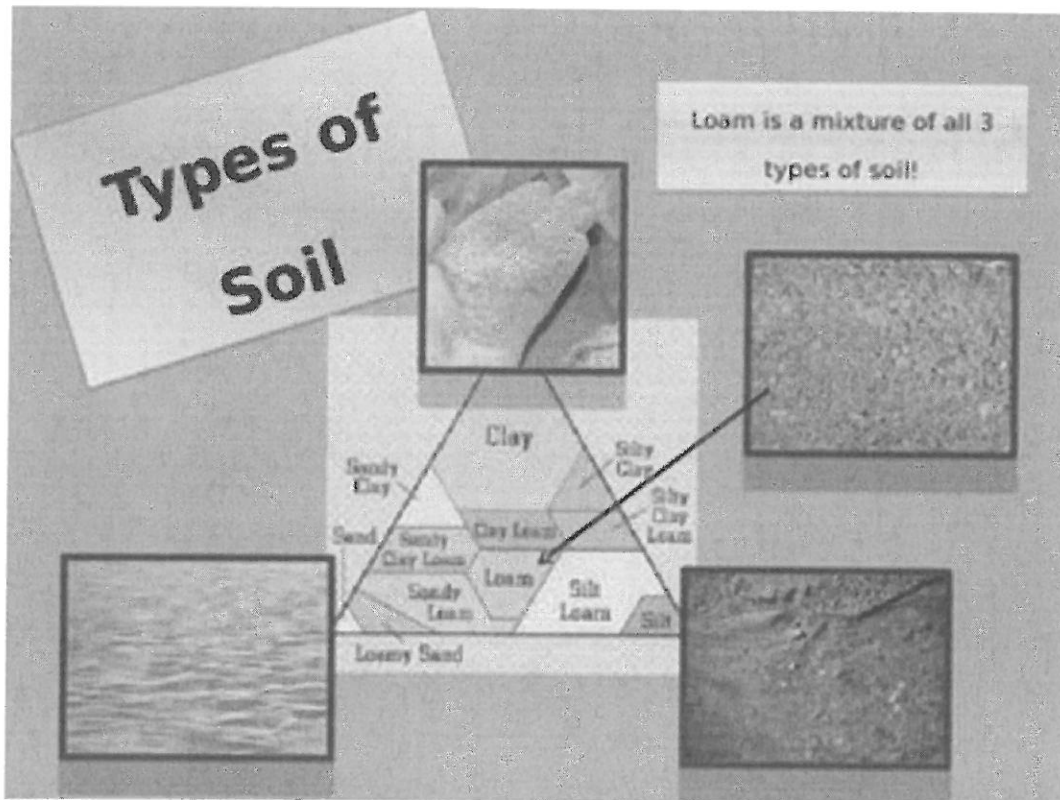


TOWN OF GILSUM EXCAVATION REGULATIONS

*PROPOSED FOR PUBLIC
HEARING JUNE 24, 2026*



Adopted November 4, 2003

Amended _____, 2026

Section I: Authority

Chapter 155-E of the New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated stipulates that, with some exceptions, all earth excavations in the State are subject to regulation from the local municipality in which the operation occurs. Pursuant to the authority vested in the Planning Board by the voters of the Town of Gilsum and RSA 155-E, the Planning Board adopts the following regulations to govern the excavation of earth materials in the Town of Gilsum.

Section II: Purpose and Scope

The goals of this regulation are to: provide for reasonable opportunities for excavation; minimize safety hazards which can be created by open excavations; ensure that the public health and welfare will be safeguarded; protect natural resources and the environment; and maintain the aesthetic features of the Town.

