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MSHA Mine Lookup for PE Aggregates: Who Owns the Quarry?

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Executive Summary

An MSHA mine lookup answers a narrower question than most private-equity origination teams assume. The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) Mines data set lists coal and metal/nonmetal mines under its jurisdiction, keyed on a single **Mine ID**, and it includes abandoned and sealed mines as well as operating ones (www.msha.gov) (catalog.data.gov). Each row carries a current operator ID and a current controller ID, which MSHA's Assessments Center assigns to legal entities (arlweb.msha.gov). Those are regulator keys, not universal company identifiers, and a regulatory record is not proof of ultimate beneficial ownership or of sale availability.

The practical risk is double counting. USGS estimates that about 1,400 companies operated 3,500 crushed stone quarries in 2025, and about 3,400 companies operated 6,500 construction sand and gravel pits (pubs.usgs.gov). That implies roughly 2.5 quarries per company and 1.9 pits per company (our arithmetic on USGS estimates). A row-per-site list therefore overstates the number of distinct operators unless Mine IDs are rolled up through dated operator and controller edges.

History must be joined by period. MSHA's Controller/Operator History file carries separate start and end dates for controllers and for operators at each mine, and a blank operator end date means the operator is still active (catalog.data.gov). Today's operator should never be attached to last year's employment record. An annual employment row that spans an operator change stays unresolved unless quarterly rows or other evidence support attribution.

Employment measures differ in kind. The Mines table carries a self-reported worker count from the Mine Information Form, while the quarterly files carry average employees and hours worked by subunit (catalog.data.gov). Operator and contractor records are separate sets, and the contractor definition files are keyed on a contractor ID. Production is the largest trap: metal/nonmetal operators are not required to report production in the employment/production files (arlweb.msha.gov), so blank aggregates output is unknown, not zero.

This report does not enumerate acquirable companies or report national counts computed from MSHA rows. It supplies a join method, scope and status rules, a measure comparison and a fictional worked graph, and it keeps corporate-parent questions open until corroborated outside MSHA.

Introduction and Background

Private-equity origination analysts mapping United States aggregates, stone, sand and gravel, and mining services need a starting universe. MSHA data is a natural place to look because quarries and pits fall inside the agency's remit: MSHA states that the Mine Act applies to all mining and mineral processing operations in the United States regardless of size, and that it covers two-person sand and gravel pits as well as large underground coal mines (arlweb.msha.gov). The statutory definition of a mine is generic, covering an area of land from which minerals are extracted in nonliquid form (www.law.cornell.edu).

The top search results for "msha mine lookup" are official tools and safety-compliance tutorials. The agency's Mine Data Retrieval System (MDRS) is listed as the access point for several data sets in the federal catalog (catalog.data.gov). A competitor explainer describes MDRS as covering mine ownership, operation and contractor details (mshasafetyservices.com). During this research the live MDRS landing page was not usable for reading: an earlier check met a robot-verification screen and the fetch made for this report returned only a maintenance notice, so this report relies on the published data sets and their definition files instead of the interactive tool.

What those sources do not supply is a time-aware roll-up: how many distinct, independently verified operators do a set of site rows represent, and which employment or production measures survive that roll-up? This explainer answers that question with explicit rules, organized around one decision. For each Mine ID that appears in a screen, the analyst must decide whether it:

- **adds a new operator** to the map;
- **is a second site** of an operator already on the map;
- **is a former operating relationship** that should be retained as history but not counted as a current candidate; or
- **remains an unresolved identity**, usually because the record is new or incomplete.

Two framing points apply throughout. First, field meanings come from MSHA's published definition files or federal regulation text, retrieved on 8 November 2026. The catalog pages show a last update of 12 March 2026 and a catalog check on 10 September 2026 (catalog.data.gov), while the portal says its files are updated every Friday afternoon unless otherwise noted (arlweb.msha.gov). The pages do not reconcile those statements, so a refresh run should record each file's retrieval timestamp. Second, no rows in the actual October or November 2026 files were counted; no national operator count or profitability benchmark was calculated.

