

## GENERAL PERMITS FOR WORK IN WATERWAYS, FLOODWAYS AND WETLANDS

Most activities in Pennsylvania water courses, water bodies or wetlands require an authorization or permit from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to protect public health, safety and the environment. Activities that change, expand or diminish the course, current or cross section of a watercourse, floodway or waterbody are termed encroachments, obstructions in certain cases, and are regulated by Chapter 105 regulations. Many of these projects qualify for a simple general permit (GP) if they are designed and implemented in accordance with the criteria in the GP. The applicant needs to complete and submit a registration form available from delegated county conservation districts or one of the DEP regional offices listed on the reverse side. The local municipality and county must be notified of the applicant's intent to use the GP. There is no fee for registering a GP.

There are 12 different GPs, each related to a particular activity. Prior to registration, an applicant must review the appropriate GP and determine if the proposed project can be constructed in accordance with the conditions, restrictions and performance criteria identified for that specific permit.

Most projects in commonwealth waters and wetlands also require federal authorization that is usually granted in the form of a Pennsylvania State Programmatic General Permit (PASPGP-3). In most instances, PASPGP-3 is approved/attached by the DEP or a county conservation district along with the registered GP. When applicable, PASPGP-3 eliminates the need for redundant federal reviews and processing for projects.

### A brief summary for each general permit is listed below:

**GP-1: Fish Habitat Enhancement Structures** - Authorizes the installation, operation and maintenance of fish habitat enhancement structures including deflectors, elevated boulder structures and half logs in regulated waters of the commonwealth. Prior approval from PA Fish and Boat Commission is required. Not for use in wetlands.

**GP-2: Small Docks and Boat Launching Ramps** - Authorizes the installation, operation, modification and maintenance of small docks (750 square feet or less) and boat launching ramps in and along the regulated waters of the commonwealth. Other size restrictions may apply.

**GP-3: Bank Rehabilitation, Bank Protection and Gravel Bar Removal** - Authorizes the installation, operation, modification and maintenance of bank rehabilitation and protection projects. It also authorizes the removal of gravel bars that are less than 500 linear feet in length in and along regulated waters of the commonwealth. A gravel bar shall be removed only to a depth of 6 inches above the water level at the time of the project. Not for use in wetlands.

**GP-4: Intake and Outfall Structures** - Authorizes the construction, operation and maintenance of intake and outfall structures in, along, across or projecting into regulated waters of the commonwealth. Not for use in wetlands.

**GP-5: Utility Line Stream Crossings** - Authorizes the installation, operation and maintenance of utility line stream crossings of the regulated waters of the commonwealth. Can be used in wetlands less than 10 acres in size.

**GP-6: Agricultural Crossings and Ramps** - Authorizes the installation, operation and maintenance of agricultural crossings and ramps in regulated waters of the commonwealth. Not for use in wetlands.

**GP-7: Minor Road Crossings** - Authorizes: (1) the construction, operation and maintenance of minor road crossings across wetlands which individually disturbs less than 0.1 acre of wetlands while cumulative impacts total less than 0.25 acres; (2) the construction, operation and maintenance of a minor road crossing across a stream where the watershed drainage area is 1.0 square mile or less; and (3) the removal of an existing minor road crossing across a stream where the drainage area is 1.0 square mile or less.

**GP-8: Temporary Road Crossings** - Authorizes the construction, operation and maintenance of temporary road crossings across regulated waters of the commonwealth for one year, including wetland crossings less than 200 feet, where no practicable alternatives exist.

**GP-9: Agricultural Activities** - Authorizes the installation, operation, modification and maintenance of certain agricultural activities that encroach into streams and their floodways or bodies of water. These agricultural activities include: grassed or lined waterways, terraces, diversions, waste storage facilities and spring development. Minor drainage that supports the above activities and is necessary for contour strips when part of an existing agricultural operation and implemented as part of a conservation plan consistent with the 25 PA Code Chapter 102 (relating to erosion and sediment control) and approved by the county conservation district is also included.

**GP-10: Abandoned Mine Reclamation** - Authorizes the construction, operation or maintenance of an encroachment or water obstruction for reclamation of an abandoned mining site, where DEP has issued a notice of intent to forfeit the bond for a mining activity permitted after August 1977 and before July 1982.

**GP-11: Maintenance, Testing, Repair, Rehabilitation or Replacement of Water Obstructions and Encroachments** - Authorizes the maintenance, testing, repair, rehabilitation and replacement of existing water obstructions and encroachments including currently serviceable bridges, culverts, utility lines and docks. The applicant will be required to register the project by submitting written notice and all applicable information to the appropriate regional office.

**GP-15: Private Residential Construction in Wetlands** - Authorizes the placement and maintenance of fill in, or the excavation of, wetlands for the construction or expansion of a single family home for the personal residence of the permittee. This includes reasonable and necessary features, such as a driveway, storage shed and utilities on a residential lot purchased by the permittee prior to Nov. 22, 1991, within established subdivisions approved by the local governing authority where such activities do not impact greater than 0.50 acre of wetlands. (PASPGP-3 does not apply.) Separate federal authorization from the Army Corps of Engineers will be required. Wetland fill cannot be used to construct or expand an on-lot septic system.

For more information, visit [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us), keyword: Wetlands, or contact:

PERMITTING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES SECTION	COUNTY RESPONSIBILITY	PERMITTING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES SECTION	COUNTY RESPONSIBILITY
Northeast Regional Office 2 Public Square Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701-1915 570-826-2511	Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, <b>Monroe</b> , Northampton, <b>Pike</b> , Schuylkill, <b>Susquehanna</b> , <b>Wayne</b> and Wyoming	Southeast Regional Office 2 East Main Street Norristown, PA 19401-4915 484-250-5970	Bucks, Chester, <b>Delaware</b> , Montgomery and Philadelphia
Northcentral Regional Office 208 W. Third St., Suite 101 Williamsport, PA 17701-6448 570-327-0529	<b>Bradford</b> , Cameron, <b>Centre</b> , Clearfield, <b>Clinton</b> , <b>Columbia</b> , Lycoming, <b>Montour</b> , Northumberland, <b>Potter</b> , <b>Snyder</b> , <b>Sullivan</b> , <b>Tioga</b> and <b>Union</b>	Southcentral Regional Office 909 Elmerton Ave. Harrisburg, PA 17110-8200 717-705-4800	Adams, Bedford, <b>Berks</b> , Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, <b>Huntingdon</b> , Juniata, <b>Lancaster</b> , Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry and York
Northwest Regional Office 230 Chestnut St. Meadville, PA 16335-3481 814-332-6984	<b>Butler</b> , Clarion, <b>Crawford</b> , <b>Elk</b> , <b>Erie</b> , Forest, <b>Jefferson</b> , Lawrence, McKean, <b>Mercer</b> , Venango and <b>Warren</b>	Southwest Regional Office 400 Waterfront Dr. Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4745 412-442-4315	Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, <b>Cambria</b> , Fayette, <b>Greene</b> , <b>Indiana</b> , Somerset, <i>Washington and Westmoreland</i>

\*Counties in **bold** are delegated to issue GPs (exceptions are GP-11 and GP-15) and SPGP (federal authorization).

\*Counties in *italics* are delegated to issue GPs 6 and 9 and SPGP (federal authorization).

**DEP CENTRAL OFFICE**

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