



The Northern Ireland Country Code

1. Respect the people who live and work in the countryside.

Show courtesy and consideration to everybody. Be a friendly visitor with a responsible manner.

2. Know where you are allowed to go.

Most land is private property and access is only available with the goodwill and tolerance of the owner. Whilst most landowners do not object to recreational users on their land, some do. Always comply with a landowner's wishes.

3. Keep to paths across farmland.

Help prevent damage to crops by walking around the edge of a field unless there is an existing path across it. Avoid fields where there are animals, as your presence may cause them stress and endanger your own safety.

4. Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls.

When crossing fences, hedges and walls, use the nearest gate or stile. Damage to fencing can allow animals to stray. If you must climb a gate because it is difficult to open, always do this at the hinged end.

5. Leave gates as you find them.

If you find a gate closed, close it when you pass through to prevent animals straying. Farmers sometimes leave gates open to allow animals to pass from one field to another to graze or drink. Help a farmer by leaving gates as you find them, but if in doubt, do close a gate.

6. Do not interfere with livestock, machinery and crops.

These are valuable commodities and should be left alone. Interference with animals and equipment may endanger you. Pay attention to warning signs as they are there for your protection.

7. Keep dogs under control.

Keep your dog on a lead when walking on roads or when close to farm animals. A dog can cause distress to animals and endanger yourself. Keep your dog under control at all times so as not to disturb wildlife or annoy other visitors.

8. Protect wildlife plants and trees.

Leave all natural places as you find them. Never uproot plants as they will be lost for ever. Keep your distance from wild birds and animals to prevent disturbance and stress especially to adults that are with young and in winter when food may be scarce or weather harsh.

9. Keep all water sources clean.

The public water supply is not available to everyone living in the countryside so take care with your personal hygiene and do not pollute water. Don't interfere with water troughs which provide clean water for livestock.

10. Take your litter home.

All litter is unsightly and glass, tins and plastic bags can be dangerous to people, livestock and wildlife. Keep the countryside clean by taking home your own litter and any which you may come across.

11. Guard against all risk of fire.

The countryside is vulnerable to fire especially during dry weather. Accidental fires pose a great risk to farmers and foresters. Be careful to put out all used matches and cigarettes and use a stove for cooking rather than a fire. Never throw cigarettes out of a car window.

12. Make no unnecessary noise.

One of the attractions of the countryside is its peace and quiet. Do not disturb this with noise or disruptive behaviour which might annoy residents and visitors or frighten farm animals and wildlife.

13. Respect other recreational users.

Behave responsibly. Where possible, warn others of your approach and slow down or stop if necessary. Irresponsible behaviour could lead to you and your activity being banned from the area in the future.

14. Take special care on country roads.

Always drive carefully with reduced speed on country roads. Consider others when parking and avoid blocking entrances, gateways or the visibility of other drivers. Walkers should take special care on narrow country roads and if appropriate, walk in single file.

15. Consider your personal safety.

If possible do not go alone. Wear suitable clothing and footwear as the weather can change very quickly. Don't go if the weather conditions are beyond your experience.