Docket provides sourced target research to private-equity firms, and this report is written as independent reference material. The framework is tool-agnostic.

Scope, Cutoff and Status Rules

Define the universe before touching the data

A screen needs four decisions written down before any join: the commodity test, the geography, the entity type, and the status set. A reproducible scope statement lets two analysts get the same site count and the same operator count.

- **Commodity test.** The Mines table has primary and secondary SIC descriptions and canvass codes, where canvass value 5 denotes metal/nonmetal sand and gravel and 6 denotes metal/nonmetal stone (arlweb.msha.gov). Treat canvass as a filter that needs a second look, not a final classification; the primary SIC code can be blank, and the file says a Mine Information Form is then required to know the true code.
- **Geography.** Use the state and county fields for the mine location, and handle portable operations separately (see below).
- **Entity type.** Separate production operators from independent contractors. A contractor is any person or organization that contracts to perform services or construction at a mine (www.ecfr.gov).
- **Cutoff date.** Pick a single as-of date, such as the end of a calendar quarter, and apply it to every join.

Status values and what to do with them

CURRENT_MINE_STATUS takes seven documented values: Abandoned, Abandoned and Sealed, Active, Intermittent, New Mine, NonProducing and Temporarily Idled (arlweb.msha.gov). The status date is the date the mine obtained its current status, taken from the Mine Information Form. The definition file gives no further semantics for the values, so inclusion rules are an analyst choice and should be recorded as such.

- **Active and Intermittent:** include as current candidates. Intermittent operations may report little activity in a given quarter, so do not read zero hours as closure.
- **Temporarily Idled and NonProducing:** keep in scope but flag them. They preserve operator identity and may matter for acquisition thesis (permitted reserves), but employment will understate capacity.
- **New Mine:** hold as "pending." The operator and controller fields can be null for a New Mine because the information is entered at a future date. Missing controller information on a new record is not evidence that the site is independent.
- **Abandoned and Abandoned and Sealed:** exclude from current candidates but retain for identity history. A Mine ID stays with the mine whether it is active or abandoned and regardless of a change in ownership, and MSHA does not give it to another mine (arlweb.msha.gov).

The 2007 handbook that states this rule is old, so spot-check it against current files.

One caution on terminology: NIOSH, which tabulates MSHA data, defines an active mine in its mine-count chart as one that reported any employee hours during the year (wwwn.cdc.gov). That is a different test from CURRENT_MINE_STATUS equal to Active, so counts from the two definitions are not interchangeable.

Location is not the address of record

MSHA's Addresses of Record data set takes its address from the Legal ID form that an operator submits when requesting a mine ID (www.msha.gov). The agency warns that the addresses may not represent the actual physical location of the mines (www.msha.gov). The portal repeats that the address file does not represent the actual mine location. For geography, use the latitude and longitude on the Mines table, which may be null, and the portable-operation flag, which indicates whether a mine is portable. A portable crusher or plant should be assigned to the state and operator that MSHA records, not geocoded from a mailing address. Abandoned mines closed before 1998 are not in the address file at all (www.msha.gov), so address joins are incomplete for old history. The address file links to the Mines table by Mine ID (www.msha.gov).

The Four Roles: Mine, Operator, Controller and Contractor

The core of an MSHA lookup is keeping four things apart. *Table 1* below summarizes what each role is, which key identifies it, where it appears, and what it must not be used to claim.

