

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



EPA'S Clean Air Act Requirements: Uranium Mill Tailings Radon Emissions Rulemaking

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Presentation to:
Uranium Contamination
Stakeholders Workshop
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Overview

- EPA regulatory requirements for operating uranium mill tailings (Subpart W)
- Status update on Subpart W activities
- Outreach/Communications



EPA Regulatory Requirements for Operating Uranium Mill Tailings (Clean Air Act)

- 40 CFR 61 Subpart W requirements apply to facilities licensed to manage uranium byproduct materials during and following the processing of uranium ores
- Limit on number/size of impoundments
 - Phased Disposal – lined impoundments no more than 40 acres, no more than two in operation at any time
 - Continuous Disposal – tailings are dewatered and immediately disposed, no more than 10 acres uncovered at any time



EPA Regulatory Requirements for Uranium Operations (Clean Air Act)

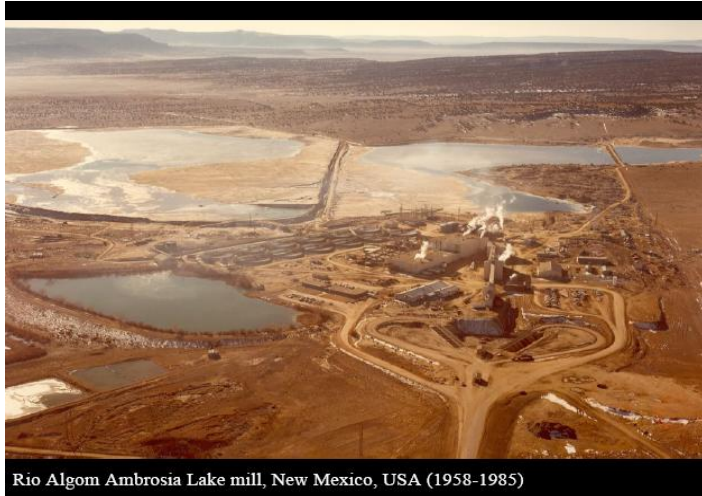
Subpart W Requirements (continued)

- Radon emission standard of 20 pCi/m²/sec -- annual reporting requirements, notification in advance of testing
- The radon emission standard is for existing sources only (existing before 12/15/89)
- See <http://www.epa.gov/radiation/neshaps/subpartw/index.html> for more information