Section III: Definitions

- A. **Abutter** means: (1) Any person whose property is located in New Hampshire and adjoins or is directly across the street or stream from the land under consideration. (2) For the purposes of receiving testimony only, and not for purposes of notification, the term "abutter" shall include any person who is able to demonstrate that his land will be directly affected by the proposal under consideration. (3) In the case of an abutting property being under a condominium or other collective form of ownership, the term "abutter" means the officers of the collective or association, as defined in RSA 356-B. XXIII. For purposes of notification and receiving testimony, abutter means all affected towns and the regional planning commission(s) in the case of a development having regional impact.
- B. **Applicant** means the owner of the property to be excavated or the owner's agent so designated in writing as part of the excavation application.
- C. **Board** means the Planning Board of Gilsum.
- D. **Buffer** means any natural or constructed feature sufficient to provide visual screening.
- E. **Commercially-useful Excavation** means any excavation that removes more than 1,000 cubic yards from the property within any tax year.
- F. **Contiguous** means land whose perimeter can be circumscribed without interruption in common ownership except for roads or other easements, in a single town, except in the case of stationary manufacturing plants, whose perimeter is not defined by town boundaries.
- G. **Dimension Stone** means rock that is cut, shaped or selected for use in blocks, slabs, sheets, or other construction units of specified shapes or sizes and is used for external or interior parts of buildings, foundations, curbing, paving, flagging, bridges, revetments, or for other architectural or engineering purposes. Dimension stone includes quarry blocks from which sections of dimension stone are to be produced. Dimension stone does not include earth as defined below.
- H. **Earth** means sand, gravel, rock, soil or construction aggregate produced by quarrying, crushing or any other mining activity or such other naturally- occurring unconsolidated materials that normally mask the bedrock.
- I. **Excavation** means using land for the commercial taking of earth, including all slopes.
- J. **Excavation Area** means the area within an excavation site where excavation has occurred or is eligible to occur under the provisions of RSA 155-E. This is also known as the pit area.
- K. **Excavation Site** means any area of contiguous land in common ownership upon which excavation takes place.
- L. **Existing Excavation** means any excavation that lawfully existed as of August 24, 1979, from which earth material of sufficient weight or volume to be commercially useful has been removed during the 2-year period before August 24, 1979.
- M. **Expansion:**
 - a. of existing excavations means excavation beyond the limits of the Town and the area which on 8/24/79 had been contiguous to and in common ownership with the excavation site and has been appraised and inventoried for tax purposes as part of the same tract as the excavation site.

b. of stationary manufacturing plants means to any contiguous lands which were in common ownership with the site of the plant on 8/4/89.

N. **Reclamation** means the restoring of an excavation Site to a standard at least equal to those outlined in Section X of these regulations.

O. **Stationary Manufacturing and/or Processing Plants** means facilities that are placed on a site for the purposes of sorting, washing, screening, crushing, classifying, drying or processing excavated earth materials.

Section IV: Projects Requiring a Permit

A. Those that commenced operations since August 24, 1979 without first obtaining a permit, unless specifically exempted by the Planning Board under Section V below.

B. Those that have lawfully operated prior to August 24, 1979 and wish to expand the excavation area.

C. Those excavations from an area that on August 4, 1989 was contiguous to or was contiguous land in common ownership with stationary manufacturing and processing plants which were in operation as of August 24, 1979 and wish to expand.

Section V: Projects Exempt from a Permit

A. The following projects do not require a permit, but are nevertheless subject to Sections IX, X and Xu of these regulations. In the event of a question regarding compliance, the Board may require the owner/operator to come before the Board and submit such information as may be necessary to demonstrate compliance with said standards.

l) Existing Excavations, provided that:

a) at the time operation began it was in compliance with any local ordinances that may have been in effect; and

b) the owner or operator of such an excavation area shall have filed an excavation report per RSA 155-E: 1 (d) with the Board no later than August 4, 1991. Any existing excavation that failed to file this report shall no longer be considered to be grandfathered and must obtain a permit from the Board before continuing excavation of the site.

B. The following projects do not require a permit, but are nevertheless subject to Sections IX, X, and XI of these regulations. Compliance with these standards is mandatory in order to retain the non-permit status. Loss of such non-permit status can occur only after the Board has given written notice that the excavation is not in compliance and the owner has failed to bring it into compliance within 30 days of receipt of such notice.

l) Excavations from a site which on August 4, 1989 was contiguous to or was contiguous land in common ownership with stationary manufacturing and processing plants which were in operation as of August 24, 1979 and which use earth obtained from such excavation site.

