

# Gates



1 For health and safety reasons good gate design and installation on public equestrian routes are essential to avoid injuries to horse and/or rider

1.1 Very serious injuries may be caused to a horse by poorly designed or installed gates, latches or hinges.

1.2 A rider's leg may be gashed or severely bruised while passing through a gateway. If a rider is unseated or thrown when the horse is injured or frightened while going through a gateway, very serious injury or even death of the rider could result. The horse is

likely to be frightened if it is bumped or trapped by the gate, if the horse's or rider's leg becomes caught on anything attached to the gate or gatepost, or if part of its bridle, martingale, saddle or stirrup becomes caught up.

1.3 Once injured or frightened while going through a gate, a horse will remember the experience. Afterwards, it will then either refuse to go through gates or panic and rush through them making it more likely that the rider's leg will be caught against the gatepost and possibly the rider be unseated and/or severely injured. Even after months of

retraining, some horses will never go through a similar looking gate again without fear. An accident at a gate can also damage the horse's overall confidence in its rider, making horse and rider altogether less safe, not only while negotiating gates, but also in other situations such as in traffic or on a bridge over a motorway.

1.4 A previous accident at a gate, or fear of an accident at a gate, leads riders to avoid using routes with gates. Once one horse or rider in a district has been injured by a gate, other riders will understandably be reluctant to risk their horses and their own safety by using the gate.

1.5 Therefore on routes used by equestrians every effort should be made to ensure that gates, their hinges and closing mechanisms are designed and installed so that they are safe and easy for equestrians to use.

2. Gates on public equestrian routes should not require the rider to dismount in order to use them

2. 1 These days, riders are not encouraged to mount from the ground as this can induce back pain in the horse and/or twist the saddle. For these reasons, many riding schools insist that all clients mount using mounting blocks.

Furthermore, many horse riders cannot, or cannot easily, dismount and remount when out on a ride. There can be many reasons for this: a minor or major disability affecting the rider (see Section 5 below for government guidance on disability discrimination), a large horse, a small rider, a fidgety or young horse, a horse with a sensitive back.

2.2 Some circumstances make mounting and dismounting difficult, and in some cases dangerous, when on a ride, for example, where there is other livestock in the field which the rider is entering or exiting, particularly playful bullocks or defensive sucklers and their calves.

2.3 Having to dismount and remount, especially repeatedly, severely reduces enjoyment of the ride for even the most agile rider with the easiest horse.

2.4 The ridden horse is controlled by the reins and the rider's seat and legs. When the rider dismounts, two of these means of control are removed. This reduction in control reduces safety for both the rider and any other people who are nearby. There may be a particular lack of control while the rider attempts to remount.

2.5 In a narrow gateway such as a bridlegate, the horse may accidentally tread on the rider or even knock the rider over while the dismounted rider is trying to lead it through the gateway; this is particularly the case with one-way opening self-closing gates.

2.6 While there is no specific statutory requirement for bridleway gates to be useable on horseback, the owner of the land is required under S 146 of the Highways Act 1980 to keep any gate or similar structure across a bridleway or restricted byway in a safe condition, and to the standard of repair required to prevent unreasonable interference with the rights of the persons using the bridleway or restricted byway. The persons using a bridleway or restricted byway will normally include persons on horseback. In the case of Durham City Council v Scott (1990) Lord Justice Watkins and Mr Justice Potts held that gates tied by twine to hedges and held closed by a loop of twine, barring the entire breadth of a bridleway, constituted an obstruction of the highway, although it was clear that members of the public were able to pass and re-pass, access only being momentarily deferred. They directed the justices to convict Mr Scott.

### **3. The safe 'heels to hinges' method to operate a gate on horseback**

3.1 The rider approaches the gate's hinges and turns to position the horse alongside and parallel to the gate, "heels to hinges", with the catch approximately level with or just in front of the horse's shoulder (the exact position will depend on the size of both horse and rider) and the horse's head and neck extending beyond the gate, alongside the fence, wall or hedge.

#### **With a gate that opens away from the rider**

3.2.1a), the rider leans forward and opens the catch, opens the gate to at least 90 degrees (unless it is a field gate), and while keeping hold of the gate for as long as possible so that it does not swing back onto the horse, reverses the horse a little, turns the horse and encourages it through the gateway.

3.2.1 b) Throughout this manoeuvre the rider operates the latch and moves and holds the gate away from the horse with just one hand, keeping control of the reins with the other hand. A rider on a large horse or lacking physical strength or mobility may not be able to hold the gate open; she may have to push it open and hope it stays open. A rider leading

another horse (for example a person needing to exercise two horses at once or an experienced rider with a novice, a small child or a disabled rider on a lead rein) will probably have to let go of the gate and will need it to stay open while the second horse comes through.

