



New Mexico Horse Council
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Riding and Rules of the Road



"When you venture out you won't always ride in remote areas. You may find that most of your trail riding requires you to use roads designed for motor vehicles. Just reaching the peace of an unimproved roadway might mean a half-hour's ride beside a busy thoroughfare.

As you ride on or alongside roads, you will realize that the public sees your horse as an unusual, nostalgic form of transportation. You must ride defensively, ready to cope with the unexpected.

First, observe all state and local traffic laws that apply to equestrians. Like other travelers you have certain rights on public roads. Some states give equestrians the right of way, or they require you to ride on the right, with traffic. All expect you to obey regulatory signs and signals. Ignoring laws endangers you and your horse, and you are not exempt from receiving a traffic citation.

Probably most drivers are unaware of the laws regarding equestrian traffic. On roadways keep your horse as far from pavements as possible. Just seeing a horse makes some drivers act silly. It's hoped that you'll never encounter one who purposely honks his horn just to see your horse jump, but these clowns do exist.

Anticipate traffic hazards that might impede your progress. Try to avoid roads under construction, major bridges, and commuters' favorite shortcuts. Besides staying alert for motorized traffic, watch out for other forms of transport. Keep a safe distance from bicyclists and skateboarders. Respect pedestrians encountered along the way."

The above excerpt reprinted with permission by author Charlene Strickland of Los Lunas, NM from [The Basics of Western Riding](#), Storey Books, Pownall, Vermont (1998).