



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

## CARRIAGE DRIVERS THUMB THEIR NOSE AT THE LAWS

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Saturday, July 21, 2012



Overloaded - with five adults + one next 1

NYC is currently experiencing beautiful weather - moderate temperatures and low humidity. But for how long? Fingers and hooves crossed! We have just moved out of an unbearable heat wave with hot and humid weather. Not even halfway through the summer and we've already experienced many uncomfortable days well into the 90s - tough for humans - but much worse for NYC's carriage horses who have no voice and no choice. [Studies](#) show that horses feel the heat more than humans. Because they cool themselves by sweating, less moisture will evaporate when it is very humid, causing them to become more susceptible to the negative effects of heat stress.

Carriage horses are protected to a degree by a NYC law that requires drivers to take them back to their stable when it reaches 90 degrees – humidity not included. But here's the rub.

This law can only be enforced by an ASPCA officer who uses a special thermometer to take the temperature. The ASPCA has 14 agents and if one is not on site to take the temperature, the drivers can legally go about their business. This happens often enough. So it is not about the CNN thermometer at Columbus Circle or someone's iPhone reading or a Parks Department employee who wants to do the right thing. Those do not matter.

To make matters worse, it is generally 45 minutes to one hour after a suspension when the horses get back to the stables; traveling up to two miles over hot asphalt under the burning sun. There is no provision in the law that describes how a suspension is lifted, so many of the drivers eventually come out on their own when it is still over 90 degrees.

NYC horse-drawn carriage drivers have been out of control this summer and breaking the law with abandon. No one is cracking the whip on them and it has taken random eyewitnesses to document these abuses.

During the recent heat wave at the end of June going into July, drivers were seen overloading their carriages and working *after* the ASPCA Humane Law Enforcement Officer had suspended them. Yes – if the law can be violated, it will be. A maximum of four adults are allowed in a carriage or a combination of fewer adults and children. A passenger is not allowed to sit in the driver's seat. But it is not considered a violation unless an ASPCA officer sees it and issues a ticket.

On July 5<sup>th</sup>, an eyewitness to this overloading saw a carriage with six passengers - one adult sitting next to the driver as shown in the photo and the carriage filled with five people.

Another eye witness captured a [similar violation](#) of the law on July 4<sup>th</sup> with a carriage carrying five adults.

On [June 29<sup>th</sup>](#) and [June 30<sup>th</sup>](#), these videos show carriages continuing to take passengers after the line was suspended because of temperature.

Then later on [July 5<sup>th</sup>](#), several carriages continue to hang around trying to get passengers after the ASPCA suspended the hack line. A few at the beginning of the video continued to take passengers. Some of the others, aware of the filming, went back to the stable. Two carriages took passengers after the line was suspended.

The next video, taken on [July 8<sup>th</sup>](#) shows many carriages on the hack line when it was 90 degrees. But remember, only the ASPCA officer can enforce this law and they were not there. One of the eyewitnesses had to call the ASPCA three times before an officer finally came out to enforce the law.

Another common practice is that of carriage drivers using hand-held devices or reading while driving their carriage through city traffic. This [video](#) is just one example. New drivers are now required to have a New York State Driver license so texting should be a violation. In 2010, the Department of Health made suggestions to revise their existing regulations and included putting a ban on hand-held devices; reading, filming and otherwise not paying attention while driving. The suggestions were eventually rescinded.

There are 68 carriages in operation and that many can be working on any given day. The drivers ply their trade in and around Central Park and later in the Times Square area. Many will disregard the laws if they feel they can get away with it. And because there is little enforcement of these inadequate laws, they often do.

Every media poll that has been taken since 2006 has shown between 75 and 80% of respondents favoring a ban on horse-drawn carriages in New York City. The people will not give up until this business goes the way of gas lamps and the horses are retired to sanctuaries or good homes.