

Horses Have Road Rights

Wisconsin State Statutes 346.01, 346.02, 346.11, 346.21

346.01 WORDS AND PHRASES

DEFINED. "Words and phrases defined in s.340.01 are used in the same sense in this chapter unless a different definition is specifically provided."

346.02 APPLICABILITY OF CHAPTER.

"...Every person riding an animal or driving any animal-drawn vehicle...upon a roadway is granted all the rights and is subject to all the duties which this chapter grants or applies to the operator or a vehicle, except

those provisions of this chapter which by their very nature would have no application...."



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346.11 PASSING OR MEETING

FRIGHTENED ANIMAL. "Whenever a person riding, driving or leading an animal which is frightened gives a signal of distress to the operator of a motor vehicle by a raising of the hand or otherwise, the operator of the motor vehicle shall promptly stop his vehicle unless a movement forward is necessary to avoid an accident or injury and shall, upon request, stop all motive power until such animal is under control."

346.21 RIGHT OF WAY OF

LIVESTOCK. "The operator of a motor vehicle shall yield the right of way to livestock being driven over or along any highway but any person in charge of such livestock shall use reasonable care and diligence to open the roadway for vehicular traffic."

Wisconsin
Horse
Council

Horses Have Road Rights

Wisconsin State Statutes



121 S. Ludington St.
P.O. Box 72
Columbus, WI 53925
920-623-0393

www.wisconsinhorsecouncil.org
info@wisconsinhorsecouncil.org

Wisconsin Horse Council is a non-profit organization representing horsemen and women and the equine industry in Wisconsin. In representing the equine industry we promote the horse through leadership, education, and service, and take a proactive role in the growth of our industry.

- We own and produce one of the largest and most successful horse expos in the U.S. – the Midwest Horse Fair.
- We conduct a Show Judge program, improving the level of open show judging through educational seminars and certification.
- Annually, we award scholarships, sponsorships, and trail grants at levels that provide significant financial help to students, equine charity events, clubs who are building and improving trails for recreational riding, etc.
- We encourage and sponsor recognition of the people who have invested their time and money in growing and developing our industry through mentoring young horse people, initiating new programs, providing leadership in various equine/equestrian areas, and promoting responsible use of horses.
- We conduct educational seminars and clinics for horse owners.
- We conduct an annual 4-day school on designing and building recreational trails for horse people.
- We take an active role in legislative matters affecting both the state and the national equine industry.
- We encourage a strong connection with our Ag/livestock partners by participating in Ag Day at the Capitol and the annual Farm Tech Days.

Rules for the Roads



1. The horse and rider are riding along the right hand side of the road; the rider does not appear to be anxious and on your approach you have seen no evidence of the horse being scared (ie the horse has not jumped out to the side, twisted its head to try and see traffic, stopped suddenly, or kicked out with any legs). Providing there is sufficient room and time to pass slowly and quietly, do so. Remember that something scary in the bushes is just as likely to scare the horse into the path of on-coming traffic, as your car is to scare the horse onto the verge – keep your distance and in the event of the horse moving out into the road, you will be able to keep well out of the way.
2. On approaching the horse and rider, you have noticed the horse appears anxious, and is a little jumpy whenever a vehicle passes. Approach slowly and carefully, and while waiting for oncoming traffic, give the horse plenty of space behind – preferably at least 2 cars' length – nothing winds a nervous horse up more than a vehicle 'sitting on his tail'.
3. The horse is behaving dangerously – spooking badly and moving all over the road. Trying to squeeze past will not do the horse, rider, or your car any good, so please be patient! Give the combination some time – the majority of riders will do their utmost to get out of your way; if the rider does not appear to be trying to move into a suitable spot for you to pass, wind you window down and politely request that they let you pass.
4. A rider / group of riders are seemingly unaware of your approach, and have not left room for you to pass. One of the most common things I see is the driver blasting the horn – not helpful for the riders, and even less helpful for you. Please wind your window down and call out "Excuse me" or ask "Am I OK to come past?" to the riders – much less scary for the horses!
5. You see a horse and rider riding along a pavement. This is not the correct place for riding. However, the fact is a lot of drivers believe that the horse is out of the way and so drive in the same place on the road and same speed as if the horse wasn't there. If you should see a rider on the pavement, please still slow down and allow the same amount of room as if they were on the road.
6. A group of riders can often provide more of an obstacle for a vehicle user to pass. The safety of all of the horses and riders needs to be considered. The group should be riding in pairs (on a major road) or single file (on a minor road/approaching bends) and should all keep close together. If a rider on a slower horse is separated, or the group is generally very spread out, please don't be tempted to 'bunny-hop' between riders; simply wait for a bigger gap in oncoming traffic and overtake the group as whole.

Rules for the Roads

7. If a horse and rider appear to be doing something incorrectly, anger and abuse are not the way to resolve a situation – the horse or rider may be young and/or inexperienced and not all riders are lucky enough to be able to 'train' off-road. You may see tabards such as 'young horse' or 'Caution' so please take extra care when passing.

8. If a rider waves you on around a blind bend, please DO NOT take their word that it is safe – unless you can see for yourself that it is. Unfortunately some uneducated riders (especially those that do not drive cars themselves) will do this, especially if you sit on their tail and cause the horse to become unhappy – keep your distance and wait until it is clear to overtake.

9. If a rider asks you to slow down (arm held out and moved up and down slowly), or stop (arm out towards you, palm facing) please obey them - there will be good reason for them to do so. Horse-riders have a higher line of visibility than car drivers so will have seen a hazard up ahead that may cause a problem if you attempt to pass



'Please Slow Down'

10. If you have passed a horse in a considerate manner and not seen any thanks from the rider, please do not assume that they are rude or ignorant – it may not be safe for them to take a hand off the reins to wave, and a smile/nod is easy to miss when you are concentrating on the road ahead.



Join the Wisconsin Horse Council's Legislative Committee. We discuss issues over the internet using a Google group: <http://groups.google.com/group/whc-legis> which connects each of the members by email. This site keeps all of our discussions threaded and new members can very quickly bring themselves up to speed on issues. We have 21 members with representatives from each of the 5 WHC districts. We have room for you in our committee, please consider joining. E-mail the committee: whc-legis@googlegroups.com