How to Stake and File a Mining Claim in Idaho

To stake and file a mining claim in Idaho, you post a location notice at one corner of the claim, mark every corner, sign a sworn statement about the ground, record the notice with the county recorder, and file with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). You have 90 days from the day you post the notice to finish all of it. A new lode claim costs $274 in BLM fees, plus the county's recording fee.

Idaho is strict about the county step, because state law says that missing the 90-day recording deadline counts as abandoning the claim.

Last checked November 9, 2026. This is a plain-words summary of Idaho and federal law, not legal advice. Fees and rules change, so confirm dates and costs with your county recorder or BLM before you rely on them. The newest version of our Idaho staking guide is at goldmapsonline.com/how-to-stake-a-mining-claim-in-idaho.html. Check it before you file, since fees and rules can change after you download your maps.

The steps at a glance

Step	Where	Deadline	Cost
1. Post your location notice	One corner of the claim	This starts the clock	No fee
2. Mark the boundaries	On the claim	Before you record	Posts or monuments
3. Sign the sworn statement	Notary or recorder	By the time you record	$1 at the recorder
4. Record the notice	County recorder	90 days after posting	$10 first page, $3 each added page
5. File with BLM	Online in MLRS, or BLM in Boise	90 days after posting	$274 for a lode claim
Keep it each year	BLM	September 1	$200 per lode claim or per 20 acres of placer
Record each year	County recorder	October 30	$10 first page, $3 each added page

Start with your map

A filled closed box on your Idaho map means that section has no active claims today, which makes it a good place to start looking. Its pop-up gives you what the paperwork asks for: the county, the township, range and section, and the BLM code.

One example from the November 2026 map is a closed placer box in Lemhi County at T24N R18E Sec 9, Boise Meridian, with the BLM code 08 0240N 0180E 009. A box covers a section of about 640 acres and doesn't show a claim's exact edges, so the map tells you where to look and your own checks tell you whether you can stake there.

Check the ground first

1. **Look it up in BLM's records.** Go to reports.blm.gov/reports/MLRS, choose Mining Claims – Geographic Report, enter the BLM code, and tick Active and Filed. Our step-by-step MLRS guide walks through each screen.
2. **Check that the land is open to mining.** BLM's Master Title Plats, on the GLO Records website, show what's open. You can't stake in national parks, national monuments, wilderness areas, Indian reservations or military land, and private land is off limits.
3. **Watch for Idaho state land.** Federal mining claims don't apply there, and mining state minerals takes a lease from the Idaho Department of Lands.
4. **Walk the ground.** A new claim can take up to 90 days to reach BLM's records, so look for fresh posts and notices before you put up your own.
5. **Make a discovery.** Every claim needs a discovery of a valuable mineral. BLM's test is whether a sensible person would spend more time and money trying to develop a mine there, and recording a claim and paying the fees won't make it valid without one.

Lode or placer

A lode claim covers gold in solid rock, like a quartz vein, and can be up to 1,500 feet long and 600 feet wide. A placer claim covers loose gold in sand and gravel, and can be 20 acres per person, up to 160 acres for a group of eight or more. Your notice has to say which type it is, and BLM's fees differ for big placer claims.

Step 1: Post your location notice

The day you post the notice is your location date, and every deadline counts from it. Post your written notice at one corner of the claim when you make the location. It has to give all of these:

- The name of each locator, plus a mailing address for BLM
- The name of the claim, and whether it's a lode or placer claim
- The date of location, the county, and the mining district if there is one
- The directions and distances that describe the claim
- The direction and distance from that corner to a natural object or permanent monument, if there's one, so the notice itself shows where the claim is
- The township, range, section and quarter section, with the Boise Meridian, for BLM

Use a separate notice for each claim, because Idaho law voids a notice that claims more than one location.

Step 2: Mark the boundaries

Mark the boundaries before you record, so the lines are easy to trace on the ground. At each corner or angle, put a substantial monument or a post at least 4 feet tall and 4 inches square or across. Mark each one with the name of the claim, which corner or angle it is, and the direction of the boundary lines.

If a corner can't go in its true spot, put up a witness monument marked to show where the true corner is. The rules are the same for lode and placer claims. BLM doesn't allow perforated or uncapped pipe as markers, because of wildlife deaths.

Step 3: Sign the sworn statement

At or before the time you record, one of the locators named in the notice has to sign a sworn statement on the notice or attached to it. Idaho law prints the wording, which swears that:

- You're a U.S. citizen, or you've declared that you intend to become one
- You know the ground the notice describes
- To the best of your knowledge, the ground hasn't been claimed before, or the old claim was abandoned or forfeited because its owners didn't follow the law

Sign it in front of a notary, or swear to it at the recorder's counter, where the oath costs $1. If you'll record by mail, have it notarized before you send it, as Shoshone County's recorder asks.

