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Canoe access - how to get permission to use new stretches of water

Open up new waters for canoeing - whether it's with a simple verbal agreement or a formal contract with landowners. You'll find everything you need to know here, along with further contacts if you want more help.

Getting access to new canoeing waters

Just because a stretch of water is above the national tidal limit, it doesn't have to be out of bounds. If you can come to an agreement with the landowner, you could be paddling further than ever before.

These pages tell you how to find out who owns a stretch of water, then how to approach them and how to agree on canoe access. Getting agreement first is important, because without it you may be trespassing on their land.

Getting an agreement doesn't have to be a long, drawn out process. Often a verbal agreement is enough, but if not then a simple document might be more appropriate. If a land owner wants a more formal agreement, there is also guidance here for how they can limit their liability for accidents on the land, and agree a code of conduct for canoeists using the water.

Voluntary canoe access agreement

Pilot evaluation 2007

Do you need an access agreement?

This section describes your basic access rights as they stand, and what sort of agreement you might need depending on the owner of the land.

Who owns the land?

Tips on finding out who owns the land and water where you want access.

How to approach the landowner

There are lots of different types of landowners, all with different approaches to their land.

Who else can help?

If it looks like getting access might be a difficult job, here are some organisations that might be able to help. You'll also find some information on how to describe the stretch of water you're talking about.

If the landowner disagrees

If the landowner says no, then that doesn't mean it's final. Try to lay their fears to rest and show them that canoe access is a good thing.

If your bid gets complicated

If it's not a simple case of door knocking and asking if you can paddle past someone's house, you may have no choice but to properly organise your bid. This page gives you a formal process to take when preparing a more in-depth case.

Risk assessment and sample formal land owner agreements

Don't know what forms to use? Here you'll find out how to fill out a risk assessment, as well some model clauses to use if you're making a formal agreement with land owners.

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Downloads

- [Approach to negotiating an agreement \(Adobe PDF 0.12Mb\)](#)
- [Canoe access - summary report \(Adobe PDF 0.68Mb\)](#)

External Links

- [University of Brighton Report](#)
- [Water-based sport & recreation](#)

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