



CROW Section 15 land FAQs

What is CROW Section 15?

Section 15 (S15) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) lists certain categories of pre-existing public access rights that on CROW access land apply instead of the CROW rights. The effect is to preserve these older rights - some of them including horse riding as well as access on foot - and their associated management arrangements even where the land appears on the CROW access maps. Because the CROW rights do not apply on S15 land, neither do CROW restrictions.

What are the categories of Section 15 land?

Natural England's maps are of areas which documentary evidence indicates fall within one or more of the Section 15 categories, which are as follows:

1. Land subject to S193 of the Law of Property Act 1925.

This section in effect granted rights of access for air and exercise to:

- Metropolitan commons (essentially those within Greater London),
- land that was common or manorial waste in 1926, and is located wholly or partly within one of the former urban districts or boroughs, and
- rural commons over which the soil owner has at some point granted section 193 rights - such a deed may have been made on a permanent basis, or subject to a right of revocation.

The courts have ruled that subject to any local controls, section 193 rights apply on horseback as well as on foot.

2. Areas with public access rights under a local or private Act, or under a scheme of regulation made under the Commons Act 1899.

Some very large areas are included in this way - for example the Dartmoor Commons, the National Trust's commons, and Epping Forest.

3. Areas with public access rights under an access agreement or order made under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Rights of this type may last only for a specified period, such as 25 years from the date an agreement was made.

4. Areas where the public have access rights under section 19 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, or would have such rights but for any provision of subsections (2) to (9) of that section.

It follows from this formulation that unlike land within the other S15 categories, areas within this category may or may not have public access rights.

What happens when land on the CROW maps ceases to be S15 land?

Where we learn that S15 rights over CROW-mapped land have been brought to an end (for example by an access agreement expiring, or an access deed under section 193(2) of the Law of Property Act 1925 being revoked), we update the S15 dataset to reflect this. In this situation the right of access under CROW takes effect there automatically, subject to any statutory restrictions or exclusions that may be necessary.

Where can I see S15 land and its associated rights displayed?

You can view our maps of S15 land by clicking on this link to the [MAGIC](#) website. Once there:

- Choose "interactive map"
- From "Select topic" drop down box, choose "Design my Own Topic"
- Select "Countryside and Rights of Way Act, Section 15 Land (England)" and press "Done" button at top right.
- Choose the area you are interested in by clicking one of the location type buttons, and then either type or use the dropdown menu to select your chosen location.
- Agree to the Terms of Use and click "Open Map" (ensure your pop up blocker is switched off)
- A new window will open with the map you have chosen.
- You may need to zoom in to make the Section 15 data appear.
- To find out a site name, or see which Act applies an area of S15 land, click on the identify "i" tool and follow the on screen instructions.

Our maps show all S15 land that we have information on, regardless of whether the land is also mapped as CROW access land.

Can I download the S15 maps?

Yes. You can download our maps of S15 land by clicking on this link to our [GIS Natural England](#) website.

If you have not used this site before you will need to register. Once registered look for the S 15 layer, which is listed as "CROW Act 2000 – S15 land", and follow the on screen instructions to download the data in the format of your choice.

Is the Section 15 dataset complete and final?

It reflects all of the relevant evidence we have so far been able to find. There will be some evidence in other places that we have not yet been shown, which could have a bearing on the S15 status of land. We remain open to people sending us copies of such evidence.

What do I do if I think land is incorrectly shown as Section 15 land, or that some is missing from the maps?

If you think the maps are wrong because:

- we are showing an area as S15 land which is not - eg a section 193 deed has been revoked;
- you think we have mapped the boundary of S15 land incorrectly; or
- you have evidence that other land is S15 land,

Please tell us about this and send us the related evidence so that we can consider it:

Email: open.access@naturalengland.org.uk

Tel: Open Access Contact Centre **0845 100 3298**

Please note that Section 15 queries can be complex and require us to carry out research and take specialist advice. We will deal with your query as quickly as possible but it may be several weeks before we are able to get back to you.

We really appreciate any evidence sent to us to help us improve the accuracy of our Section 15 maps. Any changes made to the data will be displayed on the relevant websites in due course.

Is there an appeals process relating to inclusion or non-inclusion of land in this dataset?

No. S15 rights have normally been in existence for many decades. Our data is drawn from hard evidence and is normally correct. We are committed to updating our records where clear evidence is presented that land should be removed from - or added to - the S15 maps.

Should you be dissatisfied with the outcome of a case you have referred to us, please write explaining why so that we can give proper consideration to the points you make.