Past explosive outbursts of entrapped carbon dioxide in salt mines provide a new perspective on the hazards of carbon dioxide

This paper reports on a source of past carbon dioxide accidents which so far has only been sporadically mentioned in the literature. Violent and highly destructive outbursts of hundreds of tons of CO2 occurred regularly, if not routinely, in the now closed salt mines of the former DDR. The Menzengraben mine experienced an extreme outburst in 1953, possibly involving a several thousand tons of carbon dioxide. This source of accidents fills an important gap in the available carbon dioxide accident history and may provide a unique empirical perspective on the hazards of handling very large amounts of CO2.

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