3.2.1 c) The rider can then let go of the gate. The rider will then need to turn the horse to close the gate, ending with the horse parallel to the gate again. Even if the gate is self-closing, the rider will usually need to turn to check that the latch has closed properly.

### **With a gate that opens towards the rider**

3.2.2 a), the rider leans forward and opens the catch, moves the horse backwards and turns the horse while pulling the gate towards her, opens the gate as far as she can, moves the horse round the end of the gate and then encourages the horse forward through the gateway. Throughout this manoeuvre the rider operates the latch and moves and holds the gate open with one hand, keeping control of the reins with the other hand. However there will come a point, usually quite early in the manoeuvre, when the rider has to let go of the gate. This point will come earlier or later depending on the relative sizes of the horse and

rider and the physical strength and agility of the rider. Many riders will have to let go of the gate as soon as they have fully opened it. In such cases, with a self-closing gate, the gate will swing shut onto the side or the hind legs of the horse unless the gate is installed so that it stays fully open momentarily, and then self-closes slowly and gently.

3.2.2 b) Having passed through the gateway, the rider then turns the horse round and approaches the hinge end of the gate, leaning over to reach the gate and pull it closed while taking care that it does not bump the horse.

3.3 Where there is insufficient manoeuvring space around the gate on both sides, for instance where the catch is in a corner or an overgrown hedge obstructs the place where the horse's head and neck need to go, it is not possible to use this 'heels to hinges' safe method.

## **4. Problems where the safe 'heels to hinges' method cannot be used**

4.1 Although many horses and riders do manage to negotiate gates head-on, gates at which you cannot stand the horse parallel and operate the gate one-handed are hazardous for the users and

impossible for some riders to use on horseback:

- A small pony is not tall enough to put its head and neck over the gate, so the rider cannot reach the catch
- On some large horses the rider will not be able to reach far enough forward to open the catch
- The danger of part of the bridle or martingale becoming caught on the gate handle is greatly increased. If this happens, the horse will panic, which can result in a serious accident.
- The rider has to open the latch with one hand and then use the other hand to manoeuvre the gate so that the horse can pass through it. This means that the rider has to let go of the gate and/or the reins while she swaps hands. This can result in a lack of control of the horse at a crucial time and/or a self-closing gate re-shutting. If the horse has already started to move through the gateway, the gate will bang against the horse or may trap and possibly even impale the horse.

## 5. Government guidance

5.1 Circular 1/09 from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, provides the following guidance concerning gates on public rights of way:

6.7 Stiles, gates and other structures on a public right of way are unlawful obstructions on a public right of way unless they are recorded on the definitive statement as a limitation or it can be shown that the way was dedicated with such a structure despite not being recorded on the definitive statement (i.e. the statement requires updating) or have been authorised by the highway authority under section 147 of the 1980 Act. Authorisation to install a structure may only be granted in relation to footpaths or bridleways (but not restricted byways or byways open to all traffic) where the owner or occupier of agricultural land, or land being brought into such use, makes an application showing that the structures are necessary for preventing the ingress or egress of animals. Section 145 of the 1980 Act specifies that a minimum width of 5 feet must be provided for gate across a bridleway. On granting consent for a structure an authority may impose conditions for maintenance or ease of use by members of the public. A highway

authority is required to keep a record of any authorisations granted and it is considered good practice to make such records publicly available. It is known that some authorities have poor records of structure authorisations and it would clarify matters if any shortcomings were addressed by reassessment of the validity of structures erected under claimed section 147 agreements.

6.8 The requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005) will be particularly relevant in specifying limitations or authorised structures. In authorising a structure, section 147 of the 1980 Act requires the authority to have regard to the needs of persons with mobility problems. Whilst there are no mandatory standards laid down for structures which, if met, will satisfy the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Acts, the British Standards Institute has developed a comprehensive standard, the current version of which has been published as BS5709:2006. The Pittecroft Trust has produced an explanatory document to describe BS5709:2006. Authorities may develop their own comprehensive standards for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the Acts.

6.9 Unless a way is dedicated with a limitation of a gate, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic may not have such a structure placed across them. Section 145 of the 1980 Act specifies that a byway gate must have a minimum width of 10 feet in circumstances where such a gate may be installed.

