

Crown Land Work Permits

How and when you need a work permit for projects on Crown land and shore lands.

BACKGROUND

February 1, 2021

In Ontario, the use of Crown land and shore lands is regulated under the *Public Lands Act*. There are some exceptions, including provincial parks and conservation reserves.

By law, you must get a work permit from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) for certain activities on Crown land and shore lands before any work can take place to ensure that specific activities on public lands and shore lands have regard for the environment, other users, and neighbouring landowners.

This applies to any public land managed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, including:

- the beds of most lakes and rivers
- shore lands

It does not apply to federal lands and water bodies, and private land, unless the work potentially affects Crown land, such as shore lands

Working on shore lands

In Ontario, the beds of most water bodies are Crown land. Shore lands are defined as lands covered or seasonally inundated by the water of a lake, river, stream or pond.

When a permit is required

You require a work permit under the Public Lands Act if you:

- build a new erosion control structure or change the dimensions of an existing erosion control structure
- place fill on shore lands (infilling lake or river bed, or build an erosion control structure) for any purpose
- create a new dredge or expand an existing dredge
- construct a building or structure, except for building(s) registered for mining purposes
- construct or place a structure or combination of structures that are in physical contact with more than 15 square meters of shore lands (e.g. docks with large cribs)
- construct a road, except where constructed under the authority of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act
- construct a trail, except when constructed under the authority of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act or for mineral exploration purposes
- construct a water crossing, such as a bridge, culvert or causeway, except when constructed under the authority of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act.

- remove native aquatic vegetation along the shoreline of Lake Superior, Lake Huron and on the Canadian Shield
- conduct activities subject to exemptions but cannot follow the rules

A work permit application is reviewed and, if approved, issued free of charge by the ministry.

When a permit is not required

You do not need a work permit under the Public Lands Act if you:

- undertake minor road maintenance on public land
- place a registered ice fishing hut on the ice
- install a water line, service cable or heat loop for private residential use
- remove a dock or boathouse that does not involve dredging
- construct or place structures that are in physical contact with 15 square meters or less of the shore lands fronting your property (e.g. docks, single-storey boathouses)

When a permit may not be required: Exemptions subject to rules

Certain activities are exempt from permitting requirements, provided you follow all the rules as laid out in O.Reg. 239/13.

Please visit www.ontario.ca/page/crown-land-work-permits to see a full list of rules and to determine if a permit or registration is required if you plan to:

- construct buildings on a mining claim
- dredge shore lands previously dredged (maintenance dredge)

- maintain, repair or replace erosion control structures on shore lands
- relocate rocks on shore lands
- remove invasive aquatic plants
- remove native aquatic plants

Before you start

Before you start any work, find out whether additional authorizations are required.

You should consult your local municipality (if applicable) to determine if they have Official Plan policies or zoning bylaws in place that might affect, prohibit, or control the construction and placement of a structure on Crown land and shore lands.

You should also check with other government agencies that may have an interest in your proposal (e.g. local Conservation Authorities, Federal Departments of Fisheries & Oceans and Transport Canada).

For more information, please visit www.ontario.ca/page/crown-land-work-permits or contact:

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry:

Meredith Agliani, Resources Clerk
Sault Ste. Marie District
Phone: 705-949-1231
Email: meredith.agliani@ontario.ca

Or

Ginette Wilkins, Resources Clerk
Blind River Office
Phone: 705-356-2234
Email: ginette.wilkins@ontario.ca

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