Advice on

# Horsebox parking for equestrian access sites

The British Horse Society

The law and management of public access rights vary widely between the four countries of the United Kingdom. Practical elements of the following advice apply in all of them but the legal requirements in Scotland and Northern Ireland may differ from those in England and Wales.

More advice is available on www.bhs.org.uk/accessadvice.

IMPORTANT This guidance is general and does not aim to cover every variation in circumstances. Where it is being relied upon, The Society strongly recommends seeking its advice specific to the site.

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Many riders and carriage-drivers who can afford to run a horse transport vehicle use it to access new areas to ride or drive. Some will need to transport their horse every time they go out because their local area lacks opportunities for hacking or driving a horse. Parking areas for horseboxes and trailers with access to networks of equestrian routes, country parks, beaches, commons, forests, and long distance routes are welcome.

Transport for horses varies from a two-horse trailer towed with a large car to lorries accommodating ten horses. The larger lorries are more likely to be associated with either horse transport businesses or competition horses. People using their transport to take their horse to a good riding or driving area are more likely to have a trailer or small horsebox for economy and ease but there are people with only one vehicle that has to fulfil all functions.

The extent of parking provided will be dependent on the location and the land available. In many situations, it is accepted that it will only be possible to accommodate smaller vehicles.

In providing a parking area, there are four factors to consider:

1. Height (usually entrance restrictions)
2. Turning circle or the space for the vehicle to manoeuvre

3. Space for a ramp and loading/unloading
4. Surface

## Dimensions

The figures in the table below are a rough guide from averages; there are taller trailers, and smaller boxes based on a van body (e.g. Sprinter). For manoeuvring trailers, much depends on the turning circle of the towing vehicle as well as the overall length; for lorries there are many variables depending on how the vehicle is set up.

| | Trailer | Small horsebox | Large horsebox |
|---|---|---|---|
| Height | 2.6–3 m | 2.8–3.2 m | 3.1–4 m |
| Width | 2–2.5 m | 2–2.5 m | 2.2–2.5m |
| Turning circle | 12–15 m | 10–14 m | 11.5–20 m |
| Unloading space including ramp | 4 m | 4 m | 4 m |

The unloading space is calculated as an average 2 metre ramp length plus length of horse. Large horsebox ramps will be longer than two metres because of the axle height but are generally less likely to be used for hacking transport.

UK manufactured trailers and boxes may have either a ramp to the rear or to the near side. Some have both so that a horse can walk forwards on and off.

With the ramp down, ideally you would take the horse down the ramp straight, and reload by approaching it straight so a space of 4 metres between and behind the parked vehicles is required.

## Area

Turning circles vary widely and some large vehicles, because of the axle ratios, have wide turning circles and will be more difficult to accommodate in a parking area. In practice, a 15 metre square has been found to offer parking for three trailers or small boxes and some cars but how tidily people park will obviously affect the number of vehicles that can fit into the space.

In planning how many vehicles can be accommodated, it is necessary to think of the space needed for a ramp to be lowered and the horse to descend and ascend it in a straight line using the centre of the ramp.

Where space is restricted but horsebox parking is highly desirable, it may be feasible to have an area for unloading before the vehicle is pulled forward into a space to park which is too narrow for a side ramp to be lowered. An equestrian will be unwilling to leave a

horse unattended while moving the vehicle, depending on the environment and the horse (see corrals below), however, this may still be a better solution than nothing for many users and some equestrians may travel in company, allowing one person to be with the horses at all times.

## Height

Height may be constrained by the need to also prevent fly-tipping or travellers and will need a local solution as any constraint that will permit a horse vehicle will also allow vans, small lorries and caravans.

Commonly a code operated barrier that restricts width is effective because 'problem' vehicles are very likely to be wider as well as higher so a width restriction can work as well as a height restriction although drivers of cars and horse transport will need to take greater care in passing through the gap and need space to ensure they are accurately aligned.

## Surface

The land should be level so that vehicles are able to park without being across a slope. The surface should be firm, well-drained and, ideally, able to sustain use all year, although summer-only parking is still welcome. The surface should be even so that when a ramp is lowered, its corners or edge are supported across its width. (Some ramps lower onto their edge, others have corner supports.)

## Corrals

A corral of at least 3 metres by 4 metres made from post-and-rail fencing where a horse may be left unaccompanied for a few moments, for example, while its owner moves a horsebox from unloading to parking area, is desirable.

A corral would ideally include a hitching rail but robust fencing would be adequate. The corral must be within sight of the parking area.

Fencing is recommended at standard livestock height between 1,100 and 1,200mm high, with rails on the corral side of the posts.

See also Advice on Hitching rails www.bhs.org.uk/accessadvice.

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