6.10 Under section 146(1) of the 1980 Act, landowners are responsible for maintaining gates, stiles and similar structures across footpaths, bridleways or restricted byways, whether or not they are shown on the definitive map. Authorities must contribute not less than a quarter of the expenses reasonably incurred by landowners in doing so. Where it appears to an authority that the landowner is not complying with his statutory duty, the authority may give notice to the landowner of their intention to take the necessary steps for repairing and making good the stile, gate or other works. The authority may recover the expenses reasonably incurred on doing so from the landowner.

6.11 Under the provisions of section 147ZA of the 1980 Act a highway authority may enter in to an agreement with a landowner, lessee or occupier for the replacement or improvement of a

structure which will make the structure safer or more convenient for members of the public with mobility problems. The agreement may include any temporary or permanent conditions that the authority thinks fit.

5.2 The British Horse Society reminds highway authorities and landowners that, on routes used by equestrians, persons with mobility problems may include persons on horseback or driving a horse-drawn vehicle, for whom the horse can provide a means of taking healthy exercise and accessing parts of the countryside that they would otherwise be unable to reach. The provisions of the Disability Discrimination Acts apply equally to such persons.

## **6. British Horse Society recommendations concerning gates and their installation**

6.1 For equestrians a gap is almost always preferable to a gate. Even the best designed and most carefully installed and maintained gates cause some inconvenience to equestrians, but some cause a great deal more than others. No single design of gate will always be appropriate. The most appropriate type of gate, hinge and catch will vary according to many factors such as the environment and landscape, the purpose of the

gate, the likely users of the route (including the landowner or occupier), the type of livestock, the wind conditions, the soil and the budget. What is appropriate in a remote moorland setting will probably differ from what is needed on a busy urban path.

6.2 The British Horse Society is represented on the group that designed the British Standard for Gaps Gates and Stiles, BS 5709:2006. The Society strongly recommends that the provisions of the Standard are complied with. The Standard's emphasis on the "least restrictive option", on providing sufficient unencumbered manoeuvring space around the gate and on a firm level surface are particularly important. A horse needs a minimum turning space of 3 metres.

6.3 Where for legal or for valid environmental reasons sufficient manoeuvring space to meet the Standard cannot be provided, the Society recommends that a mounting block should be provided on each side of the gate, in a position where it can safely be used. Guidance on the design and positioning of mounting blocks is at Appendix A. (A self-closing gate is not the answer. Indeed it may compound the problem, especially if it is one-way opening.)

6.5 Electric fencing near gates can present a particularly serious hazard. Please see the Society's leaflet on electric fencing.

## **7. Problems with Self-closing gates**

7.1 Self-closing gates are increasingly being installed because of fears that the public may fail to close gates securely and that livestock may escape. Self-closing gates were initially welcomed by riders because they reduce or remove the need for the rider to turn and close the gate. However, the Society has become aware of an increasing number of accidents and incidents occurring which are associated with self-closing gates. Too often, also, self-closing gates have been installed with insufficient manoeuvring space, perhaps because the installer has wrongly assumed that manoeuvring space is not required if the gate is self-closing.

7.2 Self-closing gates are almost impossible to use when riding and leading a horse.

7.3 Any self-closing device should be carefully installed and maintained to ensure that the gate stays in the open position until the horse has safely cleared the gateway. The force applied by the

closing device must be easily counteracted by the rider. Wind can exaggerate the force of a self-closing mechanism. Unfortunately it appears that if a gate is to self-close reliably in all weather, it will probably not meet the necessary requirements for rider safety. Because of the accidents and difficulties riders have reported with these gates the Society believes further research on these gates should be undertaken, though such research needs to be carried out in a way that ensures that risks to any horses and riders taking part in the trials are avoided as far as possible.

7.4 There are particular concerns about one-way self-closing gates, where the rider, having pulled the gate open and moved the horse round it, then starts to move the horse forward through the gateway and has to let go of the gate. At this point a self-closing gate will slam back onto the horse's side or hind legs unless the gate is adjusted to stay open momentarily and then close very slowly. The rider may try to avoid this happening by giving the gate a good push as she lets go of it, but unfortunately this can sometimes result in the gate returning and banging into the horse with even greater force.

7.5 The Society recommends that where there is concern that gates may be left open allowing livestock to escape onto roads, the preferred method should be to use the New Forest Box Gate arrangement shown at Appendix B. The box design is like an enlarged kissing gate and has proved successful. This can be combined with notices asking users to close the gate. Suitable notices are available from the BHS bookshop, or local authorities, National Parks or landowners may prefer to use their own signs.

