



**EVENTING IRELAND  
GUIDELINES  
FOR  
COURSE DESIGNERS**

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## 1. Eventing Ireland Guidelines for Cross Country Design

Eventing Ireland wishes to acknowledge the following in producing these guidelines:

- FEI
- British Eventing
- Eventing Ireland

This document sets out the fundamental aims and expectations of Eventing Ireland with regard to Cross Country Course Design at the different levels and types of our sport.

This document will be constantly updated with all new findings and best practices based on experience at both international and national level.

The following notes are for guidance and do not want to represent a complete guide to course design!

### FEI Rules for Eventing:

**The Cross Country Test constitutes the most exciting and challenging all-round test of riding ability and horsemanship where correct principles of training and riding are rewarded. This test focuses on the ability of athletes and horses to adapt to different and variable conditions of the competition (weather, terrain, obstacles, footing, etc.) showing jumping skills, harmony, mutual confidence, and in general "good pictures".**

The aim of the Course Designer (CD) is to set the appropriate test for each level but also produce a good 'picture'. Therefore the best horses and riders should be able to make the course look easy.

It is the Course Designer's responsibility to design courses that help to produce better horses and riders.

The CD should not build to "test the best" but rather be thinking about a fair course for the level so all have the opportunity to complete.

At the lower levels the emphasis is very much on the education of horse and rider introducing both parties to a wide variety of fences and simple questions. As the levels progress so the degree of difficulty of the courses should suitably reflect the particular level. At the highest level the balance is more on the examination of the skills of the horse and rider in a sophisticated manner. The "intensity" of the courses may increase as the levels become higher.

As a general philosophy the numbers of finishers is more important than the number of clear rounds. It has to be accepted that the quality of the field and the weather conditions can impact on the statistics and that, particularly at the higher levels, many riders now choose to retire once they are clearly out of contention or are not going to achieve a qualifying result, and that these issues are reflected on the scoreboard with more retirements and less "cricket scores". Similarly the 'elimination after a rider fall' will create many more eliminations.

The goal of seeing as many finishers as possible is desirable for all levels, but the degree of difficulty must not be compromised in order to achieve this, for example by the over-use of alternatives.

### Some simple guidelines for all levels

- The aim of the designer is to provide a suitable test for the level of competition without exposing horses and riders to a higher risk than what is strictly necessary to produce the right test for that level.
- Fences and questions should never be above the particular standard of competition or justified by the use of alternatives or options.

- Horses and riders should be encouraged and have their confidence built, not destroyed.
- It must be recognised that our sport is about achieving a standard, not about pushing the standard above what it should be. This includes measuring the length of the courses fairly and reasonably.
- Any/all questions must be fair. It is not acceptable to try to catch horses out using unfair distances or by trying to be too clever or over complicated.
- Horses must be given time (2 or 3 strides) to understand clearly what they are being asked to jump.
- Course designers have to appreciate and take into consideration the part that inclement weather can play on the severity of a course. If or when conditions deteriorate officials must readily be prepared to reduce the jumping "effort" required by the horse at all levels because of the energy sapping nature of the conditions.
- Course designers have to be their own biggest critics!
- Course designers must understand that courses must prepare horses and riders for the next level of competition and need to be of the correct degree of difficulty.
- Course designers are encouraged to use occasional more vertical fences, open oxers and open corners at higher levels where it is appropriate to site them in a user friendly place (ie: off a turn and/or slightly up hill). **The reintroduction of such type of fences should anyway be done gradually and with great care.**
- Any horse should be able to jump a straightforward fence of maximum dimensions at any particular level – big does not necessarily equate to difficult!
- We should be looking to give horses and riders the opportunity to show what they can do and are capable of rather than seeking to find out what they cannot do.
- All courses must "flow" and permit a good "rhythm". Tight turns should be avoided early in the course and especially late in the course. 'S' bends are not recommended unless there are four or more strides between elements.
- Wherever possible it is better to have turns before fences and especially at combinations rather than after fences
- All courses should offer a positive experience.

## 2. Flow

In every course there should be a beginning, middle and end.

- **Beginning:** 3- 5 fences to get horses and riders thinking forward with a good rhythm. The lower the level the more fences you need.
- **Middle:** The meat of the course, where the main questions are asked. Don't start with the most difficult question. But rather let the difficulty progress and then ease off towards the end when horses maybe getting tired. In principle after every question there should be an easier confidence boosting fence, particularly at the lower levels.
- **End:** 3 or 4 easier fences to produce a feel good factor. At the end of the course these fences should if possible be off a turn to prevent a mad gallop to the finish.

**Wherever possible try and avoid the possibility of horses landing static after a fence particularly at combinations and where a turn is involved after the fence**

### Fences difficulty and risk level

*Eventing constitutes an exciting and challenging all-round test of riding ability and horsemanship within an accepted and acceptable level of risk. Every effort must be taken by all involved in order to*

*ensure that, at each level, responsible athletes are participating with progressively trained horses in order not to be exposed to a higher risk than what is strictly inherent to the nature of the competition and generally acceptable to stakeholders.*

The safety of horse and rider has an ever-increasingly high profile in the image, evolution and financial well-being of our sport and cannot be overemphasised.

**The task of a Course Designer is to produce a Cross Country test of the level required without exposing horses and riders to a higher risk than what is strictly necessary to produce the right test for that level.**

Questions can be difficult, but should not be "risky" and the course designer must always visualise what can be the consequences of an error from the less experienced horses and/or riders. Course Designers must consider the possible consequences of a fall at any fence, eg hazards after a fence.

### 3. Criteria for evaluating difficulty and risk level

#### Approach

- Uphill – easier
- Downhill – more difficult
- Straight – more difficult
- Off a turn - easier

#### Footing

- Good footing – easier
- Deep or loose footing – more difficult

#### Materials

- Brush – easiest and most forgiving
- Roof/sloping leading edge – forgiving
- Log – still forgiving
- Rails/rounded leading edge – less forgiving
- Sawn Timber/90 degree leading edge – unforgiving
- Stone – unforgiving

#### Profile

- Vertical with uphill approach – acceptable
- Vertical with downhill approach – unacceptable
- Vertical with flat approach – 3\* only

#### Ground Lines

- Ground lines should be used to improve the profile of fences where felt essential.
- It is appropriate for there to be a discussion with the Course Designer as to the need or not of a ground lines. (Roof shaped tops of fences and large logs don't need ground lines unless on the down slope)
- Ground lines are generally appropriate at all levels on a downhill approach.
- Ground lines can be appropriate on steps out of water.

**Every effort should be made not to have an unforgiving leading edge. Research has shown that the more a horses mass can be deflected and the less it is stopped at impact the more forgiving the fence and the less the chance of a rotation. In the same vein a smooth surface is more forgiving than rough bark.**

#### Dimensions

- Apart from the first fence all straight forward fences should be built to the height of the level being jumped. It does nobody any favours to get a 1.15m qualification over a 1.10m track.

- As a guideline fences on the down slope, before a step, ditch or other unexpected situation should be at 5cm below maximum height.
- All spread fences should have the back edge not less than 2cm higher than the front edge.

#### **Combinations and related distances**

- CD's should not try and trick horses or riders and horses should have 2 or 3 strides to be able to understand the question.
- Anything 4 strides (18 metres) or less must be on a true distance.
- All Officials should be clear that the more steps/strides there are between fences the easier the question because the rider has more time to make adjustments. The exceptions are the distances where the CD has used a fence as a set up for an exercise.

