

INFORMATION SHEET

GUIDE & TEMPLATE FOR PREPARING A DAM EMERGENCY PLAN (DEP) IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

INTRODUCTION

Emergency response procedures and emergency preparedness plans have been a recommended best dam safety management practice since 1984 in British Columbia. The previous British Columbia Dam Safety Regulation, *Water Act*, required all owners of dams with a consequence classification of significant or higher to prepare an Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) for their dams.

In 2016, the *Water Sustainability Act* and Dam Safety Regulation replaced the *Water Act* and British Columbia Dam Safety Regulation. The new regulation still requires owners of dams to prepare an emergency plan, now called a Dam Emergency Plan (DEP), however with some differences including what they must contain, what must be done with them, and the date by which they must be prepared and submitted for acceptance by the Dam Safety Officer.

REQUIREMENT

As per Sections 9 and 33 of the Dam Safety Regulation, *Water Sustainability Act*, an owner of a dam that has a consequence of failure classification of significant, high, very high or extreme must prepare a DEP that includes:

- (i) a record describing the actions to be taken by the owner if there is an emergency at the dam, and
- (ii) a record containing information for the use of the local emergency authorities for the dam for the purpose of preparing local emergency plans under the Emergency Program Act.

A Guide & Template for Preparing a Dam Emergency Plan (DEP) in British Columbia has been developed to assist dam owners in preparing their DEP.

CHANGES TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF AN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

The new DEP is similar in part to the former EPP as it must describe the actions to be taken by the dam owner if a hazardous condition or potential safety hazard at the dam is detected. However, in addition, Section 9(1)(a)(ii) of the Regulation now requires that the DEP include a *record* containing specific information about the dam to be used by *local emergency authorities* (as defined in Part 1, Section 1(2) of the Regulation) for their local emergency plan; a plan mandated under the [Emergency Program Act](#).

To prepare this record, the DEP template is designed so that several parts of the DEP can be easily separated to become the *record* described under Section 9(1)(a)(ii) of the Regulation for provision to local emergency authorities. Those portions of the DEP that make up this *record* from the template are: **Sections 1, 2 & 4.1 and Appendix A (A-1, A-2 & A-3)**.

GUIDELINE AND TEMPLATE

The Canadian Dam Association (CDA) provides guidance on Emergency Preparedness for dam owners, local emergency authorities and communities in their [Dam Safety Guidelines](#). As well as this, the Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO) and the National Dam Safety Review Board (NDSRB) in the United States have developed an [EAP Resource Center](#) to provide dam owners with simple and low cost tools for creating and implementing an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) at their dam(s).

The *Guide & Template for Preparing a Dam Emergency Plan (DEP) in British Columbia* has been adapted from the CDA guidelines and ASDSO EAP

Resource Center for use by dam owners in British Columbia to assist in the preparation of their mandatory *Dam Emergency Plan*. The DEP template is intended for smaller to mid-sized dams but could also be adapted to larger dams.

USING THE DEP TEMPLATE

It is recognized that many dam owners currently have Emergency Preparedness Plans in place. Section 33 (*Transition – Dam Emergency Plan*) of the Regulation outlines the date of the next review of this document and when changes, if any, must be submitted to the Dam Safety Officer for acceptance. Existing EPP's may be acceptable as long as the Regulation requirement outlined in section 9(1)(a)(ii) is fulfilled. For owners of previously unregulated dams, Section 33(1) of the Regulation provides timelines for submission of the DEP.

As every dam owner and their dam are unique, so are DEPs. Therefore the DEP template may be modified to reflect your dam's requirements. The DEP template is only a suggested model of an acceptable DEP and there is no requirement to follow it as long as the information contained in the DEP is acceptable to the Dam Safety Officer (Section 9(1)(b)).

WHAT TO DO ONCE DEP HAS BEEN COMPLETED

Once the dam owner has completed the DEP, the DEP needs to be forwarded to the Dam Safety Officer for acceptance. The Dam Safety Officer may return the DEP to the owner with suggestions for improvement if not satisfied with the DEP. Once accepted by the Dam Safety Officer, and as per Section 9(10) of the Regulation, the dam owner must then forward relevant sections of the DEP to the local emergency authority for the purpose of the local emergency authority's preparation of their own local emergency plans under the *Emergency Program Act*. Once again, those portions of the DEP that make up this *record* from the template are: **Sections 1, 2 & 4.1 and Appendix A (A-1, A-2 & A-3)**.

MORE INFORMATION

More information on the DEP can be obtained by contacting:

Dam Safety Section
Water Management Branch
PO Box 9340 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9M1

Email: dam.safety@gov.bc.ca

Or through the provincial dam safety website at: www.gov.bc.ca/water

Additional information on dam emergency preparedness can be found in the Canadian Dam Associations' *Dam Safety Guidelines* and website at: www.cda.ca/

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