

How to install gaps in a hedge or fence-line

This guide is based on the law, best practice and established local policy. It has been produced to help people who want to create safe and accessible rights of way in Staffordshire.

Where rights of way cross a boundary, the provision of a gap should always be considered before installing a gate or replacing a stile. Gaps are accessible for most path users, offer landowners the lowest maintenance burden and a reduced risk of path users having an accident. Gaps are also more visible, making it easier for users to follow the line of a path.

Responsibilities

- Landowners are responsible for cutting back vegetation that encroaches on a path from the sides and above.
- The County Council is responsible for the construction of staggered gaps to prevent unlawful or antisocial behaviour such as illegal usage by motorbikes.

Good Practice

- On footpaths, the minimum width of a gap is 1000mm.
- On bridleways, the minimum width of a gap is 1525mm.
- On a formally constructed gap there should be a minimum width of 1000mm between the gap and any adjacent hedge. This is aimed to reduce the landowners' maintenance responsibility of cutting back vegetation.
- Gaps should be set back from vehicular roads at a distance of at least 2000mm.

Components

2	150mm x 150mm x 1700mm	Posts
X	75mm x 50mm	Rails
X	X	Screws



Equipment

Hedge cutter	Secateurs	Screwdriver	post holer
Spirit level	Spade	Panel saw	post cement

Potential Hazards

- The likelihood of works creating flying debris.
- Hidden or unexpected objects (e.g. litter, rocks and posts) that may cause damage to tools and or injury to yourself or others.
- The possibility of injury from the incorrect or careless use of machinery and tools.
- The potential for damage to be caused to private property.
- The potential that your presence and the noise that you create might agitate livestock.
- Where cuttings or other materials need to be manually lifted, ensure that they are appropriately contained and of a manageable weight, so as to avoid personal or public injury.

These guides are intended to provide solutions for most situations found on Staffordshire's rights of way network. They are not comprehensive or exhaustive, and there are situations where other solutions will be more appropriate. If in doubt, or if you would like further advice, please do not hesitate to contact us via rightsofway@staffordshire.gov.uk

This leaflet should be read in conjunction with any of the individual guides.