

Victoria Carriage Industry Facts

1. **Women-owned and operated Victoria-based businesses.**
2. **Iconic symbols of the city for visitors:**
 - Victoria's carriage horses are admired around the world. Their images are featured in the majority of postcard racks, tourist shops, commemorative books, etc.,
 - Victoria's carriage businesses are significant contributors to Victoria's \$1.9 billion tourism economy.
3. **Part of the community's social fabric.** The historical significance of the relationship between humans and horses is honored through horse-based tourism. In addition to our work downtown, we contribute to our communities by appearing at local fairs, schools and special events so children can experience the magic of the horse (which research shows significantly benefits social and long-term life skills).
4. **Large employer and educator:**
 - Employs over 70 people, many of whom are young women and university students.
 - Educates our staff and the community, drawing on a massive breadth and depth of horse knowledge and communication across the industry.
 - The industry experience we provide to our staff is proven to boost self-confidence and key employment skills such as communications, organization and social awareness; and has helped multiple staff pursue further educational opportunities in related fields such as veterinary medicine.
5. **Outstanding safety record:** In the last 20 years, involving over 1.3 million horse hours on the streets, there have only been a handful of incidents (0.0001%): none have resulted in major injury to person or horse.
6. **Well-treated horses:** Horses live on acreages on the Saanich Peninsula with their owners, where they are treated like family members.
7. **Meaningful partnerships with horses:** Horses and humans are better together than they could ever be apart. With the right approach our horses can become calmer, braver, smarter and more athletic on a daily basis, which makes them more comfortable in all of their surroundings. Countless hours go into developing deep and meaningful partnerships with these horses before they ever see downtown.
8. **Horses doing the work they were bred to do:**
 - Draft horses are bred to pull: they can easily pull a wheeled vehicle that is six times their own weight. Our carriage horses are only expending about 20% of their capacity.
 - As herd animals, horses inherently seek interaction and socialization: they receive this in spades from their buddies on the farm, work partners (us) and all our guests.
 - They love their daily grooming, easily load into the trailer for the drive to town, stand calm to be harnessed and hooked to the carriage, and display relaxed body language when working.
9. **Long lives and comfortable retirement.**
 - Carriage horses' regular, low impact work contributes to life spans of up to 10 years longer than the heavy horse average:
 - Victoria veterinary records show there has NEVER been any cases of respiratory disease (we have excellent air quality in Victoria) or joint/musculoskeletal issues (walking on pavement helps strengthen tendons and bones).
 - Victoria's retired horses live out their lives with their herd and with the family of owners and employees who love them.