2) Excavations from a site that on August 4, 1989 was contiguous to, or contiguous land in common ownership with stationary manufacturing and processing plants for which local or state permits have been granted since August 24, 1979 and before August 4, 1989, which used earth obtained from such site.

3) An excavation performed exclusively for the lawful construction, reconstruction, or maintenance of a Class I, II, III, IV, or V highway. A copy of the pit agreement executed between the pit owner and the governmental unit shall be filed with the Board; in addition, the provisions of Section VII of this regulation are to be complied with.

C. The following projects are exempt from a permit and are not subject to regulation by the Board.

l) Excavation that is exclusively incidental to the lawful construction or alteration of a building or structure, septic system, a parking lot or way including a driveway on a portion of the premises where removal occurs. This excavation cannot be started, however, until any required state and local permits have been issued.

- 2) Excavation that is incidental to agricultural or silvicultural activities, normal landscaping or minor topographical adjustment. In the event of questions, the Board shall determine what is incidental.
 - 3) Excavation from a granite quarry for the purpose of producing dimension stone, if such excavation requires a permit under RSA 12-E (Mining and Reclamation).
 - 4) Excavation that is put back on the parcel from which it is taken, or any contiguous parcel in common ownership, for the construction, reclamation, reconstruction, or alteration of such parcel within the same tax year.
 - 5) Excavation that is used exclusively for agricultural or forest management by the owner of the land.
 - 6) Excavation that does not remove 1,000 cubic yards from the property within any tax year.
 - 7) Excavations that are incidental to other construction projects and do not result in the removal from the parcel of more than 1,000 cubic yards of earth within the tax year.
- D. A person owning land abutting a site which was taken by eminent domain or by any other governmental taking upon which construction is taking place may stockpile earth taken from the construction site and may remove the earth at a later date after written notification to the Board.

Section VI: Abandoned Excavations

- A. Any excavation, except for those associated with stationary manufacturing plants, for which the affected area has not been brought into complete compliance with the reclamation standards of this regulation shall be considered abandoned if:
- 1) No material of sufficient weight or volume to be commercially useful has been removed from the site during any 2-year period, either before, on, or after August 4, 1989. The time period may be extended if, prior to the end of the time period, the Board approves a reclamation timetable, and a bond or other surety is posted in a form and amount prescribed by the Board sufficient to cover the costs of reclaiming the entire site.
 - 2) The excavation is in use, but either has not been brought into compliance with the incremental reclamation standards of this regulation, or a bond has not been posted and a reclamation timetable has not been approved by the Board.
 - 3) The owner or operator of the excavation has neither secured a permit pursuant to these regulations nor filed an excavation report with the Planning Board within the prescribed period.
- B. In the event the Board determines that any abandoned excavation presents a hazard to the public health, safety or welfare, the owner may be required, following a public hearing, to comply with the timetable and bonding requirements outlined above, or to complete reclamation within a reasonable period of time. Should reclamation not be completed, the Board may request the Town to authorize reclamation at the Town's expense. The Town's costs shall constitute an assessment against the owner, and shall create a lien against the property. Such assessment and lien may be enforced and collected in the same manner as provided for real estate taxes.
- C. The provisions of Paragraph B above also apply to any excavation which ceased commercially-useful operation prior to August 24, 1977, but for which the affected area has not been brought into compliance with the reclamation standards, if the Board determines in writing that a danger to public health or safety exists.

Section VII: Prohibited Projects

- A. For excavations within 150 feet of the boundary of a disapproving abutter or within 50 feet of an approving abutter unless approval is requested by said abutter.
- B. Where existing visual barriers would be removed, except to provide access to the excavation.
- C. Where the issuance of the permit would be unduly hazardous or injurious to the public welfare. The Board shall give particular consideration to such factors as noise, traffic, dust, fumes, or danger from operation.
- D. Where the excavation would substantially damage a known aquifer, as designated by the United States Geological Survey.