## 8. Gate width

8.1 Some of the bridleway gates which cause problems or accidents for riders prove, on measurement, to be of less than the statutory minimum width of 5 feet between the gateposts. As this statutory minimum was laid down in the Highways Act of 1835, any bridleway gate narrower than 5 feet (1525mm) between the posts is an obstruction, unless there is evidence either that the gate existed at that narrower width before 1835 or that the bridleway was dedicated or created after 1949 subject to the narrower gate width specified as a limitation in the Definitive Statement. Highway authorities have powers under S145 of the Highways Act 1980 to force the removal of bridleway

gates less than 5 feet wide and carriageway gates less than 10 feet (3048mm) wide.

8.2 In 1835 when the statutory width was set, bridle gates would normally have been one-way opening, with their hinges and catch mounted on the outside face of the gatepost, so that the gap between the gateposts would not have been narrowed by anything protruding into it. This is not the case with many modern gates. The Society recommends that where the catch, or hinges, or the gate when open, take up some of the space between the gateposts, the gap between the gateposts should be widened so as to ensure that fully 5 feet of space is provided for riders to pass through. Where space permits, a 6 feet (1828mm) wide gate can be better for riders, while still deterring motor vehicles. A self-closing gate will probably need to be wider than a normal gate because as the gate starts to close it narrows the width through which the horse and rider are trying to pass.

## 9. Summary of requirements for equestrians

9.1 A summary list of requirements to make a gate safe and easy to use for equestrians is at Appendix C.

9.2 A list of commonly found gate catches is at Appendix D, with notes about their advantages, disadvantages and suitabilities. This list is not exhaustive and there are many regional variations.

## 10. Anti-vehicle barriers

10.1 Attempts to prevent mechanically propelled vehicles using brideways and restricted byways have led to the development of a number of arrangements designed to allow access for equestrians to paths where no livestock is present while deterring access by motor vehicles. Such barriers are obstructions on a right of way unless the right of way was created subject to barriers as limitations, or unless they are installed by the highway authority under Section 66 or 115B of the Highways Act 1980.

10.2 While recognising that no such barrier is 100 percent effective in deterring motorcycles, the Society recommends that where such measures prove really necessary and the legal conditions are complied with, the Horse Stile or the Kent Carriage Gap as specified in BS5709:2006 should be used (see drawings at Appendix E). It is very important that the specifications regarding installation are complied with.

10.3 If vehicular access along a

bridleway needs to be maintained for the landowner or occupier and there is insufficient space for a Gap, Bridle Gate or Horse Stile complying with BS5709:2006 to be installed alongside a locked field gate, the anti-vehicle gate (which can be locked) is a possible solution.

10.4 However, unless well designed and installed, these can cause serious hazards for horses, riders and other members of the public. For example a horse broke a leg in the barrier shown below. The recommendations at Appendix F need to be complied with.

10.5 It is particularly important that with any of these structures there should be a straight approach and landing, the ground should be flat and well drained and soft enough that the horse will not slip or injure itself if it jumps it. There should be ample space for at least three horses to wait safely and comfortably between a horse stile / anti-vehicle barrier and any motor vehicular road, plus space to land safely if the horse jumps the structure. Horses are herd animals and a horse can become anxious and difficult to control if its companions have crossed the road leaving it alone. Most horses will have been taught to jump structures similar to horse stiles and anti-vehicle barriers, and some

horses may fail to understand that they are not supposed to jump these.

## **11. Gates associated with cattle grids**

11.1 Particular legal requirements apply to cattle grids. Please see the BHS leaflet on cattle grids for legal information and the Society's recommendations as to design.

### **Appendix A Mounting Blocks**

A rider usually has best control of a horse while mounted, but there are some circumstances in which it is desirable to provide mounting facilities. The specification given below provides a good working mounting block. Other mounting block designs are possible.

#### **Specific Requirements for Mounting Blocks**

The step height should be 240mm to 260mm.

The total height should be no higher than 780mm.

The step width should be at least 600mm.

The step length should be at least 450mm. The top platform should have length at least 750mm.

There should be a clear manoeuvring space 4000mm high and at least 1800mm wide on at least one side of the mounting block and contiguous with it. This "manoeuvring space" is to allow the horse to stand while being mounted, and to allow entry and exit from this standing space. It needs to extend at least 1500mm before and beyond the mounting block. It is desirable that there shall be such a manoeuvring space on both sides of the block.

If steps are only provided on one side of the block, they should be such that there is manoeuvring space on the right hand side of the rider as he walks up the steps. [This ensures that he can mount on the near side (left hand side) of the horse.]