#### **Guidelines for Bending Lines (subject to the types of fences used)**

- In 1 - 2 strides it is very difficult to bend more than approximately 10 degrees. This would only be appropriate for the 3\* level.
- In 3 strides it is possible to bend more (60 degrees). Again this is only appropriate for the 3\* level.
- In 4 strides you could bend 90 degrees for the 3\* level, 60 degrees for 2\* and 45 degrees for 1\*
- In 5 strides you could bend 90 degrees for the 2\* and 60 degrees for 1\*
- In 6 strides you can ask the 1\* to bend through 90 degrees.
- In 7 strides you can ask EI100 and below to bend through 90 degrees.

### **4. Lessons learned from the FEI**

#### **A Clear Question**

- First and foremost, the question that the horse has to answer must be a clear one, which should not be misunderstood by the horse.

#### **Hazards**

- Unnatural hazards should not be placed behind a fence in a way that may distract a horse at take-off, particularly if they resemble a human being

#### **Table Fences**

- At all levels up to and including three star, tables should be built with a sloping front face, sloping upwards away from the horse on the take-off side of the fence.
- In the case of picnic tables with a bench in front, the top line of the table can have a vertical face of at least 25cm and the bench in front should also have a vertical face of at least 25cm.
- At all levels, the possibility of a false ground line must be avoided. Thus for instance in the case of a picnic table be careful when having a bench on the landing side of the obstacle.
- It is vital that the horse is able to judge the spread of an obstacle – this may mean it is necessary to make the top of a table slightly ascending or to colour the landing edge if it might blend into the background.
- The back part of the table should be about 3-5cm higher than the front part.

#### **Verticals**

- True vertical fences should not be sited where it is likely or very possible that riders/horses will approach them at a very fast pace and out of balance.
- The precise degree of slope for such fences cannot be specified – this must depend on the particular site and fence, the level of difficulty of the course and the experience of the riders.

### **Spread Fences**

- Fences with a top spread close to the maximum permitted for the level of competition should not be sited in close proximity to hazards. Consideration should always be given in these circumstances to filling-in such spreads. It is important to ensure that the horse can see the back part, using different materials, colours, flowers, etc. Special care must be taken when using spread fences as last element of a combination as they could be very punishing for a horse in trouble in the combination.

### **Triple Bars**

- A maximum of three-quarters of permitted base spread for each star level should be used for triple bars or open ditches.
- In general, where the maximum base spread is to be used, the highest point of the fence should be at a point between half and three-quarters of the spread.

### **Ditches**

- At the one and two star levels a significant ditch should not normally be used in front of an obstacle forming the second or subsequent part of a combination, if the distance between the 1st and 2nd part (or 2nd / 3rd as relevant) is less than three strides.
- It is very important that the sides (back face) and bottom of the ditch can be clearly distinguished from the surrounding ground - the colour of the ground / surface should be different – even spraying ground with a coloured paint has been tried with some success!
- Consideration must be given to the depth of ditches: a very shallow ditch is not impressive enough for the horse, whilst if a ditch is more than 60 cm deep arrangements must be made such that a horse can be extracted if it becomes blocked in it.
- All ditches should be arranged with a ramp (slope) so that a horse can be walked out of the ditch readily.

### **Brush Fences**

- Where there is both a solid or fixed part and a soft "brush" part (for horses to brush through it without causing injury to the horse) to an obstacle, the fence will jump better if there is 25 cm or 30 cm of brush above the solid part.
- As the Rules specify the maximum height for the brush, then the solid part of the obstacle should be lower than the maximum permitted.
- For instance, at 3\* events where 1.40 - 1.45 m is permitted for the maximum height of the brush, the fixed part should actually be set at approximately 1.10 – 1.15 m.

### **Double and Triple Brushes**

- It is highly recommended that double and triple brushes are "filled in" between the rows of brush, so that a horse can eventually put a foot down with safety.
- In the case of double brushes, it is recommended to "fill in" between the two rows of hedge.

### **Unjumpable parts of fences**

- Unjumpable parts of a fence or combination of fences must be truly "unjumpable". This means that the Course Designer and Technical Delegate must be sure they close the places where they do not want the riders to jump in a way that for the horse it is clearly a barrier and is impossible to try to jump.

### **Alternative obstacles**

- Alternative obstacles, if possible, should be designed as the same type as the direct route, and not interfering with it.
- An alternative obstacle must not be sited in such a way as to encourage a quick jump following a refusal. For example it is not permitted to have an "elbow" attached to an obstacle on the front side as an alternative.



- Where possible, alternatives should be sited only behind the direct route, and on the landing side of obstacles. If this is not practicable (where ground slopes away or water involved) the alternative obstacle must be some distance away ensuring sufficient space to recover the impulsion is taken to jump it (at least three strides).
- For this purpose the black flag methodology is often very helpful for the Course Designer.

### **Bounce fences**

- The elements of a bounce fence should not consist of true verticals – the face of the elements should be sloping. The use of contrasting colours for each element is highly recommended.
- At one or two star events, bounce fences must not be built on downhill slopes. A bounce of maximum height is not appropriate at a lower level event.
- Double bounce fences are allowed only at 3\* events, except in the case of ‘steps’.
- Bounce fences are not recommended for EI90/100.

### **Hole fences**

- The height of the hole should not be less than 1.80m and the width not less than 1.60 m.
- Any surface that can be touched by the horse must always be soft (not susceptible to hurt the horse or the rider).
- The spread should not be more than 50% of that permitted for the level. The comment about double brushes (see above) applies.

### **Fences with roof**

- The roof should not be placed at less than 2.20m from the top of the fence.
- It is not recommended to use roofs at water complexes where the horse has to jump into the roofed area (eg: where there is a roofed bank in the water).

### **Water fences**

- Using different shades of colours or clearly differentiated colours is recommended. This makes the horse quickly understand what he has to jump. Avoid optical illusions and also avoid reflective materials / gloss paint/ shiny varnishes.
- Top line of bank or step out of water must be very visible in all conditions especially when wet after a few horses have passed.
- Step out of water, a groundline is recommended and the previous fence should be not less than 13.7m before the step.
- While a slight slope on the ground where horses land in water is recommended there must not be more than a 20cm change in the depth of water in the first two strides after landing.
- Water to water with a drop is not considered to be an appropriate question at any level.
- Use of ‘white’ coloured fences is not recommended when jumping into water.

### **Corners**

- Open Corners are recommended at all levels from one star upwards where the approach is either ‘straight’ or off a turn.
- Closed in ‘solid top’ corners are recommended where there is limited re-action time, ie. after a step or ditch or shortly after crest of hill.
- Corners with a ‘short’ back rail are recommended provided care is given to present a fence that is not confusing to the horse. This should be achieved through the flagging and a correct use of decoration, so to create a clear single visual passage across the fence. If a frangible rail is used great care must be taken to avoid the risk of a horse jumping onto the retaining post. Short back rails are not recommended for EI90/EI100 tracks.

### **Angles and Back Rail Lengths**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Angles</b>	<b>Back Rail Lengths</b>
one star	45 – 50 degrees	2.70m
two star	60 – 65 degrees	2.35m
three star	75 – 80 degrees	2.00m

## 5. A Horse's Perspective

- **Uphill approach** – easier as long as there is the opportunity to keep the revs up.
- **Downhill approach** – more difficult because the horse needs more help from the rider to maintain balance.
- **Approach off a turn** – easier because the turn helps with the balance.
- **Light into Dark** – difficult because it takes time for the horse to establish where he is going/landing.
- **Towards daylight** – much easier for it is easy for the horse to understand where it is going but guard against jumping a silhouette as this is potentially unsafe.
- **Straight-line combinations** – easier for the horse as it has the most time to understand and assess the "question".
- **Bending line combination** – can be more difficult as the rider has to take a decision!
- **Blind turns** – difficult and not appropriate at 1\* and 2\* levels or below because the horse has little time to assess to question.
- **Vision** – a horse is a 'prey animal' and can see forwards and backwards so cannot focus like a rider, a 'predator.' Therefore at narrow questions and corners it sees the fence out of one eye and a wide open space with the other.
- **Colour** – all two legged creatures see in colour, all four legged animals including horses see in contrast. Therefore officials must be cognisant of contrast (eg: a dark coloured rail in shadow is not a good idea).
- **Tiredness** – Remember a horse can get mentally tired as well as physically.

## 6. EI90 Classes

### Objective

The EI90 class is to encourage inexperienced riders and horses to compete in and experience EI events at an introductory level, with the benefit of the highest standards of course design and building.

Riders should be able to canter, around the course, in a good rhythm. They will be expected to be able to go up and down hills/slopes and to jump a variety of straight forward fences.

The cross-country course should be made up exclusively of EI90 fences, where possible, and the course should be inviting, flowing and encouraging with the minimum amount of technicality involved. If fences have to be shared with EI100 obstacles, they must be within EI90 dimensions. The EI90 class needs to cater for 'EI90 only' competitors as well as those who will use it as an educational stepping stone to progress up the classes. Time is not expected to be a key element at EI90 level. It is intended that these guidelines be used to create a base standard for the EI90 class. Advice from a senior designer is essential during the design, construction and alteration of courses.

### Design and Construction

At this grass roots level, the variety in the way that obstacles appear and their profile is very important. Obstacles which have a sympathetic and more forgiving profile should be used wherever possible. All obstacles should have well defined ground lines and their jumpable width should generally be wide and inviting. Courses should have a good balance of fences and the first six fences should encourage horses to jump confidently and in a rhythm. The inclusion of more upright fences: post and rails, is appropriate and educational but care should be given in the correct positioning of upright fences.

#### 1. Combinations and Related Distances

There should be about three combinations within the course, excluding the water fence. They should appear in the last two thirds of the course, wherever possible, to allow sufficient time for competitors to have warmed up before any questions are asked. Combinations should not appear before fence 4. (A Combination is defined as elements with two or less non jumping strides in between. Related distances refer to distances above two non-jumping strides.)

Combinations should be simple and straight forward.

Sympathetic fence profiles should be used. Avoid using fence types which can jump erratically and alter distances between elements eg. brush fence as the first part of a combination. Combinations and related distances should not be sited at the end of long galloping stretches, on a downhill slope or in an area with a confined access or exit. Avoid areas in shadow or with poor light. A slow measured approach should be the designer's aim.

#### Distances

Bounce distances, on fences with height, should not be used at this level. (A bounce distance between two steps is permitted – see table)

#### 2. Alternatives

Alternatives should not be necessary as the direct route should be suitable for the majority of competitors. Where they are considered necessary, they should be asking the same type of question as the direct route eg. accuracy, be the same in construction (where possible) and be easier and more time consuming to execute.

### 3. Water Obstacles

EI90 competitors should be expected to negotiate a simple 'dew pond' type complex, with a ramp into and out of water. Competitors should not be expected to jump into water.

#### Obstacles before water

- (i) Obstacles placed before a ramp into water should be on two non-jumping strides or more. Fence profiles should be sympathetic. Maximum height fences should be avoided.

#### Obstacles after water

- (i) Obstacles after a ramp out of water should be sited on two non-jumping strides or more. Fence profiles should be sympathetic.

#### Steps out of water

- (i) Steps out of water are acceptable, but not recommended, and must be well defined. Consider painting the top of the step out with a suitable defining colour. NO jumps in water. The depth of water (max 0.20cm) is not the test.

### 4. Narrow Fences

Narrow fences should be introduced at EI90 level. They should start to set the rider and horse a test of accuracy and honesty. There should be a maximum of 3 minimum jumpable width fences. (Jumpable width is defined as between the flags)

The minimum jumpable width should be 2.00m. This should be made more inviting with the use of trees and dressing to create an impression of width and to help guide competitors in. In the case of birch fences, cutting in a 'scallop' shape creates such an impression. Fences whose jumpable widths reduce from back to front i.e.: arrow heads should have a front face jumpable width of a minimum of 50% of the back, eg.: a 2m wide arrow head at the back, should taper to a minimum of 1m. Base spread should not exceed 75% of maximum allowed.

### 5. Tables

All tables should either be filled in with a sloping front face, with such face sloping away from the horse on the take-off side of the fence (this would be appropriate for the traditional sleeper tables or churn stands) or, in the case of picnic tables, the top line should have a vertical face of at least 0.25m and there should be a seat in front of the table, also with a vertical face of at least 0.25m. Seats must not be placed on the landing side of a table, as this may present a false ground line.

### 6. Verticals

Verticals/uprights should not be sited, where it is possible for many riders/horses to approach them too fast.

### 7. Frangible Fences

FEI approved frangible systems can be used in the construction of appropriate fences. Frangible systems should be used in jumps where, in the designer's opinion, there is a significant risk of a rotational fall due to the aspect, location or profile of the obstacle. Frangible fence systems should be installed to the manufacturer's specifications.

### 8. Distance, Speed and Efforts

Speed	Distance	Permitted jumping efforts
450m/min	1600m-2800m	18-25

### 9. Dimensions of Obstacles EI90

Obstacles	EI90
Max Height With Height and Spread	0.90m

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<b>Obstacles</b>	<b>EI90</b>
Max Spread at Highest Point	1.10m
Max spread at base	1.50m
With spread only: Max spread without height	1.20m
Max spread over water	2.00m
Drop fences: Max drop	1.20m
Jumping into and out of water: Max depth of water	0.20m
Brush	1.10m

## 7. EI100 Classes

### Objective

EI100 is to encourage less experienced riders and horses to compete in and enjoy the demands of EI events.

The cross-country course should be made up of exclusively EI100 fences. If fences have to be shared with Novice obstacles, they must be within EI100 dimensions.

The course should be inviting and flowing with obstacles evenly spaced throughout, thereby reducing long galloping stretches. The course as a whole must be consistent and demanding enough that a successful competitor could progress to CNC1\* with confidence, yet inviting enough to allow riders and horses, not yet ready for CNC1\* to gain confidence. It needs to be recognised and understood that many riders do not have the ambition to progress above this level. Competitors will be expected to jump the course in a rhythm over a variety of straightforward fences including going up and down slopes and undulations. At EI100 time begins to become a factor in the context of the competition.

These guidelines are intended to create a base standard for the EI100 class.

### Design and Construction

The variety of fence design and materials used in construction plays a significant part in educating horses and riders in what they will face as they progress through the different classes.

Courses should have a good balance of fences and the first six fences should encourage horses to jump confidently and in a rhythm. All obstacles should have ground lines with their jumpable width as wide and inviting as possible. A number of fences with top spread (90cm or over) should be encouraged.