Role	Key and what it identifies	Where it appears	Do not infer
Mine (site or facility)	MINE_ID, a seven-digit identifier, stored as text, that MSHA assigns and that is a unique key for joining to other tables. A site needs its own ID before operations begin (www.msha.gov).	Mines table; history table; address, employment and other tables joined on Mine ID (www.msha.gov)	That one Mine ID equals one company, or that one company has one Mine ID
Operator	CURRENT_OPERATOR_ID, an ID assigned by the MSHA Assessments Center to a legal entity acting as an operator at a mine (arlweb.msha.gov)	Mines table (current); history table with start and end dates	That the ID is a state entity number or a durable company key across name changes
Controller	CURRENT_CONTROLLER_ID, assigned to a legal entity acting as a controller of an operator (catalog.data.gov). The history file flags whether the controller is a company or a person.	Mines table (current); history table with controller start and end dates	That the controller is the ultimate parent or the beneficial owner
Independent contractor	CONTRACTOR_ID, an ID for a legal entity acting as a contractor at a mine (arlweb.msha.gov). A contractor may obtain a permanent MSHA identification number (www.ecfr.gov).	Contractor employment files, separate from operator files (github.com)	That contractor hours belong to the operator, or that the contractor works at only one site

The table shows why a lookup cannot stop at the mine row. Mine ID identifies a place. The operator and controller IDs identify legal entities that MSHA recorded as holding those roles at the time a form was processed, and the contractor ID identifies a service firm. None of the four is a universal company identifier.

Operator versus controller

Federal regulation defines an operator broadly. For notification of legal identity, an operator includes any owner, lessee, or other person who operates, controls, or supervises a mine (www.ecfr.gov). Part 41 requires operators to file the name and address of the person who controls or operates the mine (www.ecfr.gov). For metal and nonmetal mines, the separate Part 50 definition focuses on the entity operating the mine and owning the right to do so (www.ecfr.gov). Two practical readings follow, both of which are inferences rather

than regulatory text: the open-data "operator" is the legal entity MSHA recorded as running the site, and the open-data "controller" is the entity recorded as controlling that operator. The data dictionary gives neither term more than a one-line field description.

Corporate hierarchy therefore needs another source. A controller may be a person rather than a company, and a company controller can itself be owned by others. Use MSHA to find the entity names and dates, then corroborate parentage elsewhere (see the hand-off section).

Independent contractor IDs

Mining-services targets live in the contractor universe. Independent contractors can request an MSHA contractor ID through a form MSHA publishes (www.msha.gov), and the production-operator must keep a written record at the mine of its contractors' information (www.ecfr.gov). The 2007 handbook states that a contractor is assigned one ID number used for identification when work is performed. One consequence for site-level work is that a contractor's ID persists while its work moves from site to site, which makes contractor files useful for tracing a service firm but unreliable for assigning its hours to a particular quarry.

There is also a source conflict worth preserving. The portal describes the quarterly contractor file as reported "by subunit and mine ID" (arlweb.msha.gov), yet the contractor definition file lists CONTRACTOR_ID, subunit, year, quarter, employees and hours, and the annual contractor definition groups by calendar year, subunit code and contractor ID. The definition files do not list a Mine ID field for contractors. Until an analyst inspects the actual downloaded header, treat contractor-to-mine attribution as unconfirmed.

Building the Dated Graph: Joins, Effective Periods and Change Dates

The edge model

The reference asset is a crosswalk with one row per relationship, not per mine. Each row holds: Mine ID, operator ID, controller ID, effective start, effective end, source file, source retrieval date, and a status flag (accepted, historical or unresolved). Names are stored as observed and never used as primary keys, because the operator name on the Mines table is overwritten: the definition file says a new Mine Information Form subsequently overwrites the mine's operator name (arlweb.msha.gov), and the history table records the operator name as updated by the Legal ID form or Mine Information Form at that point in time.

Period joins

The history file is the source of truth for periods. It shows controllers at each mine, their starting and ending dates, and the operator history at that mine (catalog.data.gov). The fields are:

- **CONTROLLER_START_DT** is the date the controller started as the controller of the operator at the mine (arlweb.msha.gov).
- **CONTROLLER_END_DT** is the date the controller ceased to control the operator.
- **OPERATOR_START_DT and OPERATOR_END_DT** bracket the operating period at the mine, and if no end date appears the operator is still active (arlweb.msha.gov).

