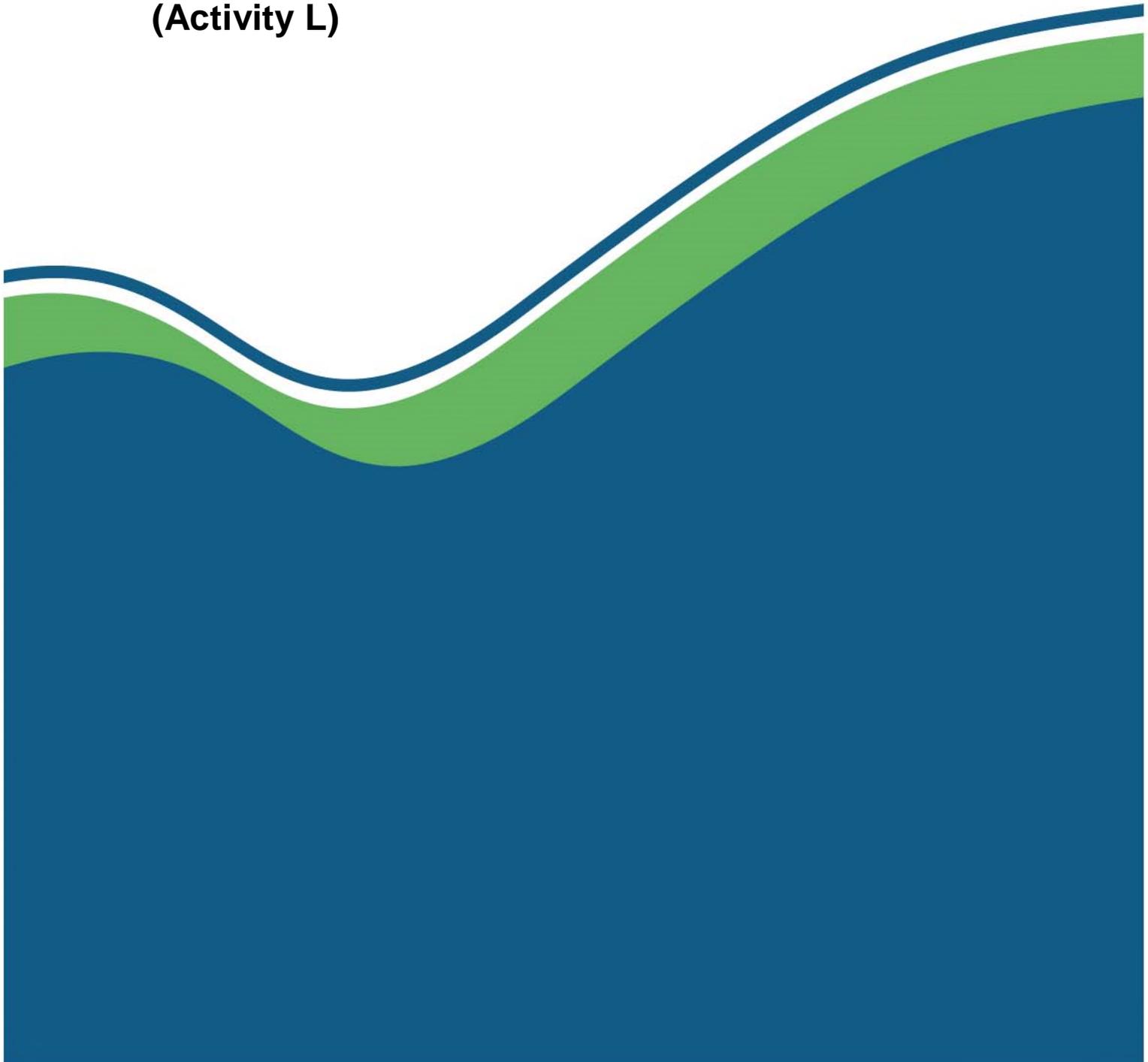




**Registration rules explained: Dredging in  
straightened rivers between 1 and 5m wide.  
(Activity L)**



## About this guidance

This guidance relates to engineering registration activity L of the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (CAR).

The registration for removal of sediment from the bed of a stretch of a river or burn only applies to channels that have the following characteristics:

- (a) Has an average width of greater than, or equal to, 1 metre and less than 5 metres as measured between the base of one bank and the other.
- (b) Has been artificially straightened or canalized, with the lines of its bank tops being parallel, or near parallel, throughout its length;
- (c) Has a bed surface layer that is entirely, or almost entirely, comprised of sediments with a diameter of less than 2mm i.e. sands, silts and clay;
- (d) Except in flood flows, has a smooth, un-rippled water surface for all, or nearly all of its length.

Part 1 of this guidance explains in pictures the characteristics of an artificially straightened or canalised channel as mentioned above i.e. the type of channel this registration applies to.

Part 2 explains other similar types of channel where you cannot use this registration.

It is important to read both sections carefully as there may be channel types in both which appear similar. There are however important differences which are highlighted in each section.

Part 3 summarises the conditions which you must follow when using this registration.