Step 4: Record with the county recorder

Within 90 days after the location, record a copy of your notice and sworn statement with the recorder in the county where the claim sits. Under Idaho law, missing that deadline counts as abandoning the claim. In Idaho, the county clerk is also the county recorder.

State law sets the fee at $10 for the first page and $3 for each added page, and the recorder can wait to record until it's paid. Keep each page no bigger than 8.5 by 14 inches, typed or clearly written. Some recorders, like Shoshone County's, take only original signed papers or certified copies.

A notice counts as recorded on the day it reaches the recorder's office, not the day you mail it. Call the office before you mail anything, since offices move and hours change. Then send the fee with your notice, and mail it well before day 90.

Step 5: File with BLM

BLM needs its own filing by the 90th day, and it advises recording with the county first. Send BLM a copy of the recorded notice, a map of the claim and the fees. You can file online in MLRS at mlrs.blm.gov with a login.gov account, or by mail or in person at BLM's Idaho State Office in Boise.

Idaho doesn't ask for a map with the county copy, but federal rules require one for BLM. Draw the claim on a USGS topographic map, or make a sketch tied to a natural object or permanent monument, showing its boundaries within the quarter section closely enough for BLM to find it. You don't need a surveyor, and one map can show several claims.

Claim	Fees	Total
Lode	$25 + $49 + $200	$274
Placer, up to 20 acres	$25 + $49 + $200	$274
Placer, 21 to 40 acres	$25 + $49 + $400	$474

The three fees are the processing fee, the location fee and the first maintenance fee, for claims located on or after September 1, 2026. Each added 20 acres of placer, or part of 20 acres, adds $200.

A claim that isn't recorded with BLM and the county by the 90th day is abandoned and void under federal law, even if the ground is good. BLM says it refunds the location and maintenance fees in that case, after the appeal period.

Re-staking a closed claim

Re-staking a closed claim means making a brand-new claim, and none of the old owner's rights carry over. Idaho's law says an abandoned claim is located the same way as a new one, with new posts or monuments, so all five steps apply and you shouldn't rely on the old markers. Idaho doesn't require any digging for it.

Your sworn statement covers the old claim too, since you swear that any earlier claim on the ground was abandoned or forfeited. Check the old claim's status in BLM's records before you sign.

Keeping your claim each year

On or before September 1 each year, pay BLM $200 per lode claim, or $200 for each 20 acres of a placer claim, or the claim is forfeited. If you stake before September 1 but file with BLM after it, you'll owe two maintenance fees at once, one for each year, unless you qualify for the small miner waiver and file it when you record the claim.

If you do the yearly work instead, Idaho's law says to record a sworn statement of it with the county within 60 days after the work is due, so record it by October 30. If you skip it, the law treats that as first-glance evidence that the work wasn't done. The law isn't clear for people who pay the BLM fee, so to be safe, record a sworn statement that you paid by October 30 too, and ask the recorder what it needs.

With 10 or fewer claims nationwide, you can do at least $100 of work on each claim instead of paying. File the free waiver form with BLM by September 1, on paper since it can't be filed online, then file a sworn statement of the work with BLM by December 30 at $15 per claim. The county statement is still due by October 30.

A claim doesn't give you a free hand on the surface. Work beyond casual use can need a notice or a plan of operations, so talk to the local BLM field office or Forest Service ranger district first.

Dredging or other small mining in a stream needs a permit from the Idaho Department of Water Resources, and a suction dredge also needs coverage from Idaho DEQ. A placer or dredge operation can also need a permit and bond from the Idaho Department of Lands, so ask before you start.

Who to ask

- **BLM Idaho State Office:** Call 208-373-4000, or 208-373-3889 from BLM Idaho's mining page. The office is at 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Boise, ID 83709, open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mountain time, Monday to Friday.
- **Idaho Department of Lands:** State land leases and the placer and dredge permit, at idl.idaho.gov. Stream permits come from the Idaho Department of Water Resources, at idwr.idaho.gov.

Where these rules come from

- Idaho Code Title 47, Chapter 6: location notices, markers, recording, sworn statements and relocation
- Idaho Code 31-3205, 55-804 and 55-809: county fees, page size and when a notice counts as recorded
- BLM's Idaho State Office and mining claim fees
- 43 U.S.C. 1744 and 30 U.S.C. 28f: the yearly filing and the maintenance fee
- IDWR's small mining instructions: stream permits, good through December 31, 2026

Idaho county recorders

A claim is recorded in the county where the ground is, and in Idaho the county clerk is also the recorder. Call before you mail anything, since offices move and hours change. A star marks an office we couldn't fully confirm on the county's own website, so check its phone number first.

