

Facts About Quarry Approvals

All quarries have oversight.

Private operations exceeding four hectares require an environmental assessment. To learn more, visit novascotia.ca/nse/ea/faqs.asp

Quarries under four hectares do not require an environmental assessment. However, they are subject to an environmental review and require an approval in order to operate. This review focuses on ensuring that there will be no adverse effects to the environment.

Quarries Under 4 Hectares

In accordance with provincial regulations, applications for quarries under four hectares are assessed and approved by the department's technical and managerial staff.

Once an application is received, within the first two weeks, it is initially reviewed to determine if all the required information has been provided or, if additional information may be needed in order to complete the environmental review.

- If the requested information is not received within the department's legislated timeframe, the application is considered incomplete and may be rejected.
- If the requested information is received and the application is deemed complete, it is then assessed in detail to determine if an industrial approval can be issued. The review must be completed and a decision rendered within 60 days.

Public Engagement

Companies are expected to engage the community about their activities through the application process. The purpose is to ensure that the public has an avenue to express their concerns and that any potential environmental effects are mitigated by adding site specific terms and conditions to an approval.

- At a minimum, the applicant is required to publish a notice in a local daily newspaper, providing the public with 30 days to comment. A summary of the comments received from the public consultation process must be submitted to the department for review.

- Once the public comment period has closed and the summary report has been received, the department may require additional forms of consultation based on the feedback received through the process.
- The department can require that a community liaison committee be established.

Approvals

The department uses science and evidence-based decision making when assessing projects for environmental approval. If an application is approved, it includes terms and conditions to ensure the environment is protected. For quarries, these requirements are outlined in the Pit and Quarries Guidelines and can include:

- monitoring requirements for ground and surface water
- dust monitoring
- noise level limits
- blasting limitations.

Once an approval is issued, failure to comply with the terms and conditions will be addressed by the department's inspection and compliance staff. Compliance issues can be addressed through a variety of means including environmental warnings, summary offence tickets, directives, prosecution and Ministerial Orders.

Appeals

The department issues more than 5,000 applications and approvals a year. We recognize that some approvals may be met with concerns.

To ensure that concerns are heard, under the Environment Act, a person who is aggrieved by a decision of an administrator may appeal to the Minister within 30 days of the decision. The Minister of Environment would then have 60 days to make a decision.

If the person making the appeal does not agree with the Minister's decision, that person can appeal it to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia.