



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 8

1595 Wynkoop Street
Denver, CO 80202-1129
Phone 800-227-8917
www.epa.gov/region08

Ref: 8EPR-ER

August 17, 2015

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Gold King Mine (b) (6)

FROM: (b) (6)
On-Scene Coordinator

TO: Site File

The following is a partial chronology of events from the Gold King Mine Release incident that occurred on August 5, 2015, and covers approximately the first 48 hours of the incident. I was in the Denver EPA Office serving as phone duty officer. I received the notification from the National Response Center and found two related e-mails on the Region 8 RRC e-mail box (e-mails attached) from CDPHE. All other events noted below were based on conversations with others such as the EPA OSC at the mine site, EPA employees serving in the REOC during the subsequent days of the incident, conference calls with stakeholders such as La Plata County, and written information from EPA's START contractor and an e-mail from personnel at the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (DRMS).

8/5/2015

- Release occurs (10:51am).
- Safety of on-site personnel is secured.
- The road at the mine site was destroyed and the crew was trapped with no cell phone coverage. The EPA crew radios to an EPA ERRS contractor who was off-site to notify him of the situation. The contractor finds the DRMS team who was off-site. EPA and DRMS communicate via radio (approximately 11:45 a.m.) and the OSC instructs DRMS to make notifications.
- 11:50 a.m. The EPA OSC and the ERRS contractor response manager left the Gold King Mine on foot to get picked up and driven to an area with phone reception to notify authorities. The START contractor stayed at the mine adit area to monitor the mine for additional surges of water and to provide support to the ERRS operator rebuilding the road.
- 12:20 The ERRS contractor began reconstructing the exit road from the site to help demobilize the equipment, vehicles, and personnel.
- CDPHE is notified by DRMS (12:40 pm)



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- CDPHE makes notifications to Durango, San Juan Basin Health Dept., and water intakes, and notifications are complete by 1:39 pm. The EPA Phone Duty Officer also notifies Colorado downstream water intakes (the same ones that CDPHE notified) later in the afternoon. The DRMS e-mail indicated that CDPHE was supposed to ensure agricultural users were also notified.
- DRMS notifies the National Response Center (12:27 pm). The NRC makes notification to the EPA Region 8 phone duty officer. (NRC reports are automatically forwarded to a number of other agencies including CDPHE, Colorado Information Analysis Center, U.S. Department of Interior which includes the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and others).
- The DRMS e-mail states that they coincidentally met the San Juan County Sheriff as the release was flowing down Cement Creek at approximately 12:47 p.m.
- There is an EPA and contractor team in the area for another project and they are familiar with Animas River sampling locations. They are diverted to the incident and begin collecting river water samples. (first round collected at 6pm, second round near midnight, another round the following morning).
- The plume reaches Silverton.
- EPA issues first press release (11:26 pm)

8/6/2015

- EPA Region 8 stands up the REOC (10:00 a.m.).
- EPA Headquarters, Region 6 and Region 9 are notified (11:00).
- The Animas River is closed to recreational users (there was coordination with local agencies and ATSDR to make this decision at approximately 10:30; EPA saw an official printed release later in the afternoon).
- EPA Region 8 Acting Water Program Director confirmed that the State had notified water users the previous day.
- The OSC met with the Town of Silverton at 11:00 a.m. He was also going to meet with La Plata County/Durango at 2:00 p.m.
- EPA Region 8 conference call with the La Plata County Emergency Manager around 11:00 a.m. or so. He reported that major irrigation users had shut their head gates.
- The Durango Treatment Plant is secure per reports from the EPA Water Program (3:45 p.m.).
- Conference call with EPA Region 6 in the afternoon before 2:00 p.m. They reported that their Water Program had contacted New Mexico.

- The plume reaches Durango (late afternoon).
- EPA deploys an additional OSC, two START contractors, the ASPECT plane (Airborne Spectral Photometric Environmental Collection Technology), and Community Involvement Coordinator personnel (varied, beginning at 12:30 pm).
- EPA issued SitRep (approx. 3:30 pm).

