

Guidelines for Prospecting and Scientific Research on the OCS

What is a Prospecting Permit?

A prospecting permit is issued by the MMS to allow for the collection of geological and geophysical data (G&G) on the OCS to determine the feasibility of the commercial recovery of offshore minerals including sand and gravel. Commercial recovery is defined as an activity whose objective is to determine the quality, quantity, and location of an OCS mineral deposit. Regulations for prospecting for sand, gravel and other non-energy minerals are in 30 CFR 280, which are posted on the MMS website:
<http://mms.gov/sandandgravel>.

Who needs to apply for a Prospecting Permit?

Any private, public or municipal corporation, state or local government proposing to conduct any prospecting activities on the OCS for any marine mineral resources must obtain a G&G permit from the MMS. The permittee is required to share all of the data collected under the permit with MMS and to cover any expenses that are incurred in providing that data. The request for a permit must be submitted to MMS at least 60 days prior to the date prospecting activities are scheduled to commence.

Under the 30 CFR 280 regulations, G&G activities for the purposes of scientific research on the OCS require a permit if the proposed activities include either: (1) the drilling of a borehole to a depth greater than 500 feet below the seafloor, or (2) the use of solid or liquid explosive. No permit is required, however, if such activities are being

conducted pursuant to authority contained in a lease issued or maintained under part 256 and part 281 of this title unless such activities are conducted by a federal agency.

Where must I send my Application or Notification for a Prospecting Permit?

You must apply for a permit or file a notice at one of the following locations:

For the OCS off the...

State of Alaska

Regional Supervisor for Resource Evaluation
Minerals Management Service
Alaska OCS Region
3801 Centerpoint Drive, Suite 500
Anchorage, AK 99503-5823
Phone: 907-334-5320

Atlantic Coast and the Gulf of Mexico

Regional Supervisor for Resource Evaluation
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard
New Orleans, LA 70123-2394
Phone: 504-736-2519/1-800-200-GULF

States of California, Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii

Regional Supervisor for Resource Evaluation
Minerals Management Service
Pacific OCS Region
770 Paseo Camarillo
Camarillo, CA 93010-6064
Phone: 805-389-7700

What is the duration of a Prospecting Permit?

The permits are issued for a term of one year, but can be extended if approved by the MMS for two additional one-year periods.

Is a permit required for Scientific Research?

A prospecting permit is not required for activities that do not involve drilling activities and the use of explosives. However, persons planning to conduct prospecting activities are strongly encouraged to obtain a prospecting permit from the MMS, if the activities have the potential to: (1) interfere with or endanger operations under any lease, right-of-way, notice or permit maintained or issued under the OCSLA, or (2) harm aquatic life, result in pollution, create hazardous or unsafe conditions, unreasonably interfere with other uses of the area; disturb any site, structure, or object of historical or archaeological significance. Persons planning to conduct activities should also obtain a permit from the MMS, if they have not consulted and coordinated with other users of the area.

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina



Before



After

