



Road Traffic Act 1988

1988 CHAPTER 52

PART I

PRINCIPAL ROAD SAFETY PROVISIONS

Use of motor vehicles away from roads

- 33 Control of use of footpaths [^{F1}, bridleways and restricted byways] for motor vehicle trials.**
- (1) A person must not promote or take part in a trial of any description between motor vehicles on a footpath [^{F2}, bridleway or restricted byway] unless the holding of the trial has been authorised under this section by the local authority.
 - (2) A local authority shall not give an authorisation under this section unless satisfied that consent in writing to the use of any length of footpath [^{F2}, bridleway or restricted byway] for the purposes of the trial has been given by the owner and by the occupier of the land over which that length of footpath [^{F2}, bridleway or restricted byway] runs, and any such authorisation may be given subject to compliance with such conditions as the authority think fit.
 - (3) A person who—
 - (a) contravenes subsection (1) above, or
 - (b) fails to comply with any conditions subject to which an authorisation under this section has been granted,is guilty of an offence.
 - (4) The holding of a trial authorised under this section is not affected by any statutory provision prohibiting or restricting the use of footpaths [^{F3}, bridleways or restricted byways] or a specified footpath [^{F2}, bridleway or restricted byway] ; but this section does not prejudice any right or remedy of a person as having any interest in land.
 - (5) In this section “local authority”—

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- (a) in relation to England and Wales, means the council of a county, metropolitan district or London borough, and
- (b) in relation to Scotland, means a [^{F4}council constituted under section 2 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994].

[^{F5}(6) In this section “restricted byway” means a way over which the public have restricted byway rights within the meaning of Part 2 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, with or without a right to drive animals of any description along the way, but no other rights of way.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 33 sidenote substituted (E.W.) (3.7.2006 for E. and 12.7.2006 for W.) by [The Restricted Byways \(Application and Consequential Amendment of Provisions\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1177\)](#), regs. 1(3)(5), 2, **Sch. Pt. 1**; S.I. 2006/1172, art. 2(a)-(d) (with art. 3); S.I. 2006/1279, art. 2(a)-(d) (with art. 3)
- F2** Words in s. 33(1)(2)(4) substituted (E.W.) (3.7.2006 for E. and 12.7.2006 for W.) by [The Restricted Byways \(Application and Consequential Amendment of Provisions\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1177\)](#), regs. 1(3)(5), 2, **Sch. Pt. 1**; S.I. 2006/1172, art. 2(a)-(d) (with art. 3); S.I. 2006/1279, art. 2(a)-(d) (with art. 3)
- F3** Words in s. 33(4) substituted (E.W.) (3.7.2006 for E. and 12.7.2006 for W.) by [The Restricted Byways \(Application and Consequential Amendment of Provisions\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1177\)](#), regs. 1(3)(5), 2, **Sch. Pt. 1**; S.I. 2006/1172, art. 2(a)-(d) (with art. 3); S.I. 2006/1279, art. 2(a)-(d) (with art. 3)
- F4** Words in s. 33(5)(b) substituted (S.) (1.4.1996) by 1994 c. 39, s. 180(1), **Sch. 13 para. 159(3)**; S.I. 1996/323, **art. 4(1)(b)(c)**
- F5** S. 33(6) inserted (E.W.) (3.7.2006 for E. and 12.7.2006 for W.) by [The Restricted Byways \(Application and Consequential Amendment of Provisions\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1177\)](#), regs. 1(3)(5), 2, **Sch. Pt. 1**; S.I. 2006/1172, art. 2(a)-(d) (with art. 3); S.I. 2006/1279, art. 2(a)-(d) (with art. 3)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C2** S. 33 applied (with modifications) (E.W.) (3.7.2006 for E. and 12.7.2006 for W.) by [The Restricted Byways \(Application and Consequential Amendment of Provisions\) Regulations 2006 \(S.I. 2006/1177\)](#), regs. 1, 2, **Sch. Pt. 1**; S.I. 2006/1172; S.I. 2006/1279

[^{F6}34] **Prohibition of driving mechanically propelled vehicles elsewhere than on roads.** **E+W**

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this section, if without lawful authority a person drives a mechanically propelled vehicle—
 - (a) on to or upon any common land, moorland or land of any other description, not being land forming part of a road, or
 - (b) on any road being a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway,
 he is guilty of an offence.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(b) above, a way shown in a definitive map and statement as a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway is, without prejudice to section 56(1) of the ^{M1}Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to be taken to be a way of the kind shown, unless ^{F7}. . . the contrary is proved.

