

MOD reminds public to stay safe on the Defence Training estate during the summer holidays

School's out, the summer holidays are here, and with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions more people may decide to explore MOD training areas with their friends and family.

The 'Respect the Range' campaign led by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) is encouraging people who use military training areas for recreational activities to stay safe and be aware of the potential dangers.

The campaign, which is targeting Salisbury Plain and Aldershot before being rolled out further, aims to raise the public's awareness and understanding of the very real risks to personal safety when using military land.

Much of the Defence training estate is open to the public and offers people the opportunity to get outside and enjoy nature. The MOD welcomes visitors to accessible areas of its estate but encourages them to always use the land safely and in line with MOD guidance and byelaws.

The summer holidays also mean that people may be tempted to use the MOD training estate for outdoor activities like camping and picnics, which are not allowed.

BBQs, campfires, wild camping and picnics are not permitted anywhere on the Defence training estate. The military train at all times of the day and night and the land must remain clear for vehicles and Service personnel. Campfires and BBQs pose the additional risk of causing wildfires, which not only put lives at risk, but also damage important flora and fauna.

In recent years, training estate staff have reported an increase in visitors straying from public footpaths and rights of way on military training areas, endangering their own lives as well as those who are with them, including children and pets. This can also put Service personnel at risk and interrupt vital training exercises, impacting on the Armed Forces' ability to prepare to deploy in real-life situations.

Brigadier Jonathan Bartholomew, DIO's Head of Overseas Region and the Defence Training Estate, said:

The Defence training estate offers many exciting opportunities to explore some of the most beautiful, unique and rural areas in the UK. We encourage the public to enjoy the land but also to be aware of the dangers associated with it.

The Defence Training estate are shared spaces that the military use all year round, they can go from calm to combat in an instant, so

it is important to be aware of the dangers involved when visiting them.

We want everyone to have a safe and enjoyable summer, so we are reminding visitors always to check training times before travelling, stick to public rights of way and observe safety information including red flags, signs and byelaws to help protect themselves and others.

For more information on accessing the training estate safely, visit the GOV.UK site on [Accessing the training estate safely](#) or [view our video](#)