



EQUESTRIAN ACCIDENTS

Overview

- Horse riding is a popular pastime. A British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) survey found that about £4billion is spent annually on horses in the UK, with over 4 million people riding each year – with 1/3 of those being children. And so it's not surprising that horse riding, and related injuries, are on the increase
- The British Horse Society is made aware of eight accidents per day – over 30% result in head injuries. Statistically horse-riding is 20 times more dangerous than motor cycling. While you can expect to have a serious motorbike accident once in every 7,000 hours, a serious horse-riding accident happens once in every 350 hours
- Horses are not dangerous animals but horse-riding is a dangerous sport. In the same way that footballers wear shin-pads and motorcyclists wear thick protective leathers, sensible riding reduces risk. But, unlike a football or a motorcycle, a horse is a living thing so equestrian sport can never be entirely risk-free
- Equine law is complex and confusing so we recommend that you deal with specialist personal injury lawyers
- Accidents can occur when either riding out or engaged in other horse-related activity at the stables. Over 12% of injuries are in the stable area, indicating the surprisingly large number of unmounted injuries
- Injuries are an inevitable consequence of horse-riding since the rider's head may be poised up to 13 feet from the ground, on a horse travelling at 40mph
- Head injuries outnumber spinal injuries by five-to-one. Of all horse riding activities jumping, particularly cross-country jumping fixed obstacles at speed, is the most dangerous riding activity – accounting for 86% of injuries – and most likely to produce a spinal injury. The most commonly injured group is amateur young female riders
- In the UK, a lot of riding is done on roads and accidents happen when cars come into collision with riders

Our advice

- Report the accident immediately, to the stable manager if appropriate
- Make sure that the details are accurately recorded in the accident report book. The law says that your employer has to record the details of all accidents and the record may be important evidence in your case
- If possible, take photographs of the place of the accident and whatever it was that caused your accident
- Obtain name and contact details of any witnesses
- Seek expert legal advice from specialist personal injury lawyers
- Seek expert medical treatment
- Keep an injury diary

Speak to our specialist equestrian team. Both Hannah Bardsley and Laura Morrison are keen equestrians and have ridden competitively in dressage and eventing. Call FREEPHONE 0800 783 1453.