

SAFE PROCEDURE FOR

Single Horse Harnessing & Hitching

HARNESSING

Put on collar — Turn collar upside down, place over head, be careful of eyes, and turn collar right side up in direction of mane at throat latch. Coil traces or place traces over the back.

Place saddle, crupper, and breeching on horse's back — Gently place saddle on back at withers, lay crupper above tail head, slide breeching around the butt, clear tail over breeching.

Buckle crupper and girth — Raise tail, smooth hair, carefully place crupper under tail and buckle. Place saddle with slight backward motion to smooth hair, slide false martingale over girth, fasten girth, loosely fasten overgirth.

Ready traces — Slide traces between saddle skirt and overgirth, run traces through back strap and secure with sliding keeper on backstrap.

Add reins — Slide reins through saddle turrets and collar terrets, buckle hand end together, slide rein ends under and then over turnback strap.

Bridle — Secure halter around neck and tie or head horse with lead rope. Put bridle on with throat latch, curb, and nose band unfastened. Fasten throat latch, nose band, and curb in that order.

Attach reins to bit — Buckle reins ensuring they are not twisted.

Inspect — Step back and inspect harness from both sides.



Illustration by Mary Ruth Marks

HITCHING (PUTTING TO)

Never Ever Remove BRIDLE and/or REINS when hitched to Carriage

Stand horse in front of carriage — Take time to settle the equine in front of a competent header or tie.

Pickup reins — Untie reins and keep them in hand or lying over forearm.

Bring carriage to horse — Raise shafts above horse's hips, roll carriage forward, put shaft tips through tugs, and bring shaft tips to point of shoulder.

Attach traces — Attach off (right) trace to single tree or trace hooks, attach near (left) trace.

Buckle holdback straps — Put off (right) holdback strap under shaft and through footman's loop, around shaft the number of times according to length, back under the wraps, and buckle. Same with near (left) holdback strap.

Girth and overgirth — Check for girth tightness, tighten overgirth.

Final check — Inspect all straps and connections on both sides of the horse and carriage.

UNHITCHING

Never Ever Remove BRIDLE and/or REINS when hitched to Carriage

Halt and stand equine — Take time to settle the equine in front of a competent header.

Dismount the carriage on right (off) side — With reins in right hand, quietly step down.

Holdback straps — With reins in hand, unbuckle and unwrap right (off) holdback strap and feed point backward through the keeper. Do same with left (near) holdback strap.

Overgirth — With reins in hand, loosen overgirth, and rebuckle in longer hole.

Traces — With reins in hand, unfasten near trace and stow across horse's back. If walking the horse a distance, slide trace through backstrap and secure with sliding keeper. Do the same on the off trace.

Shafts — With reins in hand, lift shafts and push carriage backwards until shaft points clear tugs. Lift shafts to clear horse's hips and push carriage beyond rear of horse.

Reins — Secure reins by running looped reins through backstrap and then back through reins.

UNHARNESSING

Horse Halter — Buckle halter with lead rope around neck or place halter over the bridle. Hold horse with competent header.

Reins — Unbuckle reins from bit and remove from collar and saddle terrets. Reins are now free.

Traces — Unbuckle and remove traces OR coil up OR hang over the horse's neck clear of the saddle.

Saddle, Crupper, Breeching — Unbuckle girth, slide off false martingale, unbuckle and slide crupper from under tail, lift saddle, breeching and all from the horse.

Bridle — If halter over bridle, rebuckle around horse's neck with lead rope attached. Undo curb, nose band and throat latch. Slide bridle over the ears and lower to drop bit from mouth.

Halter and lead rope — Put halter back on.

Collar — If full collar turn 180° at throat latch and slide carefully over horse's head, if breast collar turn 180° and slide over horse's head.



Dairyland Driving Club