

NOM-157-SEMARNAT-2026 | Mining Waste Management Plans

Mexico City, October 5, 2026

On September 9, 2026, Mexican Official Standard NOM-157-SEMARNAT-2026 was published in the Official Gazette of the Federation, establishing the elements and procedures for implementing mining waste management plans (the “NOM-157”). NOM-157 will enter into force on March 8, 2027, 180 calendar days after its publication. Upon its entry into force, NOM-157-SEMARNAT-2009, published on August 30, 2011, will cease to have effect.

The objective of NOM-157 is to establish the elements and procedures that must be considered when formulating and implementing mining waste management plans, with the aim of preventing waste generation and promoting the recovery of such waste, as well as encouraging its comprehensive management through economically, technically, and environmentally feasible processes, methods, and technologies.

Regarding its scope of application, compliance is mandatory for those who generate and possess mining waste. It should be noted that NOM-157 expressly establishes joint and several liability between the generator and the possessor of mining waste.

I. Main Changes

The main changes compared to NOM-157-SEMARNAT-2009 are as follows:

- The list of mining wastes has been updated: those not exclusive to mining processes (filter cloths, spent catalysts, activated carbon) have been excluded and new wastes specific to mining activities (mineral disaggregation/crushing/classification material, simple or complex sulfates, calcium or magnesium carbonates and clays) have been added.
- A new waste category is added: “Spent mineral from the bioleaching process”.
- The option of a “comprehensive study” (*estudio integral*) for waste characterization is added, aimed at predicting and preventing potential environmental impacts and,

consequently, selecting the comprehensive management activities to be included in a management plan. This comprehensive study is detailed in Appendix D.

- The Conformity Assessment Procedure (*Procedimiento de Evaluación de la Conformidad*) has been updated in accordance with the Quality Infrastructure Law (*Ley de Infraestructura de la Calidad*), which allows for demonstrating compliance with the specifications of the Mexican Official Standard through accredited and approved inspection bodies. It should be noted that the Conformity Assessment Procedure does not replace the registration of the plan with the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (“SEMARNAT”).
- The exclusion from the scope of application regarding waste from metallurgical processes, provided for in sections VIII, IX, X, and XII of Article 32 of the Regulations of the General Law for the Prevention and Comprehensive Management of Waste (*Reglamento de la Ley General para la Prevención y Gestión Integral de los Residuos*), is removed. This clarifies the application of the NOM to such waste, some of which was already included in the classification under the 2009 version.
- The obligation to monitor water bodies, soil, air and sediments during the operational and post-closure phases of all mining waste disposal sites is expanded.
- The obligation to restore vegetation cover and integrate the landscape of decommissioned disposal areas is reformulated and expanded, using endemic species to the site whenever feasible.

II. Relevant Obligations

Among the most relevant substantive obligations of NOM-157 are the following:

- Waste classification: the generator must identify its waste based on the process that generates it, in accordance with the classification set forth in Section 5.1 of the NOM.
- Hazard characterization: tests for total concentration, mobility, pH and acid drainage potential must be conducted, depending on the type of process (mining, mineral concentration, pyrometallurgical, or hydrometallurgical).
- Minimum content of the management plan: it must include (i) the objectives of the plan, (ii) a description of the waste covered by the plan, (iii) a baseline for generation, (iv) the address of the facility with a georeferenced map, (v) a description of comprehensive management activities (reduction at the source, separation, recovery, treatment, temporary storage and final disposal), (vi) a scheduled program of activities, (vii) the estimated generation period, and (viii) evaluation and improvement mechanisms.
- Mandatory update of the registered plan: the plan must be updated in the event of process modifications, material substitutions, changes in the hazardous nature of the waste, the generation of new waste, changes to any element of the plan, when a

particular type of waste is no longer generated, or any other situation in accordance with current regulations, and SEMARNAT must be notified.

Verification and monitoring are the responsibility of SEMARNAT, through the Federal Attorney General's Office for Environmental Protection ("PROFEPA"). The Conformity Assessment Procedure may be conducted by an accredited and approved inspection unit or, in the absence of private infrastructure, by PROFEPA itself.

III. Transitional Provisions

Finally, some important points to consider are as follows:

- Management plans already authorized prior to the effective date will remain in effect, without prejudice to the holder's right to request their update in accordance with the new Standard (Transitory Provision Three).
- Updates to plans already registered with SEMARNAT must comply with the provisions of NOM-157 (Transitory Provision Four), which means that any modification to the process, substitution of materials, or change in the hazardous nature of the waste that triggers an update to the current plan, as of the effective date, must be carried out in accordance with the new NOM.
- Plans in the process of being registered at the time of entry into force will continue to be evaluated under NOM-157-SEMARNAT-2009 (Fifth Transitory Provision).
- Plans submitted to SEMARNAT after the effective date must already comply with the new provisions (Transitory Provision Six).

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