Fences that restore confidence should be used after combinations or more difficult questions.

#### 1. Combinations & Related Distances

There should be up to **four or five combinations and related distances** within the course, excluding the water fence, and they should appear in the last two thirds of the course wherever possible, and not before fence four.

Combinations and related distances should be straight forward and inviting and can consist of up to three elements. Elements may be partially offset, parallel, or placed on a gentle curve.

Combinations should not be sited at the end of long galloping stretches, on a downhill slope or in an area with a confined access or exit. Avoid areas in shadow or with poor light. A slow measured approach should be the designer's aim.

At EI100 the design of combinations and related distances should start to incorporate a variety of different obstacle profiles.

In introducing slightly more technical combinations and related distances, kinder profile obstacles should be used eg. logs, in order to give a more positive experience. Avoid using fence types which can jump erratically and alter distances between elements eg. brush fence as the first part of a combination.

Separately numbering obstacles, rather than ABC lettering, is a useful design tool to help the inexperienced and is strongly recommended where appropriate.

#### ***Distances***

Bounce distances, on fences with height, should only be used at this level in a step combination. A step up to a fence on a bounce distance is acceptable (75% of max height), with an appropriate alternative.

## 2. Alternatives

Alternatives should only be used where necessary. Where they are considered necessary, they should be asking the same type of question, if possible, as the direct route eg. accuracy be the same in construction (where possible) and be easier and more time consuming to execute.

## 3. Water Obstacles

EI100 competitors can be expected to negotiate a variety of options.

### Water

- (i) Competitors can be expected to jump down into water off a step, but a suitable ramp alternative into water **should** be provided. Any jumping effort into water should have no significant height (below 30cm). i.e.: Pole on top of step should be below 30cm in height.
- (ii) A Step out of water is acceptable provided it is significant in height (0.75m). The placing of a pole at the base of the step and painting the top of the step a defining colour can prove to be helpful.

### Obstacles before water

- (i) Obstacles placed before a **ramp** into water, should be on 1 non-jumping strides or more. Fence profiles must be sympathetic. Maximum height fences should be avoided.
- (ii) Obstacles placed before a **step** into water should be on at least 2 non-jumping strides from the edge of the step. Fence profiles must be sympathetic. Maximum height fences should be avoided.

### Obstacles after water

Obstacles after a water complex can be placed after a ramp or step out. Obstacles should be on one non-jumping stride or more.

NO jumps in water. The depth of water (max 0.20m) is not the test.

## 4. Narrow Fences

The education started at EI90 should be built upon and we should be setting the horse and rider an increased test of accuracy and honesty, but still allowing for the inexperienced members of the partnership. **There should be a maximum of 3 minimum jumpable width fences. (Jumpable width is defined as between the flags)**

The minimum jumpable width should be **1.8m** wide. This can be made more inviting with the use of trees and dressing to create an impression of width. Some help can be given but learning to negotiate narrow fences is essential for progression.

**Fences whose jumpable widths reduce from back to front i.e.: triple brushes, arrowheads should have a front face jumpable width of a minimum of 50% of the back. Eg: a 1.8m wide triple brush at the back, should taper to a minimum of 0.90m. Base spread should not exceed 75% of the maximum allowed.**

## 5. Tables

All tables should either be filled in with a sloping front face, with such face sloping away from the horse on the take-off side of the fence (this would be appropriate for the traditional sleeper tables or churn stands) or, in the case of picnic tables, the top line should have a vertical face of at least 0.25m and there should be a seat in front of the table, with a vertical face of at least 0.25m. Seats must not be placed on the landing side of a table, as this may present a false ground line.

## 6. Verticals

**Verticals/uprights should not be sited where it is possible for many riders/horses to approach them too fast**

## 7. Frangible Fences

FEI approved frangible systems can be used in the construction of appropriate fences. Frangible systems should be used in jumps where, in the designer's opinion, there is a significant risk of a rotational fall due to the aspect, location or profile of the obstacle. Frangible fence systems should be installed to the manufacturer's specifications.

## 8. Distance, Speed and Efforts

Class	EI100
Distance	1600-2800m
Speed m/min	475
Jumping Efforts	18 – 25

## 9. Dimensions of Obstacles EI100

Obstacles	EI100
Max Height With Height and Spread	1.00m
Max Spread at Highest Point	1.10m
Max spread at base	1.80m
With spread only: Max spread without height	1.80m
Max spread over water	3.05m
Drop fences : Max drop	1.40m
Jumping into and out of water: Max depth of water	0.20m
Brush	1.20m



## 8. CNC1\*

### Objective

The CNC1\* class is the first class to carry any significance towards qualification for other classes. It is aimed at the more experienced and capable combinations of horse and rider, and at the same time recognising that CNC1\* level is a goal for many riders. It should be noted that as double clears at CNC1\* level count as a qualification and also earn grading points, the standard of the test should reflect that. The cross-country course should be made up of exclusively CNC\* fences. If fences have to be shared with another class, they must be within CNC1\* dimensions.

The course should be inviting, flowing, well balanced and make use of the natural terrain as much as possible. The use of the terrain and positioning of obstacles should require competitors to think more about the judgement of speed and approach. Novice horses are still learning and must be given the opportunity to learn and grow in confidence. The course as a whole must satisfy various needs – those who are stepping up to this level for the first time, combined with those who are ready to progress to the next level. The importance of encouraging horses and riders must not be lost.

Courses must be sufficiently demanding and technical that a successful competitor could progress through to two star with confidence, yet fair enough to allow riders and horses not yet ready for two star to gain confidence and education and build towards the next level.

These guidelines are intended to create a base standard for the One Star class. Advice from Technical Advisers should be sought during the design, construction and alteration of courses.

### Design and Construction

The variety of fence design and materials used in construction plays a significant part in educating horses and riders in what they will face as they progress through to the two star class. Courses should have a good balance of fences and the first few fences should encourage horses to jump confidently and in a rhythm and reflect the task ahead. Straight forward fences should be up to maximum dimensions, and where design is not an issue should be as wide and inviting as possible. A number of fences with significant top spread (over 1.00m) should be encouraged. Increased technicality should play an important part in the design process at this level. Fences that restore confidence should be used after combinations or more difficult questions.

#### 1. Combinations & Related Distances

There should be a **minimum of four or five combinations and related distances** within the course, excluding the water fence, and they should appear in the last three quarters of the course wherever possible, and not before fence 4. **(A Combination is defined as elements with two or less non jumping strides in between. Related distances refer to distances above two non-jumping strides.)**

Combinations should consist of numerous elements. Elements may be partially offset, parallel, or placed on a curve.

**When bending one star horses and riders from one jumping effort to another, the following guideline is appropriate;**

**Bend through 45 Degrees – Minimum of 4 non jumping strides.  
Bend through 60 Degrees – Minimum of 5 non jumping strides.  
Bend through 90 Degrees – Minimum of 6 non jumping strides.**

#### Distances

- (i) **A bounce** (2 similar fences on reasonably flat ground) can be used but is not compulsory. Differentiating both elements of the bounce is strongly advised. Fences with Top Spreads over 30cm **must not** be used within a bounce.

