



British Carriagedriving

Minimum Standards for Outdoor Events – Organisers' Guidance

This guidance sets out the **minimum standards expected by British Carriagedriving (BC)** for the organisation of outdoor carriage driving competitions.

The guidance applies to all events, from **Gateway and one-day “inside-out” competitions** to **Advanced three-day National competitions**. Some requirements will vary depending on the **level and format of the event**, organisers should treat these standards as the baseline for safe and effective event delivery.

The aim is to ensure that all events are **safe, well organised and enjoyable for competitors, officials, volunteers and spectators**.

1. Venue and Infrastructure

1.1 Box Park / Parking Area

The box park should:

- Ideally be **flat and well drained**.
- Be **secure and separated from public roads**, preferably with gated access.
- Provide **sufficient water supply and pressure** for horses, competitors and officials.
- Include **clearly marked manure disposal areas** where required.

For smaller one-day events without overnight stays, organisers may require competitors to **remove manure**, provided this is clearly stated in the schedule.

Waste and Facilities

- Rubbish skips should be provided where appropriate.
- At smaller events competitors may be asked to **take rubbish home**, provided this is communicated in advance.

Toilets

- Permanent or portable toilets **must** be available.
- They must be **clean, hygienic and stocked with toilet paper**.
- Daily servicing is recommended for multi-day events.

Additional facilities where possible:

- Cassette toilet disposal point (not essential for one-day events)
- Electric hook-ups (desirable for Advanced and three-day events)
- Stabling (desirable for Advanced and three-day events).

2. Competition Areas

2.1 Dressage Arenas

Dressage arenas must:

- Be on **level, well prepared ground** with short grass or other suitable surface.
- Be surrounded by **dressage boards** (Boards do not need to be continuous around the arena).
- Have **clearly marked corners and letters**.

Additional requirements:

- Letters positioned **1 metre behind boards**.
- Judges' vehicles parked **3 metres from the arena**.
- A **5 metre safety zone** around the arena to prevent warm-up activity and ensure spectator safety.

2.2 Practice Arenas and Warm-Up Areas

Events must provide adequate **warm-up areas**.

- At least **one practice arena** should be available, ideally one per dressage arena at National events
- At Club level, **two corners and a straight line** may be sufficient.

Practice arenas must not be monopolised by trainers or individual competitors.

Competitions may choose to schedule time in a warm up arena during dressage days.

A **lunging area** should also be provided where possible.

3. Marathon Course

3.1 General Requirements

The marathon course must:

- Be **safe and clearly marked**.
- Minimise use of **public roads** wherever possible.
- Be accurately measured in **kilometres**.

Where public roads are used:

- Authorities including the Police and Council must be notified.
- Stewards/volunteers should be positioned at crossings.
- Grooms should **dismount when crossing roads**.

Course marking should include:

- **Direction arrows** before and after turns
- Clearly numbered **Compulsory Turning Flags (CTFs)**

- **Kilometre** markers
- **300 m marker** before the finish if the last obstacle is more than 300m from the end of the section
- **30 m marker** after each obstacle

3.2 Halt Area

The halt area should:

- Be easily accessible
- Provide sufficient **space for multiple turnouts**
- Provide **water for horses**

Toilet facilities are desirable where possible.

3.3 Marathon Obstacles

Obstacles must be:

- **Robustly constructed**
- Clearly designed with **equine welfare as the priority**

Requirements include:

- Correct number of obstacles for the class level (see BC rules)
- Driveable routes **minimum 2.5 metres wide**
- Clearly marked gates
- Maximum of 2 letters can be used twice in the same obstacle

Mobile obstacles should:

- Be **substantial and heavy**
- Be clearly marked so competitors know elements may move.
- Each element must have a dislodgeable element
- Gate widths must be a minimum of 3m

Water Obstacles

- Maximum depth **30 cm**
- Natural water obstacles may be permitted up to **50 cm** at the discretion of the Technical Delegate
- Entry and exit points and the footing within a water obstacle must be **firm and safe**

4. Exercise Routes

Where provided, exercise routes should be **clearly signed** and available from when the **box park officially opens**.

