

Dealing with Horses

(Alan Prescott's Advice)

It is not unusual on Sunday mornings to come across horses so let us look at what we should expect and what we should do.

First, we should realise that although horses are powerful animals they are vulnerable, easily frightened and can panic around fast moving cars. When you see horses on the road, slow down. It may be obvious to us, but there are usually good reasons for riding in double file. The horse on the inside may be young and nervous and needing the security of a steadier horse between them and the traffic or the inside rider may be a child or a novice who needs escorting. We should note that riders are advised to always keep to the left of the road even when turning right. It is considered unsafe to position a horse between lines of traffic where they can panic - sandwiched with no escape route. Horse riders will negotiate turning right at roundabouts as a car driver would. However, riders should not be expected to signal right when approaching a roundabout. When on a roundabout, riders will normally signal right only when approaching exits they do not intend to use. Riders will keep left within the roundabout until reaching their exit, when they should signal left. Riders are often able to see and hear further ahead and may request a motorist to slow down or stop when they are aware of a potential danger or if they sense an impending action or reaction from their horse. *This request should be respected.*

Here are some tips for safer motoring around horses:

- Watch out for horses being led or ridden on the road, taking extra care at left-hand bends and on narrow country roads.
- Drive slowly past horses, give them plenty of room and be prepared to stop.
- Do not frighten animals by sounding your horn or revving your engine.
- Look out for horse riders signals and be aware that they may not move to the centre of the road prior to turning right. *Riders of bikes take extra care.*
- Finally, treat horses as a potential hazard and expect the unexpected.

Disclaimer: Driving is never a black and white activity, but full of grey areas, therefore neither I nor my fellow Observers in the St Helens & District Group of Advanced Motorists are liable for any consequences you may experience as a result of reading our advice. **You** are the driver. **You** should be in control of **your** vehicle at **all** times.