- (ii) The make up of combinations and related distances should be varied in technicality and the questions that are asked. Full use should be made of natural terrain and features to test competitors' ability to judge speed and approach and accuracy. However, care should be used to avoid areas which could be 'trappy' or have shadow and poor light.
- (iii) Incorporating different fence profiles into combinations and related distances is essential in testing ability and educating 1star competitors. Avoid using fence types, which can jump erratically and alter distances between elements, e.g.: Brush Fence as the first part of a combination.

## 2. Alternatives

Alternatives should be used where necessary. Where they are deemed to be necessary, they should be asking the same question as the direct route i.e.: accuracy, be the same in construction (where possible) and take longer to execute.

A bounce combination must have a suitable alternative, accessible without having to negotiate the bounce.

## 3. Water Obstacles

One Star courses must have a water obstacle. New 1Star courses starting without a water complex must move to incorporating water within an agreed time frame. Competitors should be expected to negotiate a variety of options.

### Water

- (i) Competitors can be expected to jump down into water off a step and over an obstacle with height. Jumps landing into water (which have a height of 0.50m or more) should have a suitable alternative, and have no significant top spread.
- (ii) Steps out of water are acceptable provided they are significant in height (up to 0.80cm). The placing of a pole at the base of the step and painting the top of the step a defining colour can prove to be helpful.
- (iii) The depth of water (max 0.30m) is not the test.

### Obstacles before water

- (i) Obstacles can be placed before water, using the whole spectrum of distances, except a **bounce** distance.
- (ii) Consideration needs to be given to the profiles of obstacles before water. Sympathetic profiles i.e.: Log, would be more suitable on distances closer to the water with stronger profile fences i.e.: post and rails being used with greater distance between the obstacle and the water.

### Obstacles in water

- (i) Obstacles in water are acceptable at One Star level.
- (ii) If jumps in water are to be used there should be only one other effort associated with the water, e.g.: jump into water followed by an obstacle in water and a slope/ramp out.

### Obstacles after water

Obstacles can be placed after water, using the whole spectrum of distances, except a **bounce** distance.

## 4. Narrow Fences

At One Star level we should be asking the horse and rider an increased test of accuracy and honesty, but still allowing for the less experienced members of the partnership. The minimum jumpable width should be **1.50m** wide. **There should be a maximum of 4 minimum jumpable width fences. (Jumpable width is defined as between the flags)**

This can be made more inviting with the use of trees and dressing to create an impression of width. The use of narrow fences should be encouraged at this level and included into combinations as well as water complexes.

**Fences whose jumpable widths reduce from back to front i.e.: triple brushes, arrowheads should have a front face jumpable width of a minimum of 50% of the back. Eg: a 1.8m wide triple brush at the back, should taper to a minimum of 0.90m. Base spread should not exceed 75% of the maximum allowed.**

#### 5. Tables

All tables should either be filled in with a sloping front face, with such face sloping away from the horse on the take off side of the fence (this would be appropriate for the traditional sleeper tables or churn stands) or, in the case of picnic tables, that the top line should have a vertical face of at least 0.25m and that a seat should be in front of the table, also having a vertical face of at least 0.25m

Seats must not be placed on the landing side of a table, as this may present a false ground line.

#### 6. Verticals

Care should be given to the positioning of verticals/uprights. We should at this level be starting to test judgement and approach, but must be aware of competitors approaching upright fences too fast

#### 7. Frangible Fences

FEI approved frangible systems can be used in the construction of appropriate fences. Frangible systems should be used in jumps where, in the designer's opinion, there is a significant risk of a rotational fall due to the aspect, location or profile of the obstacle. Frangible fence systems should be installed to the manufacturer's specifications.

#### 8. Distance, Speed and Efforts

Class	CNC1*	CNCP2*
Distance	1800-3000m	1800-3000m
Speed m/min	520	500 - 520
Jumping Efforts	18 - 30	18 - 30

#### 9. Dimensions of Obstacles CNC1\*/CNCP2\*

Obstacles	CNC1* CNCP2*
Max Height With Height and Spread	1.10m
Max Spread at Highest Point	1.40m
Max spread at base	2.10m
With spread only: Max spread without height	2.80m
Max spread over water	3.05m
Drop fences :Max drop	1.60m
Jumping into and out of water: Max depth of water	0.30m
Brush	1.30m

## 9. CNC2\*

### Objective

The Two Star grade should be considered the second stage towards true international competition. The class has a significant importance towards qualification for other competitions and should therefore be aimed to give experience to those combinations.

A Two Star cross country course should start to test the scope, control, accuracy, education and balance of horse and rider.

The cross-country course should ideally be made up of exclusively Two Star fences.

The course should be inviting and flowing, and the terrain can be used to play a more important part in the course design and positioning of obstacles, than at the lower levels.

### Design and Construction

Courses should have a good balance of fences and the first few fences should encourage horses to jump confidently and in a rhythm and reflect the task ahead. Straight forward fences should be up to height and top spread, and where design is not an issue, should be as wide and inviting as possible.

At Two Star level intensive questions can be asked more frequently without the need for as many let up or confidence giving fences, as in one star. It is important to remember that this is still an educational level and opportunities for horses and riders to grow in confidence must still exist.

### Design Specifics and Core Elements

Within the two star class, it is felt that specific design criteria and core elements should be incorporated, where appropriate. **Each cross country should have at least 5 different core fence types.**

- (a) There should be a correct correlation between course distance, jumping efforts and terrain.
- (b) The course should have at least two minimum jumpable width fences, one of which should be in a combination, or related distance. Narrow Fences are considered a core fence type.
- (c) A Water Jump is essential and is a core element.
- (d) A course should have a **Drop** of between 1.20m and 1.80m and is a core element.
- (e) Bounces are strongly recommended. As with all classes the correct site for a bounce is paramount.
- (f) Open Corners are strongly recommended. **Corners** are considered a core fence type.
- (g) A **Ditch** is considered a core fence type and the course must incorporate at least one ditch, (more than one preferable) either an open ditch within a coffin or as an integral part of a fence i.e. Trakehner or elephant trap.
- (h) A minimum of 20% of fences should have Top Spread (greater than 1.30m). **Top Spread** fences are core fence types
- (i) **Vertical** and more upright fences are considered essential for riders and horse to demonstrate their skills. They are considered core fence types and should be used appropriately and with the use of frangible pins.

A Two Star designer should be encouraged to use the full spectrum of questions and distances ie. split lines, curving lines and bounces. Designers should be moving away from 90 degree turns within their courses, which are stressful and uncomfortable for the horse to jump. (Unless the distance between them is more than five strides)

#### 1. Combinations

There should be a **minimum of five combinations or related distances** within the course, excluding the water fence and wherever possible not before fence 4. **(A Combination is**

**defined as elements with two or less non jumping strides in between. Related distances refer to distances above two non jumping strides.)**

Combinations and related fences should be appropriately demanding and technically challenging and consist of several elements. Elements can be straight, partially offset, parallel, or placed on a curve. **At least one of the combinations should be made up of three elements and one should include a narrow test.**

**When bending Two Star horses and riders from one jumping effort to another, the following guideline is appropriate;**

**Bend through 60 Degrees – Minimum of 4 non jumping strides.**

**Bend through 90 Degrees – Minimum of 5 non jumping strides.**

### **Distances**

- (i) **A bounce (2 similar fences on flat ground or uphill) is recommended. Differentiating both** elements of the bounce is strongly advised. (i.e.: colour) Fences with significant top spread (over 30cm) should be not be used within a bounce.
- (ii) The balance of combinations should be varied in technicality and the questions that are asked. Particular use should be made of natural terrain and features to test competitors' ability to judge speed, approach and accuracy. However, care should be used to avoid areas which could be 'trappy'. Where shadow and poor light are evident, pale colours should be used.
- (iii) Incorporating different fence profiles and designs into combinations and related fences is essential in testing the ability and education of horses and riders.

