

source which is not permitted to discharge under 40 CFR part 440, has an overflow or discharge which violates the limitations of 40 CFR part 440, the source may qualify for an exemption from such limitations with respect to such discharge if the following conditions are met:

(1) The facility is designed, constructed, and maintained to contain the maximum volume of wastewater stored and contained by the facility during normal operating conditions without an increase in volume from precipitation and the maximum volume of wastewater resulting from a 10-year, 24-hour precipitation event. In computing the maximum volume of wastewater which would result from a 10-year, 24-hour precipitation event, the facility must include the volume which would result from all areas contributing runoff to the individual treatment facility, *i.e.*, all runoff that is not diverted from the area or process subject to zero discharge, and other runoff that is allowed to commingle with the influent to the treatment system.

(2) The facility takes all reasonable steps to minimize the overflow or excess discharge.

(3) The facility complies with the notification requirements of § 122.60(g) and (h). The storm exemption is designed to provide an affirmative defense to an enforcement action. Therefore, the operator has the burden of demonstrating to the appropriate authority that the above conditions have been met.

(d) *pH adjustment.* (1) Where the application of neutralization and sedimentation technology to comply with relevant metal limitations results in an inability to comply with the pH range of 6 to 9, the permit issuer may allow the pH level in the final effluent to slightly exceed 9.0 so that the copper, lead, zinc, mercury, and cadmium limitations will be achieved.

(2) In the case of a discharge into natural receiving waters for which the pH, if unaltered by human activities, is or would be less than 6.0 and approved water quality standards authorize such lower pH, the pH limitations for the discharge may be adjusted downward to the pH water quality criterion for

the receiving waters provided the other effluent limitations for the discharge are met. In no case shall a pH limitation below 5.0 be permitted.

(e) *Groundwater infiltration provision.* In the event a new source subject to a no discharge requirement can demonstrate that groundwater infiltration contributes a substantial amount of water to the tailing impoundment or wastewater holding facility, the permitting authority may allow the discharge of a volume of water equivalent to the amount of groundwater infiltration. This discharge shall be subject to the limitations for mine drainage applicable to the new source subcategory.

§ 440.132 General definitions.

(a) "Active mining area" is a place where work or other activity related to the extraction, removal, or recovery of metal ore is being conducted, except, with respect to surface mines, any area of land on or in which grading has been completed to return the earth to desired contour and reclamation work has begun.

(b) "Annual precipitation" and "annual evaporation" are the mean annual precipitation and mean annual lake evaporation, respectively, as established by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Environmental Science Services Administration, Environmental Data Services, or equivalent regional rainfall and evaporation data.

(c) "Appropriate treatment of the recycle water" in subpart J, § 440.104 includes, but is not limited to pH adjustment, settling and pH adjustment, settling, and mixed media filtration.

(d) "Groundwater infiltration" in § 440.131 means that water which enters the treatment facility as a result of the interception of natural springs, aquifers, or run-off which percolates into the ground and seeps into the treatment facility's tailings pond or wastewater holding facility and that cannot be diverted by ditching or grouting the tailings pond or wastewater holding facility.

(e) "In-situ leach methods" means the processes involving the purposeful introduction of suitable leaching solutions into a uranium ore body to dissolve the valuable minerals in place and the purposeful leaching of uranium

ore in a static or semistatic condition either by gravity through an open pile, or by flooding a confined ore pile. It does not include the natural dissolution of uranium by ground waters, the incidental leaching of uranium by mine drainage, nor the rehabilitation of aquifers and the monitoring of these aquifers.

(f) “Mill” is a preparation facility within which the metal ore is cleaned, concentrated, or otherwise processed before it is shipped to the customer, refiner, smelter, or manufacturer. A mill includes all ancillary operations and structures necessary to clean, concentrate, or otherwise process metal ore, such as ore and gangue storage areas and loading facilities.

(g) “Mine” is an active mining area, including all land and property placed under, or above the surface of such land, used in or resulting from the work of extracting metal ore or minerals from their natural deposits by any means or method, including secondary recovery of metal ore from refuse or other storage piles, wastes, or rock dumps and mill tailings derived from the mining, cleaning, or concentration of metal ores.

(h) “Mine drainage” means any water drained, pumped, or siphoned from a mine.

(i) “Ten (10)-year, 24-hour precipitation event” is the maximum 24-hour precipitation event with a probable recurrence interval of once in 10 years as established by the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Weather Service, or equivalent regional or rainfall probability information.

(j) “U” (Uranium) is measured by the procedure discussed in 40 CFR 141.25(b)(2), or an equivalent method.

Subpart M—Gold Placer Mine Subcategory

SOURCE: 53 FR 18788, May 24, 1988, unless otherwise noted.

§ 440.140 Applicability; description of the gold placer mine subcategory.

(a) The provisions of this subpart M are applicable to discharges from—

(1) Mines and dredges that produce gold or gold bearing ores from placer deposits; and

(2) The beneficiation processes which use gravity separation methods for recovering gold from placer deposits.

(b) The provisions of this subpart M are not applicable to any mines or beneficiation processes which process less than 1500 cubic yards (cu yd) of ore per year, or to dredges which process less than 50,000 cu yd of ore per year, or to dredges located in open waters (*i.e.*, open bays, marine waters, or major rivers).

§ 440.141 Specialized definitions and provisions.

For the purpose of this subpart M, the general definitions, abbreviations, methods of analysis, and general provisions set forth in 40 CFR part 401 shall apply except as superseded by those below. The general provisions and definitions set forth in 40 CFR part 440, subpart L, shall not apply to this subpart.

(a) *Specialized definitions.* The following specialized definitions apply to this subpart only.

(1) “Beneficiation area” means the area of land used to stockpile ore immediately before the beneficiation process, the area of land used for the beneficiation process, the area of land used to stockpile the tailings immediately after the beneficiation process, and the area of land from the stockpiled tailings to the treatment system (*e.g.*, holding pond or settling pond, and the area of the treatment system).

(2) “Beneficiation process” means the dressing or processing of gold bearing ores for the purpose of—

(i) Regulating the size of, or recovering, the ore or product,

(ii) Removing unwanted constituents from the ore, and

(iii) Improving the quality, purity, or assay grade of a desired product.

(3) “Drainage water” means incidental surface waters from diverse sources such as rainfall, snow melt or permafrost melt.

(4) “Dredge” means a self-contained combination of an elevating excavator (*e.g.*, bucket line dredge), the beneficiation or gold-concentrating