- **MINE_STATUS** in the history file is the mine status at that point in time.

The file documents a blank rule only for the operator end date. The definition does not say what a blank controller end date means, so treating it as a current controller is an inference to be labelled as such. The Mines table also contains a CURRENT_CONTROLLER_BEGIN_DT field whose description reads as the start of the operating period at the mine, and which may be null until a controller ID has been submitted. Because that description is ambiguous, prefer the history table's controller start date.

The change-date overlap rule

An operator change is a point in time. Any measure that covers a period crossing that point cannot be assigned to one operator without finer evidence. Use these rules:

1. **Assign a row to an edge only if its whole measurement period sits inside the edge's effective interval.** A calendar quarter that starts on or after the operator start date and ends on or before the operator end date qualifies.
2. **Quarterly rows that straddle a change date are unresolved.** Do not split hours by days unless a primary source supports it.
3. **Annual rows that cross a change date stay unresolved** unless quarterly rows for the same Mine ID and subunit can be validated and summed within each interval.
4. **Never attach the current operator to historical employment.** The Mines table shows only the current operator ID; prior operators come from the history table.
5. **Decide whether end dates are inclusive, record the choice in the run log, and apply it consistently.** An empty operator end date is open under the documented rule; this report treats an end date as inclusive.

Legal-identity reporting explains why dates lag. A Legal Identification Report is due within 30 days of a new mine opening or of a change in legal ownership structure (www.msha.gov), and Part 41 requires operators to report any change in the information within 30 days after it occurs (www.ecfr.gov). A record's effective date can therefore trail the real-world event, and a recently changed mine may still show its prior operator.

Employment and Production: Which Measures Survive the Roll-Up

What each measure means

The Mines table has a mine-level worker count (NO_EMPLOYEES), entered on the Mine Information Form and possibly null. The quarterly operator file carries average employees by quarter, subunit and year (available beginning with 2000) and total employee hours for the quarter (catalog.data.gov). The yearly file aggregates hours where the average quarterly employment is greater than zero, grouped by calendar year, subunit code and mine ID (catalog.data.gov). Its employee count is the average of the quarterly average employee count under the same condition, and average employee hours is hours reported for the year divided by average subunit employment (arlweb.msha.gov).

Subunits matter for aggregates. The code list includes strip, quarry or open pit, dredge, mill operation or preparation plant, independent shop or yard, and office workers at the mine site. A quarry with a mill and an office reports in several subunit rows under one Mine ID.

Table 2 below compares the measures an analyst is likely to meet, with the roll-up rule for each.

Measure	Definition and source	Grain	Safe roll-up rule	Main trap
Current worker count (NO_EMPLOYEES)	Number of workers employed at the mine, from the Mine Information Form, may be null (arlweb.msha.gov)	Mine, as of the form	Use as a rough size flag only; do not sum across operators and periods	Self-reported, undated in the extract; not company headcount
Quarterly average employees	Average employees reported by the operator for the quarter, subunit and year	Mine, subunit, quarter	Average within a subunit and quarter; do not add quarterly averages across quarters	Adding quarters inflates headcount; adding subunits double counts if keys repeat
Quarterly hours worked	Total employee hours reported by the operator in the quarter for the subunit (arlweb.msha.gov)	Mine, subunit, quarter	Sum disjoint same-period subunit rows after validating the key	Hours are additive, but only across rows that are truly disjoint
Annual hours and average employees	Annual summation of hours (and average of quarterly averages) where average quarterly employment is greater than zero, grouped by year, subunit and mine (catalog.data.gov)	Mine, subunit, calenda r year	Use only for periods wholly inside one operator interval	Rows with zero average employment are excluded from the sum; a mid-year change makes the row unresolved
Contractor employees and hours	Reported by the contractor, with its own ID	Contrac tor, subunit, period	Report separately; never add to operator headcount	Operator plus contractor is not a count of unique people or of one company
Production	Coal production in tons only; metal/nonmetal operators are not required to report production	Mine, subunit, period	Do not use for aggregates	Blank is unknown, not zero; coal tons cannot be transferred to quarry economics

The matrix shows that the safe operations are narrow. Hours can be added when rows are disjoint, same-period and key-validated. Average employee counts are averages, so they can be averaged within a window but not summed across time. Operator and contractor sets are different universes, and their sum is neither unique company headcount nor unique people.