- E. When the excavation cannot receive necessary approvals from State or federal agencies, such as Alteration of Terrain or Wetlands permits.
- F. Where the excavation is not permitted by zoning or other applicable ordinances, provided, however, that reasonable opportunities for excavation exist in town, as described in RSA 155-E: 4, III.
- G. Where the project cannot comply with the requirements of Sections IX, X, and XI of these regulations.

Section VIII: Criteria for Non-Conforming Expansions

Expansion of existing excavations located in an area in which excavations are no longer permitted by local zoning that was in effect on August 4, 1989 may be restricted or modified with conditions by the Board, if after notice to the owner and a public hearing, the Board finds that the expansion will have a substantially different and adverse impact on the neighborhood. Impacts will vary depending upon the particular neighborhood; nevertheless, the following criteria will be taken into consideration:

- The excavation will not cause a diminution in area property values or unreasonably change the character of the neighborhood.
- The excavation will not create any nuisance or create health or safety hazards. The excavation will not unreasonably accelerate the deterioration of highways or create safety hazards in the use thereof.

Section IX: Operational Standards

- A. For excavations not requiring a permit, the following standards apply. For those excavations requiring a permit, these standards are considered to be the minimum; more stringent standards such as are consistent with the purpose of these regulations may be applied, as deemed necessary by the Board.
 - 1. No excavation shall be permitted closer than 150 feet to an existing dwelling or to a site for which a building permit has been issued at the time the excavation permit is granted.
 - 2. No excavation shall be permitted below road level within 50 feet of the right-of-way of any public highway as defined in RSA 229:1 unless such excavation is for the purpose of said highway.
 - 3. A vegetated buffer shall be maintained or provided within the peripheral areas of Items 1 and 2 above, to be determined by the Planning Board during application review.
 - 4. No fuels, lubricants or other toxic or polluting chemicals shall be stored on-site unless in compliance with State laws or rules pertaining to the storage of such materials,
 - 5. Where temporary slopes will exceed a grade of 1:1, a fence or other suitable barricade shall be erected to warn of danger and/or to limit access to the site.
 - 6. Appropriate drainage shall be provided to prevent the accumulation of freestanding water for prolonged periods.
 - 7. Excavation practices that result in continued siltation of surface waters or any degradation of water quality of any public or private water supplies are prohibited. For the purposes of this Regulation, water quality is characterized by its clarity, volume, and potability according to NH Department of Environmental Services.
 - 8. No excavation shall be permitted within 75 feet of any great pond, navigable river, or any other standing body of water 10 acres or more in area, or within 25 feet of any other stream, river or brook which normally flows throughout the year, or any naturally-occurring standing body of water less than 10 acres, prime wetland as designated in accordance With RSA 482-A: 15,1 or any other wetland greater than 5 acres in area as defined by the Wetlands Board.
- B. For new or expanded excavations that require a permit, additional standards may be required, including but not limited to the following:
 - 1. If blasting is proposed, the Board reserves the right to engage the services of a blasting expert, at the applicant's expense, to evaluate the blasting plan and provide guidance to the Board.

- a. The blasting plan shall comply with all applicable local, state, and federal rules and regulations, including the NH Code of Administrative Rules (Saf-C 1600); it shall also include a process for pre-blast notification; hours of allowable blasting; and measures to prevent any damage to surrounding properties, and mitigation measures should damage occur. Potential damage includes damage to structures or wells, or to well water quality or pressure.
 - b. Wells that are to be tested will be tested for the following, to include but not be limited to: arsenic, iron, manganese, sodium, nitrate, nitrite, hardness, and chloride.
 - c. If the owner utilizes the services of an independent blasting service, the owner is nevertheless to be held responsible for any damages incurred by blasting.
2. All applicable boundaries shall be demarcated before the start of excavation. The limits of the excavation area and site shall be clearly demarcated and maintained during the excavation operation so that during inspections and monitoring it will be evident that the operation remains within the approved boundaries.
 3. Any vegetation meeting the requirements of Paragraph A.3. above that is removed as part of the operation must be replaced as soon as is reasonably feasible.