They are:

- Optional for **two-day events**
 - Not required for **one-day or Club events**
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5. Officials and Volunteers

Officials should normally undertake **only one role**, except in exceptional circumstances.

Key roles include:

- Event Organiser
- Event Secretary – must be available throughout the event
- Technical Delegate (TD)
- President of the Jury (POJ)
- Course Designer
- Judges
- Scorer and score collectors
- Safety Officer
- Safeguarding Officer
- Stable Manager (desirable at club events, essential at national events)
- Stewards' Convenor (preferred)
- Obstacle observers and timekeepers
- Stewards and volunteers

Officials must be **appropriately qualified for the level of competition**.

Typical Judge Requirements

- **Three-day events:** A minimum of **three listed judges per dressage arena**.
- **Two-day events:** A minimum of **two listed judges per dressage arena**.
- **Club events:** A minimum of **one judge per dressage arena who has undertaken training**.

Cones Judging

- **Three-day National events:** Cones must be judged by **BC Listed Judge(s)**.
- **Two-day National events:** A **suitably experienced individual** may act as Cones Judge. This may include:
 - An **Advanced driver with at least three years' experience**,
 - A **Probationary Judge**, or
 - A **Probationary Cones Specialist Judge**.

Officials should be **contacted and confirmed in advance of the event**.

6. Medical and Veterinary Cover

6.1 Medical Cover

All events must have:

- A **trained First Aider**
- First Aid equipment on site.

Marathon Day at National Events must include:

- A **paramedic or emergency medical technician**
- A **casualty transport vehicle capable of operating off-road**

Recommended at Club and Training events. Medical provision must be detailed in the **Event Risk Assessment**.

6.2 Veterinary Cover

Minimum requirements:

- **Vet on call** from the opening of the box park until event completion
- **One vet on site on Marathon Day** (all National events)

Two vets on site for Marathon Day is recommended.

7. Event Administration

7.1 Event Schedule

The schedule must be published **before entries open** and include:

- Event date
- Venue address and postcode
- Directions and What3Words location
- Contact details for organiser and secretary
- Dressage tests to be used
- Approximate marathon course length
- Provisional timetable
- Entry fees and closing date (ideally two weeks before event)
- Competitor arrival times
- Marathon course inspection times
- Prize information
- Liability disclaimer.

7.2 Pre-Event Information

Prior to the event competitors and officials should receive:

- Welcome information
 - Venue access details
 - Provisional start times
 - Any hospitality or social event details.
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8. Communication

Events must ensure effective communication across the site.

Recommended provisions include:

- **Full radio coverage across the venue**
- Radios for:
 - obstacles
 - section starts and finishes
 - event control
 - officials including repair crew on marathon day
 - medical and veterinary teams.

Additional communication methods may include:

- PA / tannoy system in the box park
- WhatsApp groups for officials, competitors and volunteers.

However, **all official information must also be displayed on the Official Notice Board.**

9. Catering

Refreshments should be provided for **officials and volunteers.**

This should include:

- Tea, coffee and water
- Lunch

Provided during:

- Dressage
 - Marathon
 - Cones.
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10. Event Day Guidance

Dressage

Equipment

- Arena boards
- Letters and markers
- Paint or sawdust for markings (X & G as minimum and practice arena marker)
- Dressage Boxes
 - Clip Board per judge/writer and 'A' Steward to include
 - Pens/Pencils
 - Dressage sheets plus spares
 - Test sheets are provided by BC for National Events
 - Dressage Diagrams (ideally laminated)
 - Starting list of Competitors
- Refreshments for officials
- Radio for Judge at 'C' (minimum) and 'A' Steward

'A' Steward

should ensure competitors, spectators and others do not breach the 5m safety buffer

Wait until 'C' Judge requests the next competitor

Ensure competitors are ready to enter the arena at their designated time (or earlier in liaison with 'C' Judge and competitor)