Hours divided by 2,000 is an assumption

Dividing annual hours by 2,000 gives a workload equivalent, based on an assumed full-time year of roughly 40 hours for 50 weeks. It is not a count of employees, because overtime, part-year workers and multiple shifts all move the result. Report it as "workload equivalent (assumed 2,000 hours)" next to the reported average employee count, never in place of it. MSHA's own derived field divides reported hours by average subunit employment, which is a different quantity.

Production is unknown, not zero

The yearly definition notes that production may not have been reported and may not contain data, and the quarterly production field is coal tons only. For a quarry or pit the correct treatment is "not available from this file"; tonnage should come from other sources, such as the USGS national figures in the data section, which cannot be allocated to individual sites.

A Worked Graph (Hypothetical Example)

The following example is fictional. All names, IDs and numbers are invented to show deduplication and date overlap. They do not describe any real company, and the Mine IDs are placeholders, not real identifiers.

Setup

A fictional operator, Northfield Stone LLC (OP-1), operates a quarry (M1) and a portable crushing plant (M3), and until 30 June 2025 it also operated a sand and gravel pit (M2). On 1 July 2025 the pit passes to Riverbend Materials Inc. (OP-2). A fourth record, M4, is a New Mine whose operator and controller fields are still null. A fictional blasting contractor (C-1) reports hours in the contractor files. The cutoff is 31 December 2025. *Table 3* below is the crosswalk.

Mine ID	Operator ID	Controller ID	Effective interval	Source and date	Edge status
M1 (quarry, Active)	OP-1	CT-1	2019-03-01 to open	History file, retrieved on cutoff	**Accepted**
M3 (portable plant, Active)	OP-1	CT-1	2022-05-15 to open	History file, retrieved on cutoff	**Accepted**
M2 (pit, Active)	OP-1	CT-1	2018-01-10 to 2025-06-30	History file, retrieved on cutoff	**Historical** (former operating relationship)
M2 (pit, Active)	OP-2	CT-2	2025-07-01 to open	History file, retrieved on cutoff	**Accepted**, pending corporate-parent corroboration
M4 (New Mine)	null	null	Not stated	Mines table, retrieved on cutoff	**Unresolved** (identity pending)
M1 and M2 (contractor C-1)	C-1 (contractor)	none	Not stated	Contractor file, annual	**Unresolved** (site attribution unconfirmed)

The crosswalk makes the decisions explicit. M1 and M3 are two sites of one operator. M2 is a second site of OP-1 until the change date and then a new operator, OP-2, from 1 July 2025. M4 stays unresolved and is never counted as an independent operator on the basis of its blank fields. C-1 is a service firm, not an operator, and the definition files do not give a Mine ID for contractor rows, so its presence at two sites would have to be supported by the operator's contractor register or another document.

Counting rules applied

- **Sites:** distinct in-scope Mine IDs at the 31 December 2025 cutoff are M1, M2 and M3, so 3 sites. M4 is shown separately as 1 pending site.
- **Operators:** distinct verified operator IDs are OP-1 and OP-2, so 2 operators, with 1 unresolved identity (M4) shown separately.
- **Ratio:** 3 sites divided by 2 operators is 1.5 sites per operator for this scope and cutoff. At a 31 March 2025 cutoff the same data gives 3 sites and 1 operator, a ratio of 3.0. The ratio is only meaningful for one scope and one cutoff.

