



Coastal Margin: Categories of Excepted Land

Coastal access rights apply within the coastal margin (including along the coast path itself) unless the land falls into a category of excepted land or is subject to local restrictions, exclusions or diversions. This note explains the categories of excepted land. For information about local restrictions, exclusions and diversions please check our [interactive access maps](#). For information about any other aspect of our programme for improving public access to the coast, please visit our [coastal access pages](#) on the Natural England website.

Under Schedule 1 to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, some categories of land are completely excluded from the coastal access rights, even if they fall within the coastal margin:

- land covered by buildings or the curtilage of such land;
- land used as a park or garden;
- land used for the getting of minerals by surface working including quarrying (except, under certain circumstances, the removal of sand or shingle from an area of foreshore or beach);
- land used for the purposes of a railway (including a light railway) or tramway;
- land covered by pens in use for the temporary detention of livestock;
- land used for the purposes of a racecourse or aerodrome;
- land which is being developed and which will become excepted land under certain other excepted land provisions;
- land covered by works used for the purposes of a statutory undertaking (other than flood defence works or sea defence works), or the curtilage of such land;
- land covered by works used for an electronic communications code network or the curtilage of any such land;
- land the use of which is regulated by byelaws under section 14 of the Military Lands Act 1892 or section 2 of the Military Lands Act 1900;
- land which is, or forms part of, a school playing field or is otherwise occupied by the school and used for the purposes of the school; and
- land which is, or forms part of, a highway (within the meaning of the Highways Act 1980) – see below.

Some other land categories are excepted by default, but the England Coast Path may cross them on an access strip – in which case the strip itself is not excepted from the coastal access rights, but the rest of the land is:

- land on which the soil is being, or has at any time within the previous 12 months been, disturbed by any ploughing or drilling undertaken for the purposes of planting or sowing crops or trees;
- land used for the purposes of a golf course;

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- land which is, or forms part of, a regulated caravan or camping site; and
- land which is, or forms part of, a burial ground.

Highways, including public rights of way, are also excepted from the coastal access rights. This does not prevent the England Coast Path from following a public footpath or other highway through the coastal margin: people simply continue exercising their pre-existing rights along them.

Land owners may choose, under the legislation, to dedicate land that would otherwise be excepted as a permanent part of the coastal margin. Where they do so, the dedicated land ceases to be excepted from the coastal access rights. These provisions are explained in more detail in Chapter 2 of our [Coastal Access Scheme](#).