

BDS ORGANIZERS **RISK ASSESSMENTS AND DUTY OF CARE**

The Regional Area Commissioners meeting was held on Saturday 11th March, 2017 at Low Hill Farm by kind invitation of Roger and Sue Page. Linda Swain, who is the AC's Chairman was delighted to welcome the BDS Chairman, Angela Sixsmith.

Angela opened the meeting with a detailed explanation of how important it is that organizers of BDS events adhere to the protocol regarding Risk Assessments. Those attending the meeting were left in no doubt of the importance of following this protocol, however daunting it may seem.

WHAT TO DO PRIOR TO RUNNING AN EVENT

Firstly the Area Commissioner must apply to the BDS for every event they wish to hold in their Area. The purpose is to ensure that the BDS has prior notice of events which are held under the BDS Organizers Insurance Policy. No event can be held under BDS Organizers Insurance policy without the application being confirmed by the BDS Office.

It is the responsibility of the organizer of any BDS event, including events such as evening talks, to assess the possibility of risk and how to avoid it. This is then noted on the Risk Assessment form, which can be found on the BDS website. If an organizer has difficulty downloading the form contact Sam Searle using the new BDS Hampshire email address, hampshirebds@outlook.com, and she will forward to you the forms that you need.

It is extremely important that the BDS Office receives the Risk Assessment form at least a week to ten days prior to the event. If something changes between sending the initial form and the event itself, then this must be recorded on a Dynamic Risk Assessment form and sent to the BDS office as soon as possible following the event.

Please note that the Dynamic Risk Assessment form is not available yet. In the mean time it is perfectly acceptable to record and report via letter or email to head office.

WHAT TO DO ON THE DAY

Regardless of the type of event being organised it is a requirement that all participants have the opportunity to view the Risk Assessment form and the Dynamic Risk Assessment form (if this form is necessary). Whether or not participants take the time to do so is entirely up to them, but each individual does have a **Duty of Care** to others to be aware of the risks and of the BDS Safety rules. How the Risk Assessment is displayed is up to the organizer. It could be handed out on arrival or it could be posted on the side of a lorry or car, but the point being that participants must be told where to find it.

It is also advisable to have a copy of the Incident Report form and Accident Report form, just in case. Both of these can be downloaded from the BDS website.

DUTY OF CARE

The organisers of BDS events and activities can only do so much to ensure every ones safety. It is the responsibility of all those taking part to ensure that they comply with the BDS Safety Rules which can be seen on the Risk Assessment.

BDS Safety Rules to be followed by everyone:

- No bridle to be removed whilst horse is attached to a vehicle
- No horse to be tied to anything whilst still attached to a vehicle
- No horse to be left unattended whilst attached to a vehicle
- No horse to be driven from ground whilst attached to a vehicle
- No person to be aboard a vehicle with horse(s) attached unless the Driver is in the driving seat and holding the reins.
- If the driver dismounts, then a groom must be in control of the horse(s) by holding the head by means of a lead rope attached to the bit ring or head collar or by holding the reins close to the horse's head.
- Members under the age of 18 are accompanied and supervised by a competent adult at all times when driving and/or handling a horse.
- All drivers/grooms/passengers under the age of 14 years must wear a correctly fitted hard hat when in a carriage or in attendance to a turnout.
- The whip is an aid and should be in the driver's hand whilst driving and not in the whip socket.

Safety Rules to be notified to all Drivers/Whips, ie: displayed/handed out/clearly written in event paperwork. Drivers/Whips clearly told they may not start/be required to withdraw if: they breach BDS Safety Rules; horse/vehicle/harness is unsound/ unsafe/faulty; handling/driving causes safety concerns; fail to obey Highway Code or rules of the Drive, in the Organizers opinion, whose decision shall be final.

IN CONCLUSION

It is a sad fact of life that we live in a world of litigation. Gone are the days when people took responsibility for their own actions. As organizers all we can do is follow the protocol as required by the BDS office. Then in the event of an accident, and where horses are concerned there is always that possibility, the organizer will be covered under the BDS Organizers Insurance Policy.

6th April, 2017
BDS Hampshire Committee