



Horse Accidents With Injuries: January through March 2002

[reproduced from Spring 2002 *Caution:Horses*]

What kinds of injuries result from horse accidents? From what kinds of accidents do serious injuries result? Here are brief summaries of stories from English-language newspapers and similar sources throughout the world reporting on deaths and injuries to humans from accidents involving horses.

The full story is often available on the web site of the newspaper that reported the accident. Sometimes, those archived stories are available without charge and sometimes for a small fee. The name of the newspaper and the date of each story have been included in the summary to facilitate locating the full story.

A. Accidents While Mounted, Driving or Riding

The *Times of India* reported on January 23, 2002 about an accident on a parade grounds in which a police inspector was killed. During a practice session, the policeman's mount collided with the mount of another officer. The inspector died at the scene; the horse with which he collided also died. The other rider and the inspector's horse both sustained serious injuries.

The Express in the United Kingdom reported on February 9, 2002 that a mother watched in horror as her 18-year-old daughter tumbled from her horse and suffered fatal head injuries. The girl was wearing a riding hat when she fell at her riding school. The child was flown to hospital by air ambulance but died without regaining consciousness.

The *Times of London* reported on March 6, 2002 that a 51-year-old woman was killed when her horse was spooked by a flying swan. The mother of three was riding with her husband when she suffered fatal neck and back injuries from the accident.

The *Leicester Mercury* in the United Kingdom reported on January 17, 2002 that a woman who was taken by air ambulance to hospital after falling from her horse. The cause of the accident and the extent of her injuries were unknown.

The *Kansas City Star* reported on February 18, 2002 that a 12-year-old boy was critically injured when the horse he was riding fell on him at a riding stables.

B. Accidents While Ground Handling

The *Waikato Times* in New Zealand reported on February 27, 2002 that a 22-year-old woman was air transported to hospital after being kicked in the head by a horse and was in serious condition after neurosurgery. The *Daily News* in New Zealand reported on March 5, 2002 that the woman died. There was no indication whether she was wearing protective headgear at the time she was fatally kicked.

The *Leicester Mercury* in the United Kingdom reported on January 8, 2002 that two firefighters suffered minor injuries when they were kicked by a horse they were rescuing from a muddy ditch where he was trapped. They succeeded in extricating the horse, but one was kicked seriously enough to require taking a day off work.

C. Accidents Involving Motor Vehicles

The Raleigh, North Carolina *News & Observer* reported on March 13, 2002 that a 30-year-old woman was killed when the horse she was riding was struck by a pickup truck on a public roadway. The accident occurred at about 5:30 p.m. The driver of the pickup said he saw a dark horse dart suddenly into the road and although he braked he was unable to avoid hitting the horse. The rider was thrown off and hit her head on the pavement. The horse was uninjured.

The *Hindu* in India reported on January 18, 2002 that nine pilgrims were killed when the van in which they were passengers hit a horse that was loose on the public roadway, then collided with a commercial truck and fell twenty feet from a bridge over a railroad. Three other passengers in the van were injured in the accident. Six occupants of the commercial truck were seriously injured. The accident occurred at about 3 a.m.

The *Christchurch Press* in New Zealand reported on January 24, 2002 that an automobile passenger was killed when a loose horse on the roadway collided with the vehicle and crashed through the windshield.

The *Dominion* in New Zealand reported on February 18, 2002 that the passenger in an automobile was killed when the vehicle collided with a loose horse on a public roadway. Police were in the process of moving two loose horses into a paddock when one bolted and, after running a kilometer, collided with the motor vehicle.

The *New Straits Times* in Malaysia reported on March 4, 2002 that a motorcyclist died when he lost control of his bike while attempting to avoid colliding with a horse that was crossing the roadway.

The *Lancaster New Era* in Pennsylvania reported on February 27, 2002 that a 17-year-old woman driving a horse-drawn buggy escaped serious injury when her buggy was struck by an 18-wheel tractor-trailer. The accident, which occurred at about 6 p.m., destroyed the buggy, but the horse and driver escaped without serious injury.

