

Respect the Range: How following access rules strengthens UK Defence

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The MOD is reminding the public to follow safe access rules when visiting military training areas, to keep everyone safe and avoid disrupting training.

In its latest safety push ahead of the Easter holidays the MOD is asking the public not to put themselves in harm's way by interrupting vital military training. By accessing MOD land where and when it is not permitted or safe to do so, the public are putting themselves and training military personnel at risk and impacting unit readiness to deploy.

The campaign focuses on Aldershot and Salisbury Plain Training Area where training has significantly increased in the past year and interruptions by the public straying onto the prohibited areas are frequent. These incursions force critical military training exercises to be paused or even cancelled, impacting how our personnel can be prepared for potential deployments.

The MOD's message is clear; within the current climate of global instability, being operationally ready to deploy at a moment's notice has never been so vital to our Armed Forces. The Army's ability to operate, deter, fight and win is of paramount importance and military training is key to this preparation.

Brigadier Gavin Hatcher, Head of the UK Training Estate said:

Modern military training relies on realism, continuity and controlled conditions. Interruptions such as unauthorised access, vehicle movement or unexpected visitors can disrupt training, create safety risks and reduce unit readiness.

Uninterrupted access allows soldiers to rehearse complex scenarios, make decisions under pressure and use specialist equipment safely. Respecting access restrictions directly supports Armed Forces effectiveness and national defence.

Cpl Charles Lawrence of the King's Royal Hussars during an exercise on Salisbury Plain Training Area. MOD Crown Copyright 2026.

Captain Mhari Brannigan of the King's Royal Hussars added:

We plan our exercises meticulously, and well in advance to ensure maximum training benefit for our participating soldiers. Completing training safely, and without interruption, is vital in preparing us for our combat role within The British Army.

Many individuals in the regiment can recall members of the public interrupting training, putting themselves at risk in the process. We would urge any visitors wishing to visit Salisbury Plain to ensure they are following the safe access rules.

While some areas of the MOD estate are accessible to the public at certain times, it is primarily an area for essential military training. It is vital that our Armed Forces can carry out training exercises

uninterrupted, now more than ever after the government announced a move to 'warfighting readiness' in the recently published Strategic Defence Review.

Members of the public can access military land, but only when and where permitted to do so, and are asked to follow these guidelines:

- Look out for red flags and lights – these indicate that live firing or other high risk activity is taking place
- Check firing times and access guidelines online before you visit
- Pay close attention to signage, information boards and live indicators – they are there for your safety
- Stay on public footpaths, bridleways, PROW and byways – do not enter restricted or closed areas
- Keep your dog under control and in sight at all times – uncontrolled dogs can stray into danger zones and disrupt training. Always pick up after your dog
- Do not touch military debris – report anything you find so it can be safely removed
- Be courteous to other users, and follow any further guidance offered by military personnel and safety officers

For further information visit: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safe-access>.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/respect-the-range-how-following-access-rules-strengthens-uk-defence>