



The American Driving Society, Inc.

The Carriage Dog and The Coach Dog

It is difficult to find a horse owner who does not love dogs as much as they love horses. We almost all have at least one dog as a constant companion in our stables. It is only natural that we want to take our dogs with us when we drive. Consequently the Carriage Dog Class, described in ADS Article 231, has become increasingly popular at Pleasure Shows.

The purpose of this class is primarily to judge the suitability of the dog as a companion. It is meant to be a fun and entertaining class but there are real judging criteria that should be understood and followed by officials and competitors. The performance of the horse counts for 30% and the overall impression of the turnout, including the dog, count another 10%. The suitability of the dog counts for the remaining 60%.

Out of safety concerns, under ADS rules, only one dog is allowed per entry in this class. The dog may be of any breed or combination of breeds. This is not really a costume class for dogs! If you must "accessorize" your canine, do it in such a way that your entire turnout is enhanced.

The dog may ride in the vehicle, either standing, sitting or lying down. He should be quiet, well behaved and appear to enjoy the ride. The dog may wear a leash but the dog must not be tied to the driver, passengers or to the vehicle.

The dog may be held by a passenger in their lap or by a leash. The dog may also run behind, beside or at the axle of the vehicle. Leading a dog by a leash from the vehicle is not allowed. Training the dog should take place outside of the ring!

The driver must be free to perform the task of actually driving the horse. This means the dog should in no way interfere with the driver; nor should the driver be distracted by the actions of the dog.

What is preferred is a well-trained companion dog that politely and calmly accompanies the turnout, either riding in the vehicle or obediently traveling on the ground in close proximity to the turnout .

In the interest of safety, judges should excuse from the ring entries with a dog clearly not in control. Dogs that are running well ahead of the turnout, lagging far behind, visiting with other dogs or spectators or officials in the ring are not considered to be in control.



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The Carriage Dog should not be confused with the Coach Dog. The Coach Dog is a working dog with the very specific job of guarding the vehicle, equipment and the horses, He uses his training, innate intelligence and affinity for horses, his sense of pride and duty to keep everyone out of trouble.

The Coach Dog runs on the ground with the horses. The Coach Dog would never ride on the vehicle unless injured or stressed. Nor would he want to for he has a duty to perform and is proud of his work. The Coach Dog remains on the ground to guard against theft or interference when the vehicle is parked. Although some leeway is allowed, the most proper position for the working Coach Dog is running behind the heels of the horse and in front of the fore axle or, even better, between the horses and directly under the pole!

The Carriage Dog, on the other hand, is first and foremost a companion and is welcome to ride with the driver or passengers on the vehicle. On the ground, the Carriage Dog may roam a bit further than the Coach Dog but should still remain in close proximity. Its only task is to stay with the turnout, keep out of trouble and remain under control....and of course, to look very cute! ~

Courtesy of the ADS Pleasure Driving Committee

[Link to Carriage Dog Slideshow](#)