

This guide should be read in conjunction with any of the individual guides.

### How to use these guides

These guides are intended to provide solutions for most situations in Hampshire. They draw on the law, national and local best practice and established local policy. The guides are not comprehensive or exhaustive, and there are situations where other solutions will be more appropriate. If in doubt, or if you would like further advice, please do contact us via [pro@hants.gov.uk](mailto:pro@hants.gov.uk) or call 0300 555 1391.

Major services can be checked using <https://lsbud.co.uk/>

### Protected Areas

You must check whether the land is part of a protected area or any works will impact on watercourses and obtain any permissions needed before work commences.

The bodies involved are often able to offer useful advice and guidance even if permission is not required. Sites may be protected for:

- Conservation—eg SSSI, SPA and SAC. Natural England is the body to contact in this instance. In addition, certain species such as bats, badgers and birds nests are protected from disturbance and damage.
- Heritage—eg scheduled ancient monuments, historic buildings (including bridges, milestones and statues for example) and gardens. English Heritage and the planning authority (for listed buildings) are the bodies to contact in regards to Heritage.
- Waterways and land drainage—the Environment Agency will be able to advise whether the work planned may affect 'main rivers'; for smaller water courses and land drainage the relevant 'Internal Drainage Board' should be consulted (see [www.ada.org.uk](http://www.ada.org.uk)).

### Pipes and cables

You must check for underground pipes and services before commencing any work which involves digging into the ground as they can be buried close to the surface. Major services can be checked using [www.linesearch.org](http://www.linesearch.org). However, this will not show the many smaller pipes and cables. A CAT-scan ('Cable Avoidance Tool') is a portable hand-held scanner and it is recommended that this is used on site before any digging commences. You are also required to check visually for overhead cables or services.

### Screws, Bolts and Nails

Different fixings will be appropriate for different tasks. In all cases, corrosion-resistant fixings should be used. Such fixings include galvanised, zinc or zinc-plated, sherardized or stainless steel. In nearly all cases screws and bolts are preferred to nails as they result in a more secure fixing and can be removed more easily to allow the structure to be repaired.

### Timber

All timber used should be FSC certified tanalised softwood or oak, unless there is good reason for an alternative choice.

### Nonslip Surfaces

Nonslip surfaces are sometimes used on boardwalks, bridges and even stile steps. If the structure is not overhung with trees then a nonslip surface may not be necessary. Where it is considered necessary, no one solution is preferred. Acceptable options are using wire mesh (not chicken mesh, which is too flimsy), an anti-slip paint (now widely available) or a nonslip material which is cut and fixed to the surface (this looks like, but isn't, roofing felt).

Whenever a nonslip surface is used, it must be regularly maintained to be effective and to prevent the treatment from becoming a trip hazard.

### Credits

In order to produce these guides the following sources have been used:

- Guides such as BTCV's (now TCV) "Footpaths, a practical handbook", Scottish Natural Heritage's "Countryside Access Design Guide", the "BT Countryside For All" guide and Natural England's "On the Right Track".
- Guidance which other authorities provide, including Kent County Council's "Countryside Access Design Standards" and information from Cornwall and East Sussex County Councils.
- National Law, such as relevant British Standards, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1968/81 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which now forms part of the Equality Act 2010.
- Local policy and practice within Hampshire.

This guidance is suitable for most situations in Hampshire; for further advice email [pro@hants.gov.uk](mailto:pro@hants.gov.uk) or call 0300 555 1391