Section X: Site Reclamation Standards

- A. For excavations not requiring a permit, the following standards apply. For excavations requiring a permit, these standards are considered to be the minimum; more stringent standards such as are consistent with the purpose of these regulations may be applied, as deemed necessary by the Board.
- B. Within 12 months following the expiration date of a permit issued under these regulations, or the completion of any excavation, whichever occurs first, the excavated area shall be reclaimed in accordance with the following standards:
 1. Areas visible from a public way, from which trees have been removed, shall be replanted with tree seedlings, set out in accordance with acceptable horticultural practices.
 2. Except for exposed rock ledge, all disturbed areas shall be spread with topsoil or any other soil capable of maintaining vegetation, and shall be planted with seedlings or grass suitable to prevent erosion.
 3. All earth and vegetative debris resulting from the excavation shall be removed or otherwise lawfully disposed of.
 4. All slopes, except for exposed ledge, shall be graded to natural repose for the type of soil of which they are composed so as to control erosion or at a ratio of horizontal to vertical proposed by the owner and approved by the Board. Changes of slope shall not be abrupt, but shall blend with the surrounding terrain.
 5. Any standing bodies of water created by the excavation that are judged to constitute a hazard to health and safety shall be eliminated.
 6. The topography of the land shall be left so that water draining from the site leaves the property at the original, natural drainage points and in the natural proportions of flow.
 7. For excavation projects requiring a permit from the Division of Water Supply and Pollution Control, the provisions of RSA 485-A: 17 shall supersede this regulation. Copies of all such permits shall be filed with the Board.

Section XI: Incremental Reclamation

Except for excavation sites of operating stationary manufacturing plants, any excavated area of 5 contiguous acres or more which is depleted of commercial earth materials, excluding bedrock, or any excavation from which earth materials of sufficient weight or volume to be commercially useful have not been removed for a 2-year period, shall be reclaimed in accordance with Section X of these regulations within 12 months following such depletion or non-use, regardless of whether other excavation is occurring on adjacent land in contiguous ownership. A reclamation

plan, including a reclamation timetable for the depleted areas within the reclamation site, shall be submitted to the Board for approval.

Section XII: Performance Guarantee

- A. Prior to the granting of any permit, or to the removal of topsoil or other overburden material from a new area within an existing excavation site, the applicant shall submit to the Selectmen a bond with sufficient surety as determined by the Planning Board. The purposes of the bond are to guarantee reclamation of the area, compliance with the permit and any inspections. Off-site improvements for potential damage of Town roads or facilities caused by the transportation of earth materials shall be discussed at this stage.
- B. The surety may be in the form of a performance bond, property escrow, irrevocable letter of credit, or any other form approved by the Board. The surety may be phased to coincide with the phasing of work, in an amount sufficient to guarantee reclamation of the applicable section to be released as sections are completed. Prior to a new section being opened, new securities shall be posted, the surety shall not be released until the Board is satisfied that all conditions of the site reclamation plan have been complied with.

Section XIII: Exceptions

Due to the diverse nature of excavation operations which vary in scale and scope, and due to the varying conditions of the land to be excavated, the Board may, upon application and following a duly-noticed hearing grant any exception in writing to the standards contained in Sections IX, X, XI, and XII for good cause shown. The written decision shall state specifically what requirements are being waived and include any reasonable alternatives.

