

# Mitigating the generation of acid mine drainage from copper sulfide tailings impoundments in perpetuity: A case study for an integrated management strategy.

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# Mitigating the generation of acid mine drainage from copper sulfide tailings impoundments in perpetuity: A case study for an integrated management strategy

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## Abstract

Acid mine drainage (AMD) is one of the most serious and pervasive challenges facing the minerals industry. Current philosophy in sulfide tailings management takes an end-of-pipe approach which is yet to be shown to be sufficient to prevent post-closure impacts from AMD and guarantee ‘walk-away’ status. An improved, integrated approach to tailings management and AMD mitigation is proposed, whereby conventional tailings are separated with the use of flotation into a largely benign tailings stream and a sulfide-rich product. The key features of this conceptual approach are outlined and partly demonstrated for the case of porphyry-type copper sulfide tailings. The significance of

this approach is that it provides a basis for the identification of opportunities for the development of new process designs incorporating waste management systems for mitigating AMD in a manner consistent with the principles of cleaner production and sustainable development.



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## Keywords

Acid mine drainage; Sulfide ores; Froth flotation; Tailings disposal; Waste processing

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