

## Getting involved: Promoting responsible access

All walkers and others enjoying outdoor recreation have a part to play in making sure that the legislation works.

### What can I do?

By behaving responsibly yourself you are giving a good example to land managers and other walkers. Use common sense, know the Code, and pass on advice to other walkers.

If you walk with a dog, keep it under proper control and do not take your dog into any field with young animals in it, or into fields of vegetables or fruit unless there is a clear path.

If you encounter any obstructions or other problems, contact the local authority or national park authority access officer, and the Ramblers Scotland office. Highlight any problems or examples of good practice in the local press or Ramblers' group newsletters.

Get in touch with your local access officer and offer to help with signposting or path maintenance. You could join your Local Access Forum or community path network planning group to give input at a grassroots level. See the Ramblers Scotland *Outdoor Access: Getting Involved* pack on our website for more information.



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## Useful contacts

Ramblers' Association Scotland

- Promoting walking for health and pleasure
- Developing path networks
- Securing access for walkers
- Protecting the outdoor environment

As the representative body for walkers in Scotland, the Ramblers took a leading role in delivering the access legislation and Code. Join us to make more walking friends, and to make sure these rights are protected, promoted and work well for everyone.

See [www.ramblers.org.uk/scotland](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/scotland) for information on access and walking in Scotland. Download a copy of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code from the website, or call our office at the number below if you do not have internet access.

The Scottish Outdoor Access website is at [www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com). Maintained by Scottish Natural Heritage, this site is full of useful information and has contact details for all access officers in local authorities and national parks, and other recreation organisations.

For advice on walking during deer stalking activities, check out the Hillphones service on [www.hillphones.info](http://www.hillphones.info).

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# Walking in Scotland

## A guide to access rights by Ramblers' Association Scotland

Statutory rights of public access have been established over most land and inland water in Scotland through the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. This legislation, along with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, provides a framework for access which secures our traditional rights and freedoms, alongside a modern system for protecting paths and developing new path networks.

This leaflet will help you to get the most out of walking in Scotland and to enjoy your right to roam in a responsible way.

Main photo © Ben Winston



# The right to roam:

## *The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003*

This legislation establishes a right of non-motorised access over most land and inland water.\* The Act is supported by the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and places new responsibilities on local authorities and national park authorities to uphold access rights. In addition, Local Access Forums have been set up in all local authority areas and national parks. They are helping to promote the new access arrangements and encourage the development of new path networks.

### *Main points about the Act for walkers:*

- It establishes a statutory right of access over most land and inland water for recreational, educational and some commercial purposes, and for crossing over land or water.
- Both land managers and walkers must behave responsibly. Access should be taken in ways which are compatible with land management needs.
- Both access takers and land managers must respect the environment, including wildlife and historic features.

We now have one of the best arrangements in Europe for public access to land and inland water for our citizens and visitors. There's never been a better time to go for a walk in Scotland!

### *Dealing with obstructions*

If you find a path is obstructed, eg, by a broken stile, please try and inform the land manager. If you believe the obstruction is intentional, eg, a barbed wire fence, contact the access authority (info at [www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com)).

If you believe you are walking in a responsible way, yet a land manager tries to prevent you from taking access, you may continue or choose to leave. Later you can contact the local access officer to report the incident, and please also inform the Ramblers Scotland office.

\* apart from people with a disability using a vehicle adapted for their use

# The guidance:

## *The Scottish Outdoor Access Code*

What is responsible access? For detailed guidance on responsible behaviour for the public and land managers, see the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, which was approved by the Scottish Parliament in 2004.



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### *Know the Code – enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly*

When you're **in the outdoors:**

- take personal responsibility for your own actions and act safely;
- respect people's privacy and peace of mind;
- help land managers and others to work safely and effectively;
- care for your environment and take your litter home;
- keep your dog under proper control;
- take extra care if you're organising an event or running a business.

If you're **managing the outdoors:**

- respect access rights;
- act reasonably when asking people to avoid land management operations;
- work with your local authority and other bodies to help integrate access and land management;
- respect rights of way and customary access.



SCOTTISH  
OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE

For a full copy of the Code go to [www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com)  
or phone your local Scottish Natural Heritage office.

# Responsible access:

## *Key points for walkers*

**Farmland:** access rights apply to fields but not to grassland being grown for hay or silage if it is above ankle height. Field margins are included in access rights, even if sown with a crop. When crossing arable fields use the tracks or "tramlines" made by tractor wheels, or any unsown ground. Avoid disturbing farm animals, especially where young or aggressive animals are present.

**Farmyards:** farmyards are not included in the right of access, but you may still take access through farmyards by rights of way, custom or tradition. Farmers are encouraged to sign alternative routes if they do not want people passing through their farmyard. If you are going through a farmyard, proceed with care and respect the privacy of those living on the farm.

**Camping:** access rights extend to lightweight, wild camping – small numbers of people for 2 or 3 nights in one place. Take your litter away and don't cause pollution. For guidance on responsible wild camping see: [www.mountaineering-scotland.org.uk/leaflets/wildcamp.html](http://www.mountaineering-scotland.org.uk/leaflets/wildcamp.html).

**Shooting:** walkers should take account of reasonable requests to minimise disturbance where sport shooting or culling is taking place of, eg, deer, grouse or pheasants. Advice on red deer stalking may be available for some areas on the Hillphones service ([www.hillphones.info](http://www.hillphones.info)) in late summer or early autumn. Disturbance can usually be minimised by following prominent ridges, main watercourses or routes through the glens.

**Golf courses:** you have the right to cross a golf course, providing you avoid interfering with anyone playing golf and also stay off the greens, and keep dogs on short leads.

**Houses & gardens:** you cannot take access in private gardens, within the curtilage of buildings, or in places where an entrance charge is made.

**Requests not to take access:** be guided by reasonable requests from land managers not to take access when, eg, tree felling is taking place or you might disturb nesting birds. Such requests should apply to specific areas and times and for short periods. Alternative routes may be suggested.