

Heading down the Highway...

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Most of us Midwesterners have tucked our horses and ourselves in during the cold winter months. But spring is fast approaching and we will want to pack up our horses and head out to clinics, trainers, shows, or hit the trails. So whether you travel to competitions or for pleasurable trail rides, it is time to get ready to head down the highway.

1. I recommend starting with a veterinarian exam. Have your horse assessed for any health or lameness issues prior to hitting the road.
2. Check your show regulations and travel plans, as you may need your veterinarian to perform a Coggins test and/or issue a health certificate. A Coggins and health certificate are required when transporting across state lines and for several breed shows. A Coggins is a blood test for the disease Equine Infectious Anemia, and is valid for a year. A health certificate, on the other hand, is only good for 30

days, as it is a document from your veterinarian stating that your horse is currently free from contagious disease and is healthy for transport.

3. To assure your horse's health during transportation, make sure to keep your horse current on the appropriate vaccinations. Again, your veterinarian is a good resource for this information.
4. Call the farrier to get your horse trimmed or shod.
5. Check and update a travel first aid kit. The kit should be tailored based on traveling needs. But I like to recommend: bandage materials, scissors, thermometer, clean towels, wound ointment and your veterinarian's phone number. Optional things about which to visit with your veterinarian would be anti-inflammatories (phenylbutazone/firocoxib/banamine), eye ointment, gastric ulcer preventative, and

electrolytes. I would also recommend taking a rider first aid travel kit, which will probably contain similar items.

6. Other things to consider, but not limited to, are: fly spray, hay, grain, shavings, buckets, hay nets, and grooming supplies. Remember to pack for yourself also: insect repellent, sunscreen, hats, food and drink, etc.
7. Look over and clean tack to make sure nothing needs replacing or repair. It's always a good idea to pack some extras; like halter, lead ropes, riding pads, etc.
8. Last, but not least, make sure both your vehicle and trailer are in good working condition, and with spare tires.

With a little planning and organization we can make our time with our horse(s) a relaxing and enjoyable event. So be safe, have fun, and maybe we'll pass each other on our travels.

