

Stiles

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.

Stiles are the most common structures on the rights of way network as they are the best method of controlling stock where public right of way cross farm land. However, they can cause inconvenience and discomfort to users and, in some instances, may severely restrict people's ability to gain access to the countryside.

Stiles act as a barrier for many people, especially those with pushchairs and with mobility difficulties. As a result, they should only be installed when it is not possible to provide access by means of a gap or gate.

As a general rule, stiles are not permitted on bridleways or Restricted Byways or Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs), although there are cases where they exist.

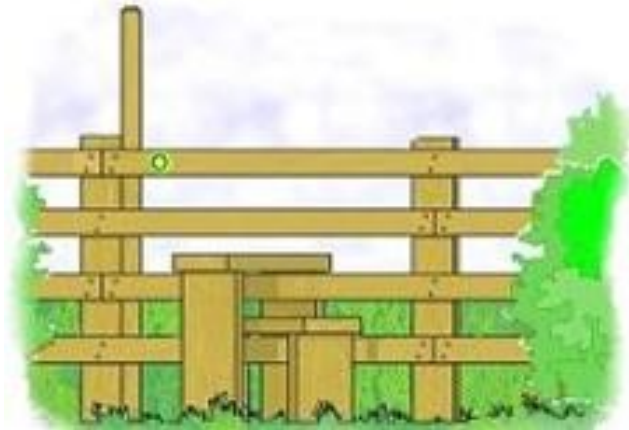
Responsibilities

- Landowners are responsible for the maintenance of, and are liable for, any stiles on public rights of way over their land
- The County Council is obliged to provide at least 25% of the costs of replacing or repairing a stile. It does this by providing standard stile kits at a subsidised rate.
- The County Council is willing to contribute towards the cost of a gate where it replaces an existing stile.
- Whilst it's not a legal duty, the Council can arrange for staff or volunteers to install structures on private land with the permission of the landowner.

Good Practice

- It is not always possible to meet these guidelines, particular in restricted areas or whether there are long established boundaries e.g. dry stone walls, etc In these instances, please contact the council for further advice.
- The height between the ground and first step, and between the first and second steps, must be the same, and no more than 300mm.
- The height between the top step and the top of the top rail must be no more than 450mm.
- The overall height, between the top of the top rail and the ground, must be no more than 1050mm.
- Steps must be level and at least 200mm wide; they should be at least 50mm thick and 900mm long. Steps can be either crossed or parallel.
- All uprights should be sunk at least 500mm into the ground.
- Handposts (projecting to a height of 500mm to 700mm above the top rail) should be provided where possible.

- Dog gates should be provided only where agreement from the landowner has been given.
- The ground immediately around the stile should be level, firm and dry.
- Barbed wire and electric fencing must not be attached to the stile.
- Stiles should be set back from vehicular roads at a distance of at least 2000mm.



Components

1	100mm x 100mm x 2000mm	Upright
1	100mm x 100mm x 1500mm	Upright
3	75mm x 50mm x 1000mm (Can vary from 800mm-1200mm)	Rails
2	200mm x 50mm x 900mm	Cross steps
2	150mm x 150mm x 800mm	Step supports
2	150mm x 150mm x 1100mm	Step supports

Equipment

Hedge cutter	Secateurs	Screwdriver	Post holer
Spirit level	Spade	Panel saw	Post cement
Mallet	Drill	Screws	Digging bar

Potential Hazards

Areas of work when installing or repairing a stile that pose a risk include:

- Manual handling
- Working at heights
- Slips, trips and falls
- Sun exposure
- Hand hygiene and safety
- Safety in excavation
- Power / Hand tools
- Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAV)

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 the General Advice Note.