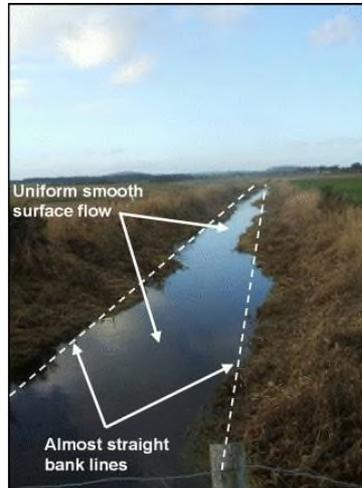
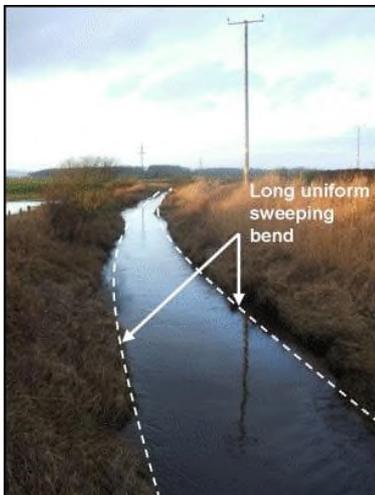
When carrying out this registration you must obtain the appropriate authorisation. Application forms are available on our [website](#). You can apply using the online form or by printing off a paper form, filling it in and sending it to us.

If you are in doubt at any point you can contact your [local SEPA office](#)

## Part 1: Characteristics of the type of channel the registration applies to

The registration only applies to channels that have the following characteristics, for the length of the reach to be worked:

- Has an average width of greater than, or equal to, 1m and less than 5m.
- Is completely straight or with artificial bends (either long uniform sweeping bends or very sharp, almost 90°, bends).
- Has a bed surface dominated by sand, silt or clay i.e. sediment with a diameter of less than 2mm;
- Has uniform smooth surface flow for all, or nearly all, of the length except during flood flows.



**Bed dominated by sediment less than 2mm in diameter i.e. sand, silt or clay.**

Other features which indicate an artificially straightened or canalised channel include:

- uniform flow depth; normally deep;
- uniform channel width; only slight variation;
- high, steep banks;
- vegetation on the banks will normally be simple with few or no trees.

## Part 2: Other previously modified channels where registration does not apply

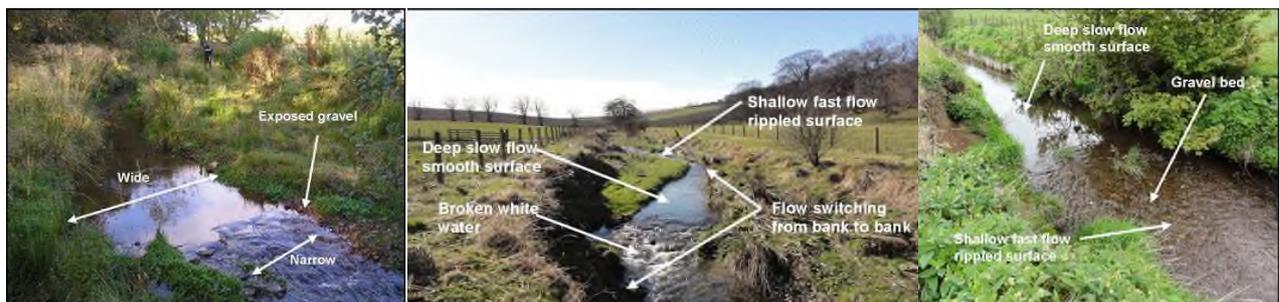
The registration only applies to watercourses with the characteristics described in Part 1, it **does not apply to** channels that have not been straightened, or channels which were historically straightened but have now partly recovered.

These will have the following main characteristics:

- The pattern of flow on the surface is rippled or variable (from rippled to smooth and back again).
- Flow depth and speed varies (mixture of deep/slow and shallow/fast).
- The bed surface is dominated by gravel and cobbles.

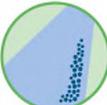
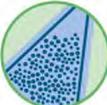
Other characteristics which **may** be present are:

- a winding/curving pathway to the water at low flow;
- a channel of varying width;
- the flow switches from one bank to the other;
- there are deposits of gravel and cobbles exposed at low/normal flow;
- there is sometimes a small flat area just above the part of the channel carrying water at normal flows



### Part 3: A guide to the do's and don'ts once you are registered

This is a summary only. Please refer to your registration letter for exact wording and other general conditions and if in doubt, please contact your local SEPA office.

<p><b>DO</b> complete the work within 12 months from authorisation date.</p>	
<p><b>DO</b> notify SEPA one week before starting work.</p>	
<p><b>DO</b> always leave some sediment intact at the toe of at least one bank.</p>	
<p><b>DO</b> use measures to prevent environmental harm. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use filter materials such as silt curtains or straw bales to trap silt before it gets downstream.</li> <li>• Minimise the time the works will take.</li> <li>• Choose the right weather conditions e.g. drier periods.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>DO</b> keep vehicles out of the river or loch where possible, especially where pearl mussels may be present within 50m.</p>	
<p><b>DO</b> prevent any oil from entering the river and contain spillages.</p>	
<p><b>DON'T</b> clear more than a total of 500m river length. You may split this length up e.g. 100m + 400m.</p>	
<p><b>DON'T</b> make the river bank any higher. Smooth out removed silt if necessary, and keep it away from bank edge.</p>	
<p><b>DON'T</b> work if fish are spawning or young fish are waiting to emerge. Works between the end of May and the end of October will generally avoid salmonid spawning and emergence periods but you should check with your local fishery board as there is considerable local variation</p>	

<p><b>DON'T</b> leave a sudden change or step in the river bed. Grade the bed using a shallow angle to tie in with the unworked areas.</p>	
<p><b>DON'T</b> widen the river channel. Leave the banks alone, and don't cause erosion.</p>	
<p><b>DON'T</b> dump sediment back into any watercourse, loch or wetland.</p>	
<p><b>DON'T</b> lower water levels in wetlands, designated or otherwise. This includes marshy grassland on rough grazing land.</p>	
<p><b>DON'T</b> work within 1km of a loch outlet unless there is a dam, weir or other control structure on it.</p>	