

Horse Sense for Motorists



WHOA DOWN!

Horses have the right to use public roads, and motorists have a legal obligation to “whoa down.” By learning how to share the road, riders and motorists can work together to prevent tragedies. Horse/vehicle accidents kill or seriously injure thousands of riders and motorists each year.

- ◆ **Slow down** when approaching horses on the road.
- ◆ **Horses startle easily**, often bolting into oncoming traffic.
- ◆ Strange noises, big vehicles, and **moving things spook horses** (trailers, rattling tools, flapping plastic, big trucks, motorcycles, horns, cement mixers, etc.) — especially if the scary thing comes up behind the horse.
- ◆ **Most riders can’t control their horse when he gets upset.**
- ◆ **STOP if the rider signals** to you or if the horse isn’t under control. (If the horse’s head is “up,” in the alert position, he may be stopped but about to bolt.)
- ◆ **Pass slowly** (and not on curves or hills), and give the horse plenty of room.
- ◆ **Do not** rev your engine or blow your horn, even as a “hello.”
- ◆ **Do not** throw anything out of the vehicle or at the horse.
- ◆ **Anticipate** riders or carriages on country or gravel roads.

NC law requires motorists to use reasonable care when approaching or passing a horse. It is “Reckless Driving” to operate a motor vehicle without due caution and regard to the safety of, or in a manner endangering, other people. (NCGS Sections 20-140 & 216)

Whoa Down! and Share the Road