Safety point: we strongly recommend that steps are provided on both sides of the central platform (as shown in Figure 2). If a horse continues to walk forward, the rider can then go down the steps rather than have to jump off a high platform.

The material forming the mounting block should be such that striking them with horses hooves or rider's footwear should not make a sudden ring or noise likely to startle a horse.

The material forming the steps and

platform should be of a non-slip nature.

### **General requirements applicable to all structures on paths**

When the structure fails to meet any of the general requirements it shall be repaired, or replaced, or removed.

· There shall be no barbed wire, or electric fencing capable of giving a shock within 1m of the structure or of the manoeuvring space.

· Any finger or direction post carrying a protruding direction sign shall not form part of the structure, but shall be mounted separately so that the direction arm cannot overhang the structure or intrude into the manoeuvring space.

The ground within 1m of the structure shall be free of surface water (except within a couple of hours of rain), with less than 10mm of mud and a firm surface consolidated so that the surface level does not erode.

Where the structure abuts a vehicular road the structure should be set back sufficiently to allow riders and horses to access the mounting block without risk of being struck by vehicles.

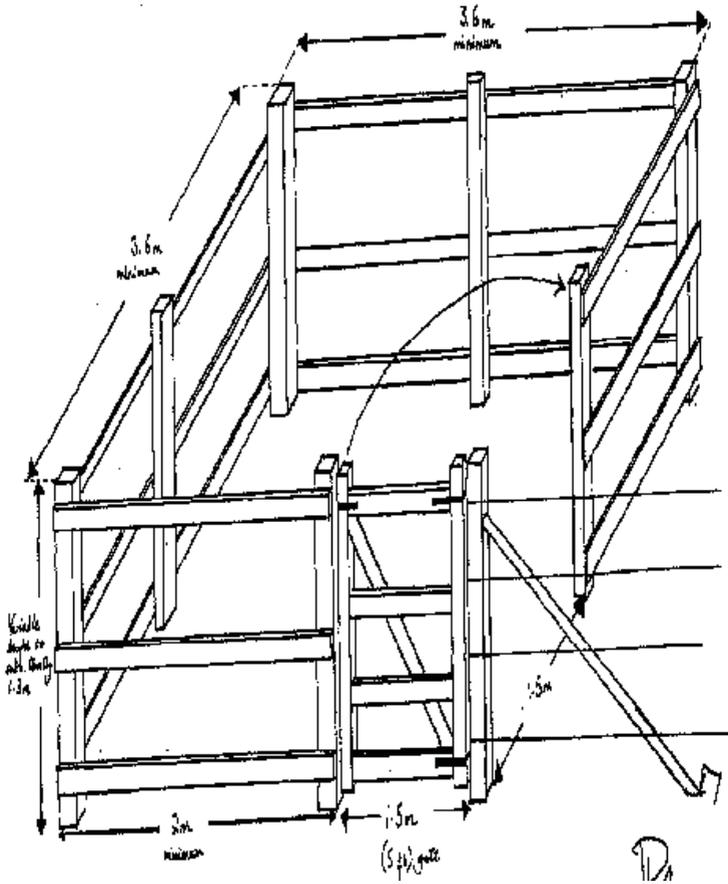
On the structure there should be

no projections such as bolts likely to catch on clothing of path users or to injure animals. On the main structure there should be no splinters on wood, slivers on metal, or similar defects in other materials, that are liable to pierce the skin. All edges and corners on the main structure except those on the lower horizontal edges of horizontal parts should be rounded to a radius no sharper than 3mm or chamfered with at least a 3mm flat. Where this is not practicable, there should at least be no sharp edges.

The structure should be built and maintained with adequate strength and rigidity and quality of material and design to ensure the safe and convenient passage of users.

# Appendix B

## New Forest Box Gate



## Appendix C

### Gates and gate catches

#### GATES

Points to note that will make life easier and safer for equestrians

1. Riders should not have to dismount to open/close the gate. More mature riders or those on young or large horses will experience difficulty re-mounting, and those with disabilities may be unable to remount .

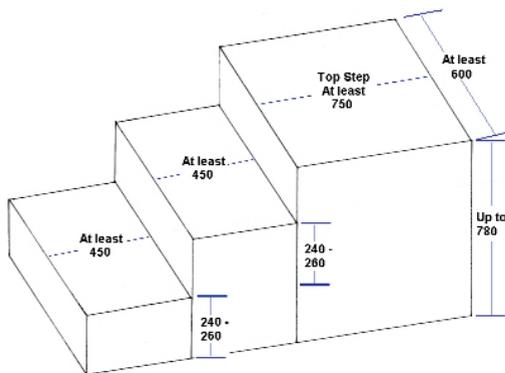
2. The gate should swing easily on its hinges (the lighter the gate the better).

3. The gate should not be grounded and so require a lift. Almost impossible from a horse.

4. Gates should be two way opening where possible (far easier to open a gate in the direction of travel).

5. The gate, if a field gate, should not swing under its own weight to the fully open position as this increases the risk of stock getting out should the rider lose their hold on the gate.

6. The gate should open wide enough for a large horse to get through without banging the rider's legs against the gate post



(extremely painful! Can cause a serious accident if the rider is unseated in consequence). A clear width of 5ft (1.525mm) between posts is the minimum required, and where possible a greater width is preferred. A bridle gate should open to at least 90 degrees and preferably to about 130 degrees but ideally should not swing back the whole 180 degrees.

7. If the gate's hinges and catch are fitted on the inside of the gateposts, and hence take up some of the 5 feet width between the posts, the space between the gateposts should be widened so that a full 5 feet or more is provided.

8. A 5ft (1.525mm) to 6ft (1.8m) bridlegate is generally easier to handle, particularly in a strong wind, than a full size field gate. As it is lighter, it is also less likely to cause the gatepost to shift and the catch to become more difficult to

deal with. However, on public carriageways a 10 ft wide gate is required for ease of use by horse drawn vehicles.

9. Where a bridleway goes through a wide gateway with double field gates, a separate bridlegate is recommended as managing two gates and a horse, particularly if it is windy, is almost impossible. Failing a separate bridle gate, one of the gates should be firmly fixed so that the rider only has to manoeuvre one gate.

10. Although a gently self-closing gate created by very slightly off-set or specially designed hinges may be acceptable (providing it is two-way and the closing speed allows enough time for a rider to manoeuvre and pass through without the gate bumping the horse), one with a spring or weight that causes it to snap shut is certainly not.

11. There should be room for the horse's head and neck beyond the gate post (it should not be obstructed by vegetation or a wall or fence). Riders approach a gate sideways, with "heels to hinges", and need to stand parallel to the gate by the catch so they can reach it easily.

12. In order to open and close the gate safely on horseback, a horse rider needs a width and length of at least 3 metres (the manoeuvring space), on the approaches to the gate.

13. The surface of the gateway and its manoeuvring spaces should be firm and flat. A horse will not stand happily in a puddle or in deep mud, while the rider operates the catch. Dealing with a step, the bar of an H-frame gate, uneven or sloping ground or any other obstacle in the gateway or its manoeuvring spaces hugely increases the difficulty of operating the gate safely.

14. There should be no overhanging vegetation or building within 3.7m above the gate and its manoeuvring spaces: having to duck under overhanging branches or gutters while manoeuvring through a gate hugely increases the difficulty of operating the gate safely.

15. There should be no barbed wire or electric fencing within 1m of the gate and its manoeuvring spaces, as this can cause injury to the horse and/or rider as they manoeuvre to open or shut the gate.

16. There should be no loose wire or other appendage in which

the horse's or rider's feet or the horse's tack could be caught, on the gate or gatepost, and no loose sheep or rabbit wire or other hazard within 1 m of the gate and its manoeuvring spaces.

17. Gates should preferably not be placed on bridges. If the gate is at the end of a narrow lane or bridge, it should be remembered that the average horse needs 3m in which to turn and space to put its head and neck beyond the catch end of the gate. If this is not available it is impossible for a mounted rider to open and close the gate.

18. A gateway at the roadside needs to be set back from the tarmac by at least 4m. Otherwise the horse is standing in the road while the rider operates the catch – a very dangerous situation as their concentration is on the catch, not the traffic. This space is also needed as a waiting area off the carriageway while choosing a safe moment to cross (which could be several minutes). The gate should open away from the carriageway, or else be set back an additional distance to compensate for the space the gate takes up towards the highway as it opens.

19. The waiting space beside a road should be wide enough for at least three ridden horses to wait

before or after passing through a gate, because a horse will become difficult to control if asked to wait on its own on one side of the road when its companions have crossed.

20. If there is a cattle grid beside the gate, the catch should be at the end away from the grid as horses have a natural fear of such structures. There should also be a barrier between the gate and the cattle grid, extending 3 metres on either side of the grid, to ensure that the horse cannot accidentally step into the grid or into the path of the motor traffic while manoeuvring around the gate.

21. Catches and hinges on wooden posts and gates will need repeated checking and adjustment, because the gates and posts will shrink and swell as they age and with the effects of the weather. Gateposts on clay ground will need to be well concreted in and the gates checked especially regularly because of clay ground's tendency to move.

Good installation and maintenance are vital. The best gate and latch in the world can still be difficult if put in poorly.

## GATE CATCHES

Equestrians need

22. A catch that can be operated without causing the rider to have to get off the horse or to bend down to a dangerously low position where they may lose their balance (a catch at third bar level is too low).

23. A catch that can be operated together with the gate, with one hand only. The other hand is needed to hold the reins and control the horse. Dropping the reins to use two hands is asking for trouble (and conflicts with the Highway Code).

24. A catch that does not need much physical strength to operate as 75% of riders are female, 34% are children and some have arthritic hands or other disabilities (Disabilities Legislation).

25. A catch that can be operated equally easily from either side of the gate. The rider needs to be able to see what she is doing and to be able to reach the catch.

26. There should be no horizontal projection from the side of the gate, or gatepost, that can rip the side of the horse, the rider's leg or the saddle (all have happened to riders). This is particularly important where a gate is self-

closing.

27. Where the catch protrudes into the gateway, extra space between the posts needs to be allowed so as to ensure that safety is not compromised

28. The catch should allow some leeway for the gatepost to move a little (they all do!).

29. Operating the catch should be straightforward and obvious; the catch should not become impossible to close from the mounted position if the rider has to let go of the handle in order to control the horse.

30. A handle that requires lifting as well as pulling is difficult to use (and disliked by riders). It will be particularly difficult for riders with disabilities.

## Appendix D

### A selection of gate catches

1. A hook and eye - OK if at the top of the gate. The hook should be on the gate and the eye on the gatepost. Probably the easiest for riders to use and has proved stockproof for both cattle and sheep when installed on one-way gates. Cheap.
2. A chain loop – OK providing the gate post doesn't move too much. Easier to use if the chain is stapled to the gate rather than loose or stapled to the post. Cheap.
3. A hunter catch – one-way opening only. OK, provided it is installed far enough up and out from the gatepost for the rider's fingers not to get caught in it, and positioned on the gatepost far enough away from the gate to lessen the risk of the horse's side brushing against it as it passes through. Cheap. But it can be stiff to operate and reins/martingale can get caught on handle.
4. Triangular gravity catch – one-way opening only. Requires two hands (undesirable, see 23 in Appendix C). If used, it should be combined with a D catch, not a bar (see 26 in appendix C) and have an extended handle. However these handles have been known to break off.
5. Horizontal spring catch – needs long handle attachment (above top rail). However, riders and horses can be injured by the bolt if it springs back (see 26 in Appendix C) and reins/martingale can be caught on extended handle. Important to ensure the spring is not too powerful or stiff.
6. Trombone handle adaptation of horizontal spring catch– easier for riders to use. Less likely to get reins etc caught in it, but if caught, more difficult to free the horse.
7. Equi-catch/Equine Catch/ Easy-catch – has no projection on the gate but projects from the inside of the gatepost. Best fitted with a gate wider than 5ft and with a lifter (though the lifter projects from the gate, meaning that there are projections from both the gate and the post).

## Appendix E

### Technical specification for Horse Stile and Kent Carriage Gap

#### Horse Stiles

The height of top of the bars above ground shall be 190mm +/- 60mm. There shall be no gap between the ground and the bar.

The thickness of bars along the path shall be between 80mm and 160mm.

The minimum width of bar across the path shall be 1525mm. The distance between centre lines of bars shall be 1200mm +/- 100mm.

There shall be a clear manoeuvring space 4000mm high and 3000mm long and at least 2000mm wide both sides of the horse stile and contiguous with it. The space between the bars shall be free draining.

Access for other users, for example a kissing gate, shall be provided to the side of the horse stile.

The horse shall be able to walk straight through the structure. Space shall be provided to allow that and no gates shall require to

be opened.

The material of the bars should be such that striking them with horses hooves should not make a sudden ring or noise likely to startle a horse.

General requirements applicable to all structures on paths

·When the structure fails to meet any of the general requirements it shall be repaired, or replaced, or removed.

There shall be no barbed wire, or electric fencing capable of giving a shock [allows crossings] inside the gap or structure or within 1m of the gap or structure or of the manoeuvring space.

·

Any finger or direction post carrying a protruding direction sign shall not form part of the stile or gate post, but shall be mounted separately so that the direction arm cannot overhang the structure or intrude into the manoeuvring space.

