

The Countryside Code

The Countryside Code started life in the 1950s as the Country Code. The new version was launched in July 2004.

The Countryside Code applies to all parts of the countryside. Most of it is just good commonsense as it's designed to help us all to respect, protect and enjoy our countryside. The Code, which applies in England and Wales, makes it clear what the responsibilities are for both the public and the people who manage the land.

There are five sections to the Countryside Code which is dedicated to helping members of the public respect, protect and enjoy the countryside:

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- **Keep dogs under close control**
- Consider other people

Keep dogs under close control

The countryside is a great place to exercise dogs, but it's every owner's duty to make sure their dog is not a danger or nuisance to farm animals, wildlife or other people.

Wherever you go, following these steps will help keep your pet safe, protect the environment, and show you are a responsible dog owner.



- ❁ Control your dog so that it does not scare or disturb farm animals or wildlife.
- ❁ When using the new access rights over open country and common land, you must keep your dog on a short lead between 1 March and 31 July – and all year round near farm animals – and you may not be able to take your dog at all on some areas or at some times. Please follow any official signs.
- ❁ You do not have to put your dog on a lead on public paths, as long as it is under close control. But as a general rule, keep your dog on a lead if you cannot rely on its obedience. By law, farmers are entitled to destroy a dog that injures or worries their animals.
- ❁ If a farm animal chases you and your dog, it is safer to let your dog off the lead – don't risk getting hurt by trying to protect it.
- ❁ Take particular care that your dog doesn't scare sheep and lambs, or wander where it might disturb birds that nest on the ground and other wildlife – eggs and young will soon die without protection from their parents.
- ❁ Everyone knows how unpleasant dog mess is and it can cause infections, so always clean up after your dog and get rid of the mess responsibly. Also, make sure your dog is wormed regularly to protect it, other animals and people.

Find out more about the Countryside Code from www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk