

Responsible dog walking in Scotland



The outdoors is good for dogs and their owners. In Scotland, you can walk your dog on most land as long as you follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and keep your dog under proper control.

Poorly controlled dogs are a serious concern for farmers, other land managers and visitors to the countryside. Dogs can:

- worry or attack livestock, for example causing pregnant ewes to miscarry or resulting in injury or death,
- disturb wildlife, including breeding birds, and
- scare other people.

Key things to remember are:

- do not allow your dog to approach animals or people uninvited (in open country, it may not be obvious when animals are around)
- where possible avoid animals – release your dog if threatened by cattle
- always keep your dog in sight and under control – if in doubt use a lead
- don't take your dog into fields of vegetables and fruit unless there is a clear path
- always bag and bin dog poo – take it home when bins aren't available

Advice for farmers and crofters

To help address any problems caused by dog walking, you can:

- consider public access and assess relevant risks
- if necessary, use helpful signs to highlight issues to dog owners, removing them when not required, and
- suggest reasonable alternative routes if needed.

Further advice

- The Scottish Outdoor Access Code website includes guidance on managing issues linked to dog walking and downloadable signs.
- For assistance in managing problems at a particular place, contact your local authority access officer.

