
Guidelines for rights of way furniture

Furniture standards in the Peak District National Park are being revised as a result of the Disability Discrimination Act and the Authority's own draft policy, under Government advice, to reduce barriers to the less able. The following specification may therefore appear higher than some existing structures but all replacement and new structures should comply with the new standards.

Gates

All gates should swing freely and be opened easily from either side of the gate. A gate which has to be manhandled or requires string or wire to be untied is an obstruction. There should be no barbed wire on or adjacent to the gate. More than one catch or fiddly fastenings, such as cow-chains, are more likely to be left unfastened.

To improve stock security, gates can be self-closing and self-securing. Various mechanisms are being tried by the Authority (details available) and if you know any successful designs we would appreciate details.

Gates need regular maintenance to ensure that they do not drop beyond the tolerances of the latch or ground levels so they remain free-swinging and easily latched.

Minimum width on footpaths should be 1m to allow wheelchair access and users with sticks or crutches.

Hanging stiles to be 100mm x 75mm, top rails 75mm x 25mm, cross braces 75mm x 25mm, shutting stile 75mm x 75mm.

Hanging post to be 2.1m x 150mm x 150mm.

Shutting post: 2.1m x 150mm x 150mm.

On bridleways

There are additional specific requirements for gates on bridleways.

Minimum gap 1.5m so when hanging bridlegates against posts a 1.7m gate is required. A 1m clear space is needed alongside the clapper post to allow horses' shoulders beyond the gate (i.e. clapper post should not be situated in the corner of an enclosure).

Gates must swing freely to 90° and be openable while mounted. Self-closing should only be achieved by offset hinges or self-closing hinges operating under gravity. Springs or weights are dangerous on a bridleway where they may close onto a horse.

Ideally, latches should be easily operable with one hand from horseback from either side of the gate without a rider having to reach below the top of the gate. A rider always needs a hand for the horse and bending to lower latches can be dangerous if the horse should be startled. There are mechanisms available which operate a latch from the top of the gate (details available) if the length of the gate requires it to be fastened at its mid-height for stock

security. The handle to operate any latch should be on the gate so that the same hand can operate the catch and move the gate. Extension levers can be fitted to make spring bolts on metal field gates easier to use. Latches may need regular maintenance to ensure that they remain effective.

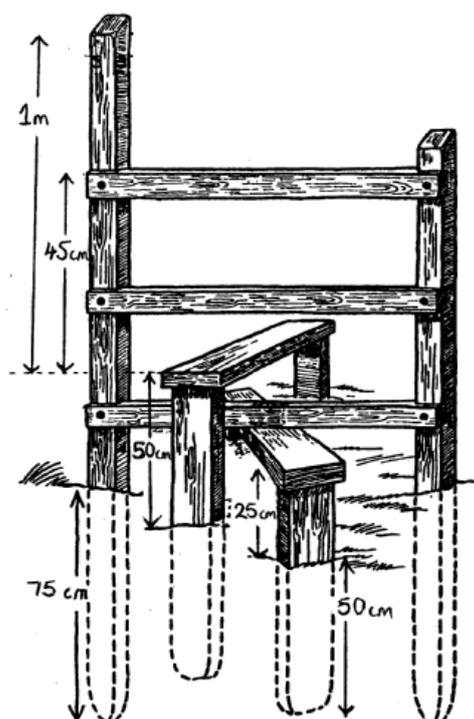
Kissing gates

Kissing gates are expensive to install and maintain, and they are not always stock proof without latches. In addition, they present a barrier to less able users for whom there is insufficient room to manoeuvre and many designs are impassable to those with backpacks or pushchairs. The Authority's aim is to replace kissing gates with self-closing, self-latching bridlegates which are stock proof and do not present a barrier.

Stiles

Gates are preferable to stiles as they allow easier access for less able walkers. Self-closing and latching gates should be maintained for stock security rather than using stiles. A stile should only be used where the terrain is such that to get there a walker must be agile enough to mount a stile. Minimum heights from ground to bottom step, and from top step to top rail should be strictly observed, taking account of ground erosion making the bottom step greater.

Step stile: For details of construction see diagram and material specifications below.



Pull-up post: 7.5cm sq. x approx. 2m.
Post should be 1m above top step.

Rails: 7.5cm x 5cm x 1.2m.
Minimum width 1m to allow easy leg swing.

Stepboards: 17.5cm x 4cm x 1m.

Step supports: 15cm x 7.5cm x 75cm - 1m.

With barbed wire fences barbs should be removed for 1m each side of the stile. Two rails sandwiching the top strand of wire are recommended.

Set top step at 90° to fence and set second step at 45° to fence.

Maximum height from ground to bottom step and between steps – 30cm.

Maximum height between top step and top rail – 45cm.

Steps should not rest on rails – a clearance of 2.5cm is needed to prevent 'see-saw' effect.

If a stepboard stile does not seem ideal, please contact the Authority for advice on alternative designs.

Vegetation

Overhanging vegetation should be clear for a width which allows two people to pass one another without stooping to avoid branches. On a bridleway, there should be a clear height of 3m and a width of at least 2m to allow horses to pass. Where a right of way runs between fences, hedges or walls, the full width between the boundaries should be clear.

Surface vegetation should be less than 1.5cm high.

This guidance is given for general advice only and may not be appropriate to all situations. For more details and site specific advice please contact the Conservation Service on 01629 816270 or email farming@peakdistrict.gov.uk.