[It is not an offence under this section for a person with an interest in land, or a visitor ^{F8}(2A) to any land, to drive a mechanically propelled vehicle on a road if, immediately before

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the commencement of section 47(2) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the road was—

- (a) shown in a definitive map and statement as a road used as a public path, and
 - (b) in use for obtaining access to the land by the driving of mechanically propelled vehicles by a person with an interest in the land or by visitors to the land.]
- (3) It is not an offence under this section to drive a mechanically propelled vehicle on any land within fifteen yards of a road, being a road on which a motor vehicle may lawfully be driven, for the purpose only of parking the vehicle on that land.
- (4) A person shall not be convicted of an offence under this section with respect to a vehicle if he proves to the satisfaction of the court that it was driven in contravention of this section for the purpose of saving life or extinguishing fire or meeting any other like emergency.
- (5) It is hereby declared that nothing in this section prejudices the operation of—
- (a) section 193 of the ^{M2}Law of Property Act 1925 (rights of the public over commons and waste lands), or
 - (b) any byelaws applying to any land,
- or affects the law of trespass to land or any right or remedy to which a person may by law be entitled in respect of any such trespass or in particular confers a right to park a vehicle on any land.

(6) Subsection (2) above [^{F9}does] not extend to Scotland.

(7) In this section—

“definitive map and statement” has the same meaning as in Part III of the ^{M3}Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;

[^{F10}“interest”, in relation to land, includes any estate in land and any right over land (whether exercisable by virtue of the ownership of an estate or interest in the land or by virtue of a licence or agreement) and, in particular, includes rights of common and sporting rights;]

“mechanically propelled vehicle” does not include a vehicle falling within paragraph (a), (b) or (c) of section 189(1) of this Act; and

“restricted byway” means a way over which the public have restricted byway rights within the meaning of Part II of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, with or without a right to drive animals of any description along the way, but no other rights of way.

[A person—

- ^{F11}(8) (a) entering any land in exercise of rights conferred by virtue of section 2(1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, or
- (b) entering any land which is treated by section 15(1) of that Act as being accessible to the public apart from that Act,

is not for the purposes of subsection (2A) a visitor to the land.]]

Extent Information

- E1** This version of this provision extends to England and Wales only; a separate version has been created for Scotland only

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Textual Amendments

- F6** S. 34 substituted (30.1.2001) by 2000 c. 37, ss. 67, 103(2), **Sch. 7 para. 5**
- F7** Words in s. 34(2) repealed (2.5.2006 for E. and 16.11.2006 for W.) by Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (c. 16), ss. 70(3), 105(2), 107, **Sch. 12**; S.I. 2006/1176, **art. 6**; S.I. 2006/2992, **art. 2**
- F8** S. 34(2A) inserted (E.W.) (2.5.2006 for E. and 16.11.2006 for W.) by Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (c. 16), **ss. 70(4)**, 107; S.I. 2006/1176, **art. 6**; S.I. 2006/2992, **art. 2**
- F9** Words in s. 34(6) substituted (E.W.) (2.5.2006 for E. and 16.11.2006 for W.) by Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (c. 16), **ss. 70(5)**, 107; S.I. 2006/1176, **art. 6**; S.I. 2006/2992, **art. 2**
- F10** Words in s. 34(7) inserted (E.W.) (2.5.2006 for E. and 16.11.2006 for W.) by Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (c. 16), **ss. 70(6)**, 107; S.I. 2006/1176, **art. 6**; S.I. 2006/2992, **art. 2**
- F11** S. 34(8) inserted (E.W.) (2.5.2006 for E. and 16.11.2006 for W.) by Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (c. 16), **ss. 70(7)**, 107; S.I. 2006/1176, **art. 6**; S.I. 2006/2992, **art. 2**

Marginal Citations

- M1** 1981 c. 69.
M2 1925 c. 20.
M3 1981 c. 69.

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 - (b) any byelaws applying to any land, or affects the law of trespass to land or any right or remedy to which a person may by law be entitled in respect of any such trespass or in particular confers a right to park a vehicle on any land.
- (6) Subsection (2) above and section 34A of this Act do not extend to Scotland.

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“definitive map and statement” has the same meaning as in Part III of the ^{M3}Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;

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Marginal Citations

M1 1981 c. 69.

M2 1925 c. 20.

M3 1981 c. 69.