8/7/2015

- ASPECT flyover (initiated at 7:30 a.m., found extent of plume at 8:30 a.m.; lat/longs received, map pending).
- Coordination call with R6, R9 and HQ. Region 9 was planning to sample at the Navajo Reservation.
- Preliminary results for sampling and monitoring is expected to be received on this day.
- As of 8:30 a.m. the plume had not yet reached New Mexico.
- OSC in the field reports that private residential wells were showing yellow color and requests ERRS support for alternative water (distribution began that evening).
- EPA requests information from USGS regarding a stream gauge on Cement Creek and USGS reports that the release was larger than 1,000,000 gallons.
- Region 8 receives a call from FEMA R8 because their tribal liaison was getting calls from the Navajo Nation and EPA Region 8 provided Region 9's OSC contact info to FEMA.
- EPA Region 8 holds call with the Region 8 Regional Response Team (including the U.S. Department of Interior from R6 and R8, and multiple Forest Service representatives.)

Attachments

Submit Action Report

Spill Summary Report

NATIONAL RESPONSE CENTER 1-800-424-8802
 GOVERNMENT USE ONLYGOVERNMENT USE ONLY***
 Information released to a third party shall comply with any
 applicable federal and/or state Freedom of Information and Privacy Laws

Incident Report # 1124824

INCIDENT DESCRIPTION

*Report taken by: CIV (b) (6) at 14:27 on 05-AUG-15
 Incident Type: FIXED
 Incident Cause: OTHER
 Affected Area: ANIMAS RIVER
 Incident occurred on 05-AUG-15 at 11:30 local incident time.
 Affected Medium: WATER ANIMAS RIVER

REPORTING PARTY

Name: (b) (6)
 Organization: STATE
 Address: 1313 SHERMAN STREET
 RM 215
 DENVER, CO 80203

PRIMARY Phone: (303)8663567
 Type of Organization: STATE GOVERNMENT

SUSPECTED RESPONSIBLE PARTY

Name: UNKNOWN

Type of Organization: UNKNOWN

INCIDENT LOCATION

County: SAN JUAN
 City: SILVERTON State: CO
 10 MILES NORTH OF THE TOWN OF SILVERTON

RELEASED MATERIAL(S)

CHRIS Code: NCC Official Material Name: NO CHRIS CODE
 Also Known As: MINE WATER
 Qty Released: 0 UNKNOWN AMOUNT Qty in Water: 0 UNKNOWN AMOUNT

DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

CALLER IS REPORTING A RELEASE OF MINE WATER FROM AN UNDER GROUND MINE

INCIDENT DETAILS

Package: N/A
 Building ID:
 Type of Fixed Object: OTHER
 Power Generating Facility: UNKNOWN
 Generating Capacity:
 Type of Fuel:
 NPDES:
 NPDES Compliance: UNKNOWN
 Sheen Color:
 Sheen Odor Description: MINE WATER
 Sheen Travel Direction:
 Sheen Size Length:
 Sheen Size Width:
 ---WATER INFORMATION---
 Body of Water: ANIMAS RIVER

Tributary of:
 Nearest River Mile Marker:
 Water Supply Contaminated: UNKNOWN

IMPACT

Fire Involved: NO Fire Extinguished: UNKNOWN
 INJURIES: NO Hospitalized: Empl/Crew: Passenger:
 FATALITIES: NO Empl/Crew: Passenger: Occupant:
 EVACUATIONS: NO Who Evacuated: Radius/Area:
 Damages: NO

<u>Closure Type</u>	<u>Description of Closure</u>	<u>Hours Closed</u>	<u>Direction of Closure</u>
Air:	N		
Road:	N		Major Artery: N
Waterway:	N		
Track:	N		

Passengers Transferred: NO
 Environmental Impact: NO
 Media Interest: UNKNOWN Community Impact due to Material:

REMEDIAL ACTIONS

CALLER ALSO STATED THAT ANYONE THAT IS USING THE WATER FOR IRRIGATION PURPOSES SHOULD NOT USE THE WATER, PERSONNEL ARE ONSITE AT THE MINE, THE COUNTY AND LOCAL POLICE HAVE BEEN MOBILIZED
 Release Secured: UNKNOWN
 Release Rate:
 Estimated Release Duration:

WEATHER

ADDITIONAL AGENCIES NOTIFIED

Federal:
 State/Local: STATE, LOCAL POLICE, COUNTY
 State/Local On Scene: STATE, LOCAL POLICE, COUNTY
 State Agency Number:

NOTIFICATIONS BY NRC

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL (GRASP)
 05-AUG-15 14:37 (770)4887100
 DHS NOC (NOC)
 05-AUG-15 14:37 (202)2828114
 CGIS RAO ST. LOUIS (COMMAND CENTER)
 05-AUG-15 14:37 (314)2692420
 CO DEPT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT (MAIN OFFICE)
 05-AUG-15 14:37 (877)5185608
 COLORADO INFO ANALYSIS CENTER (FUSION CENTER)
 05-AUG-15 14:37 (720)8526705
 DOT CRISIS MANAGEMENT CENTER (MAIN OFFICE)
 05-AUG-15 14:37 (202)3661863
 U.S. EPA VIII (MAIN OFFICE)
 05-AUG-15 14:39 (303)2931788 ACKERMAN
 NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COORD CTR (MAIN OFFICE)
 05-AUG-15 14:37 (202)2829201
 NOAA RPTS FOR CO (MAIN OFFICE)
 05-AUG-15 14:37 (206)5264911
 NATIONAL RESPONSE CENTER HQ (AUTOMATIC REPORTS)
 05-AUG-15 14:37 (202)2671136
 CO OIL & GAS CONSERVATION COMM (MAIN OFFICE)
 05-AUG-15 14:37 (303)8942100
 DOI/OEPC DENVER (MAIN OFFICE)

05-AUG-15 14:37 (303)4452500
USCG DISTRICT 8 (MAIN OFFICE)
05-AUG-15 14:37 (504)5896225

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

*** END INCIDENT REPORT # 1124824 ***
Report any problems by calling 1-800-424-8802
PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT <http://www.nrc.uscg.mil>

Close Window



COLORADO

Office of Emergency Preparedness & Response

Department of Public Health & Envirc

Print date 8/5/2015

CASE NUMBER: 2015-0492 DATE ENTERED: 8/5/2015 TIME ENTERED: 12:52
 WHO TOOK REPORT: (b) (6) NRC DATE REPORTED: 8/5/2015 TIME REPORTED: 12:40:00 PM
 NRC NUMBER: 1124824

CALLER: (b) (6) CONFIDENTIAL: N PHONE: (b) (6)
 ORGANIZATION: DRMS
 STREET:
 CITY: DENVER COUNTY:
 STATE: CO ZIP CODE:

POTENTIALLY RESPONSIBLE PARTY GOLD KING MINE
 PRP CONTACT: EPA SUPERFUND SITE PRP PHONE:
 ADDRESS: EMAIL:
 CITY: COUNTY:
 STATE: CO ZIP CODE

EVENT DATE: 8/5/2015 EVENT TIME: 10:40:00 AM
 LOCATION GOLD KING MINE, EPA SUPERFUND SITE MILE MARKER:
 CITY: GLADSTONE COUNTY: SAN JUAN Latitude: _____
 STATE: CO ZIP CODE Longitude: _____

TYPE OF MATERIAL OTHER
 MATERIAL1: MINE BLOW OUT WATER QUANTITY1: 1 UNIT1: MILLION GALLO QTY TO WATER1: 1 UNIT1: O
 MATERIAL2: QUANTITY2: UNIT2: QTY TO WATER2: UNIT2:
 MATERIAL3: QUANTITY3: UNIT3: QTY TO WATER3: UNIT3:

SOURCE: X
 SOURCE TYPE GOLD KING MINE
 CAUSE: OTHER

CAUSE INFORMATION: While working on the portal for this mne/EPA Superfund Site, over a million gallons of water surged out to Upper Cement Creek, which leads to the Animas River. The water is very orange, carrying dissolved iron and zinc. Caller wanted WQ to notify downstream users that the surge is expected to reach Silvertown and downstream users shortly. (b) (6) was reached and is working on calling downstream users. They do not expect the water to exceed the banks of the river. Water is still being released more slowly from the mine site.

MEDIUM IMPACTED: WATER

Fixed Facility

Land

Air

Groundwater

Surface Water

Waterway Impacted:

UPPER CEMENT CREEK

NUMBER OF DEATHS:

NUMBER OF INJURIES:

EVACUATION:

NUMBER EVACUATED:

ACTION TAKEN:

CDPHE NOTIFIED:

WQCD: (b) (6)
(b) (6)

CPW: (b) (6)

HMWMD: (b) (6)

DRMS:

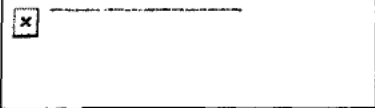
COMMENTS: San Juan County EH: (b) (6)

RESPONDERS:

RESPONDER COMMENTS:

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response



P 303 (b) (6) | F 303 (b) (6) |
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South, C-2, Denver, CO 80246
(b) (6) @State.Co.Us | www.colorado.gov/

24-hour Colorado Emergency and Incident Reporting Line: 1-877-518-5608