Section XIV: Application Procedure

Prior to the Board rendering a decision for an excavation permit, a public hearing shall be held, with due notification of all abutters and the public. The procedure for holding these public hearings is as follows:

- A. Filing of the Application
 1. Applications for excavation permits shall be filed with the Board at a regularly scheduled meeting.
 2. The application will be reviewed with the applicant at the meeting, and will be accepted by the Board only if it is found to meet all submission requirements for a completed application. Should the application not be accepted as complete, another meeting must be scheduled for submission.
- B. Board Action on Application
 1. Following a vote to accept the application as complete, the Board will schedule a public hearing to be held within 30 days. The hearing may be held on the same evening as the vote to accept, provided the notice so states.
 2. Within 20 days of the close of the hearing on the application, or any continuation thereof, the Board shall make a decision. Notice of this decision shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and placed on file in the Town offices.
 3. The applicant shall receive a written Notice of Decision within five (5) business days of the decision. In the event the application is disapproved, the reasons for the disapproval shall be given.
- C. Notices Required for Public Hearing
 1. All abutters will be notified by certified mail, not less than 10 days prior to the meeting at which the application will be submitted for acceptance. Names and addresses of abutters must be taken from Town records not more than 5 days before filing the application.
 2. Public notice will appear in a newspaper of general circulation and in at least three public places not less than 10 days prior to the meeting.
 3. The notice must include the location and general description of the proposal as well as the date, time, and place of the meeting.

D. Fees

1. The filing fee plus postage shall be paid upon submission of an application, to defray the costs of posting notice for the public hearing. Failure to pay such cost shall constitute grounds for the Board to not accept the application.
2. A permit fee of \$50 shall be paid upon the issuance of a permit.

Section XV: Application Submission Items

The applicant shall submit at least five (5) copies of an Excavation and a Reclamation Plan; one copy shall be sent to the Conservation Commission. The plans shall be at a scale appropriate for the land area involved. The Board may, upon good cause shown, waive any of the items in Paragraphs A or B.

A. Excavation Plan

The plan shall show or be accompanied by the following items:

1. Name and address of the owner, the excavator (if different) and all abutters.
2. Name, address, and signature of the person preparing the plan; date, bar scale and north arrow.
3. Zoning district boundaries of the proposed area and within 200 feet of the excavation site.
4. Sketch and description of the location and boundaries of the proposed and any existing excavations; the area in square feet and acres.
5. The location of existing buildings, structures, septic systems and wells within 200 feet of the excavation site.
6. All properties within 2,000 feet of the excavation site.
7. Public streets, driveways, intersections, rights-of-way, and all easements within 200 feet of the excavation site; road network to be affected: intended transportation routes to be used.
8. Topography at contour intervals of five feet or less.
9. All surface drainage patterns including wetlands and standing water.
10. Sketch and description of existing and proposed access roads, including width and surface materials.
11. The breadth, depth and slope of the proposed excavation and the estimated duration of the project.
12. The elevation of the highest annual average ground water table within or next to the proposed excavation.
13. Test pits that extend to either the seasonal high-water table, ledge, or a minimum of six feet below the maximum proposed excavation depth, including location and soils data; boring logs may be submitted separately.
14. Proposed fencing, buffers or other visual barriers, including height and materials.
15. All measures to control erosion, sedimentation, water pollution, air pollution, noise, or any hazards to human safety.
16. Plans for storm water management.
17. Plans for equipment maintenance.
18. Methods to prevent materials from the site from being tracked onto public roadways.
19. Copies of all necessary state and federal permits.
20. The excavation plan shall address specific actions to be taken on the Site relative to fuel and chemical handling and storage, dust control, traffic, noise control and abatement, and comprehensive site safety of unauthorized persons.
21. Blasting Plan, if applicable.

B. Reclamation Plan

The reclamation plan shall address the effects of the proposed excavation on soil, surface and groundwater, vegetation, overburden, topography, and fill material, and should address future land use consistent with the Master Plan. The plan shall show or be accompanied by the following items:

1. Name, address, and signature of the person preparing the plan; date, bar scale and north arrow.
2. All boundaries of the area proposed for reclamation and the land within 200 feet of the excavation site.
3. Final topography of the area proposed for reclamation, at contour intervals of five feet or less.
4. Final surface drainage pattern, including the location and physical characteristics of all artificial and/or modified drainage facilities.
5. Timetable as to the start and end of excavation of each area within the site and reclamation timetable of fully depleted sites within the excavation area.
6. Schedule of final reclamation activities including seeding mixtures, cover vegetation, fertilizer types, and application rates, and potential future use, if known.

