

The Correct Driver - Reinsmanship

- If there is more than one seat on the vehicle, the driver sits on the right.
- If possible, the knees should be below the hips at a comfortable width, not splayed out, but not stuck together. If the knees are not below the hips, perhaps the vehicle seat can be raised. This will give the driver a stable, balanced position.
- One foot should be forward of the other one for stability.
- To achieve good posture, “lift your ribs out of your belt”, or “stick your belly out” without arching the back. Shoulders should be square and relaxed.
- There is no “right way” to hold the reins, but there are “more correct” ways. Holding them English riding style is most common. Using “plow rein” style is least effective.
- Arms should be flexible, not rigid, but not “flying”. Elbows should be in front of the body, but not “reaching”. Wrists should be above the elbows in most low carts.
- Hands should be flexible and forgiving, with fingers “closed” on the reins. Reins should be deep in driver’s hand, not on the fingertips where they can be dropped.
- Typically, the whip is held in the right hand. It should “balance” in the hand at a 45° angle towards the left side of the vehicle, not out or up where it could be caught.
- The driver can use the whip on the horse’s belly or sides, but it is tacky to use it on the haunches. The lash needs to be long enough to do this, 8”-24” is typical for singles.
- The whip salute is used to acknowledge the judge during line up and before and after Reinsmanship patterns. It should be crisp, deliberate, without losing eye contact with the judge. Drivers should practice this in front of a mirror.
- A good driver has the horse perform distinct gaits with engagement.
- A good driver looks ahead of their horse to the next destination, not the horse’s ears.
- A good driver does not tailgate or cut off other turnouts, or stop quickly. Drivers may pass, and should do so if necessary, but get back to the rail quickly.
- A good driver comes into line up straight off the rail, not zigzagging the arena.
- Drivers may address the judge with a pleasant, “Good Morning”, but avoid lengthy conversations with either the judge or other competitors.
- A good driver keeps showing the entire class to show courtesy to the judge, even when the placings are into the announcer. Never drop hands in the lap. Be ready for anything!
- Drivers should keep moving when exiting the arena and ask their “fan club” to move with them so as not to block the gate and cause an accident.
- A driver should exhibit confidence in himself and his horse, and accept praise and criticism gracefully! Being friendly with other competitors makes the show fun!



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