

Controlled Activities Regulations

Removal of sand, silt or clay from the bed of previously straightened rivers and burns

This guide will help those who have applied for and received a registration from SEPA to dredge in straightened rivers up to 5m wide. The registration only applies to channels that have the following characteristics, for the length of the reach to be worked.

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Has an average width of greater than, or equal to, 1 metre and less than 5 metres measured across the bed between the base of one bank and the other. | 2
Has been artificially straightened or canalised with the lines of its bank tops being parallel, or near parallel, throughout its length. | 3
Has a bed surface layer that is entirely, or almost entirely, comprised of sediments with diameter of less than 2mm i.e. sands, silts and clay. | 4
Except in flood flows, has a smooth, un-rippled water surface for all, or nearly all of its length. |
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The following rules apply once you are registered. Please refer to your registration letter for exact wording and other general conditions and if in doubt, please contact your local SEPA office.

DO Complete the work within 12 months from authorisation date. 	DON'T Clear more than a total of 500m river length. You may split this length up e.g. 100m + 400m.. 
DO Notify SEPA one week before starting work. 	DON'T Make the river bank any higher. Smooth out removed silt if necessary, and keep it away from bank edge. 
DO Always leave some sediment intact at the toe of at least one bank. 	DON'T Work if fish are spawning or young fish are waiting to emerge (May end to Oct end generally avoids salmon spawning. You can check with your local fishery board). 
DO Use measures to prevent downstream pollution. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use filter materials such as silt curtains or straw bales to trap silt before it gets downstream.• Minimise the time the works will take.• Choose the right weather conditions e.g. drier periods. 	DON'T Leave a sudden change or step in the river bed. Grade the bed using a shallow angle to tie in with the unworked areas. 
DO Keep vehicles out of the river or loch where possible and where pearl mussels may be present within 50m. 	DON'T Widen the river channel. Leave the banks alone, and don't cause erosion. 
DO Prevent any oil from entering the river and contain spillages. 	DON'T Dump sediment back into any water course, loch or wetland. 
	DON'T Lower water levels in wetlands, designated or otherwise. This includes marshy grassland on rough grazing land. 
	DON'T Work within 1km of a loch outlet unless there is a dam, weir or other control structure on it. 