·

The ground within 1m of the structure and through the structure shall be free of surface water (except within a couple of hours of rain), with less than 10mm of mud and a firm surface consolidated so that the surface level does not erode.

·

Where the structure abuts a vehicular road the structure should be set back sufficiently to allow users to access and traverse the structure without risk of being struck by vehicles. This also helps prevent danger should a horse try to jump the structure. The following may be suitable: 4m from the carriageway for bridleways. (The Countryside Agency recommend a set back distance of 5m on the Pennine Bridleway.)

·On the structure there should be no projections such as bolts likely to catch on clothing of path users or to injure animals. On the main structure there should be no splinters on wood, slivers on metal, or similar defects in other materials, that are liable to pierce the skin. All edges and corners on the main structure except those on the lower horizontal edges of horizontal parts should be rounded to a radius no sharper than 3mm or chamfered with at least a 3mm flat.

The structure should be built and maintained with adequate strength and rigidity and quality of material and design to ensure the safe and convenient passage of users.

## **Kent Carriage Gap**

The Kent Carriage Gap consists of one pair of smooth concrete bollards, 0.33 to 0.38m high (13 to

15 inches), 1.52m (60 inches) apart, with a clear space of at least 0.6m (24 inches) wide outside one or both of the bollards. This pair may be backed up with two further pairs if forced access by large vehicles is likely. Any remaining space outboard of the bollards, up to banks or fences, can be restricted with taller bollards. The bollards must be very solidly planted, and the surface hard and level right up to and through the pattern.

In use, any horse-drawn carriage less than 1.5m wide can pass between the pairs of bollards This requires care, but it is not too difficult provided a straight approach is possible. Larger carriages can pass with one wheel between the pairs of bollards, the other outside.

The Kent Carriage Gap can legally be used to enforce a no-car TRO. It might also be used on a bridleway if the landowner has given permission for carriages, but was concerned that the path might be used by unauthorised motor vehicles. Obviously, this layout does not stop motor cycles, and very small cars may be able to squeeze through, but these tend not to be used for 'off-roading' anyway. There are some horse carriages that might find the system obstructive too: those

based on car wheels and axles; very wide vehicles with a low fixed backstep; those with a pair or team of horses to a big carriage.

## **Appendix F**

### **Anti-vehicle barrier**

#### **Recommendations concerning installation**

1) Anti-vehicle barriers are only suitable for use on bridleways. On byways open to all traffic, restricted byways and unsurfaced, unclassified roads the Kent Carriage Gap should be used instead.

2) A 5 ft (1525mm) gap beside a field gate is preferable for equestrians (the least restrictive option) and visually more in keeping with the countryside.

- Anti-vehicle barriers should only be used on bridleways where all of the following circumstances apply

- where private motor vehicular access needs to be maintained while deterring motor vehicular use by the public, and

- where there is insufficient space beside a field gate for a gap (or a well designed and installed bridlegate), and

- where there is clear evidence of persistent problems with unlawful

public motor vehicular access, and

- evidence of persistent problems with unlawful public motor vehicular access, and

- where the necessary legal requirements for installing a structure on a public right of way have been met.

3) There should be at least 10 metres length of straight approach, at least 2 metres wide, on either side of the barrier, because

a) the horse will need a straight approach if it is not to refuse it and

b) some horses will jump the barrier and canter for a few strides afterwards.

4) By a road there should be a further 3 metres of waiting space, 5 metres wide, so that three horses can wait safely to cross the road without other horses crashing into them (giving a total length between barrier and road of at least 13 metres).

5) The space over the barrier and its approaches should be clear of overhanging branches and other hazards to a height of 4 metres.

6) The ground under the barrier and on the approaches should be flat, firm and well drained but not

hard, slippery or stony; that is, it should be a surface on which a horse can safely jump. This surface will inevitably need regular maintenance.

7) The space in the centre through which the horse passes should be no less than 1200mm wide at the bottom and no less than 2000mm wide at the top.

8) The top of the central section over which the horse steps should be 190mm  $\pm$  60mm from the ground (i.e. a maximum 250mm overall height measured from the ground beneath that part of the barrier).

9) There should be a damper on the lock so that the barrier does not clang if the horse's foot touches it.

10) There should be solid wooden cladding on both sides of the central section, so that the barrier does not clang if the horse's foot touches it.

11) The wooden cladding should extend as close to the ground as possible to minimise the chance of a horse's hoof being caught in the barrier and so that the horse can judge the obstacle more easily.

12) The edges of the wood should be rounded so that the horse's legs will not be grazed if they scrape it.

13) There should be no screws or other projections on which a horse could be injured.



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