### **2. Alternatives**

Where alternatives are deemed to be necessary, they should, where possible, be asking the same question as the direct route i.e.: accuracy, be of similar nature, but take longer to execute. Where there are combinations involving maximum top spreads or with very technical questions a two star designer may decide to offer a 'long route', which takes significantly longer. As time is more crucial at this level, this is good design practice and allows for inexperienced horses or combinations to complete and learn without affecting the result.

### **3. Water Obstacles**

A Water obstacle is essential at Two Star. Competitors should be expected to negotiate a variety of options. A designer should be more inventive with fence designs around water i.e. Narrow fences, brush and corners.

**There should be a minimum of two efforts connected with the water one of which must have height (over 30cms).**

#### **Water**

- (i) Competitors can be expected to jump down into water off a step and over an obstacle with height into water. The maximum drop for the two star class (1.80m) should be avoided into water. Most often the drop determines the height of the obstacle.
- (ii) Steps out of water should be significant in height (Suggested Max 1.00m). The placing of a pole at the base of the step and painting the top of the step a defining colour is always helpful.
- (iii) The depth of water (max 0.30m) is not the test.

#### **Obstacles before water**

- (i) Obstacles can be placed before water, using the whole spectrum of distances, including a **bounce** distance.
- (ii) Consideration needs to be given to the profiles of obstacles before water. A more sympathetic profile ie: Log, would be more suitable on distances closer to the water with stronger profile fences ie.: post and rails being used with greater distance between the obstacle and the water.

### Obstacles in water

Obstacles in water are appropriate at two star level. Maximum height and minimum width of obstacles in water should be avoided.

### Obstacles after water

Obstacles can be placed after water, using the whole spectrum of distances, however a bounce distance would be considered in appropriate.

#### 4. Narrow Fences

At Two Star level we should be asking the horse and rider an increased test of accuracy and honesty. The minimum jumpable width should be **1.30m** wide. The use of narrow fences is essential at this level and **included in at least one combination**.

#### 5. Tables

All tables should either be filled in with a sloping front face, with such face sloping away from the horse on the take off side of the fence (this would be appropriate for the traditional sleeper tables or churn stands) or, in the case of picnic tables, that the top line should have a vertical face of at least 0.25m and that a seat should be in front of the table, also having a vertical face of at least 0.25m. Seats must not be placed on the landing side of a table, as this may present a false ground line.

#### 6. Verticals

Care should be given to the positioning of verticals/uprights

#### 7. Frangible Jumps

FEI approved frangible systems can be used in the construction of appropriate fences. Frangible systems should be used in jumps where, in the designer's opinion, there is a significant risk of a rotational fall due to the aspect, location or profile of the obstacle. Frangible fence systems should be installed to the manufacturer's specifications.

#### 8. Distance, Speed and Efforts

Class	CNC2*
Distance	2800-3600m
Speed m/min	550
Jumping Efforts	22 – 32

#### 9. Dimensions of Obstacles CNC2\*

Obstacles	CNC2*
Max Height With Height and Spread	1.15m
Max Spread at Highest Point	1.60m
Max spread at base	2.40m
With spread only: Max spread without height	3.20m
Max spread over water	3.65m
Drop fences :Max drop	1.80m
Jumping into and out of water: Max depth of water	0.30m
Brush	1.35m

## 10. Guide Lines on Distances between Related Fences

There are many factors that affect the length of the average horse's stride between two related fences including:

- Profile, width, slope up, slope down, ground conditions, what is associated with the fence (eg. Water, ditch, into dark etc.) and other variations.

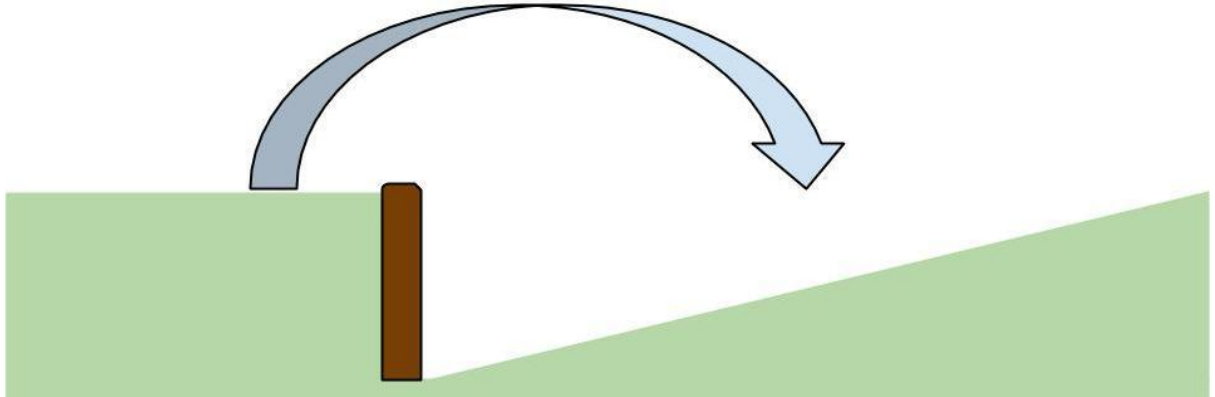
All these factors must be taken into account when setting the distance between fences and it is with experience over time that will determine the correct distance between elements.

The following are guide line distances that should work with most horses. When using these distances in the lower level competitions use the shorter distances and the higher level competitions should use longer distances.

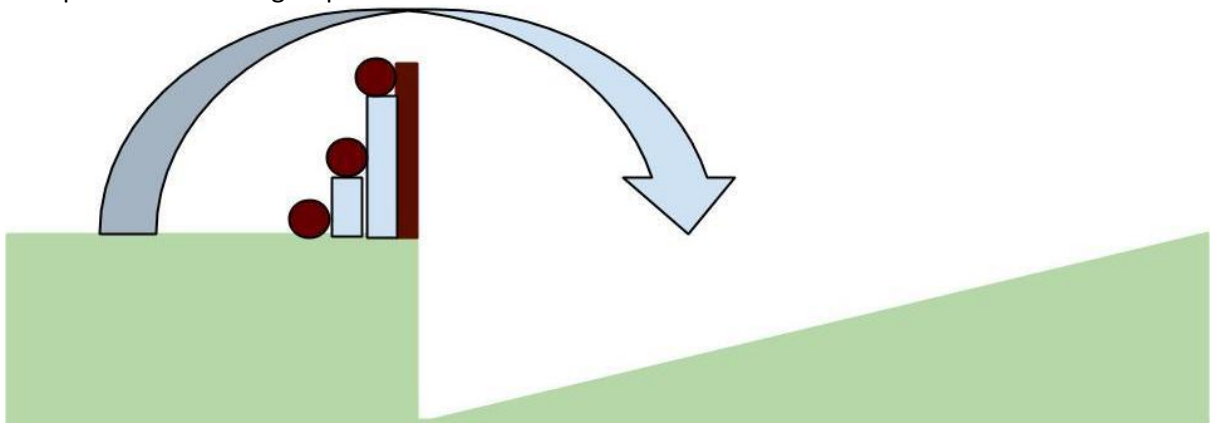
<b>Cross-country guide line distances</b>	
1 Stride	7.6m-7.9m (25ft-26ft)
2 Strides	10.5m-11m (34ft 6in-36ft)
3 Strides	14.5m- 15.8m (48ft-52ft)
Jump to Ditch- A to B	Sloping-5.5m (18ft) Flat ground 6.1m (20ft)
Jump to Ditch- B to C	Sloping 5.8m (19ft) Flat ground 6.4ft (21ft)
Sunken Road 1 Stride	6.6m-7.9m (21ft-22ft 6in)
Sunken Road 2 Strides	9.2m-9.5m (30ft-31ft)
Bounce Steps up or down	2.8m (9ft)
Steps 1 Strides up	5.5m-6.1m (18ft-20ft)
Step up, Bounce to Jump	2.78m (9ft)
Step up, 1 Stride to Jump	5.8m-6m (19ft-20ft)
Step down, 1 Stride to Jump	5.4m-5.8m (18ft-19ft)
Jump, bounce to step down	3.05m (10ft)
Jump, 1 Stride to Step down	5.5m-6m (18ft-20ft)
Jump, 1 Stride to Step up	7.3m (24ft)
Bank	2.6m-3.05m (8ft 6in-10ft)