Employment attribution

Suppose the annual operator file for M2 in calendar year 2025 reports hours in subunit 03 (quarry or open pit) and the quarterly rows are 9,000, 9,500, 10,000 and 10,500 hours, with average employees of 18, 19, 20 and 20. The annual figure is 39,000 hours and an average of 19.25 employees; 39,000 divided by 2,000 gives a workload equivalent of 19.5, close to but not the same as the reported average.

Because the operator change falls on 1 July, the first two quarters sit wholly under OP-1 (18,500 hours) and the last two wholly under OP-2 (20,500 hours). The annual row is unresolved as a whole, but the quarterly rows can be assigned, provided the keys validate and the subunit rows are disjoint. Change the transfer date to 15 August and the third quarter straddles the change: the quarter-three hours become unresolved, OP-1 keeps only the first two quarters, and OP-2 keeps only the fourth. Hours must not be split by calendar days without a primary source.

Data Analysis and Evidence

What the national estimates imply for site-to-operator ratios

USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries 2026 estimate that in 2025 about 1.5 billion tons of crushed stone were produced by an estimated 1,400 companies operating 3,500 quarries (pubs.usgs.gov), and that about 870 million tons of construction sand and gravel were produced by an estimated 3,400 companies operating 6,500 pits (pubs.usgs.gov). The arithmetic is simple. Crushed stone: 3,500 divided by 1,400 is 2.5 quarries per company. Sand and gravel: 6,500 divided by 3,400 is about 1.9 pits per company. Most crushed stone goes to construction aggregate, mostly road construction and maintenance (pubs.usgs.gov). These are USGS survey-based estimates of its own frame, not MSHA operator counts, and a company can appear in both commodities, so the two cannot be added into a national operator total.

An older, firmer concentration reference shows why company roll-ups matter. In USGS's 2018 yearbook for crushed stone, the combined production of the top 100 companies was 1.22 gigatonnes (Gt), 87% of the national total (pubs.usgs.gov). For construction sand and gravel, the top 10 companies produced 222 million tonnes (Mt), 24% of the U.S. total, and the top 100 produced 450 Mt, 49% (pubs.usgs.gov). These are 2018 figures and should not be read as current concentration. They do indicate that site counts and company counts diverge, and that the divergence differs by commodity. An industry association, the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association, states that its member companies produce more than 90 percent of crushed stone (www.nssga.org), which is an attributed membership claim, not a census of producers.

How MSHA-derived site counts compare

NIOSH's chart of active mines by sector, sourced from MSHA, lists 4,312 stone mines and 6,284 sand and gravel mines for 2024, where active means any employee hours reported during the year (wwwn.cdc.gov). Against the USGS 2025 estimates (pubs.usgs.gov), the MSHA-derived stone count is roughly 800 higher than the USGS quarry estimate and the sand and gravel count is roughly 200 lower than the USGS pit estimate. Treat these gaps as a rough order of magnitude only, not a measured difference between MSHA and USGS. The years differ, and so do the definitions: the MSHA-derived count is a Mine ID count with any hours reported, which can include facilities, mills and portable operations. The comparison is a caution about definitions, not an error estimate. A site count only has meaning with its scope statement attached.

Employment magnitudes

USGS reports 2025 quarry and mill employment of 71,200 for crushed stone and mine and mill employment of 41,900 for construction sand and gravel, including office staff and sourced from MSHA (pubs.usgs.gov). Dividing by the USGS site estimates gives about 20 workers per quarry (71,200 over 3,500) and about 6 per pit (41,900 over 6,500). These are order-of-magnitude averages that mix a USGS site frame with an MSHA-sourced employment series, not target-level benchmarks.

Reuse of MSHA data in research

A peer-reviewed study of underground coal mines covering 1992 to 2008 took hours worked and mine records from MSHA's databases and combined them with mine-specific revenue from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov). It shows MSHA mine-level records joined to outside sources in published work, but it is coal data, not a current quarry benchmark. Separately, a public academic replication repository keeps distinct scripts for operator and contractor employment (github.com), consistent with the two being separate files.

