

Tailings Pond Encyclopedia Article

Tailings Pond

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Refers to the water stored on-site to wash ore and receive waste **tailings** as a residue. This provides both a water supply and a **sediment** trap. Two serious environmental problems ensue. The water leaches out metals and other dangerous elements that were formerly trapped underground in a reducing (non-oxidizing) **environment**; acidic wastes amplify the **leaching**. And though usually stable, some **dams** have burst during flood stages, unleashing a torrent of toxic materials and posing a combined hazard of mudflow and **flooding**.