

Coal ash contamination in america

[Business](#)



Currently the United States of America is suffering from a horrible ecological crisis in the form of the contamination of land and aquatic systems from coal ash.

Coal ash is a byproduct of burning coal in power-plants. It is usually mixed with water or another liquid to keep it from blowing away, at which point it is referred to as coal slurry. Coal ash contains levels of arsenic, selenium, lead, and mercury which have been deemed unfit by the US Department of Health. The chemicals can cause cancer, assorted lung ailments, central nervous system damage, and insanity. There are no regulations on the disposal of coal ash and it is classified as a non-hazardous waste. As such there is usually little to nothing to prevent the leaching of these toxic chemicals into land and aquatic ecosystems as well as groundwater, in the 600 coal ash sites in America.

Coal ash is a serious health hazard. There are significantly elevated levels of asthma and some forms of cancers in the communities surrounding coal ash sites. As well as recent studies have found groundwater to be contaminated to non-potable levels in these areas. Due to the complete lack of regulation, coal slurry spills are relatively common, there have been 34 coal slurry spills in the past decade. The Martin County coal slurry spill in 2000 and the Kingston Fossil Plant coal fly ash slurry spill in 2008 are particularly famous. They both caused severe property damage, the complete destruction of nearby aquatic ecosystems, as well as severe contamination of the soil and groundwater in their respective areas.

They both will cost billions of dollars and years to clean up. Coal Ash needs to have regulations regarding its storage and disposal because it is a significant public health crisis and incredibly destructive to the ecosystems of this fine nation.