C. Other

1. The Board reserves the right, per RSA 155-E: 3, VII to request any other information it deems necessary to make an informed decision, or to have plans reviewed by an outside agency. According to the authority vested in the Board by RSA 676:4. I (g), any reasonable expenses incurred for such information or reviews shall be charged to the applicant. Failure to pay such costs constitutes valid grounds for the Board to deny the application.
2. In order to better visualize the project, the Board may require colorized plans, aerial photography, or other methods that clearly depict both the proposed excavation and reclamation plans.

Section XVI: Administration and Enforcement

This Regulation shall be administered by the Planning Board and enforced by the Selectmen.

A. Permits

1. Permits shall be issued only to the owner or his agent and shall not be transferable without the prior written consent of the Board. A copy of the permit shall be prominently displayed at the site or the principal access to the site.
2. A permit shall be valid for three (3) years and the expiration date shall be specified.
3. Failure to file for a permit shall be considered a violation and operators who fail to file will be issued a cease-and-desist order.
4. The Board may include in the permit any such reasonable conditions as are consistent with the purpose of these regulations.

B. Amendments and Renewals

Permit holders wishing to alter the size or location of the excavation, the rate of removal or the plan for reclamation shall apply for a renewal or amendment. The procedure to be followed for renewals is the same as that required for an original permit, therefore the application is subject to all provisions that are applicable to new applications.

C. Inspections

1. The Board or its designee may make periodic inspections of all excavation sites as needed to determine if the operations are in conformance with these regulations and the approved plans. In determining whether an inspection is necessary, the Board may refer to the Intent to Excavate and Excavation Reports filed annually by the operator in order to evaluate current activity.
2. If deemed necessary, the Board will establish an agreed-upon inspection schedule during the application review process that shall also designate an inspector approved by the Board, at the applicant's expense.

D. Suspensions and Revocations

The Board may suspend or revoke a permit if the Board determines that any provision of the permit has been violated, a material misstatement made in the application upon which a permit was granted, or any unsafe or hazardous conditions are determined by a site inspection to exist. Such suspension or revocation shall be subject to a motion for rehearing thereon and appeal in accordance with these regulations. Any subsequent enforcement action deemed necessary shall be referred to the Select Board.

E. Appeals

Any person affected by the Board's decision to approve or disapprove an application or any amendment thereto or any suspension or revocation of a permit, may appeal to the Board for a rehearing on such decision or any matter determined thereby. The motion for rehearing shall be filed within ten (10) days of the meeting at which the decision was made, and shall fully specify every ground upon which it is alleged that the decision or order complained of is unlawful or unreasonable. The Board shall either grant or deny the request for rehearing within (10) days, and if the request is granted, a rehearing shall be scheduled Within thirty (30) days. All fees associated with a rehearing shall be borne by the applicant Any person affected by the Board's decision on a motion or rehearing may appeal in accordance with RSA 677:4-15.

F. Violations

Any person who believes that a permitted operation is in violation of its Excavation Permit granted by the Planning Board may bring that complaint to the Planning Board. The Planning Board will follow up with appropriate action to determine whether a violation exists. If any violation of the Permit is found, it will be referred to the Select Board for enforcement.

G. Penalties

Fines, penalties and remedies for violations of this regulation shall be the same as for violations of RSA 676: 15 and 17. Whoever violates any provision of this regulation, a permit or a valid order issued hereunder shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Section XVII: Separability

The invalidity of any provision, sentence, paragraph, etc. of this regulation shall not affect the validity of any other provision, sentence, paragraph, etc.

Section XVIII: Effective Date

These regulations shall take effect upon adoption by the Board and as amended.