Changes to legislation:

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 34A inserted by [2000 c. 37 Sch. 7 para. 6](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. The amending provision has been repealed)
- s. 41(2)(m) inserted by [2006 c. 49 s. 18\(1\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 41(2)(ba) inserted by [2006 c. 49 s. 56\(3\)](#)
- s. 49(3A) inserted by [2006 c. 49 s. 48\(1\)](#)
- s. 66(7A) inserted by [2006 c. 49 s. 56\(5\)](#)
- s. 85(1) words omitted (temp.) by [S.I. 2019/648 reg. 2\(5\)\(a\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Reg. 2(5)(a) substituted (1.9.2020) by S.I. 2020/818, regs. 1(b), Sch. 6 para. 39(2)(c)(i))
- s. 85(1) words omitted (temp.) by [S.I. 2019/648 reg. 2\(5\)\(d\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Reg. 2(5)(a) substituted (1.9.2020) by S.I. 2020/818, regs. 1(b), Sch. 6 para. 39(2)(c)(ii))
- s. 85(2) added by [1988 c. 54 Sch. 2 para. 17\(c\)](#)
- s. 97(1)(c)(ia) words repealed by [2006 c. 49 Sch. 3 para. 6\(2\)\(b\)Sch. 7\(4\)](#)
- s. 97(1)(d)(ii) words omitted by [S.I. 2018/1251 reg. 2\(4\)](#)
- s. 97(1ZA) inserted by [2006 c. 49 s. 38\(2\)](#)
- s. 108(1BA) inserted by [S.I. 2018/1251 reg. 2\(5\)\(c\)](#)
- s. 123123A substituted for s. 123 by [2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 2](#)
- s. 123A(3) words inserted by [2009 c. 17 s. 1\(3\)](#)
- s. 124(3)-(5) inserted by [2009 c. 17 s. 3](#)
- s. 124(6) inserted by [2015 c. 20 Sch. 2 para. 2\(b\)](#) (This amendment is to Part 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 6 to the Road Safety Act 2006. Those amendments have not yet come into force)
- s. 125(3A)-(3D) inserted by [2015 c. 20 Sch. 2 para. 3\(2\)](#) (This amendment is to Part 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 6 to the Road Safety Act 2006. Those amendments have not yet come into force)
- s. 125(5A) inserted by [2015 c. 20 Sch. 2 para. 3\(3\)](#) (This amendment is to Part 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 6 to the Road Safety Act 2006. Those amendments have not yet come into force)
- s. 125A(5)-(7E) substituted for s. 125A(5)-(7) by [2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 6\(3\)](#)
- s. 125ZA inserted by [2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 5](#)
- s. 125ZA(2)(b) word omitted by [2015 c. 20 Sch. 2 para. 4\(2\)\(a\)](#) (This amendment is to Part 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 6 to the Road Safety Act 2006. Those amendments have not yet come into force)
- s. 125ZA(2)(d) and word inserted by [2015 c. 20 Sch. 2 para. 4\(2\)\(b\)](#) (This amendment is to Part 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 6 to the Road Safety Act 2006. Those amendments have not yet come into force)
- s. 125ZA(4)(c) word omitted by [2015 c. 20 Sch. 2 para. 4\(3\)\(c\)](#) (This amendment is to Part 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 6 to the Road Safety Act 2006. Those amendments have not yet come into force)
- s. 125ZA(4)(c) words substituted by [2015 c. 20 Sch. 2 para. 4\(3\)\(b\)](#) (This amendment is to Part 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 6 to the Road Safety Act 2006. Those amendments have not yet come into force)
- s. 125ZA(4)(ba)(bb) inserted by [2015 c. 20 Sch. 2 para. 4\(3\)\(a\)](#) (This amendment is to Part 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 6 to the Road Safety Act 2006. Those amendments have not yet come into force)