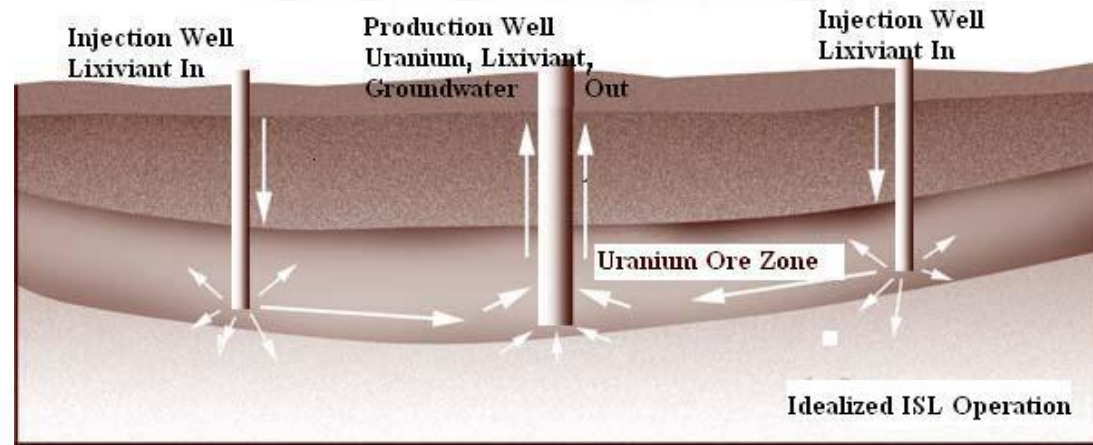


Uranium Recovery Methods

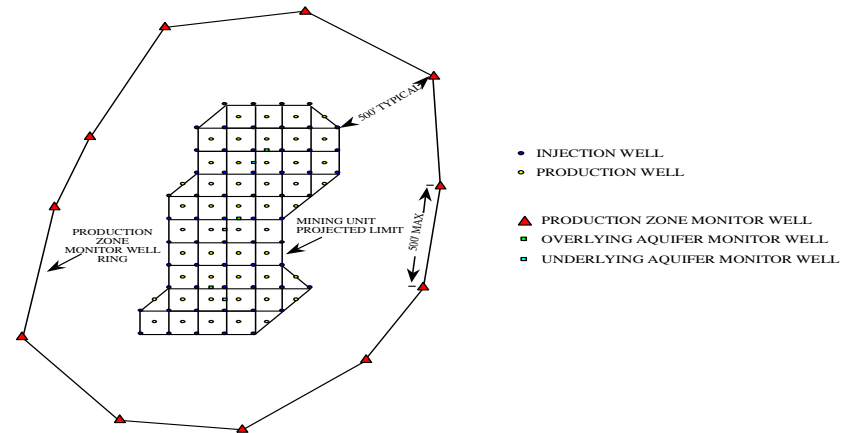
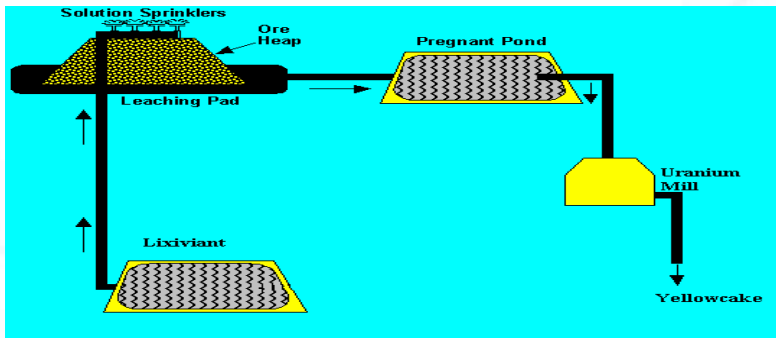
Surface Mill



In Situ Leach (ISL)



Heap Leach



Uranium Mill Tailings In-Situ Leach Impoundments



Status Update on Subpart W Activities



Status of Subpart W Review Activities

- We conducted historical research on the risk assessment work originally done in support of the 1989 standard
- We completed a survey of existing technologies
- We requested that ISL facilities provide radon flux data from their evaporation ponds
- We are now in the process of performing new risk assessments at existing uranium mills and ISL facilities



Communications Plan

- EPA is committed to maintaining an open and transparent rulemaking process
- Objectives:
 - Inform stakeholders of potential changes in EPA's Subpart W requirements
 - Give stakeholders an opportunity to provide feedback
- Audiences:
 - Tribes
 - States
 - Offices/Regions within EPA
 - Other Federal Agencies: NRC, DOE, BLM, others
 - Mining companies



Communications Plan

- Strategies:
 - Develop clear messages and materials to explain the potential amendments to Subpart W
 - Educate stakeholders by using communications tools to provide easy-access to information
 - Work with stakeholder representatives and EPA regional staff to identify additional audiences and methods of dissemination
 - Communicate a timely and consistent message to stakeholders (Industry, Public, Tribes, States, other government agencies)



Outreach

- Holding stakeholder meetings to inform and receive input
 - on City, CO – June 2009
 - Rapid City, SD – October 2009
 - Gallup, NM – November 2009
 - White Mesa, UT – May 2010
 - Denver, CO – May 2010
 - Tuba City, AZ – September 2010



Outreach

- National webinar held June 2010
- Established a dedicated web site to act as an information outlet
- <http://www.epa.gov/radiation/neshaps/subpartw/rule-making-activity.html>
- Site contains current and historical rulemaking documents, presentations, contact information, useful links



Outreach

- Quarterly conference calls to answer stakeholder questions
- Next call – October 5, 2010 – 11:00 AM EDT
- Call in number is 1-866-299-3188. You will be prompted for a conference code, which will be 2023439563. After entering the conference code press the # key and you will then be placed into the conference call
- Public participation by e-mail:
 - subpartw@epa.gov



Questions?

