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# Planning Mineral Exploration Projects on Crown Land

**Crown land is one of Ontario's greatest natural assets. It makes up about 87 per cent or 937,000 square kilometres of the province's land mass. Crown land supports many resource management and recreational activities and Aboriginal traditional practices. The Ministry of Natural Resources is responsible for managing Ontario's Crown land in a way that balances social, economic and environmental interests.**

**Contact the Ministry of Natural Resources when planning any mineral exploration activities on Crown land.**

Whether you are undertaking preliminary exploration activities, such as claim staking, grid line cutting or planning an extensive stripping or drilling program, contact the ministry early in the process to allow ample time to review permit applications when required.

[Local ministry offices](#) can identify permits and approvals that you may need, and also provide information regarding other Crown land uses and natural resources values that you should be aware of when planning your work.

The **Ministry of Natural Resources** administers a number of statutes that may apply to mineral exploration activities, such as:

- Public Lands Act – work permits
- Endangered Species Act
- Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act
- Crown Forest Sustainability Act
- Aggregate Resources Act



Photo Credit: MNDMF

Prospectors examining channel sampling

## Work Permits

Work permits authorize specific activities and works on public lands and shore lands (lands covered or seasonally inundated by the water of a lake, river, stream or pond). They allow for effective stewardship of public lands and help ensure that specific activities undertaken on shore lands have regard for the environment, other users and neighbouring landowners.

Many activities associated with mineral exploration, including the construction of roads, water crossings and buildings, require a work permit issued by the ministry. Some activities may require other permits or approvals (e.g. from the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans under the Fisheries Act) before work can begin.-

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# When is a Work Permit Required?

## Building Construction

A work permit is required for:

- Construction of all new buildings defined as “structures consisting of a roof, wall or floor.”  
Note: at some locations (e.g. within the 120-metre reservation on unpatented mining claims) a land use permit may be required before construction can begin

A work permit is **not** required for:

- Floating structures, tents
- Maintenance and improvements to existing buildings and structures located on a land use permit, licence of occupation or Crown lease

## Roads and Trails

A work permit is required for:

- All new roads constructed on Crown land, *except* those approved under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act
- All new trails *except* those constructed for mineral exploration or extraction. Typically, trail construction involves the removal of only enough trees and vegetation for off-road vehicles (e.g. all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, skidders)
- Existing roads that are altered, widened, or graded, other than what could be considered normal maintenance



Example of a road built on Crown land

Photo Credit: MNDFM/F

## Dredging and Filling of Shore lands

A work permit is required for:

- All works involving the placement, removal or displacement of material from any shore land (lands seasonally inundated by the water of a lake, river, stream or pond)

## Water Crossings

A work permit is required for:

- All water crossings, including culverts, bridges or causeways located on Crown land, *except* those approved under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act
- Water crossings located on municipal or private land which may require authorization issued under the Lakes and River Improvement Act.

## Mineral Exploration

A work permit is **not** required for:

- Prospecting activities including clearing, mechanical stripping, bulk sampling, drilling and blasting, the movement of heavy equipment, etc.

**NOTE:** Ontario Regulation 349/98 – made under the Public Lands Act, RSO, 1990, Chapter P.43 as amended –requires that a work permit be obtained to undertake certain “disruptive” mineral exploration activities in specified areas. These work permits are issued by the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. The areas to which this regulation applies are described in a schedule to the regulation. Currently the regulation applies only to areas around Lake Temagami.

For More Information:

- Contact your [local Ministry of Natural Resources office](#) when planning any mineral exploration activities on Crown land.
- Information on permits can also be found at [ontario.ca/crownland](http://ontario.ca/crownland).