County	Recorder's address	Phone
Ada	200 W Front St, Boise, ID 83702	208-287-6840
Adams	201 Industrial Ave., Council, ID 83612 Mail: PO Box 48	(208) 253-4561 Option 5
Bannock	624 East Center, Room 211, Pocatello, ID 83201 Mail: PO Box 4489	208-236-7340
Bear Lake	30 N Main, Paris, ID 83261 Mail: P.O. Box 190	(208) 945-2155 ext. 5
Benewah	701 W College Ave, Suite 101, St Maries, ID 83861	208-245-3212
Bingham	501 N Maple St, Blackfoot, ID 83221	208-782-3160
Blaine *	206 1st Ave South #100, Hailey, ID 83333-8429	(208) 788-5510
Boise *	Mail: PO Box 1300, Idaho City, ID 83631-1300	(208) 392-4431
Bonner	1500 Highway 2, Suite 335, Sandpoint, ID 83864	208-265-1490
Bonneville	605 N Capital Ave, Idaho Falls, ID 83402	(208) 529-1350, ext. 1350
Boundary	6452 Kootenai St, Bonners Ferry, ID 83805 Mail: PO Box 419	208-267-2242
Butte	205 W Grand Ave., Arco, ID 83213 Mail: P.O. Box 737	(208) 527-3021, ext # 1
Camas	501 Soldier Road, Fairfield, ID 83327 Mail: PO Box 430	208-764-2242
Canyon	1115 Albany St, Caldwell, ID 83605	208-454-7555
Caribou	159 S Main Room 202, Soda Springs, ID 83276 Mail: PO Box 775	(208) 547-4324 Ext 4
Cassia	1459 Overland Ave RM 105, Burley, ID 83318	(208) 878-5240
Clark	224 W Main St., Dubois, ID 83423 Mail: PO Box 205	208-374-5304
Clearwater	150 Michigan Ave, Orofino, ID 83544 Mail: PO Box 586	208-476-5615
Custer	801 E Main Ave #385, Challis, ID 83226-0385 Mail: PO Box 385	(208) 879-2360
Elmore	2280 American Legion Blvd., Mountain Home, ID 83647	(208) 587-2130 Ext. 6500
Franklin	39 W. Oneida Street, Preston, ID 83263	208-852-1090
Fremont *	151 W. 1st N. #12, St. Anthony, ID 83445-1548	(208) 624-7332
Gem	415 E. Main St. Room 202, Emmett, ID 83617	(208) 365-4561
Gooding	624 Main Street, Gooding, ID 83330 Mail: PO Box 417	208-934-4841
Idaho	320 West Main Street, Rm 5, Grangeville, ID 83530	(208) 983-2751
Jefferson	210 Courthouse Way Suite 100, Rigby, ID 83442	208-745-7756 Ext. 1000
Jerome	300 N Lincoln Ave, Jerome, ID 83338	208-644-2714
Kootenai	451 Government Way, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814 Mail: P.O. Box 9000	208-446-1480
Latah	522 S Adams Street, Ste 101, Moscow, ID 83843	(208) 883-2249
Lemhi	206 Courthouse Drive, Salmon, ID 83467	(208) 742-1665
Lewis	510 Oak Street, Room 1, Nezperce, ID 83543	(208) 937-2661
Lincoln *	111 West B Street Suite C, Shoshone, ID 83352-5364	(208) 886-7641

County	Recorder's address	Phone
Madison *	134 E Main, Rexburg, ID 83440 Mail: PO Box 389	(208) 359-6244
Minidoka	715 G Street, Rupert, ID 83350 Mail: P.O. Box 368	208-436-7111
Nez Perce	1230 Main Street, Lewiston, ID 83501 Mail: P.O. Box 896	208-799-3020
Oneida	10 W Court St, Malad City, ID 83252	(208) 766-4116
Owyhee	20381 State Highway 78, Murphy, ID 83650 Mail: P.O. Box 128	208-495-2421
Payette	1130 3rd Ave. N., Payette, ID 83661	(208) 642-6000
Power	543 Bannock Avenue, American Falls, ID 83211	208-226-7611
Shoshone	700 Bank Street, Suite 120, Wallace, ID 83873	(208) 752-1264
Teton	150 Courthouse Drive - Room 208, Driggs, ID 83422	208-776-8111
Twin Falls	630 Addison Ave W, 2nd floor, Twin Falls, ID 83301 Mail: P.O. Box 126, Twin Falls, ID 83303	208-736-4004
Valley	700 S. Main Street, Cascade, ID 83611 Mail: PO Box 1350	(208) 382-7100 Option 2
Washington	256 E Court Street, Weiser, ID 83672 Mail: PO Box 670	208-414-2092