



# **Access & Conservation Club Guidelines**

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## **Access and Conservation**

### **1. Introduction**

These guidelines are for Club Officers, Meet Leaders and Club Members. They cover preparing a club meet, access legislation, club climbing meets, choosing a climbing site and parking. It is necessary to consider access and conservation issues when organising club meets. The BMC often liaise with landowners and conservation bodies to negotiate access arrangements to crags that are on private land. Occasionally, access arrangements can change or can be withdrawn, so care needs to be taken to keep up to date and use the crags considerately.

### **2. Preparing a club meet / event**

Club meet organisers should:

- Check the BMC Regional Access Database (RAD) and other climbing media such as Summit, Climbing Magazine and UK Climbing.
- Read the relevant access notes in the guide book for the area where the meet will be taking place.
- If you are still not sure about the current access issues then contact your local BMC Access Rep or the BMC office.
- Remember that on soft rock types such as sandstone there is the sandstone code of practice  
[http://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmcNews/media/u\\_content/File/access\\_conservation/southern\\_sandstone/ssc05\\_postcard.pdf](http://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmcNews/media/u_content/File/access_conservation/southern_sandstone/ssc05_postcard.pdf)

Ensure participants follow the Countryside Code and the BMC Crag Code.

### **3. Access, the law and you**

The Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) is the main piece of legislation governing access to the uplands of England and Wales. The CROW Act gives a right of access on foot to areas of mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land, defined as open access land. If you are unsure of your rights and responsibilities or where you can go, please visit [www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk) and [www.openaccess.gov.uk](http://www.openaccess.gov.uk) in England, [www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk) in Wales.

Some restrictions to access are in place under the CROW Act, e.g. excluding dogs or allowing access only along a designated linear route. These will often be signed at the entrance points to access land. An exclusion means that the statutory right of access is removed completely for the period concerned.

## **Public Rights of Way**

The Public Rights of Way (PROW) network in England and Wales is a unique asset and it is important to understand what types of PROW may be used for different activities.

- Footpath – access on foot only.
- Bridleway – on foot, horseback or bicycle (although cyclists are obliged to give way to other users).
- Restricted byway – on foot, horseback, and non-motorised vehicles (e.g. cycles and horse-drawn carriages).
- Byway open to all traffic – as for restricted byway but including motorised vehicles.

The restrictions that are sometimes used on CROW access land do not affect public rights of way (so you can walk along them even when surrounding access land is closed). However, public rights of way can sometimes be diverted, removed, created or have the rights suspended but only by the local highway authority. Official signs, posted by the authority, will be found on the route to tell you if there are any changes to the local network.

## **Dogs**

It is a criminal offence to allow your dog to worry stock. On open access land in England and Wales dogs must be kept on a short lead from 1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> July and at all times when in the vicinity of livestock. In fields of adult animals they must always be kept under close control on a short lead. Always consider the interests of others who use the land – not everyone will love your dog as much as you do.

## **Wildlife legislation**

It is illegal under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) to intentionally uproot any plant from the wild without the permission of the landowner or occupier.

Under the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994, it can also be an offence to deliberately pick, collect, uproot or destroy a wild plant of a European protected species.

Wild birds and their eggs are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Revised every five years, it lists the birds that qualify for protection.

## **4. Club climbing meets**

Being part of a big group can often have an impact on the other climbers who are at the crag. Please be aware of this and bare the crag code in mind.

Top roping and abseiling on routes for long periods causes erosion and can spoil other climbers' enjoyment. This should be avoided.

Other users, landowners, tenants and neighbours of the surrounding land should see climbing as a quiet and informal recreation. Please note there are documented examples of inconsiderate behaviour of climbers towards residents

which in some cases has led to permanent or temporary bans. When you leave the crag take any litter home.

## **5. Choosing a climbing site**

Consider the following:

- Popularity of a particular site with other groups and individuals, especially at weekends and public holidays.
- The parking situation if a large number of vehicles are planned to be used.
- The sensitivity of access to the crag. There may be an 'active' situation that could be jeopardised by a visit. (Check the BMC's Regional Access Database <http://www.thebmc.co.uk/bmcCrag/>).
- Group size and ability with regard to the nature of the routes.
- Proximity of toilet – 'Go before you go'.
- Avoid taking groups to the most popular areas at weekends.

## **6. Parking**

Inconsiderate parking has historically created many access problems for climbers and walkers. Consider the following:

- Car share
- Plan ahead
- Park considerately
- Go elsewhere if there is insufficient parking.

## **7. Further Information**

### **The BMC Green Guide to the Uplands**

<http://www.thebmc.co.uk/Download.aspx?id=350>

Or contact the BMC Office on 0161 445 6111

### **The BMC Crag Code**

<http://www.thebmc.co.uk/cragcode>

### **The Countryside Code**

[http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/things\\_to\\_know/countryside\\_code](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/things_to_know/countryside_code)