

British Driving Society  
Unit of Competence for Carriage Driving  
**The Road Driving Assessment**

**This test is recommended as a minimum competence for  
driving horses/ponies on the public highway**

Candidates who wish to progress through the BDS Levels of Competence must precede the Road Driving test with the BDS Preliminary Competence. The Road Driving Test is a prerequisite to BDS Intermediate Competence.

- *Candidates who have not achieved their Preliminary Driving Competence accredited (Unit 2), will need to have their driving ability assessed in an enclosed area prior to proceeding onto the roads in Element 2 of the Test – Drive on the Public Highway. See page 4 for details.*

This test can be used as a stand alone unit and can be taken in isolation from any other BDS test.

- *Candidates using this Test as a stand alone unit must also complete the additional requirements found at the end of this syllabus. See page 4*

A certificate of human first aid is highly recommended

**Contents**

Guidelines Page 1

Assessor notes Page 2

Element 1 Page 3

Element 2 Page 3

Element 3 Page 4

Additional Requirements Page 4

*For candidates using this test as a stand alone unit or for candidates with accreditation from Unit 2 of the Preliminary Competence*

**Guidance Notes**

**Method of Assessment**

The test will be assessed by direct observation of the practical performance and oral questioning of the underpinning knowledge section of the syllabus. The assessment will be in line with safe yard practise.

The driving will take place on the public highway, using the English coaching style of driving (reins held in the left hand with the right hand supporting).

**Time for completion** Approximately 1 hour 30 minutes *Candidates needing the 'Additional Requirements' will need approximately 10 minutes more.*

## Assessor Guidance

The successful candidate will be capable of harnessing up safely and efficiently; will drive a single turnout safely, using the English coaching style of driving on the public highway.

They will be capable of adjusting pace to suit road conditions, be aware of other road users at all times, observe road traffic signs and signals, show courtesy to pedestrians and other road users and have a sound knowledge of the highway code.

They must be able to show effective use of an assistant and be in control of the turnout at all times.

### Candidates

Candidates who wish to proceed to Intermediate level MUST have completed the Preliminary Competence as well as the Road Driving Test. Candidates must be members of the BDS.

Candidates can sit this test as an isolated Unit. They also must also inform the test organiser so that additional arrangements can be made. These candidates do not need to be members of the BDS but will pay an additional fee.

### Age of candidates \*\*\*\*\*

**Horses/Ponies** must be 5 years or over with a minimum of 1 year driving experience. They must be safe in traffic. They must be of a suitable size and fitness to convey the candidate and the assessor for a drive on the roads which will last for approximately 45 minutes. Road driving pace is expected. The horse/pony may be the property of the candidate or be hired or borrowed for the occasion.

**Harness** must be in sound condition and fit correctly.

**Vehicle** 2 or 4 wheeler. It must be well maintained and suitable for the type and size of the animal and the passengers.

**Venue** This must have a safe and secure area for Elements 1 and 3. There must also be reasonably quiet access to suitable public roads, but with some naturally occurring obstacles and road hazards as required for the performance criteria. (e.g. roundabouts, traffic lights, etc). In some country areas where there may be a shortage of roundabouts, crossing and traffic lights questioning and simulation will then be used. A substantial part of Element 2 of the Road Test will take place using the public highway – not a simulation using tracks or estate roads.

**To be successful, the candidate will be successful all the Elements in one test situation.**

## ELEMENT 1 Prepare for Road Use

### Requirements

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Animal</b>   | Horse/pony, 5 years or over with a minimum of one year's driving experience. It must be quiet in traffic and suitable for the requirements of the test. |
| <b>Harness</b>  | A sound set of single harness suitable for the horse/pony and carriage used.  |
| <b>Vehicle</b>  | A 2 or 4 wheeled vehicle  |
| <b>Location</b> | Controlled, secure environment suitable for putting to eg stable yard   |
| <b>Time</b>     | Approximately 15 minutes  |

### Performance Criteria

- a. Control of horse/pony is maintained at all times
- b. Harness is selected and fitted to horse
- c. Horse is put to using laid down procedures
- d. Health and safety of horse/pony, self and others is maintained at all times

### Knowledge and Understanding

1. Safety precautions to be taken when handling horse/pony
2. Importance of safety checks
3. Dangers of inappropriate procedures when adjusting harness
4. Suitability of shoeing for road use
5. All sections of the Road Traffic Act appertaining to horse drawn vehicles. (Note these are different in different parts of the country.)
6. Safety clothing and their use
7. Carrying of adequate spares and their potential use
8. Importance of correctly fitting breeching

## ELEMENT 2 Drive on the public highway using the English Coaching style of driving ie reins in the left hand, supported by the right hand

### Requirements

**Conditions** Genuine traffic on the public highway, varying road surfaces, gradients

**Obstacles and hazards** as encountered naturally on the drive out. The drive must include a substantial part of genuine public highway with road junctions, turns to the left and right, moving and stationery/parked vehicles.

Simulation or questioning can be used to cover any of the following that are not covered naturally in the drive – pedestrians, cyclists, traffic lights, road signs, pedestrian crossings, roundabouts, differing weather conditions, noise levels, environmental hazards.

**Time** Approximately 45 minutes

### Performance Criteria

- a. The vehicle is mounted using safe procedure
- b. The whip is taken up
- c. Horse/pony and vehicle are driven smoothly and appropriately to road conditions
- d. A correct position is maintained on the road to ensure a safe and effective performance
- e. Naturally occurring obstacles and road hazards and negotiated safely
- f. Road safety procedures are adhered to at all times

- g. Health and safety of horse/pony, self and other road users in maintained at times

### Knowledge and Understanding

1. Horse/pony's reaction when working alone and in company
2. Effects of weather on road conditions
3. Application of the Highway Road and Road Traffic Act (NB There are significant local differences)
4. Use of the whip and voice
5. Types of hand signals
6. Procedure in the event of a road traffic accident
7. The importance of adopting the English coaching style of driving, especially when driving on the highway

### ELEMENT 3 Attend to Horse/Pony and Vehicle after Driving

**Requirements** As for Element 1  
**Time** Approximately 20 minutes

### Performance Criteria

- a. Vehicle is parked and secured at a suitable location
- b. Horse/pony is taken out of the vehicle using safe practise
- c. Horse/pony is unharnessed using laid down procedure
- d. Harness is returned to the appropriate place
- e. Control of horse/pony is maintained throughout
- f. Health and safety of horse/pony, self and others is maintained at all times

### Knowledge and Understanding

1. Safe procedure when unharnessing
2. Recommended cooling down procedure
3. Method of securing the vehicle after use
4. When and how to use assistance
5. How to make safety checks to the vehicle (Ref Department of Trade Code of Practise)

**Additional Requirements** For candidates who are using this test as a stand alone unit

**Requirements** As for Element 1  
**Location** Secure driving area eg field, driving arena  
**Time** Approximately 8 minutes

Following completion of Element 1, **these candidates** (only) will be required to drive in an enclosed area to demonstrate their driving competence and rein handling.

Should the Assessor feel that the candidate is not up to the required standard in **competence, style or safety**, they will not be allowed to proceed to **Element 2 - Drive on the Public Highway** of the Road Driving Test.

Candidates with accreditation who are not seen as demonstrating the required level of competence will not be allowed to complete this test. They must complete **Preliminary Competence Unit 2** successfully before they can retake all of the **Road Driving Test**.