

KENTUCKY DIVISION OF WATER
GUIDELINES FOR GRAVEL EXCAVATION AND REMOVAL
Updated February 2019

The commercial excavation, removal, and sale of gravel requires a permit from the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mine Reclamation and Enforcement, Non-Coal, Explosives & Blasting Branch. For gravel removal permits please contact Martin W. Brashear, Acting Non-Coal, Explosives & Blasting Branch Manager at (502) 782-6564 or Martin.Brashear@ky.gov. For more information, go to <https://eec.ky.gov/Natural-Resources/Mining/Reclamation-Enforcement/non-coal-review/Pages/default.aspx>

The Kentucky Division of Water does not issue permits for excavation and removal of gravel in streams, however the following guidelines should be used to obtain gravel from stream channels in a manner that minimizes impacts to the resource:

- 1) Gravel excavation should be conducted outside of the stream flow and should be restricted to gravel bar areas.
- 2) Gravel excavation should be conducted only during low-flow, preferably during late summer or fall.
- 3) Gravel excavation should not be conducted during fish spawning season (April 15th to June 15th).
- 4) Only the top of the gravel bar should be excavated (i.e., the portion of the bar more than 12 inches above the water surface).
- 5) A buffer of ten (10) feet should be maintained between the stream bank and the work area.
- 6) Gravel should not be stockpiled within the stream channel, but rather removed by following the process outlined in the Kentucky Division of Water, Guidelines for One-Step Removal of Stream Flow Obstructions; the work area should be graded and restored to natural contours and conditions after finishing.
- 7) The frequency of excavation should be limited to the greatest extent possible. For example, remove gravel once to once a year and stockpile it at an upland location. Then obtain gravel from the stockpile as needed.
- 8) To promote bank stability, the removal of stream bank vegetation should be kept to a minimum.
- 9) Streams should not be used as roads to access work areas, except where access is limited to a single perpendicular (90 degree) crossing. The work area should be accessed from land where possible.

NOTE: The excavation and removal of gravel can result in serious stream impacts by eliminating aquatic habitat and by causing channel instability if done incorrectly. Many streams are too small to accommodate gravel excavation in an environmentally sound manner. Keep in mind that removing point bars will do little to improve stream flow or stabilize stream banks. Likewise, pushing creek rock onto stream banks will not provide long-term bank stabilization. In-stream activities that significantly increase sedimentation or alter stream flow are violations of state water quality standards and may be subject to enforcement action.