



The Spares Kit

While Spares Kits are most associated with the American Driving Society show ring, a spares kit, even in its simplest form, can be an essential accessory on your carriage. A well-stocked kit might mean the difference between making a repair on the road necessary for continuing the journey, or dropping the carriage and walking home with the horse! While visiting the Harley-Davidson Museum in Milwaukee, WI a couple of years ago, I found it interesting to see that there was a 1942 US military motorcycle displayed along with its pouch of parts necessary to fix it if ever the time came. I didn't take a photo of the motorcycle, but I did of the tool kit! It was the WWII version of the carriage spares kit!



A 1942 WLA TOOL KIT
USED FOR QUICK REPAIRS
IN THE FIELD

Historical tool kit on display at the Harley-Davidson Museum.

Carriage spares kits come in many forms, from a practical vinyl kit or a simple leather pouch, to a leather show spares kit designed to impress any carriage driving judge. Let's first discuss what a driving judge expects to see in a spares kit.

There are three places in the ADS rulebook that mention spares. The first is in the rules for the Turnout class of a Pleasure Driving competition. This is where the turnout is judged primarily on quality and cleanliness. Having a quality spares kit can make the difference between placing just OK and placing well under certain judges in a tightly competitive Turnout class. I have also known of competitors who did not place in a Turnout class under a particular judge because they didn't have a spares kit on the carriage at all! Ideally, the kit and its contents coordinate with the carriage and harness as well.

Here are the rules for the Turnout class in the 2024 ADS Rulebook (with **emphasis** added by me):

Article 217 - Turnout

217.1 - A Pleasure Driving class in which entries are judged primarily on the performance and quality of each turnout.

217.2 - To be shown both ways of the arena at a walk, slow trot, working trot, and strong trot. To stand quietly and to rein back.

217.3 - To be judged:

- 70% on the condition, fit and appropriateness of harness and vehicle, **spares and appointments**, neatness and appropriateness of attire and overall impression.
- 30% on performance, manners and way of going.



IVC Carriage

© IVC Carriage

E9432A SOUTH AVENUE • REEDSBURG, WI 53959

608.393.0598

www.ivccarriage.com • info@ivccarriage.com



Another place the spares kit is mentioned in the ADS Rulebook is for another type of class called a Pleasure Drive. The Pleasure Drive is kind of a cross country drive available in a couple of different formats including either timed, or judged on quality. It isn't offered as a class at some ADS Pleasure Driving shows, but many drivers use the list of items under the Article 255.1 rules to complete their proper spares kit for competitions:

Article 255.1 - Spares must be carried on each vehicle during a pleasure drive. They are as follows:

Wheel wrench to fit axle nuts
Knife
Length of rawhide, string or wire
Leather punch
Rein splice or spare rein
Screwdriver
Trace splice or spare trace
Pliers
Hame strap (if appropriate)
Small hammer
Halter and lead shank per horse
Hoof pick



255.2 - One penalty point will be assessed for each item omitted. Complete omission of spares will receive 20 penalty points. Spares must be checked prior to the start of the Pleasure Drive. To insure that each vehicle actually carries the required spares, provision for random recheck at either the rest stop or immediately following the drive may be made (if explained in the ADS Omnibus).

Some tools for spares kits have dual purposes so that the kit doesn't have to carry as many physical tools, such as our nesting hammer/screwdrivers or horseman's knife. By having these tools combined, it saves space in the kit.

The last place in the ADS rulebook where spares are mentioned is in the section for Combined Driving Events (CDEs). For CDEs, the rules for carrying spares are a little different:

*Article 938.2 - In all ADS-recognized competitions, **drivers may carry whatever spares they require.***

In other words, drivers can bring whatever spares they want. Many drivers opt for just a halter and lead per horse. For the sake of space and weight on a marathon vehicle, some just put a rope halter instead of a nylon or leather halter in their kit. A lot of drivers carry a sharp jackknife or multi-tool, zip ties, duct tape, and maybe electrical tape in their kit for a CDE.

IVC Carriage

© IVC Carriage

E9432A SOUTH AVENUE • REEDSBURG, WI 53959

608.393.0598

www.ivccarriage.com • info@ivccarriage.com



For recreational drivers, an amalgamation of items on the Pleasure Driving list and the typical CDE spares might be a good choice. It is no fun being a few miles from home or the home base of an event with a breakdown of either the carriage or the harness. And it's a good idea to plan for if the horse or a human gets hurt as well! A recreational driving spares kit might consist of the following:

- Halter and lead per horse
- Sharp jackknife
- Hammer
- Screwdrivers and wrenches that fit the vehicle
- Duct tape
- Zip ties
- Hoof pick
- Gauze bandages
- Vet wrap
- Cell phone (best carried on your person)



Whatever event in which you choose to participate, be prepared by having a functional spares kit. Make sure your tools are well-cared for and properly oiled, so they work when you need them to. Remember to also restock your kit if you ever use consumables such as zip ties.

I do remember waiting my turn for an obstacle class when a part of someone else's carriage became loose. It was loose enough that it might have meant that she would not be able to drive for her "go" in the class. The holding area for the course was at least a block away from the barns, so there wasn't time for Driver A to go back and find the tool to fix her cart. As it was in the early 2000's, not all of us carried spares kits at that time, but someone in the area had a fully stocked kit on their cart. My husband, who was waiting with me, was able to find the tool in Driver B's kit to fix Driver A's vehicle right there in the holding area. Carriage drivers are known to be very gracious, and that fully stocked spares kit shared by Driver B saved the day!



IVC Carriage

© IVC Carriage

E9432A SOUTH AVENUE • REEDSBURG, WI 53959

608.393.0598

www.ivccarriage.com • info@ivccarriage.com