## 11. Unacceptable Cross Country Fences

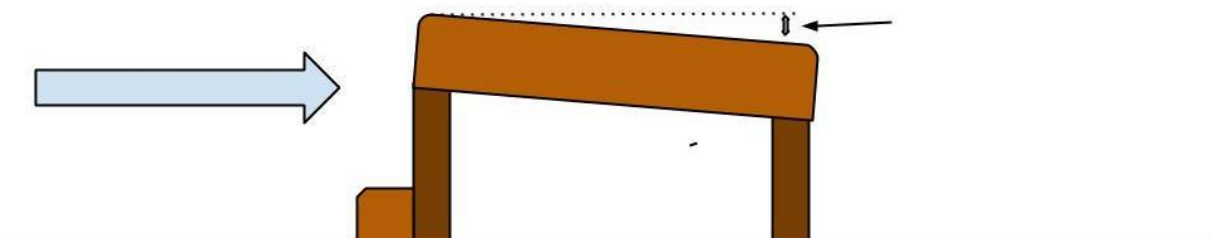
(i) Step down onto rising slope



(ii) Jump down onto rising slope

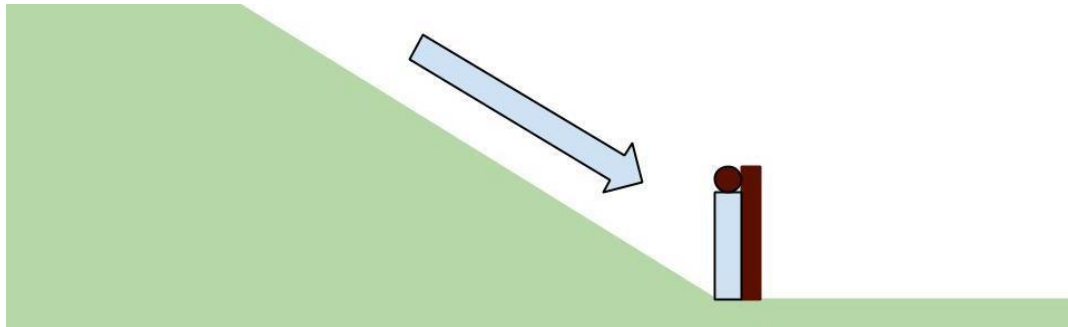


(iii) Spread fence lower on the landing side.

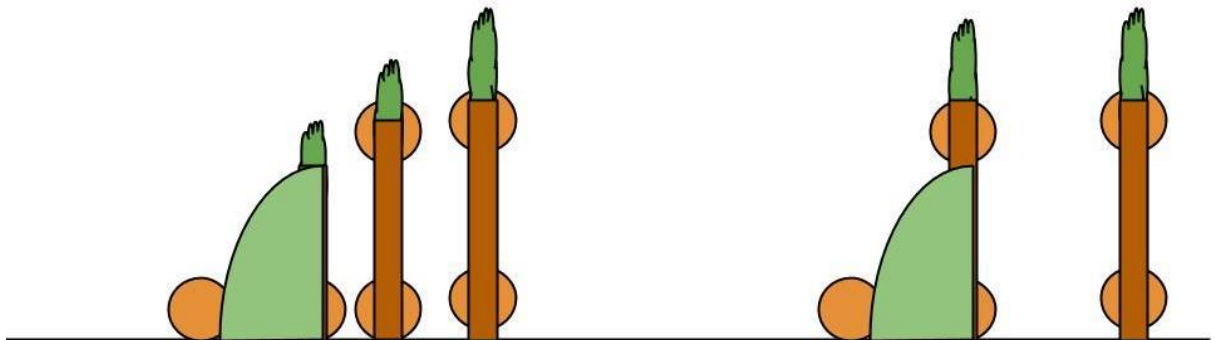




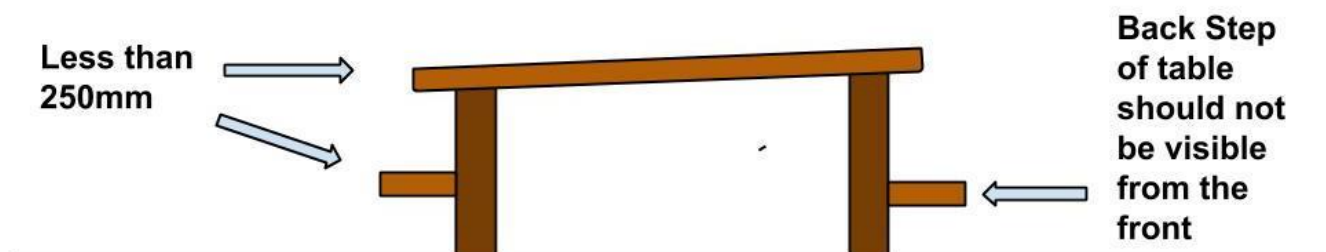
(iv) Slope down to upright fence



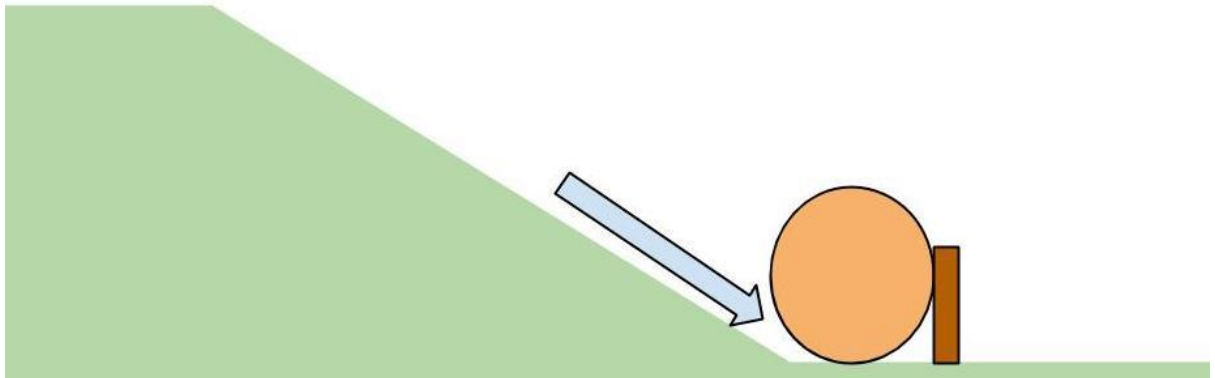
(v) Double or triple brush without being filled in between parts



