

WDFW Help

Do I need a permit to prospect for minerals or placer mine in Washington?

Yes. In passing Chapter [77.55 RCW](#), the Washington State Legislature gave Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) the authority to regulate anyone who “desires to construct any form of hydraulic project or perform other work that will use, divert, obstruct, or change the natural flow or bed of any of the salt or fresh waters of the state”. Recreational and “for profit” mineral prospecting and placer mining activities that will use, divert, obstruct, or change the natural flow or bed of waters of the state qualify as “other work” and you must have a valid permit from WDFW to legally conduct those activities. Other types of mining that will not affect waters of the state do not require a permit from WDFW, but you will need permits from other agencies. For more information, contact the Governor's Office of Regulatory Innovation and Assistance at 1-800-917-0043 or [oria.wa.gov](#).

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/help/questions/241/>