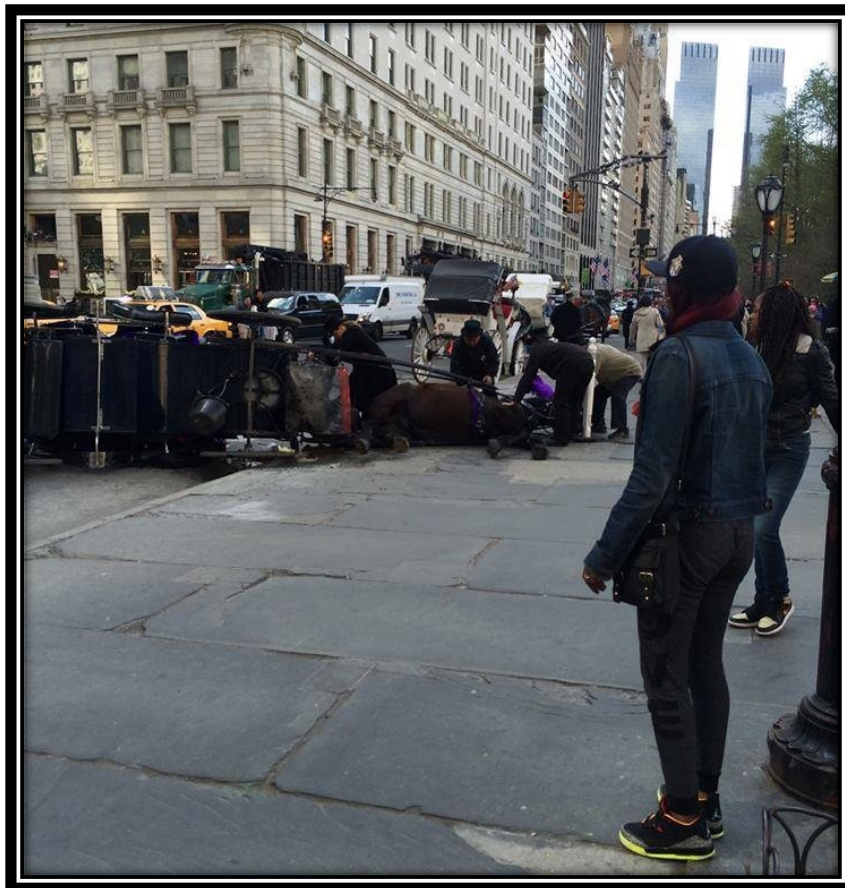




Horses Without Carriages International™
global support for a ban on horse-drawn carriages

'Spooked' Carriage Horse Collapses On Central Park South

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Yesterday afternoon, a carriage horse collapsed—apparently after being spooked by a bus—and now opponents of carriage horses are holding a protest at the scene today at 1 p.m.

According to NYCLASS and PETA, the incident occurred on Central Park South, just west of Fifth Avenue, across from the Plaza Hotel. A tourist sent a photograph and this description to PETA:

I was in town visiting from Oklahoma when I witnessed one of the worst animal cruelty incidents I have seen in a long time. A bus drove very close to a horse and spooked it (rightfully so, I was also scared of how close the busses were to us). The horse bucked and started to run when its

carriage went of the curb and pinned the animal to the ground. See video here http://gothamist.com/2014/04/24/photo_spooked_carriage_horse_collap.php

The men (if that's what we want to call them) proceeded to hold the horse down and save their carriage (yes carriage, not horse) from further damage. One man suggested cutting the carriage and the other said no because it would come out of his pocket (he clearly had one concern, of which the horse was not). To top off the whole event, the men proceed to strap the horse back into harnesses and continue to work even though he was clearly limping and hurt!!!

The horse apparently ended up pinned under the carriage and also defecated on himself while still on the ground. Donny Moss, who has been critical of the use of carriage horses and directed *Blinders*, a documentary about the industry, told us, "Six carriage horses have spooked and crashed in urban areas in the past 10 days. In New York City, the open carriages are driving in the streets with motor vehicles, but the passengers are not wearing helmets or seatbelts. If tourists had been in the carriage when it flipped over last night, they could have been seriously injured. No amount of regulation can prevent a horse from spooking. This is just one of the many reasons why horse-drawn carriages cannot be operated safely or humanely in New York City. We are grateful that Mayor de Blasio understands this and is taking the carriage horses off the streets for good."

Moss added, "By continuing to support a ban on horse-drawn carriages in midtown, a move for which he will be criticized, the Mayor is putting principle ahead of political expedience. That is the sign of a true public servant and leader, and he will be remembered for it." De Blasio says he's committed to ending carriage horses, but isn't rushing to do so.

UPDATE: The Historic Horse-Drawn Carriages of Central Park, LLC issued a statement titled, "Minor Carriage Incident Demonstrates Carriage Drivers' Professionalism" and claimed the horse, named Spartacus, "unexpectedly pulled out, catching the back wheel of the carriage on the back wheel of the carriage in front of it. The tangle pushed the second carriage over, which caused 15 year old carriage horse Spartacus to lose his footing and fall to the sidewalk."

The group also says, "Several carriage drivers immediately came to the horse's aid, keeping him calm and laying down while they unharnessed him, got him untangled and righted the lightweight carriage before safely allowing him to get to his feet. Unharnessed, Spartacus was reharnessed and rehitched to the carriage, whereupon he was driven directly home to his stable on West 38th St. to await the arrival of the vet. In all, this was a very minor incident with no injuries whatsoever to horse or human."

Carriage driver Christina Hansen claims, "Contrary to rumors, he was not startled by a bus; there was no bus on 59th St. at the time." Another carriage driver Colm McKeever says, "To the onlooker, the longer the horse is down, the worse it looks to the layperson, but to the horse professional, you must take all the time you need to ensure all harness is free so the horse is not fighting against it getting up."

Still, an opponent of the horse carriages told us, "Thankfully, the carriage was empty and no one was hurt in this serious accident. Eyewitness accounts say there was a bus that went by at a high rate of speed and spooked the horse."

Dan Mathews, senior vice president at PETA, says, "Large, skittish animals and fast moving vehicles don't mix. This is the fifth accident involving carriage horses in the last two weeks and that's why we support the mayor's efforts to get carriage horses off of busy New York streets."

London, Paris and Toronto have already removed carriage horses from their busy city centers. It's time for New York to do the same."

"This is additional proof that horses don't belong in dangerous midtown traffic. It's clearly time to put an end to the unsafe and inhumane carriage horse industry in New York," Allie Feldman of NYCLASS."