

Camping in tents or visiting in a motorhome

Scottish Government guidance means tent campers, motorhomes and campervans are now welcome to travel around Scotland. This guidance is designed to help those visitors enjoy the Highlands while also protecting the environment and keeping it clean, tidy and safe for both visitors and residents.

While many businesses are reopening, not all campsites will be open immediately and others may have restricted space or only be able to cater for certain types of users, so **we strongly encourage visitors to plan ahead and book campsites** before they travel. Many of the communities you visit may be small or remote and have limited health services so please also respect the community's wishes and follow all government guidance on social distancing and group size and composition.

Responsible Camping

Camping in tents is now permitted and many campsites using shared facilities, will be open and should be booked ahead to ensure space. If you camp away from a campsite be very considerate of others and act responsibly. **Wild camping** is defined as being well away from settlements & roads, with no facilities other than what you carry in and only for a short period of time in any one location. All you carry in must be carried out, leaving no trace and minimal impact. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot defines these rights and how to behave responsibly – and remember, this is different to the position in England and Wales.

Roadside camping, with easy access to your car, is not wild camping. Be aware this can often cause concern to local residents & other visitors unless done so considerately. They fear that it will create litter, toilet waste, damage to vegetation and disturbance and then encourage others to use the same spot.

- There should be no noise, no fires and no litter.
- Toileting should be 30m from water, and solid waste buried.
- Tents should be erected late and dismantled early, i.e. one night.
- Discreet locations are best.
- Do not camp in large groups or close to other people.

Visiting in a motorhome

Stopping overnight in a motorhome outside a formal site is not wild camping as permitted by the Scottish Outdoor Access Code as it takes place in a motor vehicle. CAMPA, Scotland's Campervan and Motorhome Professional Association (www.campa.org.uk) provide excellent advice, including encouraging visitors to use official campsites or designated overnight parking areas if possible. CAMPA do however recognise that it is not always possible to stay in a campsite – for example you may arrive in an area late at night so some "informal camping" takes place. Visitors should remember that informal camping is not a right and historically has relied upon the goodwill of landowners to permit overnight use - if parking off-road overnight you should have the permission of the landowner.

As a motorhome user, it is your responsibility to ensure you leave no trace of your travel and dispose of your waste in the correct manner. Formal campsites will have facilities for you to do this so please use these. Public toilets, particularly in rural areas will often operate with small scale septic tanks that cannot safely accept some forms of motorhome waste so please avoid disposing of waste there and plan your trip so as to use the onsite facilities.

Support local businesses and communities

As with the rest of the UK there has been a significant impact on the Highland economy due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the related restrictions. **You can help the local recovery by using local businesses wherever possible** – buy groceries in local shops, have a coffee and cake in a cafe or enjoy an evening meal in a local pub or restaurant and in particular stay on caravan and camping sites. Remember that while the impact of each individual motorhome or tent may be small, the cumulative impact of people using the same places night after night can cause significant environmental damage as well as risks to health and cause disturbance to communities

Please act responsibly but above all, enjoy your visit.