The *Harrisburg Patriot* in Pennsylvania reported on March 8, 2002 that a 17-year-old boy was injured after a horse-drawn wagon in which he was riding was hit by a car. He was transported to hospital by helicopter, where he remained in fair condition. The accident occurred about 6 p.m. and glare from the setting sun was believed to have been a factor. One of the two horses drawing the wagon suffered a minor leg injury.

The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* in Pennsylvania reported on February 23, 2002 that a 16-year-old driver of a horse-drawn buggy was seriously injured when a motor vehicle collided with the buggy at about midnight on a public roadway. The buggy driver, who was catapulted from the buggy, underwent brain surgery and was then released from the hospital. The horse was euthanized. The buggy was equipped with safety devices, including battery-powered lights and reflectors. The driver of the motor vehicle has been charged with aggravated assault by vehicle while driving under the influence of alcohol, for which he could receive a prison sentence of as long as ten years.

D. Accidents Involving Horse Racing

The *Baltimore Sun* reported on March 27, 2002 that Sheri Garcia, a 37-year-old exercise rider, was killed while galloping her own horse at Pimlico Race Course. She was trying to rein in the 3-year-old filly when it became unruly and lunged to the outside of the track. The rider hit the half-mile pole and died of head injuries. She had just completed licensing to become a jockey and was scheduled to race the horse the following week at Pimlico. The horse was uninjured.

The *Evening Post* in Australia reported on March 6, 2002 that former jockey Gavin Jolly was killed while exercising a horse. The 52-year-old was on a sandy section of the track when his horse shied and he fell. He is believed to have died from neck injuries.

The *Dominion* in New Zealand reported on February 15, 2002 that female jockey Jo McGartland, 25, died of severe head and chest injuries as a result of being thrown during a race when her mount clipped a heel of a horse in front. She was trampled by a trailing horse and her own horse stumbled on her while getting to his feet.

Newsday in New York reported on January 26, 2002 that two jockeys, Heberto Castillo, Jr. and Roberto Villafan, escaped serious injury in a spill during the seventh race at Aqueduct. Castillo was just off the leader at the top of the stretch when his horse broke her left foreleg, pitching him to the ground, where he appeared to have been struck in the head by a trailing horse. Villafan was catapulted when his mount attempted to jump the fallen Castillo. Castillo's mount, Madame Viceroy BB, was euthanized on the track.

The *Globe and Mail* in Canada reported on January 29, 2002 that Dave Wall, one of Canada's top harness racing drivers, was seriously injured in an accident at Western Fair Raceway in London, Ontario. As Wall was driving in a qualifying race, a horse suddenly fell in front of him, and he was catapulted from his sulky and suffered a severe concussion, a broken right wrist, and a broken cheekbone. Wall's condition was later upgraded from critical to fair.

The *Houston Chronicle* reported on January 27, 2002 that Yvonne Azeff, a 41-year-old assistant trainer, was seriously injured when she was thrown from and pinned under her mount at Gulfstream Park in Florida. Ms. Azeff works in the training barn of John Ward, Jr., who trained Monarchos, winner of the 2001 Kentucky Derby. She was thrown when the lead pony she was riding became agitated by another horse and fell on top of her. The *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* reported on February 12, 2002 that injured assistant trainer Yvonne Azeff was still in a coma, but that her condition was improving somewhat.

E. Preventing Injuries from Horse Accidents

Scotland on Sunday in the United Kingdom reported on March 17, 2002 that scientists have invented a "smart fence" to reduce the number of riders killed in equestrian sport's most hazardous event. Experts say that the fence has the potential to save lives without destroying the element of danger that is an essential part of the cross-country portion of three-day eventing. The British Horse Trials Association commissioned scientific engineers to find ways of making the event safer after several deaths in the United Kingdom in 1999 from cross-country accidents. The proposed "smart fence" uses breakable metal pins inserted between the top pole and the uprights supporting it.

The *Santa Fe New Mexican* reported on March 28, 2002 that a Wilderness First Responder class taught at Santa Fe Community College is designed to teach students how to respond to accidents and emergencies in the wilderness, including horse riding accidents. The class is taught by Wilderness Medicine Institute, based in Pitkin, Colorado and is held in Santa Fe each year for ten days at spring break. Further information is available at www.wmi.nols.edu.

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