

Public Rights of Way – Information Sheet

Electric Fencing

Where electric fencing, which should only be temporary (up to 6 months) in nature, has been erected across a footpath, the Council will not normally require the fencing to be removed provided that is required for stock-proofing and that the landowner/occupier has created a safe crossing point for walkers to use.

Ideally, single-strand fencing should be all that is present at the crossing (e.g. see photos). The strand of wire should be insulated with plastic tubing, handle or similar, to a minimum width of 1.5 metres and the height of the wire should be no greater than 0.75 metres, to enable walkers to step over it easily. If an insulated handle is used as a "gate" it should be openable with one hand. A wooden post should be driven into the ground next to the wire to act as a vertical handhold to steady walkers. In addition, a sign should be prominently displayed advising walkers of the nature of the wire (these are normally manufactured in yellow plastic).



Electric fence with insulated handle and warning sign for a footpath crossing:



Hand-hold post at lowered electric fence.

If the fence consists of more than one strand of wire, all the strands must be insulated to the 1.5 metre width. Electric netting is not appropriate for use at a footpath crossing. Electric fencing of any type should never be placed across a public bridleway. Where an electric fencing is placed at a gate across a bridleway, it should be discontinued for 3 metres either side of the gate. When it is not discontinued, the wire must be insulated and buried at a depth of 10cm below the gate or run high enough above it to comfortably allow a rider through (i.e. 4m or higher).

Where it is necessary to place electric fencing alongside a footpath or bridleway, an extra width should be provided. The exact measurements will depend on the topography, the condition of the surface of the path and whether fencing or overgrowth exists on the other side of the path. Signs should be placed at intervals along the route in order to advise and remind path users of the nature of the wire.

The Council would however draw your attention to s162 Highways Act 1980 which states that it is an offence to place rope or wire across a highway unless it is shown that all necessary means have been followed to give adequate warning of the danger. In addition, such fencing, whether across or adjacent to a highway, could be found to be an obstruction or nuisance and the Council would advise you to contact the PROW Team prior to installing any fencing. Should the Council receive a request for access to be provided for the disabled, it reserves the right to require further modification of the design of the crossing-point.

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