

Crown roads – What you need to know

What is a Crown road?

Crown roads are public roads. They are land corridors set aside for access. People often call them ‘paper roads’, as most Crown roads exist only on maps and are not built.

The Crown Lands branch within the NSW Department of Planning and Environment administers these roads under the *Roads Act 1993*.

How do I identify a Crown road?

The [spatial data viewer](#) on the NSW Planning Portal identifies Crown road reserves as ‘Crown land’. The mapping does not show the difference between a Crown road and other Crown land. You can, however, often identify Crown roads by their long and narrow shape.

Alternatively, your deposited plan may show road corridors within or next to your private property. If you are unsure who administers the road corridor, you may apply to the department for a [road status search](#).

What should I do before buying a rural property?

Some rural land parcels may use an unconstructed Crown road for legal access. Alternatively, they may have unconstructed Crown roads next to or within the private land parcel.

If you are thinking of buying a rural property, we recommend that you apply for a conveyancing and [road status search](#) before settlement. This will show if any enclosure permits are connected to the property. An enclosure permit allows the owner of an adjoining property to use the Crown road for grazing stock. A road status search will identify any roads that may exist as well as any problems now or in the future regarding access.

Do I have to fence out a Crown road from my property?

Yes, unless you have a valid enclosure permit or licence over that Crown road corridor, any constructed or unconstructed Crown roads adjoining or within your private land parcel must be fenced out.

An enclosure permit allows you to fence the road within your property, but you must still allow for public access along the road. Visit our Crown roads page for more information about [enclosure permits and licences](#).

Who is responsible for maintaining and repairing Crown roads?

The department is not a road construction authority and does not build or maintain Crown roads. We may, however, allow a road user to complete small-scale works on certain Crown roads. Visit [road works on Crown roads](#) for more information.

If a new development must use a Crown road for legal access, ownership of the road must transfer to the local council. This must be included in the development proposal.

Do I need written approval for small-scale road works?

Yes, you must apply for written approval from the department to do small-scale road works. To start this process, complete and submit our [road works enquiry form](#) or [contact us](#).

Can I buy a Crown road?

There are many Crown roads within the public road network that are not used or needed for public access. In these cases, the department may sell or close Crown roads without harming the broader public interest. You may apply to buy a Crown road that directly adjoins or is within your private land parcel. For more information, visit [purchase a Crown road](#) or [contact us](#).

How do I report suspicious activities or a hazard on a Crown road?

Please [contact us](#) if you see something obstructing public access along a Crown road, or other threats to the environment, public health and safety, or the community. In your report, please include any evidence you have, such as photos and let us know:

- **what** you have seen
- **where** the obstacle or hazard is
- **when** you think the problem happened
- **how** the problem affects you, the community or the environment.

How does the department make sure people follow laws?

We will investigate any alleged breaches of the *Roads Act 1993* that the public or government agencies report to us, to make sure people use and occupy Crown roads the right way. We will also investigate if we see problems on aerial images or during site inspections.

If someone encloses a Crown road, makes it difficult for the public to access it, or does work on it without approval, they are breaking the law.

More information on administration of Crown roads

Refer to the [Administration of Crown roads guideline](#), visit the [Crown roads page](#) or scan the QR code.

Contact us

To learn how we regulate Crown roads, monitor compliance with the law and enforce it, contact the Compliance Strategy and Monitoring Team:

Phone: 1300 886 235

Email: cl.compliance@crowmland.nsw.gov.au

Web: crowmland.nsw.gov.au/protection-and-management/compliance

For help in your language, call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450.