Data coverage dates

MSHA's Mines data set page gives a date range of January 1, 1970, to present (www.msha.gov). The operator yearly catalog record lists temporal coverage ending 31 December 2025 (catalog.data.gov), and the quarterly record also ends in 2025 (catalog.data.gov). The Controller/Operator History record lists coverage to 31 March 2026 (catalog.data.gov). The catalog's accrual periodicity value is R/PT1S (catalog.data.gov), an ISO 8601 one-second repeat that is evidently a placeholder, so it should not be read as a refresh cadence. A 2026 employment join therefore needs the actual downloaded file's maximum year and quarter, recorded in the run log, rather than the catalog label.

Handing Off a Candidate: Implementation Guidance

A hand-off is a package, not a verdict. For each proposed operator candidate, deliver the following.

Minimum hand-off contents

- **Operator candidate:** the operator ID, the name as observed on each record, and the effective interval from the history file.

- **Original mine records:** the Mine ID rows, status, status date and commodity fields with the file name and retrieval timestamp.
- **Edge list:** every accepted, historical and unresolved edge, with its reason code.
- **Employment note:** which measures were used, which rows were excluded for crossing a change date, and the assumption behind any hours conversion.
- **Open questions:** unresolved corporate-parent links, blank controller fields, and any conflict between sources.

Corroborating legal identity outside MSHA

MSHA fields identify who filed with the agency, not who ultimately owns the business. Independent sources can corroborate parentage, each with limits:

- **Securities filings.** For public registrants, Regulation S-K requires an exhibit listing all subsidiaries with their jurisdictions of incorporation (www.ecfr.gov), but the names of particular subsidiaries may be omitted if the unnamed subsidiaries in the aggregate are not significant (www.ecfr.gov).
- **Legal Entity Identifier data.** GLEIF publishes "who owns whom" parent relationships, with collection that began in May 2017 (www.gleif.org). Coverage of small private aggregates operators is not established by that page.
- **Beneficial ownership registry.** FinCEN's page states that its March 2025 interim final rule removed the requirement for U.S. companies and U.S. persons to report beneficial ownership information (www.fincen.gov), and that an August 11, 2026 final rule made those reporting exemptions permanent, effective August 14, 2026, so a federal beneficial ownership filing should not be assumed available for a domestic quarry operator.

State business registries and company materials are the usual next step and are outside what this report verified. When parent evidence conflicts with an MSHA controller record, keep both, label each with source and date, and mark the parent question unresolved.

Where specialists belong

Records that sit alongside a Mine ID, such as compliance or safety history, are outside the scope of this screening and are not evidence about ownership, valuation or availability. Route any such material to qualified legal, environmental and safety specialists for review. A mine record is not a legal conclusion about a company, and sale availability must be established through direct, permission-based research.

Implications and Future Directions

A refresh checklist for quarterly maps

At each quarterly refresh boundary, the crosswalk should be rebuilt rather than patched. The statement that files are updated every Friday afternoon means a snapshot taken on a Tuesday is not the same as one taken on Friday evening, so the log must carry the retrieval timestamp. Reporting deadlines add a second timing

rule: quarterly employment reports on Form 7000-2 are due 15 days after quarter end (www.ecfr.gov), with MSHA listing the first-quarter due date as April 15 (www.msha.gov). The newest quarter in the employment files may therefore be incomplete for weeks after it closes.

Why the contractor side deserves its own pass

MSHA states that operators and independent contractors both report employment and production information (www.msha.gov), and under Part 50 each operator of a mine where an individual worked during any day of a calendar quarter must file the quarterly report (www.ecfr.gov). For mining-services analysts the contractor files are the nearest thing to a registry of service firms, but their site linkage is weak, so enrich contractor candidates with company materials and state registries before claiming how many sites a firm serves.

Open questions this report cannot settle

- Whether the current October or November 2026 files differ from the 2026 catalog metadata, since no rows were downloaded.
- How the live Mine Data Retrieval System presents operator and controller history, since the page was not readable in this research.
- Whether contractor files carry a Mine ID in practice, given the wording conflict above.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is an MSHA mine lookup, and where do I start?

