

Arizona State Mine Inspector



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ABANDONED MINES AND WILDFIRES

Maps:

If the maps available to you have mine sites marked on them, then you should assume there are unmarked sites in the area. Unmarked sites can be anywhere. Many of these sites whether marked or not, can be very hard to see until you're right on them.

Shafts:

Shafts (vertical) can be small and hard to see or the main feature at a mine site. If you're in an area that's supposed to have a mine shaft and you are unable to find it, then it may have been filled in or plugged. Look for indicators such as head frame footings; they may be concrete or wood. That can give you a general idea where the shaft once was or should be. Look for old cans, rusted metal, corrugated metal or old pieces of milled wood. All can be an indicator of a mine feature. If you see a low spot that doesn't look natural or the ground just doesn't look right, do not walk across it.

Adits:

Adits (horizontal) like Shafts can be small or large and some are very hard to see. Adits whether small or large can have a hi-wall above the entrance. If you're working above one keep in mind some Hi-walls can be very high.

Prospects:

Prospects can be shafts, adits, or trenches but still deep enough to cause injury or death. They can be very hard to see and are more likely to not be marked on your maps. There are many more prospects than any other mining feature.

Waste piles:

Waste piles can be very small and the first sign you have that a mine feature is there. Waste piles can also be very large and the waste from one mine site or the waste from many mining sites in the area. In some cases the waste was hauled off during the mining process and all you have is a Shaft or Adit. You do not have to have a waste pile to have a mine.

Stopes/Air vent:

A stope is where a miner followed a vein of ore from underground to the surface. Like an air vent there may be no sign on the surface that an opening is there. They can be very hard to see and very deep.

Roads:

Roads in the back country whether old or new can be a clue to where a mine site may be. Some mine sites never had a road; they were mined with mules, so look for trails.

Hi-Walls:

Hi-Walls are the high side of many adits, prospects, trenches, and roads. If working above any of these features, be careful not to get forced down to the top of a hi-wall.

Explosives\Chemicals:

In some cases the explosives used at mine site were left behind when the mining stopped. They may be inside the mine feature, in an explosives magazine used for storing explosives away from the mine site, or just lying about. You may find caps, primer cord, or explosives (old & new). The explosives may be in boxes, cans or wrap in wax paper or cloth.

Chemicals were also left behind like cyanide and mercury and others. Some are water soluble and reactive

Please note location (GPS) and report as soon as possible.

Dump sites:

Many mine sites have been used for illegal dumping. There can be cars, animals, house trash, industrial trash, chemicals and more and can be hazardous.

Keep in mind:

The most dangerous place to be when working around any mining features is on the HI-Side or uphill of the opening. It's the same for a hi-wall. Most of the ground around mining features is loose rock. It's like standing on marbles. If you stumble or fall you can easily go over the side.

An abandoned mine site can be an attractive staging area. It may be the only flat open ground in the area. Keep in mind you do not know what's under your feet or wheels.

Abandon mines can look very attractive at times.

Stay out stay alive!

If you have any question please call 602-542-5971 or email publicinfo@asmi.az.gov.

Thank you for your service to the State of Arizona.



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