

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Instruction Memorandum No. NV-2004-035
Expires: 09/30/2005

To: Field Managers, Nevada

From: State Director, Nevada

Subject: Signing of Geothermal Hazards

The Nevada State Office is reissuing guidance regarding the signing of hot springs located on public lands which may pose a hazard to the public because of extremely hot temperatures. Implementation of this guidance is intended to reduce the opportunity for injuries to occur on public lands.

Hot springs or groups of hot springs with temperatures of greater than 120°F are found on public lands throughout the northern two-thirds of Nevada. We should consider any hot springs on public lands to be potentially hazardous, and pay special attention to those with temperatures of higher than 120°F. These springs are located in areas administered by all Field Offices other than Las Vegas. Half of the springs have temperatures of greater than 150°F, and 40 percent of the springs are greater than 180°F. The location and temperature of these springs may be found by referring to Thermal Waters of Nevada, Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology Bulletin 91, or by contacting the Division of Minerals Management.

The purpose of this IM is to identify actions through which the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) may provide adequate notice of the potential safety hazards and health problems associated with hot springs. Field Managers will make the final decision on how to implement this policy and establish priorities for which hot springs to sign. If requested, the Division of Minerals Management will assist in developing priorities. It should be noted that this issue is specific to geothermal hazards at this time and should not be applied to other hazards such as abandoned mines.

Actions which Field Offices may take include:

1. Notifying the public that they will be entering public lands where dangerous conditions such as hot springs, may pose safety or health hazards. Unlike identified recreation areas, these public lands are not actively maintained. General notification may be provided through management plans in the safety section of statewide or Field Office recreation maps, at kiosks near recreation areas, on web sites, in general BLM documents, or in other handouts. The State Office has prepared a brochure describing potential hazards found at hot springs. The brochure was distributed to the Field Offices. If additional copies of the brochure are needed, please contact Jolynn Worley, Office of Communication at (775) 861-6515.
2. Consider signing all hot springs, but pay special attention to signing hot springs with obviously high temperatures. Signs may be located at either access points, such as trail heads or parking areas, or at the springs. **Sign maintenance inspections should be performed by Field Office staff as part of their routine duties.** Attachment one presents suggested wording for a warning sign.
3. Restrict access to dangerous hot springs. Examples of options for restricting access include fencing springs or closing roads or trails.
4. A combination of these options.

For further information, contact Richard Hoops, Division of Minerals Management, at (775) 861-6568.

Signed by:
Amy L. Lueders
Associate State Director

Authenticated by:
Pam Collins
Staff Assistant

1 Attachment

1. Warning Sign Wording (1 p)

