



## International Carriage Drivers Association

### MEMORANDUM

To: Manuel Bandeira de Mello, Director of Driving FEI  
Joaquín Medina Garcia, Chairman Driving Committee FEI  
Copy: Committee ICDA  
From: Marie de Ronde-Oudemans, Secretary General ICDA  
Date: November 27, 2024

**Re: Measurement of carriage track widths**

Dear Manu and Joaquin,

At the first ICDA Committee meeting following the grant of the MOU, there was unanimous agreement on the need to express concern about the implementation of the change in the FEI Driving Rules as they relate to measurement of carriage track widths (Appendix 11). ICDA has also been approached by a number of members representing a range of nationalities and disciplines who share our concerns based on considerations of horse welfare, safety, cost and the difficulty of implementation.

**Horse welfare and Safety:** The driving sport has progressed, speeds are increasing in the marathon and cones driving. For safety reasons, various adjustments have been made to the carriages over the past 10 years to increase safety, including cutting into the tread / rubber on a carriage. Without these modifications over the recent years, carriages become uncontrollable and sliding without restraint, therefore needed tire tread improvements. Without these improvements the horse welfare issue is apparent as the drivers will need to lock the steering mechanism and thus hindering and loading the horse and inhibiting his freedom. The surface / ground conditions of the marathon and cones course are always such that carriages form a track / leave a track in the ground to a greater or lesser extent. By adjusting the rubber, it has been shown that carriages have more grip on the surface, which improves balance and therefore safety. In muddy / wet conditions, the carriage sinks more into the ground, and in hard sandy surfaces, the carriage slides less.

Given these safety consideration, athletes will increasingly as mentioned above use the turntable brake in marathon and cones. A much increased use of the turntable brake is not at all desirable as it affects horse welfare as the pole (for single shafts) in its locked position makes it much more difficult for horses to turn.

**Costs:** In recent years, the same method of measuring carriages has been used. Due to the new method of measuring, it can happen that a carriage becomes too narrow. This also results in:

- an athlete choosing to replace the rubber and omitting the cutting (reduced safety)
- an athlete choosing to widen the axle

Whichever solution is chosen, this entails high additional costs.



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To illustrate this, here is a letter from the company Chr. van den Heuvel, the leading carriage builder in the driving sport, which gives an indication of the costs here but also indicates that it is not possible to adjust all carriages prior to the outdoor season.

**Practical considerations:** As mentioned above, a carriage wheel always sinks into the ground, which increases the cutting of the rubber, but also negates the width 'gain'. The current measurement of the track width is therefore practically correct.

If a carriage is measured after dressage, marathon or cones in the new way on a hard surface, this does not correspond to practice.

We would obviously be happy to discuss any questions you may have in respect of this request. However, we urge you to postpone the implementation of Appendix 11 from the FEI Driving Rules 2025 and to investigate the issue of carriages more thoroughly.

Best regards.

Marie de Ronde-Oudemans  
On behalf of Committee ICDA