

# You should know...



North Dakota Public Service Commission

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North Dakota Public  
Service Commission

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## Abandoned Mine Land Subsidence

### PURPOSE

Landowners in North Dakota have experienced problems associated with abandoned mined lands. These problems can lead to serious safety hazards and expensive repairs when underground mines collapse causing sinkholes or settling. As lands are developed for residential, commercial, industrial, or recreational purposes, landowners and zoning authorities should be aware of the potential hazards of abandoned mine lands.

### WHO NEEDS TO KNOW

- Homeowners
- Developers
- Zoning board members
- Township boards
- Landowner groups
- Prospective buyers
- Government officials
- City authorities
- Community planners
- Construction firms
- Realtors
- Engineers & architects
- County authorities
- Chambers of commerce
- Lending agencies

### MINE SUBSIDENCE

Mine subsidence is the surface expression of an underground mine collapse. In North Dakota, this is usually characterized by sinkholes (also known as cave holes) or as a general settling of the ground surface. Mine subsidence can cause serious danger to the public and damage to homes, driveways, sidewalks,

streets, water and sewer lines, septic systems and more. Building above an underground mine can be dangerous and zoning authorities and developers should determine whether an area is undermined *before* any construction begins.



### HOW CAN I FIND OUT IF A PROPERTY IS UNDERMINED?

The Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Division of the North Dakota Public Service Commission has information regarding abandoned coal mines in our state. However, many abandoned mines in North Dakota are poorly documented and records may be incomplete or nonexistent. Before developing an area where abandoned mines are a possibility, a site evaluation should be conducted by a qualified engineering or drilling firm. Exploratory drilling, when conducted properly, is the best method to determine whether an area is undermined.

**Counties with known abandoned mines include: Adams, Billings, Bowman, Burke, Burleigh, Divide, Dunn, Emmons, Golden Valley, Grant, Hettinger, McHenry, McKenzie, McLean, Mercer, Morton, Mountrail, Oliver, Renville, Slope, Stark, Ward, and Williams.**

# Abandoned Mine Land Subsidence Ask Before You Build

## WHAT CAN I DO IF MY PROPERTY IS ALREADY UNDERMINED?

The AML Division is charged with eliminating public hazards resulting from areas mined for coal prior to 1977 in which the mine operator has no continuing responsibility. These hazards may include subsidence, dangerous highwalls,

water filled pits, coal fires and others. The AML Program is funded by a federal production tax on lignite coal mined in North Dakota. AML problems must be addressed in order of priority from the most to least hazardous. AML funding cannot be used to repair structures that have been damaged by abandoned mine lands. If you feel you may be affected by abandoned mine lands or need more information, you can contact the AML Division at (701) 328-4096 or reach our website at [www.psc.nd.gov](http://www.psc.nd.gov).