



Two carriage accidents in two days in Cincinnati

horsetalk.co.nz 12.31.09

Two horse-drawn carriage accidents in two days in Cincinnati have prompted a fresh call to have them banned from the city.

The Coalition to Ban Horse-Drawn Carriages in New York City and Horses Without Carriages International have written to Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory and the Cincinnati City Council urging them to ban horse-drawn carriages.

The letter follows two accidents involving horse carriages in one week.

The first, on December 24, involved a carriage horse who became frightened due to a loud noise and bolted, causing his carriage to flip over.

The horse ran through Hyde Park Square before being captured and calmed by a bystander. The driver suffered facial injuries. The second accident occurred only two days later on December 26 when a car rear-ended a carriage on a suspension bridge. The carriage driver suffered serious head injuries. The carriage was mangled. The horse appeared to be OK.

"Horse drawn carriages do not belong in heavy city traffic," said Elizabeth Forel, president of the New York group.

"They are open, flimsy and unsafe. Accidents involving these slow-moving conveyances have caused serious injuries and fatalities to horses, drivers, passengers, pedestrians and motorists.

"At 1200 to 1500 pounds, carriage horses are unpredictable, unwitting weapons. As prey animals, they are very fearful and spook easily - at a loud noise, a rustling leaf, an unusual situation."

The Coalition to Ban Horse-Drawn Carriages began their campaign in New York in 2006 to ask the Mayor and council to ban the horse-carriage industry in that city.

In 2008, it joined with other organisations and activists around the world to create Horses Without Carriages International, a global initiative that includes the campaigns in Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Rome, Vienna and Dublin, all seeking to bring an end to the horse carriage trade in their cities.

It is hoped that these cities will soon join with a growing number of municipalities that have already banned the horse-drawn carriage tourist trade. They include Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Camden, New Jersey; Biloxi, Mississippi; Palm Beach, Panama City, Key West, Deerfield Beach, and Pompano Beach, Florida, as well as London, Paris, Oxford, Beijing and Toronto.

Just this past year, Tel Aviv banned carthorses from their city and New Delhi in India banned carriage horses.

Forel hopes the accidents will be a wake-up call to the people of Cincinnati.

"It is cruel to exploit horses for economic greed involving small industries and we urge the mayor and City Council to act now to prevent future accidents."