

# Natural England launches new Countryside Code for land managers

With more people enjoying the outdoors than ever before, Natural England, in partnership with Natural Resources Wales, has today (8 February 2022) set out [new guidance for land managers](#) to help them ensure that visitors to the countryside can enjoy it in a responsible way.

Published under the [Countryside Code](#), the update provides recommendations to land managers on making rights of way accessible, creating safer environments and installing clear signage to help the public respect, protect and enjoy the countryside.

The new guidance advises farmers and land managers on how to make land more accessible, for example by adding self-closing gates instead of stiles where possible and using better signage, and how to report anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, littering, livestock worrying and other offences correctly. These changes will allow more people to access nature safely whilst also supporting land managers and helping to avoid damage to property, livestock and wider anti-social behaviour.

As well as advice for protecting livestock, using machinery in public spaces and the safe storage of chemicals, other key changes include:

- Clearer guidance on keeping rights of way usable, including recommendations for cutting back vegetation and keeping public waterways clear
- Instructions for where visitors can walk freely on [open access land](#) or in a [coastal margin](#)
- Information about common land and understanding that horse-riding rights are applicable
- The process of reporting anti-social behaviour – criminal damage and threatening behaviour will not be tolerated, and farmers and land managers are advised to contact the police to report any such incidents
- Advice on reporting noise disturbances and fly-tipping to the local authority
- Guidance on managing and protecting livestock, and a reminder of responsibilities when using firearms and fencing
- Advice for creating a safe environment, including the safe storage of bales, logs and the management of trees
- Information on using and storing dangerous substances responsibly

## **Marian Spain, Chief Executive of Natural England, said:**

With more people than ever before spending time in nature, this refreshed advice for land managers has never been more important in helping to ensure we work together to protect our outdoor spaces.

I urge all land managers to follow this new advice and continue to help make nature accessible to everyone, so people of all ages and backgrounds can enjoy the invaluable health and wellbeing benefits that nature offers, while giving it the respect it deserves.

**Lord Benyon, Minister for Rural Affairs, said:**

We want to ensure that nature is accessible for all, whilst also supporting people to do the right thing when they are visiting the countryside.

The new advice in the Countryside Code will help farmers and land managers to help the public enjoy the outdoors in a responsible way. I am grateful to all of those stakeholders who have helped shape this updated guidance.

Natural England and Natural Resources Wales have worked alongside stakeholders, including the National Farmers Union (NFU), Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Country Landowners Association (CLA), to develop advice which offers clear guidance to land managers and ensures the public can enjoy the countryside in a safe and respectful way.

The new advice for land managers follows the publication of the refreshed Countryside Code last year, which was revisited following a growth in people spending time outdoors during the pandemic.

The Countryside Code now covers all green spaces, waterways, the coast and parks in urban areas. To help people of all ages and backgrounds enjoy the countryside responsibly, the public code encourages people to 'be nice, say hello, share the space' and reminds visitors to not litter and avoid feeding livestock, horses or wild animals.

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## **Service leavers veterans and reservists to see enhanced support following combination of employment services**

The Officers' Association (OA) and RFEA – The Forces Employment Charity (RFEA) are working together to create a single charity to provide exceptional career support to all service leavers, veterans, reservists, and their families. Support will be available throughout the UK, irrespective of rank,

length of service, or reasons for leaving.

The new organisation will be called Forces Employment Charity, reflecting the purpose and heritage of the two constituent organisations. Founded in 1920 and 1885 respectively, the OA and RFEA both enjoy royal patronage, and provide support, jobs and training opportunities to Service leavers and veterans, as well as their families. Between them, the charities helped over 25,000 ex-military personnel in 2021.

Historically, the OA has existed to help officers, and the RFEA has supported veterans and service leavers of all ranks. Whilst having a different focus, both organisations are driven by a desire to achieve the best outcomes for their beneficiaries. This objective will underpin the new charity's direction, building on the individual successes of the OA and RFEA, and turbocharging the 2 organisations' work to continue transforming the lives of military personnel for the next century and beyond.

