

# Recreation on agricultural public land

## Recreational Access Regulation

Alberta's incredible landscapes offer many unique opportunities for recreation.

This fact sheet will help you prepare to have safe and fun experiences when accessing agricultural public land for recreation. This fact sheet only applies to agricultural dispositions under the *Public Lands Act* and not does not apply to dispositions in Parks or the Forest Reserve.

### What is the Recreational Access Regulation?

The [Recreational Access Regulation](#) was established under the [Public Lands Act](#) to allow agricultural leaseholders to sustainably use and protect leased land and their livestock, while allowing some access to the land by recreationists.

Under the Recreational Access Regulation, leaseholders and land users have rights and responsibilities to ensure the land is used and enjoyed responsibly.

### What does the regulation say?

If you are looking to recreate on an agricultural lease you must contact the leaseholder to discuss access prior to entering a lease. Leaseholders have a duty to allow reasonable recreational access to the land, as outlined in the Recreational Access Regulation. As the land manager, the leaseholder is held accountable for the land, including any damage caused by recreational activities. A leaseholder can deny access or specify conditions for use if:

- livestock are present in the field
- a crop has not yet been harvested
- you wish to discharge a firearm or use explosives near livestock or for the purpose of target shooting
- you are not on foot
- you wish to camp
- a fire ban is in effect
- the proposed use is not permitted under a recreation management plan or a condition set by the government

All agricultural public lands (permits, licences, and leases) fall under the regulation, however, contact is only required for leases. Every lease is different and leaseholders may apply conditions to help facilitate access, such as how to contact the leaseholder, where to park, and how to access the land.

Leaseholders are encouraged to provide reasonable guidance related to recreational access that supports the health and safety of persons, animals, vegetation or land. In some cases, more specific Department conditions, such as limiting the number of recreational users in high volume areas, can be set to help ensure public safety, animal health and proper land management. Leaseholders must make a request to have conditions applied. Before being implemented they are carefully reviewed by the department.

### Checking conditions and contacting the leaseholder

Talking to the leaseholder will allow you to discuss important information. For example, there may be sensitive areas, hazards or livestock that you need to avoid while accessing the lease. Unless otherwise specified, you are encouraged to confirm your plans with the leaseholder at least two weeks prior to your trip. When contacting the leaseholder, be prepared with the following information:

- date and time you would like to access the lease
- your contact information
- the activity you are proposing
- how many people are in your group
- license plate of vehicle(s)

You cannot access the lease without a response from the leaseholder. If you cannot get a hold of the leaseholder, please [contact a local rangeland agrologist](#). In the event of a dispute, you will be required to prove contact with the leaseholder was attempted.

Preferred contact information and methods as well as any access conditions can be found for each lease across the Province on the [Recreational Access to Agricultural Public Lands Web Map](#). For detailed instructions on how to use the web map, visit [Alberta.ca/AgriculturalPublicLand](https://alberta.ca/AgriculturalPublicLand)

## Stewardship of the land

Alberta's public land is a shared resource and responsibility. All recreational users are expected to use and enjoy the land in respectful ways and play a stewardship role in maintaining the quality and character of Alberta's natural resources.

When accessing agricultural public land be courteous, and remember to:

- abide by all relevant laws and regulations
- follow instructions provided by the leaseholder
- have direct control of animal(s) brought on the lease
- pack out all garbage
- avoid damaging land or property
- park vehicles so they do not block access for the leaseholder or other users
- leave gates as they were found, open or closed
- report anything unusual you see to the leaseholder

## Denied Access

If you are denied access to a lease:

### STEP 1

Ask the leaseholder which conditions you were denied access under. If the reason provided by the leaseholder is not outlined in the Recreational Access Regulation, or to the specific lease, have a respectful conversation with the leaseholder.

### STEP 2

If the leaseholder is limiting access for reasons outside the regulation, [contact a local rangeland agrologist](#) as soon as possible.

### STEP 3

An agrologist will facilitate a discussion between disputing parties on recreational access to the land in question.

### STEP 4

If the parties come to a facilitated conclusion, then the matter is considered settled. If access is still not agreed upon, the agrologist will suggest submitting an application for Local Settlement Officer (LSO) review. You can learn more about this process [here](#). The formal dispute resolution process will take a minimum of 7 days.

## 310-LAND (5263)

Call [310-LAND \(5263\)](#) for information about agricultural dispositions on public land, or to report illegal activity, public safety incidents and enforcement concerns on public land.

When reporting an incident you may be asked to:

- describe what happened
- describe where it happened
- share available photos of the activity or incident
- describe the person(s) involved
- provide the vehicle make and licence plate number (if applicable)

## Other recreation opportunities

Agricultural public land covers over 5 million acres, but it is not the only place available for recreation. In total, Alberta has 100 million acres of Crown land that provides unique opportunities for Albertans and visitors. Remember, not all Crown land is managed in the same way, so make sure to check the restrictions wherever you are going – you are responsible for knowing what the regulations are for the land you are visiting. Learn more here:

- [Recreation on Public Land](#)
- [Recreation in Provincial Parks and Protected Areas](#)

Recreation on private land is only permitted if you have permission from the landowner; however, landowners have the right to permit or deny access for any reason on private land. Permission is also required before entering or crossing Indian reserves and Métis settlements.