

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR MINOR REVISION  
COAL AND URANIUM PROGRAM  
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

COMPANY NAME: Rio Tinto - Spring Creek Mine      DATE: 6/8/09

OPERATING PERMIT#: 79012      MR#: 09-12-11

LOCATION: Spring Creek Mine Decker, MT

Type and Purpose of Action: Spring Creek Mine is requesting approval for placement of light duty trailers containing radio transmission relay units and light plants with generators on topsoil stockpiles. The devices will be placed temporarily on topsoil stockpiles only when other locations are determined unsuitable for providing consistent radio or light coverage. Equipment used to place and access radio and lighting devices will be restricted to light vehicles. This revision amends section 609 (other support facilities).

Radio transmission relay units are solar powered creating a minimal risk to soil stockpiles due to light vehicle traffic. Additionally, in the unlikely event the battery unit is damaged and leaks the contamination would appear to be small enough to not compromise the stockpiled soils.

Light plants pose some risk in that they typically have a fuel tank in order to generate power necessary for running the lights. The light plant will be removed from the stockpile and footprint area for fueling. In the case of a leak the soil material would be removed from the stockpile and treated accordingly. Due to the small volume of the light plant fuel storage tank and infrequency of this practice the risk appears very low for this activity.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures: Potential impacts would include the need to remove a small portion of soil from a stockpile in the case of a spill. Additionally a small amount of compaction could conceivably occur from the vehicle traffic; however, the Department soil scientist believes this compaction to be negligible and ameliorated through the soil re-distribution process.

Alternative Actions: The alternative would be to leave the permit as it stands and deal with placement of these devices on a case by case basis.