

## Mechanized Surface Stripping

### What is the Activity?

Mechanized surface stripping uses heavy equipment to remove vegetation and soil from areas of rock. Next, pressurized water pumps with water hoses, similar to those used to fight forest fires, may be used to wash soil and debris off of the rock. The exposed rock can give information about the type of rock and the minerals present. This information is used to make geological maps and to guide future exploration.



This activity is commonly used where there is not enough exposed bedrock for geologists to examine and may prepare the area for trenching.

### Footprint on the Land

Equipment such as bulldozers, backhoes or excavators may be used. The soil removed from the bedrock is stored beside the stripped area and may later be placed back on the rock. Vegetation can then be hand planted or the site can be left to grow back naturally.

Washing the outcrops requires water to be pumped to the location.

The pumps may be placed on the shores of lakes, rivers and streams. Water is pumped at high pressure to wash away remaining soil.

Access trails may be made to move people and equipment to these locations.

### Mining Act Requirements

Mechanized stripping with a total surface area of **less** than 100 square metres within a 200-metre radius needs an **exploration plan**.

Mechanized stripping with a total surface area of **more** than 100 square metres within a 200-metre radius needs an **exploration permit**.

## Permit Standards for Early Exploration

All early exploration activities that require an exploration plan or permit must follow the Provincial Standards for Early Exploration. There are three parts to these Provincial Standards:

- Rules for carrying out exploration plan activities.
- Rules for carrying out exploration permit activities.
- Rules for rehabilitation of exploration plan and exploration permit activities.

During surface stripping programs, the Provincial Standards must be followed for both an exploration plan and an exploration permit:

- Stockpile all of the stripped overburden on the site in a safe and stable manner. Store waste rock separately.

**The rehabilitation requirements** in the Provincial Standards must be followed. They must be done after the exploration activity is complete, or before the exploration plan or permit expires.

- Disturbed overburden must be used to backfill stripped areas or contoured onsite to a stable angle of repose.
- For stripped areas that are not backfilled, disturbed overburden must be contoured to a stable angle of repose.

For the official and most up to date information on the rules for carrying out these exploration and rehabilitation activities, please refer to:

- [The Mining Act](#)
- [Exploration Plans and Exploration Permits Regulation](#)
- [Provincial Standards for Early Exploration](#)

## Ministry of Northern Development Mines Office Contact Numbers

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