Forces Employment Charity will be headquartered in Mountbarrow House, London, and led by Alistair Halliday, current Chief Executive of RFEA, and the new Board of Trustees will be comprised of trustees from both charities. Ben Farrell MBE, a current trustee of the OA, will be appointed the new Chairman of Trustees. The OA Presidents and RFEA Vice Patrons will also lend their considerable experience. The OA's CEO, Lee Holloway, will continue to run the OA's grants and welfare services to officers and their dependants.

**Ben Farrell (Chairman designate of Forces Employment Charity) said,**

The rationale of combining the employment capabilities of both existing charities is clear, and will lead to an improved offering to all beneficiaries who can look forward to an unprecedented level of support from Forces Employment Charity. We are completely committed to continuing the OA and RFEA's current programmes, retaining the advantages of having a bespoke service for the Officer Corps, and delivering all existing contracts to the highest standards. The charities' staff will also be given the opportunity to play their part in this new strategy, with all employment and directly relevant support staff carrying over into the new organisation. Lee Holloway's contribution to the OA over the last 8 years has been immense, and we all wish him the very best for the future.

**Alistair Halliday (Chief Executive designate of Forces Employment Charity) said,**

The creation of this new charity is motivated by a desire to maximise outcomes for beneficiaries, who will enjoy unrivalled access to employment services of the highest quality. We believe that veterans and Service personnel of all ranks have a range of skills that make them well placed to thrive in the public or private sector. It is our responsibility to help them realise their

potential. This is an exciting new chapter for everyone connected with the OA and RFEA, and I am confident that Forces Employment Charity will build on the excellent work of both charities, and has a bright future ahead.

**Lee Holloway (Chief Executive Officer of the OA) said,**

This combination is a partnership of equals, and will benefit military personnel of all ranks, including officers, who will see their support enhanced through access to a wider range of programmes, such as Military Women and Partners programmes, Project Nova and Ex-Forces Employment. Having been the CEO of the OA for the past 8 years, I have every confidence that future generations of officers needing employment support will be better served than ever before.

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## [GC team contributes to UK POSTnote on genome edited food crops](#)

News story

The Government Chemist and his team contributed to a POSTnote on genome edited food crops



POSTnotes are four-page briefings which review emerging areas of research and are produced by the [Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology](#).

[Julian Braybrook](#), [Selvarani Elahi](#) and [Malcolm Burns](#) contributed to a [UK POSTnote on genome edited food crops](#), published on 24 January.

Genome editing is a technological process which creates the possibility of making precise alterations in the DNA of food crop plants. The POSTnote

describes genome editing technology, identifies which food crops are currently undergoing editing and why, describes the regulation and registration of genome-edited food crops, discusses issues around trade and describes stakeholder views about the technology.

For more information about the work of the Government Chemist sign up to receiving email alerts on the [home page](#) or contact

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## [Vital equipment helps slash time taken to move stranded vehicles to safety](#)

New gadgets have been introduced to help slash the time taken to move a stranded vehicle out of a live line to safety on motorways or major A roads.

National Highways has invested £200,000 in new equipment and training for all Traffic Officers to help speed up the time it takes to move “non-rolling” broken down vehicles – including electric vehicles – to a safe place and keep traffic moving.

As part of the change, all 262 National Highways traffic officer vehicles have been equipped with plastic skates, with training also provided to all Traffic Officers across the country in how to use them. The skates, also known as “Slippery Jims”, work by being hammered under each tyre. This helps to reduce the surface friction between tyre and road, allowing it to be towed to a place of safety by a National Highways Traffic Officer vehicle.

They can be used to safely move depleted electric vehicles (EVs). Towing an EV can greatly damage the vehicle due to how the motors are attached to the wheels and their lack of a true neutral gear. Where previously traffic officers had to wait for a recovery vehicle to avoid damaging the vehicle further, EVs can now be moved right away with the use of this new equipment.

