

Harnessing Order

Generally, here's the order of harnessing...

Place the back saddle on first and tighten the girth slightly. Follow that by placing the crupper gently under the horse's tail and buckling it. The crupper shouldn't be too tight or



too loose under the tail, and make sure all tail hair is out of the way. While you're harnessing, loop any hanging straps out of the way until they're needed. Next, if your harness has breeching, make sure it's in the proper position just below the point of the horse's buttocks. Put on the breast plate and buckle the strap over the horse's neck to hold the breast plate in place. The breast plate should be just below the neck, across the chest, and just above the point of the shoulder. The traces should be looped over the horse's back temporarily to keep them from being stepped on. Finally, place the bridle on the horse, buckling the throatlatch and making sure the browband is straight, the ears are not pinched, and the blinkers (blinders) are not touching the horse's eyes. The check rein (overcheck) should not be attached yet nor should the reins be run through the turrets. You're ready to put to cart!

Putting to Cart

Have a helper hold your horse at the bridle. Again, make sure all hanging straps are out of the way. Take hold of one of the shafts of the cart and gently bring it up beside your horse, with the other shaft on the opposite side of your horse. Guide the shaft through the loops on both sides of the back saddle up to the shaft stops, if you have them on your shafts. The end of the shaft should be at the point of your horse's shoulder. Place the traces onto the hook or end of your cart's singletree. If your harness has wrap straps, wrap them in a figure eight around the shaft, the loop and the shaft stop (if applicable) and buckle them down. If your harness has French tugs instead, just buckle the strap snugly. If you are using breeching, run the holdback straps through the footman's loop and wrap around the shaft as needed, then buckle the strap. While your helper is still holding your horse, attach the check rein (overcheck) and run the reins through the turrets on the back saddle and if applicable, the breeching. When you're assured everything is in order, get into the cart, holding the reins in your hand. Get settled and when ready, have your helper release your horse. When done driving, reverse the steps to remove the cart and harness.

