

WALKING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Responsible behaviour by the public

We all know that being in the outdoors is great for our health and wellbeing and walking can be a key part of this.

Whatever your walking interest, whether it's straight from your front door to walk locally, or further afield in the fantastic Scottish countryside, hills or mountains, there are some key organisations and plenty of information to help you on your way.

What will you use as your inspiration? A guide book, a map, tourist information leaflet, an app for your mobile phone? Some ideas can be found on the [NatureScot](#) website.

The Access Code says:

You can exercise access rights for:

- recreational purposes (such as pastimes, family and social activities, and more active pursuits like horse riding, cycling, wild camping and taking part in events)
- educational purposes (concerned with furthering a person's understanding of the natural and cultural heritage)
- some commercial purposes (where the activities are the same as those done by the general public), and
- for crossing over land or water.

The three key principles of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code are:

- Respect the interests of other people
- Care for the environment
- Take responsibility for your own actions

Responsible behaviour by land managers

There is no specific guidance for land managers about walking in the Practical Guide section (Part 5) of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. This is because most of this information is provided in other parts of the Code, including Part 4: 'Managing land and water responsibly for access'. In brief, the general principles of responsible land management apply:

- respect access rights in managing your land;
- 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, and;
- take account of access rights if you manage 'contiguous land' (places where access rights don't apply, but which may be important for access to neighbouring land).

Further information

The Scottish Government and public bodies are working hard to encourage everyone to become more active. This can greatly improve people's health and well-being (helping to combat problems such as obesity), and bring economic benefits. It can also help to reconnect people with nature and the land, and to promote greater understanding of land management. Your help and support can play an important role in meeting these aims.