- s. 125ZA(4)(ca) inserted by [2015 c. 20 Sch. 2 para. 4\(3\)\(d\)](#) (This amendment is to Part 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 6 to the Road Safety Act 2006. Those amendments have not yet come into force)
- s. 126(5) omitted by [2015 c. 20 Sch. 2 para. 6](#) (This amendment is to Part 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 6 to the Road Safety Act 2006. Those amendments have not yet come into force)
- s. 126A inserted by [2016 c. 16 s. 1\(3\)](#)
- s. 126A omitted (cond.) by 2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 8A (as inserted) by [2016 c. 16 s. 3\(3\)](#)
- s. 126A heading words inserted by [S.I. 2016/1089 reg. 3\(2\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Regs. 3, 4 omitted (1.12.2023) without ever being in force by virtue of S.I. 2023/1286, regs. 1, 7(3))
- s. 126A(1) words inserted by [S.I. 2016/1089 reg. 3\(3\)\(a\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Regs. 3, 4 omitted (1.12.2023) without ever being in force by virtue of S.I. 2023/1286, regs. 1, 7(3))
- s. 126A(1) words inserted by [S.I. 2016/1089 reg. 3\(3\)\(b\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Regs. 3, 4 omitted (1.12.2023) without ever being in force by virtue of S.I. 2023/1286, regs. 1, 7(3))
- s. 128A inserted by [2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 11](#)
- s. 128A(4) inserted by 2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 11 (as inserted) by [2016 c. 16 s. 4\(4\)](#)
- s. 128B inserted by [2015 c. 20 Sch. 2 para. 9](#) (This amendment is to Part 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 6 to the Road Safety Act 2006. Those amendments have not yet come into force)
- s. 128ZA inserted by [2009 c. 17 s. 1\(1\)](#)
- s. 128ZB inserted by [2009 c. 17 s. 2](#)
- s. 128AZA128AZB inserted by [2016 c. 16 s. 2\(2\)](#)
- s. 128AZA128AZB inserted (cond.) by 2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 10A (as inserted) by [2016 c. 16 s. 4\(2\)](#)
- s. 128AZA128AZB substituted (cond.) by 2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 10A (as inserted) by [2016 c. 16 s. 4\(2\)](#)
- s. 128AZA heading words inserted by [S.I. 2016/1089 reg. 4\(2\)\(a\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Regs. 3, 4 omitted (1.12.2023) without ever being in force by virtue of S.I. 2023/1286, regs. 1, 7(3))
- s. 128AZA(1) words inserted by [S.I. 2016/1089 reg. 4\(2\)\(b\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Regs. 3, 4 omitted (1.12.2023) without ever being in force by virtue of S.I. 2023/1286, regs. 1, 7(3))
- s. 128AZA(4) words inserted by [S.I. 2016/1089 reg. 4\(2\)\(c\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Regs. 3, 4 omitted (1.12.2023) without ever being in force by virtue of S.I. 2023/1286, regs. 1, 7(3))
- s. 128AZB heading words inserted by [S.I. 2016/1089 reg. 4\(3\)\(a\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Regs. 3, 4 omitted (1.12.2023) without ever being in force by virtue of S.I. 2023/1286, regs. 1, 7(3))
- s. 128AZB(1) words inserted by [S.I. 2016/1089 reg. 4\(3\)\(b\)\(i\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Regs. 3, 4 omitted (1.12.2023) without ever being in force by virtue of S.I. 2023/1286, regs. 1, 7(3))
- s. 128AZB(1) words inserted by [S.I. 2016/1089 reg. 4\(3\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Regs. 3, 4 omitted (1.12.2023) without ever being in force by virtue of S.I. 2023/1286, regs. 1, 7(3))
- s. 131(A1)-(C1) inserted by 2006 c. 49, Sch. 6 para. 13(1A) (as inserted) by [S.I. 2023/1286 Sch. 3 para. 92\(2\)\(a\)\(i\)](#)
- s. 131(3)(b)(c) substituted for s. 131(3)(b) and word by [2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 13\(4\)](#)
- s. 131(6) inserted by [2016 c. 16 s. 2\(4\)](#)
- s. 131(6) inserted by 2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 13(9) (as inserted) by [2016 c. 16 s. 4\(5\)](#)
- s. 131(6) substituted by 2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 13(9) (as inserted) by [2016 c. 16 s. 4\(5\)](#)
- s. 132-133ZA and cross-heading substituted for ss. 132, 133 and cross-heading by [2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 14](#)

- s. 133(2)(a) words omitted by [2015 c. 20 Sch. 2 para. 10\(a\)](#) (This amendment is to Part 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 6 to the Road Safety Act 2006. Those amendments have not yet come into force)
- s. 133(2)(b) words omitted by [2015 c. 20 Sch. 2 para. 10\(b\)](#) (This amendment is to Part 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 6 to the Road Safety Act 2006. Those amendments have not yet come into force)
- s. 133D(1A) inserted by [2015 c. 20 Sch. 2 para. 14\(2\)](#) (This amendment is to Part 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended by Schedule 6 to the Road Safety Act 2006. Those amendments have not yet come into force)
- s. 140(1)(2) inserted by [2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 23\(2\)](#)
- s. 140(1A) inserted in earlier affecting provision 2006 c. 49, Sch. 6 para. 23(2) by [S.I. 2023/1286 Sch. 3 para. 92\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 140(3) s. 140 renumbered as s. 140(3) by [2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 23\(1\)](#)
- s. 141A(5) words repealed by [2006 c. 49 Sch. 3 para. 24](#)[Sch. 7\(4\)](#)
- s. 143(1A) repealed (cond.) by [S.I. 2019/1047 Sch. 2 para. 2](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. The insertion of s. 143(1A) by 2018 c. 18, Sch. para. 17 was repealed (1.11.2019) by The Motor Vehicles (Compulsory Insurance) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/1047), reg. 1, Sch. 2 para. 1 (with reg. 5) without ever being brought into force.)
- s. 173(2)(g)-(gb) substituted for s. 173(2)(g) by [2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 27](#)
- s. 173(2)(n) and word inserted by [2006 c. 49 s. 37\(8\)](#)
- s. 174(1)(da) inserted by [2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 28](#)
- s. 183(6A) inserted by [2006 c. 49 Sch. 6 para. 29](#)