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### **Tips for Safe Travel with Horses: Part II**

With the summer season of shows and trail riding upon us, many horse owners are hitting the road with their horses. Last month's issue addressed trailer and tow vehicle safety tips. The following tips on hauling and care while on the road will help keep you and your horse safe this season.

#### **Loading Horses:**

- The horse should load and unload safely (practice well in advance of scheduled travel)
- Use a leather halter or nylon safety halter with leather crown when trailering
- Wrap legs, use bell boots (NO WRAPS BETTER THAN IMPROPER WRAPS)SEE BELOW
- Best to have two people available for loading/unloading
- A cotton or leather lead should be used for loading and unloading (not nylon)
- Before loading, chest bar and escape door are open for safe exit
- Load a single horse or heaviest horse on the left side in straight load trailers
- Approach the center of the ramp or back of trailer
- Secure butt bar/chain before tying the horse's head (stand to side)
- Tie the horse's head using a quick release knot or a tie with safety snap
- Tie horses head at proper length to permit head movement for balance
- Provide adequate ventilation
- Hay bag or manger should be secured at proper height (not below chest)

#### **Tips for Hauling:**

- Do not exceed the speed limit
- Allow extra stopping distance when pulling a trailer
- Stops, starts and turns should be slow and steady
- Do not smoke cigarettes; do not throw cigarettes out window (fire risk)
- Stop every 3 to 4 hours to allow horse to rest and perform safety check

#### **Unloading Horses:**

- If ramp used, keep feet and hands out of the way, drop slowly
- Untie the horse before releasing butt bar or chain
- Do not stand directly behind horse
- Do not allow horse to fly back quickly
- Back horse out of trailer straight
- Hand-walk your horse after travelling long distances to relax muscles

### **Other Useful Tips for Traveling with Horses:**

Feed and Water. Horses will be more content if they are provided with hay during the trip. Providing hay free choice also helps reduce digestive problems. Water should be offered during stops to ensure horses are well hydrated. Horses will often refuse to drink water they are not used to, so it may be necessary to bring water from home.

Wrapping Legs. Wrapping the legs will offer protection when hauling, but must be done properly or injury from the leg wraps can occur. Ready-made shipping boots often do not fit properly and do not offer support. Leg wraps should be checked at every stop and rewrapped if needed. If you are not confident with your ability to wrap then you are better off not wrapping at all.

#### **Tips for wrapping:**

- Legs should be clean and dry
- Use thick quilts or no-bow quilts to provide a minimum of 1" padding beneath the wrap
- Apply quilt so it lies flat and wrinkle free against the leg
- Start the wrap at the inside of the cannon bone- do not begin or end over joints
- Wrap from Front to back, outside to inside (counter clockwise- left legs, clockwise- right legs)
- Wrap in spiral pattern, working down the leg then up, overlapping by 50%
- Use smooth uniform pressure- do not wrap too tight
- Extend the wrap below the coronet band of the hoof or use bell boots
- Extend the bandage to one-half inch of the padding at top and bottom
- Allow the horse to become accustomed to the wrap before loading
- Check the legs for any swelling, irritation or heat after removing wraps

#### **Protection for Head**

Head bumpers provide added protection to the poll area. Halter fleeces or shipping halters help avoid rubbing the face when travelling long distances.