



Breastcollar - The breastcollar is what the goat uses to pull the vehicle. It should be adjusted as high as possible on the shoulders without interfering with the windpipe.

Britchen - Also called "breeching", this piece, combined with the holdbacks is the vehicle's brakes. It should be adjusted at about the same height as the breastcollar, usually halfway between the tail and the hocks. You should be able to just fit your hand sideways between the britchen and the goat's leg. Too tight and it interfere's with hind leg movement. Too loose and it makes stopping uncomfortable.

Driving halter - Most goats are driven in a halter rather than bridle and bit. It should fit snugly to reduce chafing and prevent it from "climbing" the face when the reins are pulled. If a bit is used, it should be a mullen or french link type snaffle because of a goat's low palate.

Footman loop - A loop on the underside of the shaft through which the holdbacks are passed. It is part of the braking system.

Girth - It does not need to be tight like a horse's saddle. Snug it up so there is no daylight under the belly and check it again after attaching the vehicle, but leave it comfortable.

Holdback straps - Straps that run from the britchen and wrap around the shafts and through the footman loop. These are part of the vehicle's brake system.

Saddle - In a two-wheeled vehicle some weight will fall on the saddle, so make sure it is wide enough to distribute the weight and always use a harness pad when driving a two-wheeled cart.

Shafts - These are the part of the vehicle that allow it to stop and turn. The vehicle should not be pulled by the shafts, but by the breastcollar and traces.

Shaft loops - Also called tugs, these hold the shafts up and attach them to the saddle.

Shaft wraps - Also called a bellyband or tie downs, these wrap around the shafts to prevent them from bouncing or floating up. Sometimes the bellyband buckles to a strap on the shaft loop.

Traces - These attach the breastcollar to the vehicle. They should be strong to prevent accidents, and they should always hook to a whiffletree.

Whiffletree - Also called a singletree or swingletree, this important piece of equipment is sometimes overlooked in goat hitches. It swings to accommodate the goat's shoulder movement and prevent the breastcollar from chafing.

Things to keep in mind:

Try to achieve parallel and perpendicular lines in your harness. Breastcollar, traces, and britchen should be in line with each other and parallel to the ground. Traces may not be parallel to the ground if the whiffletree is positioned low on a 4-wheeled vehicle. Neck strap and hip straps should join the breastcollar and britchen at right angles.

Shafts on two-wheeled carts must be level or pointing slightly uphill. They should *never ever* point downhill as this puts too much weight on the goat's back. A third supporting wheel in front may be necessary to balance the shafts with smaller goats.

Straps should be adjusted so that nothing is tight and nothing is flapping. Excess strapping should be trimmed, wrapped, or tucked neatly away to prevent accidents.

Shafts should not be hooked into the saddle but should rest freely in the shaft loops. The goat should not pull the cart by the saddle!

Draft goat facts:

- A healthy full grown goat can comfortably pull 1 1/2 times it's own body weight.
- A four-wheeled vehicle is generally easier to pull because no weight rests on the goat's back.
- Any goat can pull, but the size, age, sex, conformation, and health of the goat will determine how much it can pull.
- Be careful of using a lactating doe for pulling. The britchen could irritate her udder, and hard work will pull her condition down. Use her only for light work and use thimbles instead of a britchen.
- A large, healthy goat can start pulling light loads for short distances by 18 months but should not be expected to work like an adult. Slowly add weight and distance as your goat matures.
- A goat should not pull heavy loads until he is mature at around three years old.
- Patience, consistency, and rewards go a long way toward making your goat happy in his work. You must be firm in your commands but never impatient. He must respect the whip and reins but not fear them. Always, always reward your goat for a job well done.