked continuously for racing and side attraction riding.

Foals



If young foals are provided as a side attraction they must be supplied with a separate pen away from the main holding paddock. Foals under two months should not be used for this purpose. Foals from two months to six months must be accompanied by their dams in the pen and must be transported to and from the venue, separated by a partition from the other animals, other than their dams, in accordance with The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997.



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a code of practice

Donkey Derbies



Donkey derbies are a regular feature of many charity days and other events throughout the summer season. Whilst many are well run and ensure the welfare of the donkeys is fully protected, there have been others, which have given rise to much concern.

To ensure an enjoyable day out for both the donkeys and the riders, all those organising and operating donkey derbies should follow these guidelines.

The Organiser's Responsibilities

Owing to the risk of injury to riders and others, operators are strongly advised to have adequate public liability insurance.

Holding paddocks

A secure holding paddock should be set up within the proximity and sight of the race finishing line and be constructed of hurdles, chestnut fencing or stakes with a minimum of three strands of rope stretched tightly. The size of the holding paddocks should give the donkeys sufficient room to stand comfortably, allowing human access to each for the fitting or removal of riding tack and any other necessary care and attention. In no case should this be less than seven yards (six metres x six metres).

The holding paddock must be situated away from shrubs and vegetation poisonous for donkeys, for example - ragwort, bracken, yew, privet, laburnum and rhododendron. The holding paddock should be cleared of rubbish and must be constructed so as to contain the donkeys and not to cause injury to them.

Provision of drinking water

The organiser must provide an adequate supply of fresh, clean drinking water for the donkeys. It is also recommended that the donkeys are protected from the extreme elements (sun, heavy rain).

Course design

The course should be horseshoe in shape or

straight and be 100 -150 yards (90 -140 metres) in length. The minimum width of the course should be calculated by allowing one yard for each of the donkeys running together in competition plus one yard intervals between each and also between the side barriers and the donkeys running on the right and left hand extremities of the course - for example:

- 7 donkeys = 15 yards (13.5 metres)
- 8 donkeys = 17 yards (15.3 metres).

Riders

- Riders should be drawn from local pony clubs and riding schools and have some experience of riding.
- Accurate weighing scales are essential - all riders must be weighed before the race.
- As a general guide riders should be between the ages of nine and 15 years and weigh no more than eight stone.
- Novelty races with professional jockeys are acceptable provided that the eight stone weight limit is observed.
- Other than in the above case, no adult may take part in any races as a rider.
- Publicity photographs of adults riding or sitting on donkeys should be discouraged.
- All riders must wear a proper riding safety hat with fastened chinstrap.
- No rider may be permitted to carry a whip or stick or wear spurs, nor employ any other instrument or artificial means of inducing a donkey to increase speed.

Fitness of the donkeys

It is the responsibility of the organiser to ensure that no unfit donkey is allowed to take part in any race or be ridden as a side attraction. All donkeys hooves must be in good order and properly trimmed. The final arbiter of 'fit or unfit' will be a qualified veterinary surgeon.

Arrangements must be made in advance to ensure that a veterinary surgeon is either in attendance or 'on call' throughout the event.

The Operator's Responsibilities

Compliance with transit legislation

Transport of donkeys to and from the venue must be carried out in compliance with The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997.

Fitness of donkeys

No unfit donkey must be allowed to take part in any race or be ridden as a side attraction. 'Unfit' is defined as poor condition, ill, lame, injured or lactating mares. Failure to comply with this section could be contravention of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1911 (1912 in Scotland).

The final arbiter of 'fit or unfit' will be a qualified veterinary surgeon.

Entire male donkeys

No entire male donkey may be used for racing or riding in side attractions.

Minimum age

Donkeys used for races or riding as side attractions must be over four years of age.

Code of practice

Provide the organiser with a copy of this Code of Practice when a booking is made.

In foal donkeys

No in-foal donkeys may be used for racing or riding as a side attraction. Failure to comply with this could lead to a prosecution.

Provision of substitute donkeys

Each operator should provide an adequate number of extra donkeys over and above the number calculated to take part in the races as substitutes for any donkeys that become ill or injured.

Provision of drinking water

Each operator must ensure that adequate drinking containers are taken to the venue and that clean, fresh drinking water is made available to the donkeys.

Provision of fodder

Should donkeys be away from their base stables for more than five hours, they must receive an adequate supply of fodder.

Riding tack



All tack should be in proper repair and so constructed to fit the donkey correctly. The use of saddles and/or stirrups should be discouraged.