It is a search of MSHA's mine records by Mine ID, name, operator or controller. The Mines data set is the inventory, with Mine ID as its unique key, and the catalog points to the Mine Data Retrieval System as the access page. For bulk work, use the pipe-delimited data sets on the legacy open-data portal, which lists definition files for each, or the Department of Labor's Open Data Portal, which, filtered to MSHA, returned 15 data set results at the time of retrieval and may list a different number now (dataportal.dol.gov).

How does an MSHA mine ID lookup work?

A Mine ID is a seven-digit number; the first two digits identify the state in which the mine is located, using MSHA's own state codes rather than FIPS codes (arlweb.msha.gov). Keep it as text, since the field is stored as a character string.

What is the MSHA controller versus operator difference?

The operator is the legal entity recorded as operating the mine (www.ecfr.gov), and the controller is the legal entity recorded as controlling that operator. Both are tracked with start and end dates in the history file. Neither proves ultimate beneficial ownership.

What is an MSHA independent contractor ID?

It is an identification number for a legal entity acting as a contractor at a mine, where a contractor is anyone contracted to perform services or construction there (www.ecfr.gov). Contractors can apply for one (www.msha.gov), and contractor employment sits in its own files.

How do I find who owns a quarry?

Start with the Mine ID, read the current operator and controller, pull their dated history, then corroborate the parent through securities filings, LEI data and state registries as described above (www.ecfr.gov) (www.gleif.org). Record each step and source date.

Can I screen aggregates acquisition targets from MSHA alone?

No. MSHA rows show regulated sites and legal entities, not sale availability, financials or ownership.

Does MSHA publish quarry production?

Not for metal/nonmetal operators in these files. The portal states they are not required to report production.

Conclusion

A Mine ID tells an analyst that a regulated site exists. It does not tell the analyst how many companies stand behind a list of sites, who owns them, or whether any of them is a candidate. The reliable path is a dated crosswalk: Mine ID joined to operator and controller IDs over explicit effective intervals, with the source file and retrieval date on every edge, and with accepted, historical and unresolved edges kept apart.

Three rules carry most of the value. First, count sites as distinct in-scope Mine IDs and operators as distinct verified operator IDs, show unresolved IDs separately, and display a sites-per-operator ratio only for one scope and one cutoff. Second, attach employment only where the measurement period sits wholly inside one operator interval; an annual row crossing a change date stays unresolved unless quarterly evidence supports the split. Third, treat missing production as unknown, and keep operator and contractor records as separate universes.

Corporate-parent questions remain open until corroborated outside the regulator's files, and compliance records belong with specialists rather than in a target screen. Used this way, an MSHA lookup is a disciplined starting point for mapping aggregates and mining-services companies, with its limits stated alongside its results. For research practices that apply the same evidence standards across industries, see Docket's research practices.

Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

1. https://www.msha.gov/mines-data-set
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3. https://arlweb.msha.gov/OpenGovernmentData/DataSets/Mines_Definition_File.txt

4. https://pubs.usgs.gov/periodicals/mcs2026/mcs2026-stone-crushed.pdf
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35. https://dataportal.dol.gov/datasets?filterBy=agency&name=Mine%20Safety%20and%20Health%20Administration

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Research against a defined mandate

A useful target list needs more than company names. Docket focuses on the questions that determine whether a company fits an investment mandate, including the evidence needed to support or qualify each answer. Our research approach makes the connection between screening criteria, source material and conclusions visible to the team reviewing the work.

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Our research library covers market mapping, screening criteria, private-company data, succession and ownership, source evaluation and evidence standards. These resources explain the methods and limitations behind origination research. Findings support a team's judgment; they do not establish that a company is for sale or guarantee a transaction or investment outcome.

Work with Docket

Visit Docket to explore the platform, managed research and the current contact path. Read about screening criteria, evidence standards, AI research agents and market mapping.

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