Dressage Day Timings

- Suitable comfort and lunch breaks for officials
- Comfort breaks should be sufficient for the officials to leave the arena and return without rushing
- extra time between tests for change of test (3-5 minutes)
- sufficient time for arena change (in liaison with course designer, average 20 minutes)
- Recommended - No more than 9 competitors without a comfort break
- Each judge should not judge more than 45 competitors in a day

Safety Check area

- Novice, Pre-Novice, Newcomers, Introductory Classes, Very Small Equine & Small Equine competitors
 - A competent experienced person to perform safety check such as an experienced steward, minimum open level competitor with at least 3 years experience, judge etc

Marathon

Equipment

- Obstacle numbers
- Gate letters (A-F)
- In/Out Gates
- 30m & 300m Markers
- Dislodgeable elements ie Balls
- Direction arrows – preferably yellow but different colours should be used if there is more than one route
- Kilometre markers
- Section start and finish markers
- Compulsory Turning Flags and Numbers
- Warning Signs such as Bumps, Slow, Road Crossing etc
- **Obstacle Boxes** to include:
 - 2 clipboards

- Pens and pencils
- Starting list of competitors (at least 2)
- Obstacle drawing sheet
- Red spots / dots / red marker pen
- Obstacle Observer Sheet to be taken by score collector
- Master Obstacle Observer Sheet to remain with Obstacle Observer (control sheet)
- 2 (minimum) stop watches – preferably 3
- Whistle
- Hold up board
- Sufficient High vis tabards for each observer
- Radio
- Refreshments
- **Section Boxes** to include
 - Clipboard
 - Starting list of competitors
 - Pens or pencils
 - Control sheet to go to scorers
 - Master Control sheet to remain with timekeeper
 - Section A Start – Green Cards –
 - 2 per competitor at 2 and 3 day BC events
 - For Short Format, VSE, SE, (Section B only) competitors Green Cards must also be added to the Start B box
 - Radio

Extra Personnel

- Medical cover at National Events
 - on Marathon Day must include a paramedic, emergency medical technician or equivalent and a casualty transport vehicle capable of operating in difficult ground conditions
 - At all events the Event Organiser and Safety Officer will decide the level of cover when completing the Risk Assessment after consulting the Planning for Safety at Events, Medical Cover at Events and the Rule Book.
- Vet
 - **One vet on site on Marathon Day** (all National events). Two vets on site for Marathon Day is recommended.
 - Marathon day vets should not be competitors unless there is additional cover on marathon day while they are competing
- Farrier
 - One positioned at Halt on marathon day
 - not required on site at Club level events
 - On-call throughout
- Repair crew
 - with appropriate equipment to repair and rebuild obstacles as necessary
- Horse ambulance
 - Best practice for horse welfare is for a horse ambulance to be on site, attached to a towing vehicle and with a driver readily available. If this is not possible then local availability on-call.

Cones

Equipment

- Cones (different colour or different colour sleeves for narrow cones)
- Balls
- Number markers

- Measuring sticks (suitable for each width)
- Practice cones
- Cones for measuring carriages
- Spare Balls
- Cones Box
 - Timing devices and Stopwatches
 - Whistle
 - Score sheet
 - Starting list of competitors
 - Copy of cones course, with dotted line showing course measurement
 - Speeds and distances for each class
 - available 120 minutes before cones start time

Extra Personnel

- Competent Cones Judge(s) with good working knowledge of the rules – ideally a BC listed judge or BC listed Cones Judge
- Spotters
- Time keeper
- Stewards

11. Enhancing the Event (Desirable)

Organisers may wish to enhance the event experience by providing:

- Catering throughout the event
- Social or entertainment activities
- Online or live scoring
- Provisional results published daily.

12. Final Guidance

This guidance provides an **overview of the essential requirements for organising a carriage driving event**.

Individual competitions may have additional requirements depending on **location, format and level of competition**, but all events should aim to deliver:

- **High standards of safety**
- **Professional organisation**
- **Good communication**
- **An enjoyable experience for all participants**

and above all, a **successful and welcoming event for the carriage driving community**.