

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Colorado State Office
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*This handout is provided to give a basic explanation of the rules and regulations pertaining to mineral prospecting on BLM land in the State of Colorado. **Prior to beginning operations we strongly advise prospectors to contact the BLM Field Office or United States Forest Service Office with jurisdiction for the area where the operation is planned to determine the level of use for your operation.***

Classification of Operations in the State of Colorado

CASUAL USE

Casual use prospecting includes those activities which cause very little or no disturbance. For example: collection of geochemical, rock, soil, or mineral specimens using hand tools; hand panning; or non-motorized sluicing. It also generally includes use of metal detectors, gold spears and other battery-operated devices for sensing the presence of minerals, and hand and battery-operated dry washers. Operators may use motorized vehicles for casual use activities provided the use is consistent with the regulations governing such use (part 43 CFR 8340), including following off-road vehicle use designations and temporary closures ordered by BLM. Casual use operations do not require notification of the BLM, except where specific land use or recreation area plans call for a recreational mining permit. You must reclaim any casual-use disturbance that you create.

NOTICE-LEVEL

BLM and the State of Colorado have an agreement addressing notice level prospecting activities on public land in the State of Colorado. A person must file a Notice of Intent to conduct Prospecting Operations (NOI) and provide a financial warranty for the prospecting operations with the appropriate BLM field office. As defined by the BLM 43CFR 3809 regulations and State of Colorado Hard Rock/Metal Mining Rules and Regulations; Notice level prospecting means any prospecting operation that is motorized, or is reasonably expected to result in greater land disturbance other than is caused by the ordinary, lawful use of the land by persons not prospecting. The term includes a single activity on a single block of land up to 1600 square feet (Rule 1.1.43).

PLAN OF OPERATION

An approved Plan of Operations is required for exploration activities disturbing in excess of 5 acres, bulk sampling of 1,000 tons or more, and **all** proposed mining or milling operations (**regardless of the acreage disturbed**). A Plan is required for any operation causing surface disturbance greater than **Casual Use** in special status areas as defined in 43 CFR 3809.11. Financial warranty must be supplied for all plan level operations.

Suction Dredging on Public Land in the State of Colorado

If your operations involve the use of a suction dredge, the state requires authorization for its use. A person must contact the BLM Field Office with jurisdiction over the land where the operation will take place **BEFORE** beginning such use to determine what level of regulations your operation falls under.

The BLM Grand Junction Field Office and the Royal Gorge Field Office have designated rules on suction dredging and recreational placer operations within their Field Office boundaries. A Notice of Intent form for these areas only is provided on each Field Office web-site.