

Carriage-Free Victoria FAQ

(Frequently Asked Questions)



What is Carriage-Free Victoria?

The **Carriage-Free Victoria** campaign launched in 2006 with the goal of banning Victoria's horse-drawn carriages. It is organized by The Victoria Vegan, a local advocacy publication and group, with help from our volunteers, and funded by supporters. Info on our Victoria campaign can be found at www.TheVictoriaVegan.com/activism . Please consider joining our Carriage-Free Victoria campaign on Facebook for updates: www.Facebook.com/BanVictoriaCarriages

Why ban the carriages?

It's an inherent injustice to exploit horses to provide short-term entertainment for tourists. It's wrong to force them to work on hard pavement in dangerous, unhealthy conditions, in all manner of extreme weather, confined between carriage shafts day after day, and denied the ability to run free and socialize with other horses. The city is no place for horses. Public lands should be preserved for horse communities who are able to live free. Because they are flight animals and easily frightened by the constant stimuli in an urban environment - *when spooked, they instinctively bolt* - it's a potential disaster for them, as well as any drivers, cyclists or pedestrians in the area.

But aren't the horses used to the city?

No, and that is why accidents keep happening, and people and horses keep getting injured. In NYC, horses have died recently, and similar tragedies occur in other places we find horse-drawn carriages.

Also consider the constant fumes from traffic: Victoria Vegan editor Dave Shishkoff worked for two years as a cycle courier in Victoria and quit after realizing the black gunk in the corners of his eyes at the end of the night paled in comparison to what would be in his lungs. Furthermore, walking on hard concrete is terrible for a horse's well-being, and there are no limits to when the carriage companies will work, from blistering hot summer days to wind storms like on Christmas 2011, when carriage companies were found working their horses.



They give the horses special shoes though, so it's not that bad.

Sadly, it is. The shoes mainly provide traction and grip (*yet horses still slip and fall like one did in a very visible incident on Government St at View in 2009 - news report here: <http://bit.ly/carriageaccident> - you can see the carriage company owner talking about the horse being spooked by a pylon, see photo on reverse of leaflet*), yet they offer little actual cushioning or support, as vets and horse chiropractors will testify. Horses simply should not be spending their days on pavement.

The carriage company says the horses are rescued.

It's true carriage companies often buy 'spent' horses from Canada's Premarin industry (which exploits female horses for their urine for estrogen treatment.) But it isn't a 'rescue' if the animal is forced to work in a hazardous, commercial business. Further, it creates financial incentive for the Premarin industry if they know they can profit from their 'spent' horses, and completes the cycle of demand. Purchasing a horse to 'rescue' her is hardly different from purchasing dogs at the pet store. It's participating in the profit model, and rewarding them for breeding more horses.

"We can imagine a better life for these horses; rather than trudging around downtown Victoria, help us get them off the streets to live their lives in peace."

Horses like work; they're work animals & become ill if they're not worked.

This, of course, is ludicrous. No draft horse has died because they haven't been used for manual labour, but many suffer and die at the hands of those who treat them as commodities. The fact that many come from Premarin ranches, and are able to haul riders after years of standing in one spot with their urine siphoned is evidence of this fact. Horses should not be bred into existence for lives of forced labour to profit humans.

What will happen to the horses if carriages are banned? Will they run free?

Legally, the horses are "property" of the carriage companies, so the public can't 'make' them do anything. Mirroring efforts from places like New York City, we would strive to ensure that a condition of the ban would home them at appropriate sanctuaries where they will be properly cared for, and live out the rest of their lives peacefully, free from exploitation. Ideally this would be written into the legislation and mandated.

How many accidents are there?

It's impossible to tell, given there are no requirements for carriage companies to report (or even record) accidents or incidents. We hear of them with alarming frequency, and inform the media whenever possible. Thankfully with so many camera phones, it's getting harder for the trade to hide when accidents occur.

We estimate there are minor incidents every week, and major incidents once a month.



What about jobs?

There are plenty of potential jobs in tourism that don't involve exploiting animals, including pedicabs. The companies could switch over to horseless electric carriages and offer similar tours. Very few of the employees are career carriage drivers, and this is a summer job or part-time work for many. If carriage companies were truly sincere about rescuing horses, they could become non-profits and convert their farms into horse refuges.

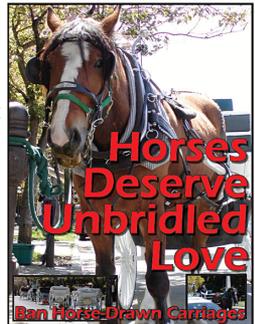
Okay, I'm convinced, what can I do to help make Victoria carriage-free?

Boycott horse-drawn carriages in Victoria and everywhere, and educate your friends, family and coworkers as to why they should never go for a ride.

Please write the Victoria Mayor City Council and urge them to support a ban on horse-drawn carriages. You can email the entire council here: councillors@victoria.ca

You can also sign our petition or you can print a copy and help collect signatures. Available here: www.TheVictoriaVegan.com/activism and join our Facebook page: www.Facebook.com/BanVictoriaCarriages

Getting the word out boosts the campaign. Do please write letters to local papers and publications.



And of course, please support The Victoria Vegan. Your donations help us promote this and other important campaigns.

Thank you for speaking up for horses!

- Dave Shishkoff,
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Let's Make Victoria Carriage-Free