

Many riders and carriage-drivers who can afford to run a horse transport vehicle look forward to using it to access new areas to ride or drive. Some will need to transport to open spaces every time they go out because their local area lacks opportunities for hacking or driving. Parking areas for horseboxes and trailers with access to good networks or long distance routes will be very welcome.

Transport for horses varies from a two horse trailer towed by a large car to lorries accommodating ten horses. The larger lorries are more likely to be associated with either horse transport businesses or competition horses. People using their transport to take their horse to a good riding or driving area are more likely to have a trailer or small horsebox for economy and ease but there are people with only one vehicle that has to fulfil all functions.

The parking area provided will be dependent on the location and the land available. In many situations, it is accepted that it will only be possible to accommodate smaller vehicles.

In providing a parking area, there are four factors to consider:

1. Height (usually entrance restrictions)
2. Turning circle or the space for the vehicle to manoeuvre
3. Space for a ramp and loading/unloading
4. Surface

Dimensions

The figures in the table below are a rough guide from averages; there are taller trailers, and smaller boxes based on a van body (e.g. Sprinter). For manoeuvring trailers, much depends on the turning circle of the towing vehicle as well as the overall length; for lorries there are many variables depending on how the vehicle is set up.

	Trailer	Small Horsebox	Large Horsebox
Height	2.6–3 m	2.8–3.2 m	3.1–4 m
Width	2–2.5 m	2–2.5 m	2.2–2.5m
Turning circle	12–15 m	10–14 m	11.5–20 m
Unloading space including ramp	4 m	4 m	4 m

The unloading space is calculated as an average two metre ramp length plus length of horse. Large horsebox ramps will be longer than two metres because of the axle height but are generally less likely to be used for hacking transport.

UK manufactured trailers and boxes may have either a ramp to the rear or to the near side. Some have both so that a horse can walk forwards on and off.

With the ramp down, ideally you would take the horse down the ramp straight, and reload by approaching it straight so a space of four metres between and behind the parked vehicles is required.

Area

Turning circles vary widely and some large vehicles, because of the axle ratios, have wide turning circles and will be difficult to accommodate in a reasonable parking area. In practice, a 15x15 metre square has been found to offer parking for three trailers or small boxes and some cars but how tidily people park will obviously affect the number of vehicles that can fit into the space.

In planning how many vehicles can be accommodated, it is necessary to think of the space needed for a ramp to be lowered and the horse to descend and ascend it in a straight line. Some horses will step easily on or off a ramp from an angle if necessary, others need to be aligned with the centre of the ramp to load and to be fully off the ramp before turning when unloading.

Where space is restricted but horsebox parking is highly desirable, it may be feasible to have an area for unloading before the vehicle is pulled forward into a space to park which is too narrow for a side ramp to be lowered. An equestrian may be unwilling to leave a horse unattended while moving the vehicle, depending on the environment and the horse, however, this may still be a better solution than nothing for many users and a number of equestrians may travel in company.

Height

Height may be constrained by the need to also prevent fly-tipping or travellers and will need a local solution as any constraint that will permit a horse vehicle will also allow vans, small lorries and caravans.

Commonly a code operated barrier that restricts width is effective because 'problem' vehicles are very likely to be wider as well as higher so a width restriction can work as well as a height restriction although cars will need to take greater care in passing through the gap and need space to ensure they are accurately aligned.

Surface

The land should be level so that vehicles are able to park without being across a slope. The surface should be firm, well-drained and, ideally, able to sustain use all year, although summer-only parking is still welcome. The surface should be even so that when a ramp is lowered, its corners or edge are supported across its width. (Some ramps lower onto their edge, most have corner supports.)

IMPORTANT This guidance is general and does not aim to cover every variation in circumstances. The Society recommends seeking advice specific to a site where it is being relied upon.

If you are looking at a print copy of this advice note, please check www.bhs.org.uk/accessadvice for the latest version (date at the top of page 2).