

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ROAD RULES RELATING TO HORSES AND RIDERS

The following information provides a simple interpretation of the law relating to the riding and leading of horses on public roads and paths in Western Australia and is not intended to constitute legal advice. An electronic copy of the Western Australian *Road Traffic Code 2000* can be found at the State Law Publisher's website www.slp.wa.gov.au

Horses being ridden are considered "Vehicles"

Under traffic laws horses ridden or driven (in harness) on roads, nature strips, paths and footpaths are treated the same as vehicles. They have the same rights and responsibilities as other vehicles, including motor vehicles, bicycles and power assisted pedal cycles.

The following key rules are relevant:

- Riders are required to obey all the road rules that apply to drivers of motor vehicles, including signs such as those below.



- Riding a horse on or alongside any road (other than freeways) is permitted unless a sign, such as the following, says otherwise.



- There are a few areas that ridden/driven horses can go that motor vehicles are not permitted. These include on paths and nature strips, unless otherwise signed.
- Horses can be ridden on the shoulder of a road, or to the left of any continuous edgeline, in the same direction of traffic.
- Riders on or crossing nature strips and paths must give way to pedestrians.
- Horses can be ridden across roads but must give way to all traffic on the road.
- Horses must not be ridden across a road on a 'pedestrian crossing' or 'children's crossing' – the rider must dismount and walk the horse across.
- Horses must not be ridden alongside more than one other horse on a road (or shoulder).
- Riders must give hand signals when changing direction.

Riding at night

- Riding at night can be dangerous. Horses and riders are not required by law to have lights displayed and are therefore not easily seen. While riding on or next to roads at night should be avoided – riders who do should ensure a reflective vest is worn and horses have reflective bands attached (such as reflective leg bandages).

Wearing helmets

- While it is not compulsory for riders of horses to wear helmets, it is advisable for safety to do so.

Leading other horses

- A rider cannot lead more than one other horse.
- Horses must not be tethered to moving vehicles or led by a person in a motor vehicle.

Riding while under the influence

- It is illegal to ride while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or to ride without care and attention.

Leading a horse (unmounted)

- A person leading a horse while walking is deemed to be a **pedestrian** and must obey all the rules applying to pedestrians.
- A person leading a horse should use the path or nature strip if provided. If a path or nature strip is not provided, or is provided but not in a useable condition, then the person must walk facing the oncoming traffic.

TIPS FOR RIDERS

- Avoid riding on roads or shoulders of roads if there are alternative places to ride, such as a nature strip.
- Check behind before changing directions.
- Don't ride on a road if the horse is unsettled.
- Ride on the nature strip as a first option. Riding on nature strips is safer than riding on shoulders which in turn is safer than riding on the road. However, if there is no option - ride as far left as possible.
- Be aware of traffic.
- Always wear a helmet when riding.
- Wear light coloured clothing during the day and at night a reflective vest with reflective bands on your horse

TIPS FOR DRIVERS IN AREAS WHERE THERE ARE HORSES

- While riders of horses are required to obey the same traffic laws that apply to drivers of motor vehicles, horses can be unpredictable.
- They are permitted to ride on road, shoulders of road, paths and nature strips.
- If you know horses are likely to be in the area, or you see horses, reduce speed and give them a wide berth. Expect the unexpected.
- Do not sound your horn when you are close to horses as it may startle them and cause them to move erratically.