



Coal Waste Impoundments: Risks, Responses, and Alternatives

Committee on Coal Waste Impoundments, Committee on Earth Resources, Board on Earth Sciences and Resources, National Research Council, National Research Council

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On October 11, 2000, a breakthrough of Martin County Coal Corporation's coal waste impoundment released 250 million gallons of slurry in near Inez, Kentucky. The 72-acre surface impoundment for coal processing waste materials broke through into a nearby underground coal mine. Although the spill caused no loss of human life, environmental damage was significant, and local water supplies were disrupted. This incident prompted Congress to request the National Research Council to examine ways to reduce the potential for similar accidents in the future. This book covers the engineering practices and standards for coal waste impoundments and ways to evaluate, improve, and monitor them; the accuracy of mine maps and ways to improve surveying and mapping of mines; and alternative technologies for coal slurry disposal and utilization. The book contains advice for multiple audiences, including the Mine Safety and Health Administration, the Office of Surface Mining, and other federal agencies; state and local policymakers and regulators; the coal industry and its consultants; and scientists and engineers.

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