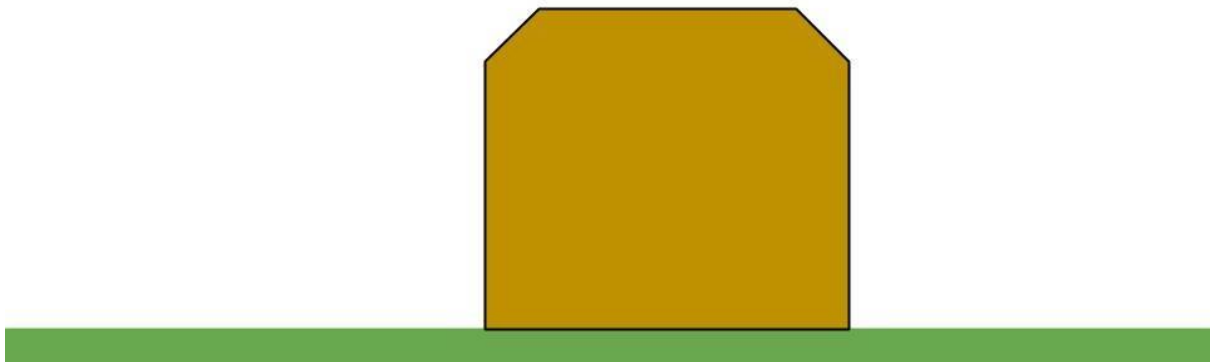
(vi) Table or Picnic Table with front edges less than 250mm



- (vii) Jumps likely to cause a leg to be trapped

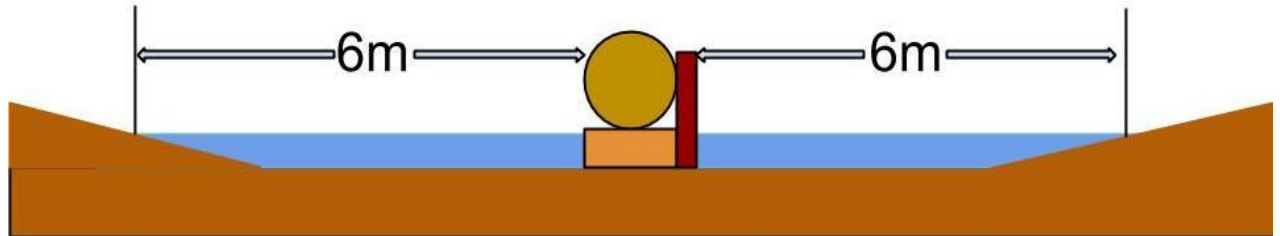


- (viii) Unsecured portable fences

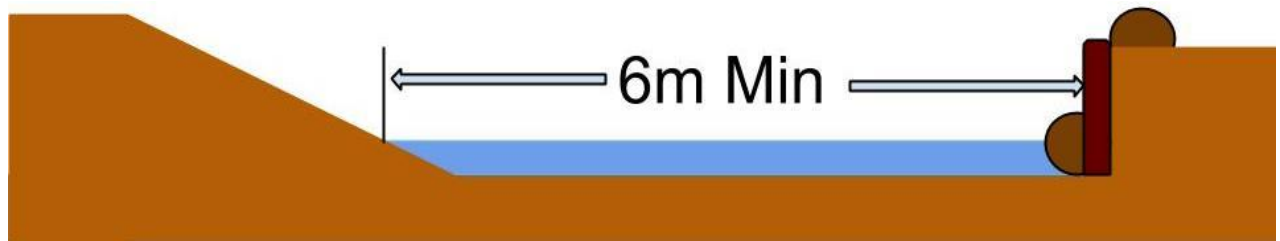


**12. Recommended Minimum Distances in Water**

(i) Jump in Water



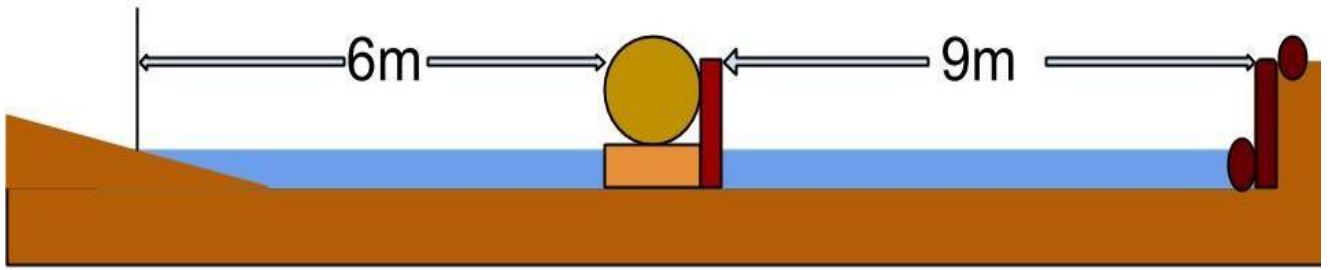
(ii) Ramp in step out



(iii) Step into and step out of water



(iv) Jump in Water to Step Up



### **13. Course Designer Levels and Upgrading Criteria**

To be on the current EI course designers list the designer must be a paid up member of Eventing Ireland for the current year, ie minimum Non-riding membership.

#### **1. Assistant Course Designer**

- a) Must have a working knowledge of equestrian competitions and in particular must have volunteered in the running of Eventing Ireland competitions.
- b) Assisting/actively working with a qualified course designer to at least EI100 level

#### **2. One Star National Course Designers**

The requirements to be promoted to a One Star National course designer is as follows:

- a) To have regular practice as an assistant course designer over a period of the past two years.
- b) To have gained experience as a one star course designer, under supervision of an Eventing Ireland national course designer, at a minimum of two FEI and/or national one day events. These should include course design for EI90, EI100 and One Star tracks.
- c) To have been recommended for promotion by an FEI/Eventing Ireland 2/3 star course designer.
- d) To have received positive assessments at an EI approved course design seminar and from their mentor.

#### **3. Two Star National Course Designers**

The requirements to be promoted to a Two Star National course designer is as follows:

- a) To have regular practice as a One Star National Course Designer over a period of at least two years.
- b) To have gained experience as an assistant course designer at 2/3 star or international events during the past two years.
- c) May be listed as an FEI 1 & 2 Star Course Designer.
- d) To have been recommended for promotion by an FEI/Eventing Ireland 2/3 star course designer.
- e) To have received positive assessments at an EI approved course design seminar and from their mentor.

#### **4. Three Star National Course Designers**

The requirements to be promoted to a Three Star National course designer is as follows:

- a) To have regular practice as a Two Star National Course Designer over a period of at least two years.
- b) To have gained experience as a course designer at international events, both at CIC and CCI level, during the past two years.
- c) Should be listed as an FEI 1 & 2 Star Course Designer.
- d) To have been recommended for promotion by a 3 star FEI/Eventing Ireland national course designer.
- e) To have received positive assessments at an FEI/EI approved course design seminar and from their mentor.