

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

plant, and a tailings disposal plant, all mounted on a floating barge.

(5) “Five (5) year, 6-hour precipitation event” means the maximum 6-hour precipitation event with a probable recurrence interval of once in 5 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.

(6) “Gravity separation methods” means the treatment of mineral particles which exploits differences between their specific gravities. The separation is usually performed by means of sluices, jigs, classifiers, spirals, hydrocyclones, or shaking tables.

(7) “Infiltration water” means that water which permeates through the earth into the plant site.

(8) “Mine” means a place where work or other activity related to the extraction or recovery of ore is performed.

(9) “Mine area” means the land area from which overburden is stripped and ore is removed prior to moving the ore to the beneficiation area.

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

(11) “New water” means water from any discrete source such as a river, creek, lake or well which is deliberately allowed or brought into the plant site.

(12) “Open cut mine” means any form of recovery of ore from the earth except by a dredge.

(13) “Ore” means gold placer deposit consisting of metallic gold-bearing gravels, which may be: residual, from weathering of rocks in-situ; river gravels in active streams; river gravels in abandoned and often buried channels; alluvial fans; sea-beaches; and sea-beaches now elevated and inland. Ore is the raw “bank run” material measured in place, before being moved by mechanical or hydraulic means to a beneficiation process.

(14) “Permit area” means the area of land specified or referred to in an NPDES permit in which active mining and related activities may occur that result in the discharge regulated under the terms of the permit. Usually this is specifically delineated in an NPDES

permit or permit application, but in other cases may be ascertainable from an Alaska Tri-agency permit application or similar document specifying the mine location, mining plan and similar data.

(15) “Plant site” means the area occupied by the mine, necessary haulage ways from the mine to the beneficiation process, the beneficiation area, the area occupied by the wastewater treatment facilities and the storage areas for waste materials and solids removed from the wastewaters during treatment.

(16) “Process wastewater” means all water used in and resulting from the beneficiation process, including but not limited to the water used to move the ore to and through the beneficiation process, the water used to aid in classification, and the water used in gravity separation, mine drainage, and infiltration and drainage waters which commingle with mine drainage or waters resulting from the beneficiation process.

(17) “Settleable solids” means the particulate material (both organic or inorganic) which will settle in one hour expressed in milliliters per liter (ml/l) as determined using an Imhoff cone and the method described for Residue—Settleable in 40 CFR part 136.

(b) *Specialized provisions—storm exemption.* This specialized provision applies to this subpart M only. If, as a result of precipitation (rainfall or snowmelt), a source subject to this subpart has an overflow or discharge of effluent which does not meet the limitations or standards of this subpart, the source may qualify for an exemption from such limitations and standards with respect to such discharge if the following conditions are met:

(1) The treatment system is designed, constructed, and maintained to contain the maximum volume of untreated process wastewater which would be discharged, stored, contained and used or recycled by the beneficiation process into the treatment system during a 4-hour operating period without an increase in volume from precipitation or infiltration, plus the maximum volume of water runoff resulting from a 5-year, 6-hour precipitation event. In computing the maximum volume of water

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which would result from a 5-year, 6-hour precipitation event, the operator must include the volume which would result from the plant site contributing runoff to the individual treatment facility.

(2) The operator takes all reasonable steps to maintain treatment of the wastewater and minimize the amount of overflow.

(3) The source is in compliance with the BMP in §140.148 and related provisions of its NPDES permit.

(4) The operator complies with the notification requirements of §122.41 (m) and (n) of this title. 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.

**§ 440.142 Effluent limitations representing the degree of effluent reduction attainable by the application of the best practicable control technology currently available (BPT).**

Except as provided in 40 CFR 125.30–125.32, any existing point source subject to this subpart must achieve the following effluent limitations representing the degree of effluent reduction attainable by the application of the best practicable control technology currently available (BPT):

(a) The concentration of pollutants discharged in process wastewater from an open-cut mine plant site shall not exceed:

Effluent limitations	
Effluent characteristics	Instantaneous maximum
Settleable solids .....	0.2 ml/l

(b) The concentration of pollutants discharged in process wastewater from a dredge plant site shall not exceed:

Effluent characteristics	Effluent limitations—Instantaneous maximum
Settleable solids .....	0.2 ml/l

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**§ 440.143 Effluent limitations representing the degree of effluent reduction attainable by the application of the best available technology economically achievable (BAT).**

Except as provided in 40 CFR 125.30–125.32, any existing point source subject to this subpart must achieve the following effluent limitations representing the degree of effluent reduction attainable by the application of the best available technology economically achievable (BAT).

(a) The volume of process wastewater which may be discharged from an open-cut mine plant site shall not exceed the volume of infiltration, drainage and mine drainage waters which is in excess of the make up water required for operation of the beneficiation process. The concentration of pollutants in process wastewaters discharged from an open-cut mine plant site shall not exceed:

Effluent characteristics	Effluent limitations—Instantaneous maximum
Settleable solids .....	0.2 ml/l

(b) The volume of process wastewater which may be discharged from a dredge plant site shall not exceed the volume of infiltration, drainage and mine drainage waters which is in excess of the make up water required for operation of the beneficiation process. The concentration of pollutants in process wastewater discharged from a dredge plant site shall not exceed:

Effluent characteristics	Effluent limitations—Instantaneous maximum
Settleable solids .....	0.2 ml/l

**§ 440.144 New source performance standards (NSPS).**

Any new source subject to this subpart must achieve the following NSPS representing the degree of effluent reduction attainable by the application of the best available demonstrated technology:

(a) The volume of process wastewater which may be discharged from an open-cut mine plant site shall not exceed the volume of infiltration, drainage and