

Subpart W—National Emission Standards for Radon Emissions From Operating Mill Tailings

SOURCE: 54 FR 51703, Dec. 15, 1989, unless otherwise noted.

§ 61.250 Designation of facilities.

The provisions of this subpart apply to owners or operators of facilities licensed to manage uranium byproduct materials during and following the processing of uranium ores, commonly referred to as uranium mills and their associated tailings. This subpart does not apply to the disposal of tailings.

§ 61.251 Definitions.

As used in this subpart, all terms not defined here have the meaning given them in the Clean Air Act or 40 CFR part 61, subpart A. The following terms shall have the following specific meanings:

(a) *Area* means the vertical projection of the pile upon the earth's surface.

(b) *Continuous disposal* means a method of tailings management and disposal in which tailings are dewatered by mechanical methods immediately after generation. The dried tailings are then placed in trenches or other disposal areas and immediately covered to limit emissions consistent with applicable Federal standards.

(c) *Dewatered* means to remove the water from recently produced tailings by mechanical or evaporative methods such that the water content of the tailings does not exceed 30 percent by weight.

(d) *Existing impoundment* means any uranium mill tailings impoundment which is licensed to accept additional tailings and is in existence as of December 15, 1989.

(e) *Operation* means that an impoundment is being used for the continued placement of new tailings or is in standby status for such placement. An impoundment is in operation from the day that tailings are first placed in the impoundment until the day that final closure begins.

(f) *Phased disposal* means a method of tailings management and disposal which uses lined impoundments which

are filled and then immediately dried and covered to meet all applicable Federal standards.

(g) *Uranium byproduct material or tailings* means the waste produced by the extraction or concentration of uranium from any ore processed primarily for its source material content. Ore bodies depleted by uranium solution extraction and which remain underground do not constitute byproduct material for the purposes of this subpart.

§ 61.252 Standard.

(a) Radon-222 emissions to the ambient air from an existing uranium mill tailings pile shall not exceed 20 pCi/(m²-sec) (1.9 pCi/(ft²-sec)) of radon-222.

(b) After December 15, 1989, no new tailings impoundment can be built unless it is designed, constructed and operated to meet one of the two following work practices:

(1) Phased disposal in lined tailings impoundments that are no more than 40 acres in area and meet the requirements of 40 CFR 192.32(a) as determined by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The owner or operator shall have no more than two impoundments, including existing impoundments, in operation at any one time.

(2) Continuous disposal of tailings such that tailings are dewatered and immediately disposed with no more than 10 acres uncovered at any time and operated in accordance with § 192.32(a) as determined by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

(c) All mill owners or operators shall comply with the provisions of 40 CFR 192.32(a) in the operation of tailings piles, the exemption for existing piles in 40 CFR 192.32(a) notwithstanding.

[54 FR 51703, Dec. 15, 1989, as amended at 65 FR 62159, Oct. 17, 2000]

§ 61.253 Determining compliance.

Compliance with the emission standard in this subpart shall be determined annually through the use of Method 115 of appendix B. When measurements are to be made over a one year period, EPA shall be provided with a schedule of the measurement frequency to be used. The schedule may be submitted to EPA prior to or after the first measurement period. EPA shall be notified 30 days