



CHIEF INSPECTOR'S DIRECTIVE

May 25, 2006

The investigation by the Chief Inspector of Mines into the May 2006 accident which resulted in four fatalities at the Sullivan Mine in southeastern British Columbia, Canada, is ongoing. Preliminary investigation has identified a potential hazard that may exist at any operation where enclosed sampling locations are located downstream of mine waste dumps.

All mine sites with sampling enclosures located downstream of waste dumps are directed to follow the directives given below.

The atmosphere within one of the water sampling buildings located at the toe of a reclaimed mine waste dump was severely oxygen depleted. Sampling work had been conducted on a routine basis at this location for four years without incident prior to this accident occurring.

It has become evident through the investigation that this oxygen depleted atmosphere outgassed from the mine waste dump to the sampling location. How or why the outgassing occurred is still under investigation.

Oxygen depletion happens when oxidation of rock or decomposition of organic matter occurs.

Therefore, the following directives are issued and are to be implemented immediately and remain in place until revised or cancelled by the Chief Inspector of Mines.

- 1) All operations shall immediately check any sampling enclosures located downstream of mine waste dump to confirm that the environment is safe.
- 2) All such sampling locations are to be signed as follows: "Danger possible oxygen deficient atmosphere."
- 3) All such locations are to be locked with single key access. Personnel accessing such locations will be required to obtain the necessary key from a controlled location.
- 4) No person shall enter any sampling enclosure located downstream of mine waste dump without being equipped with and trained in the use of oxygen monitoring equipment or being accompanied by someone qualified in its use.
- 5) No person shall enter sampling enclosures located downstream of mine waste dumps without testing air quality and determining it is safe prior to entry.

The Chief Inspector of Mines is to be notified when this is completed.

The following two directives are to be completed as soon as possible, no later than in four months time.

- 1) All enclosed sampling stations located downstream of mine waste dump are to be equipped with a positive ventilation system designed to provide forced ventilation to the lowest point with a maximum air exchange time of 10 minutes.
- 2) All enclosed sampling stations located downstream of mine waste dumps are to be equipped with air quality monitoring systems that can be accessed from a location outside but in close proximity to the building where interior building conditions can be read from a safe location.

Hand held monitors as described in directives four and five will still be required to be used after installation of the ventilation system and remote monitoring equipment.

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