Common mistakes when trying to arrange emergency preparedness for TSF failure

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ABSTRACT

The Global Industry Standard on Tailings Management (GISTM) requires tailings storage facility (TSF) owners to *"provide immediate response to save lives, supply humanitarian aid and minimise environmental harm"* (GISTM Requirement 13.4, ICMM 2020). This requires owners to create emergency preparedness, which comprises a suitable emergency management and emergency response organisation, an understandable emergency response plan and the capability to execute an emergency response.

Emergency response is defined by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (2009) as the tactical response to mitigate the impact of an emergency, whilst emergency management is defined as the organisation and management of resources for dealing with all aspects of emergencies.

There are various standards, guidelines, and documents advising on how to create emergency preparedness for a TSF. However, perhaps because of the number of documents, there have been numerous attempts at creating the desired level of emergency preparedness that have fundamentally failed. The majority of these failed, or non-compliant attempts can be traced back to one or more common categories of errors.

This paper presents an overview of these common errors or pitfalls, describes why they most likely occur and provides guidance on how to avoid them when arranging emergency preparedness, composing an emergency preparedness and response plan, and developing the associated training.

The advice given in this paper is based on many reviews by the author of existing and proposed plans, as well as observing many training and exercise activities. The observations are informed by the author's long experience of working with emergency response and emergency management.

This paper delivers an easy-to-apply model for avoiding common pitfalls and advice on where to find the descriptions of *"what good looks like"*.