

## Dogs

If you have permission to take your dog with you, keep it under control:

- Do not let your dog frighten other people.
- Keep your dog on a short lead or under close control around farm animals.
- Do not let your dog disturb birds or wildlife.
- Pick up and remove your dog's faeces.
- If you take your dog onto sheep farms you should get it dosed for sheep measles.

## Firearms

Even though you may have a legal right to carry a firearm in a particular place, recognise how others may feel:

- Get permission before shooting.
- Always observe the Firearms Safety Code.

## Land managers

If you have authority as a landowner or manager to grant access to land:

- Respond reasonably when people ask permission for access. Explain the reasons for any conditions that you apply.
- Advise visitors of out-of-the-ordinary hazards arising from farm activities (such as tree felling or blasting).
- Respect people's rights of public access, such as use of unformed legal roads and marginal strips. The exact locations of these can be hard to determine.
- Unformed legal roads may be unsurfaced, unfenced and indistinguishable from surrounding land, but they still have the legal rights and obligations of formed roads.
- Work with your local council and others to help manage access issues and safety.

- Respect sites of Māori cultural significance such as wāhi tapu. Work with iwi and hapū.
- Work with recreation groups and local authorities to provide tracks and signs to help everyone behave with care.

## Māori relationships with land

*Whaia nga tapuwae o nga tupuna*

Māori land does not generally have public access rights, so you need to seek permission from the owners or those authorised by them. Learn and follow the relevant tikanga (protocol). Cultural offence may be caused by haere pokanoa (unauthorised wandering).

Provisions are likely to include:

- Respect for specific taonga including wāhi tapu (sacred places).
- Complying with rāhui (restrictions) and other Māori customs and practices.

Seeking permission may not be straightforward.

You may need the help of the local Māori Land Court, tribal authorities and Maori Land Online to identify property boundaries, owners and appropriate contacts.

## The Outdoor Access Code

This leaflet is a shortened version of the Walking Access Commission's Outdoor Access Code. The Commission works to provide free, certain, enduring and practical public access to the outdoors.

For more information, or if you are having access issues – either as a land user or a land manager:



+64 4 815 8502  
[www.walkingaccess.govt.nz](http://www.walkingaccess.govt.nz)  
[contact@walkingaccess.govt.nz](mailto:contact@walkingaccess.govt.nz)

# Outdoor Access Rights and Responsibilities



***New Zealand's outdoors is full of unique and incredible places. Our recreational heritage – based on access to rivers, beaches, forests and mountains – contributes to our quality of life, our wellbeing and our environment.***

## Know your access rights and responsibilities

Not all rivers, lakes, beaches, forests and mountains have public access to, along or around them.

There are many outdoor places you can access:

- most foreshore (beaches), but some foreshore is private;
- legal walkways;
- legal roads (including unformed legal roads);
- marginal strips along waterways under the Conservation Act;
- public access easements across private land;
- national parks, reserves and other conservation lands.

Depending on the type of access, you might be able to do a range of different activities. For example:

- picnicking, photos and sightseeing;
- walking, cycling, horse-riding, fishing, tramping, kayaking, camping, rock climbing, mountaineering;
- crossing land to get from one place to another; and
- activities involving cars, dogs, or guns.

## Get permission

If land is fenced off or appears to be private and there are no signs indicating access, then ask for permission. There may be valid reasons (such as lambing or mustering) for land managers to deny access. Accept refusals with good grace.

If you want to use a vehicle, or take a dog or firearm, make this clear when seeking permission.



You can view many areas of legal public access via online maps at [www.wams.org.nz](http://www.wams.org.nz).

Tracks on maps (including the NZ Topographic map 1:50,000 series) are not necessarily public.

## Be Responsible

Outdoor access to both public and private land comes with obligations:

- Take responsibility for your own actions.
- Follow any reasonable advice offered.
- Consider and respect other people.
- Care for the environment.
- Seek permission for access to private or Māori land.
- Learn and respect tikanga Māori.
- Know the Outdoor Safety Code (on DOC's website).
- Be aware of natural hazards and weather.
- Keep a safe distance from farm or other machinery.
- Get permits for hunting and fishing.

## Take care

### Respect other people's property

- Leave gates as you find them – open or closed.
- Do not climb unsupported fence wires – in the absence of a gate or stile, go through the fence wires or climb over at posts.
- Do not block or obstruct gateways, tracks or entrances.
- Walk in single file around farm animals, without disturbing them.
- Do not feed farm animals.



- Walk around, rather than through, crops.
- Report damage, stock in difficulty, or anything suspicious to the land manager.

### Limit outdoor fire risk

- Do not light fires without permission.
- Make sure you fully extinguish fires.
- Be aware of closed fire seasons.

### Care for the environment

- Do not disturb stock or damage vegetation, wildlife, historic places, pasture or crops.
- Take your litter home. Bury toilet waste away from waterways.

### Be aware

- Make room for others.
- If biking or horse-riding, control your speed.
- Let others know you are passing.
- If farm animals are on the road drive slowly, keep left and wait for them to move away.

## Consider others

### Motor vehicles

Motor vehicles can be much more intrusive than walking or cycling:

- Make sure you say you will use a motor vehicle when you seek permission.
- Even where access with vehicles is legally allowed, such as on an unformed legal road, it is polite to inform the adjacent landholder.
- Keep strictly to formed tracks and do not cause damage.
- If a legal road is blocked (for example, by a locked gate) report this to the Council.