Additionally, Traffic Officer vehicles have also been fitted with “battery boosters” – an effective tool to combat a battery failure on a combustion engine vehicle. The booster will help recharge and jump start the battery of any vehicle (up to 8 litre petrol and 6 litre diesel) immediately, allowing it to be moved to a safer area.

The battery booster in action providing power to a broken-down vehicle

The announcement of the new kit was made as National Highways launched the latest phase of its “Go Left” campaign today to advise drivers who experience

a problem with their vehicle.

Mel Clarke, National Highways Customer Service Director, said:

No-one plans to break down, but if the unexpected happens the new equipment we have fitted to all our vehicles will further reduce the time it takes to move a stranded vehicle out of a live lane to a safer area, reducing the risk to both our Traffic Officers and other road users.

The new apparatus allows our Traffic Officers to be much more agile when dealing with broken down vehicles. Beforehand we'd have to wait for a recovery vehicle to get to the scene but this new approach speeds up clearance times, further improves motorway and major A road safety and allows carriageways to return to normal running quicker.

This is one of a number of measures being introduced to support the shift to zero emissions journeys to meet the governments' 2050 net zero carbon target.

The kit was rolled out nationwide last year following a successful trial in the East of England. The trial proved that the plastic skates were 100% successful in towing a non-rolling vehicle to safety, while the battery boosters were 99% effective in providing power.

Dave Harford, National Highways Traffic Officer, said:

Safety is one of National Highways top priorities, and when we're dealing with a non-rolling vehicle in a live lane of a motorway or major A road our primary concern is finding a way to move the vehicle to an area of safety as quick as possible whilst minimising risk.

This new equipment is a great addition to our vehicles as we're able to safely move vehicles much more effectively, which gets the recovery process moving much faster helping to minimise any delays to other road users.

In 2021 there were almost 205,663 reported breakdowns across the National Highways network including around 183,453 on motorways.

Before the introduction of the new skates and battery boosters, it could be the case that where a non-rolling electric vehicle was concerned a Traffic Officer would need to wait for vehicle recovery. During this time the stranded vehicle can cause delays to other drivers. It's expected that removing incidents from live lanes more quickly will equate to a minimum boost of £29.8m per year to the UK economy.

As part of the "Go Left" campaign, motorists in difficulty are recommended to

leave the motorway if possible and if this is not possible:

## **Go left**

Put your left indicator on and move into an emergency area, onto a hard shoulder, motorway service area, left-hand verge or A-road lay-by.

Switch your hazard warning lights on, even during the day. If it's dark, use side lights and in poor visibility use fog lights as well.

On a motorway without a hard shoulder, it should be possible for most vehicles experiencing a problem to reach an emergency area. These are regularly spaced and are marked by a clearly visible orange road surface and blue signs featuring an orange SOS telephone symbol.

## **Get safe**

If it is safe to do so, and you can get out with any passengers, exit your vehicle on the side furthest from traffic. If it is not safe to do so, stay in your vehicle and wait for help.

Keep well away from moving traffic and your own vehicle. Get behind a safety barrier where there is one, and where it is safe to do so. If you're on a verge, be aware of any unseen hazards such as uneven ground or debris.

## **Get help**

Contact National Highways on 0300 123 5000 and then a breakdown recovery provider.

If you are unable to exit your vehicle and get to a safe place, have stopped in a live traffic lane or feel your life is in danger, stay in your vehicle with your seatbelts and hazard lights on and call 999 immediately.

More advice about [what to do in a breakdown](#).

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the National Highways customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the National Highways press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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# Quality Assurance Scheme

News story

Our latest blog talks about the importance of our accreditation by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries' Quality Assurance Scheme.



GAD is proud to be accredited by Institute and Faculty of Actuaries' Quality Assurance Scheme. In [our latest blog](#) we talk about our latest annual return. It shows we've been continuously improving; working to uphold the standards needed to complete high-quality actuarial work.

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