



Ministry of
Forests, Lands, Natural
Resource Operations
and Rural Development

Plan Submission Requirements for the Construction and Rehabilitation of Small Dams

Dam Safety Program

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural
Resource Operations and Rural
Development

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A. PREAMBLE

This *Plan Submission Requirements for the Construction and Rehabilitation of Small Dams Guideline* is developed to assist you in obtaining approval for constructing a new dam or rehabilitating an existing dam. To obtain this approval the following plan submission requirements must be followed.

Please be aware that this Guideline is not intended for large dams as defined by the International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD) although many of the principles described apply to large dams. For more information visit ICOLD's web site at: <http://www.icold-cigb.net/>.

The diversion and use of water in British Columbia requires a water license issued pursuant to the [Water Sustainability Act](#) administered by either the Water Management Branch or the Regional Resource Authorizations units of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD). Further, the Comptroller of Water Rights or a Water Manager must grant authorization prior to the construction of any new dam under authority of the *Water Sustainability Act* or prior to the rehabilitation of any dam under authority of section 12 and 13 of the [Dam Safety Regulation](#), *Water Sustainability Act*. This authorization may be in the form of a water license, approval, order or letter.

For construction of a new dam, use this guideline in conjunction with the water license application package. If you are considering the development of a waterpower project in association with these works, you will want to refer to the [Clean Energy Production in BC: An Inter-agency Guidebook for Project Development](#) (Chapter 6: Waterpower Projects). A copy can be found on the website:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/natural-resource-use/natural-resource-major-projects/industry-sector/clean-energy-projects>

FLNRORD staff will review the information submitted and accept or specify an interim dam failure consequence classification; assess the size, scope and complexity of the proposed project; and determine the appropriate plan submission requirements¹. Where a new license is involved, these requirements will be set out in an attachment to the water license. Most information contained in this guide will likely be required prior to the issuance of a water license. Where repairs or rehabilitation of an existing, licensed dam is involved, you must request a determination of plan submission requirements for your project from the Dam Safety Officer.

¹ A copy of the FLNRORD's Plans Review Checklist can be found on the Dam Safety Website at: www.gov.bc.ca/damsafety



Exceptions to these requirements are:

- *minor repairs and routine maintenance* to existing licensed works as designated in an accepted Operation, Maintenance and Surveillance Manual for the dam,
- addressing hazardous conditions in relation to the dam in accordance with section 14(1) [hazardous condition] of regulation,
- conducting an investigation described in section 16 [invasive investigations] of regulation, in accordance with that section,
- those works not requiring submission of plans as set out in the *Water Sustainability Act*, Part 6 regulations,
- dams that do not meet the criteria stipulated in Section 7, Application of Part 3, Dam Safety Regulation, or
- tailing impoundment dams under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Energy and Mines.

If you are unsure of your particular situation contact the Dam Safety Officer for your area (see Appendix 5 - Contact Information).

Deviations from these plan submission requirements will only be considered under special circumstances, where they can be justified and safety issues are not compromised. A written request containing justification for all deviations must be submitted to the Dam Safety Officer with a complete list of requirements that would not be met, the reasons why, and how they would be addressed. A decision will be made and you will be informed as soon as possible.

The [Environmental Assessment Office \(EAO\)](#) of B.C. may consider large projects that meet the following requirements as reviewable:

- the new dam is over 15 m in height or impounds 10 million m³ of water,
- the new dam or rehabilitation creates or increases the reservoir area by 20 ha, or
- any dam facility that is, or was, permitted to impound 10 million m³ of water or more that is being decommissioned or removed.

Please contact the EAO if your project meets any of these criteria.

DESIGN CRITERIA

The design criteria applied to dams in B.C. is determined principally by the Canadian Dam Association's (CDA) *Dam Safety Guidelines*² although other texts and guidelines may be acceptable. In addition, some specific minimum design standards have been developed by the B.C. Dam Safety Program for small dams with a potential dam failure consequence classification less than Very High (see Appendix 1). These minimum design standards are described in Appendix 2.

² For further information please refer to CDA's website at: www.cda.ca



B. SERVICES OF A PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

Construction of a dam and related works is a complex undertaking involving knowledge in many fields of engineering. The consequences of a dam failure could be severe and the owner may be liable for any and all damages. Life, property, the environment and your investment all may be affected by a dam failure.

Therefore, for all dams except those with a Low dam failure consequence classification, FLNRORD will require that you contract the services of a *professional engineer* who is registered in B.C. and has experience in dam design and construction. FLNRORD also recommends that those proponents whose dam has a Low dam failure consequence classification also seek the services of a professional engineer.

The role of the professional engineer is to design the dam, manage and/or supervise construction of the dam and compile other required information (i.e. OMS & DEP, as built drawings etc.). It is a good idea to have a joint meeting with the engineer and FLNRORD staff prior to submitting support information. For additional information refer to Appendix 3 "[Procuring the Services of a Professional Engineer](#)".

C. REVIEW STANDARDS & DESIGN CRITERIA

FLNRORD will review the submitted information to ensure the proposed project will be constructed in a manner that provides the appropriate level of security to life, property and the environment. This review is undertaken to determine if the submitted information conforms to accepted practices, the *Water Sustainability Act* and its regulations.

The review is also intended to address issues of safety directly related to the structural stability and integrity of the completed project. These issues include longevity, ease of operator/owner maintenance and repair. The review does not extend to more general issues, such as worker safety, which are not directly related to the structural stability and integrity of the project. The proponent must seek consultation with other regulatory agencies including [Fisheries and Oceans \(Canada\)](#), [Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources](#), [WorkSafeBC](#), etc.

Documents which contain deficiencies will be identified to the owner or the project engineer. Changes may be required to conform to accepted practice.

Where differences of opinion arise on the suitability of certain practices and cannot be readily resolved, the burden of proof will rest on the owner and/or project engineer to demonstrate the suitability of the proposed plan or action.



All revisions to plans or drawings previously submitted for review must be accompanied by a complete detailed list of revisions made specifying where the revisions are located. FLNRORD will make every effort to ensure that plans are reviewed in a timely manner and the proponent be contacted directly as soon as possible.

D. SUBMISSION OF PLANS AND OTHER INFORMATION

The following information provides proponents (water licensees, applicants or potential applicants for a water license) with our requirements for the submission of plans, drawings, reports and other information.

Reference is made to dams throughout, however, these requirements may be applied to any licensed works that could create a hazardous situation or are a safety concern of the Dam Safety Officer, Water Manager or Comptroller of Water Rights.

Any changes in land development adjacent to or downstream of the dam may affect the dam failure consequence classification. A change in the classification may result in a change in plan submission requirements. Incomplete submissions are unacceptable and will be returned.

The following information is required:

- Development Report
- Design Plans and specifications
- Construction Supervision Plan and Schedule
- Environmental Monitoring Plan
- Draft Operation Maintenance and Surveillance Manual
- Draft Dam Emergency Plan

Development Report

This report is not required for those dams with a Low dam failure consequence classification.

A Development Report contains the various engineering investigations and pertinent project information. It forms an important element of the project design documents and supports the development of the plans and specifications. Development reports shall be comprehensive in description of the various investigations and analyses. The report will include all design, environmental, and safety factors considered with the project and must bear the seal and signature of the project engineer.

The report for new project construction shall include, as a minimum, the items listed below. For modifications of existing dams, design reports shall include, as a minimum, those items listed which

Hazardous works may include penstocks, dugouts, ditches etc.

Submission Requirements

Development Report

represent changed conditions from original construction or which address items that have not been previously addressed in prior reports that were submitted to the Dam Safety Officer.

Contents of Development Reports:

- (a) A description of the basic purposes of the project, normal operational characteristics and any unique or important design considerations associated with the site or project configuration.
- (b) A description and assessment of the site geology, seismicity and geotechnical considerations including a presentation of the findings from subsurface explorations based on test pits and/or boring logs; field tests; laboratory testing and classification of samples.
- (c) Design features including:
 - A description and assessment of the climatic and hydrologic characteristics of the site and tributary watershed including a listing of all sources of inflow to the reservoir; the inflow design flood and reservoir elevations; and any other pertinent bathymetric information.
 - Information relating to the type, class and description of all materials to be used, including any fill.
 - Description of moisture conditioning and compaction to be used and how it will be addressed for all earthen zones;
 - Description of any concrete or other structural components
- (d) An assessment of the consequence classification³ in the event of dam failure on downstream areas, including:
 - The dam failure consequence classification as defined by Schedule 1 of the Dam Safety Regulation, located in Appendix 1, reflects the current and proposed conditions of development in downstream areas and a description of how the downstream impacts relate to the chosen classification. The most serious potential dam failure consequence classification of those listed shall be used to establish the appropriate classification. Please note the Dam Safety Officer is responsible for accepting the final dam failure consequence classification.
 - An estimation of the magnitude of the dam break flood hydrographs resulting from various hypothetical dam failure scenarios occurring with the reservoir at normal storage elevation and maximum storage elevation.

³ A copy of the FLNRORD's [Downstream Consequence of Failure Classification Interpretation Guideline](#) can be found on the Dam Safety Website at: www.gov.bc.ca/damsafety

- A general description of the areas downstream of the dam that could be affected by floodwater from a dam failure;
- For those structures that pose risk to human life, an inundation map delineating the maximum extent of flooding anticipated by a sudden breach. The mapping will continue downstream until the expected flooding is within the 100 year floodplain elevation.

(e) An assessment of the potential impacts, including but not limited to; instream uses, fish, wildlife, water quality, domestic and other water uses, reservoir and stream channel slope stability, private and crown land, and historical significance and aboriginal rights. Any mitigation measures will also be included.

(f) An archaeological assessment of all lands impacted by the works may be required.

Design Plans and Specifications

Plans shall be drawn up to detail the configuration and specifications of the dam and its associated works. The plans and specifications must contain sufficient detail to totally depict the proposed construction work and shall be submitted to the Dam Safety Officer for review and acceptance.

The following items, as a minimum, shall be included as part of the design plans:

- project location and vicinity maps;
- site map of dam and reservoir area showing unique and natural features, property boundaries and appurtenances; at a scale of 1:1000 or larger (ie 1:500 is larger),
- sectional view along longitudinal axis of dam and foundation, at a scale of 1:250 or larger,
- cross-sectional view of dam at location of maximum height, at a scale of 1:75 or larger,
- cross-sectional views and profiles of spillway(s), outlet facilities and other appurtenances, at a scale of 1:50 and 1:100 or larger respectively,
- any instrumentation, dewatering routes or other pertinent information, and
- borrow pit and spoil disposal areas.

Design Plans and Specifications

Design Plan Contents

Construction Supervision Plan

For all dams, a plan shall be submitted to the Dam Safety Officer describing how adequate and competent construction supervision will be provided.

The Construction Supervision Plan shall, as a minimum, include:

- a description of construction management organization and responsibilities,
- details for diversion, dewatering and handling runoff and potential siltation problems at the site,
- details for providing flow to the downstream channel for ecosystems, fish life, water users and water quality,
- a listing of construction activities related to critical project elements and planned inspection effort including staffing level, responsibilities, frequency and duration of site visits,
- a description of the quality assurance testing program which describes the type of test, general frequency, acceptable results, handling of deficient materials and the individuals responsible for overseeing the testing,
- description of the technical records handling and the content and frequency of construction progress reports, and
- a detailed construction schedule showing the proposed start dates and duration of construction activities.

Environmental Management Plan

Those projects deemed to have significant environmental impacts during the construction may require a separate plan detailing how the impacts to the environment will be monitored. Depending on the scale of impacts, a requirement of the leave to commence construction or license will be to retain an acceptable person to implement and manage the accepted Environmental Management Plan.

Draft Operation Maintenance and Surveillance Manual

An Operation, Maintenance and Surveillance (OMS) manual provides all the information and instruction needed to allow an individual to perform all the actions necessary to provide safe operation, routine maintenance and regular inspection of the dam.

An OMS manual is required for all dams except those with a Low dam failure consequence classification. For those structures, the creation of an OMS manual is at the discretion of the project owner unless notified in writing. OMS manuals, however, are recommended for all projects.

Most problems occur
on the first filling
of the reservoir

OMS Manual
Contents

As part of the submission package, the proponent shall provide a draft OMS manual to the Dam Safety Officer for review and acceptance. After the Dam has been operating for 1 year, the final OMS manual shall be submitted. The owner is responsible for providing upgrades and revisions to all holders of copies of the manual, including the Dam Safety Officer.

The manual shall describe procedures for operation of the project under normal and extreme reservoir inflow conditions and provide technical guidance and procedures for monitoring, inspection and short and long term maintenance. **It must also contain a surveillance schedule for the first filling.** The manual shall, as a minimum, contain the following items:

- (a) contact information and identification of the individuals responsible for implementing the plan,
- (b) a project data sheet describing the pertinent features of the dam and reservoir, including the spillway(s), outlet works and appurtenant structures and their locations at the dam site,
- (c) a copy of the current as-built or record drawings,
- (d) the rules and procedures used to regulate reservoir levels and project operation for various inflows and for both normal and unusual seasonal conditions, including a graphic rule curve,
- (e) a description of each hydraulic feature used to regulate or release water, including information on proper operation and scheduled maintenance,
- (f) a surveillance schedule as per Schedule 2 of the Dam Safety Regulation,
- (g) a listing of the items requiring periodic monitoring, the frequency of monitoring and procedures for monitoring, measuring and record keeping,
- (h) a listing of the items requiring periodic maintenance and procedures for conducting and documenting maintenance and recording of problems,
- (i) a listing of the items to be inspected or test operated, the frequency and procedures for conducting the same and the procedures for documenting the findings.

If the project is a Water Power Project, a report on the operating parameters and procedures (OPP) of the authorized works is required (please refer to the Guide for Waterpower Projects). This OPP shall be incorporated into the final OMS manual and describe the operating procedures during normal times while the OMS will describe the operating procedures during extreme flood events and scheduled maintenance.

For more information on OMS manuals, please refer to the document entitled [Inspection and Maintenance of Dams, Dam Safety Guidelines](#) available at all FLNRORD office's and on the Dam Safety website www.gov.bc.ca/damsafety. This document contains valuable information regarding inspection and maintenance of dams as well as an OMS minimum requirements [template](#). In addition, the section on OMS in the Canadian Dam Association's [Dam Safety Guidelines](#) should be consulted.

Draft Dam Emergency Plan

Draft DEP

A Dam Emergency Plan (DEP) provides all the information and instruction needed to allow an individual to respond to an emergency related to the dam.

A DEP is required for all dams with a dam failure consequence classification of Significant, High, Very High, and Extreme. The creation of a DEP for those dams with a Low dam failure consequence classification is at the discretion of the owner unless notified in writing. It is strongly recommended that all dams have a DEP in place and kept in a convenient location. The submission of this document is not required for those existing structures undergoing rehabilitation if there is a current DEP.

Many dam owners include the DEP as a section in the OMS manual. The DEP should be highly visible if it is placed in the OMS manual.

DEP Elements

Essential elements of a Dam Emergency Plan include:

1. A *response strategy* that protects the public (early notification),
2. A clearly defined *notification chart* that includes key stakeholders (local government etc.),
3. An *DEP distribution* that includes key stakeholders for an integrated response,
4. *Recognition of the local emergency authority* Emergency Operation Centre (EOC), (agency representation),
5. "Dam Breach" *inundation map(s)* (multiple release scenarios),
6. *Listing of key infrastructure* which could be affected by a dam failure, and
7. A *schedule* to exercise your plan with all stakeholders.

The DEP shall also, as a minimum, include the following operational information:

DEP Contents

- (a) emergency assessment procedures,
- (b) emergency action plans,
- (c) emergency notification procedures with flow chart,

- (d) communication system details,
- (e) access routes to dam for all seasons and extreme conditions,
- (f) response plans during periods of darkness and adverse weather,
- (g) lists of local contractors/equipment operators, material suppliers etc., and
- (h) lists of emergency power sources locations.

For more information on Dam Emergency Plans, please refer to the [Dam Emergency Plan Information Sheet](#), the [Guide & Template for Preparing a Dam Emergency Plan in BC](#) and the document entitled [Inspection and Maintenance of Dams, Dam Safety Guidelines](#) all available at all FLNRORD office's and on the Dam Safety website www.gov.bc.ca/damsafety. These documents contain further information valuable to creating a clear and concise DEP. In addition, the section on Emergency Preparedness in the Canadian Dam Association's *Dam Safety Guidelines* should be consulted.

E. ISSUANCE OF WRITTEN LEAVE TO COMMENCE CONSTRUCTION

All new dam construction is authorized by licence under the *Water Sustainability Act*. Any alteration, improvement to or replacement of all or part of a dam that is not considered to be routine maintenance work, addressing hazardous conditions or conducting an investigation, must be authorized under the *Water Sustainability Act* by an authorization, change approval or order as per Section 12 of the Dam Safety Regulation. A clause pertaining to **written leave to commence construction** will be included in the approval, order or licence.

After FLNRORD has determined all other required information has been submitted and conforms to accepted practices and the *Water Sustainability Act*, written *leave to commence construction* will be sent to the licensee.

Construction shall not commence until written leave to commence construction has been issued by the Dam Safety Officer.

Receiving leave to commence construction does not absolve an owner of any responsibilities or liabilities. The owner shall make all necessary notifications, obtain all other permits, licenses and authorizations required. This includes permission to access either Crown or private lands.



The mobilization of equipment, stripping and grubbing and other site access and preparation work may be acceptable prior to receipt of written leave to commence construction if all work is subject to:

- an issued water license or approval,
- the supervision of qualified personnel,
- no permanent features of the project are initiated, and
- all regulatory and land access requirements have been met.

You must also observe the B.C. Heritage Conservation Act and understand that it is an offence for any person to knowingly remove, destroy or alter a heritage site or object. Upon discovery any archaeological material, you must take all reasonable precautions to avoid direct impact with such material and immediately notify FLNRORD Archaeological Branch.

Depending on the size, scope and geographical location of your project, you may be required to provide an archaeological impact assessment and/or a traditional use survey of the area affected by your project. You will be notified of this requirement by FLNRORD.

F. ROLES DURING CONSTRUCTION

The owner is responsible for ensuring all aspects of construction are carried out appropriately and safely. You must notify all parties affected by the construction or alteration of operation of the dam. This may include the provision of alternate water supplies for those affected.

FLNRORD staff may inspect the site to confirm that construction is progressing according to accepted plans, specifications and practices. Construction may be stopped if any discrepancies or problems are noted during the inspection. The owner is responsible for all associated costs.

G. CONSTRUCTION CHANGES

All projects receiving leave to commence construction shall be constructed in accordance with accepted plans and specifications. The supervising personnel will report any significant departures from the approved plans and specifications prior to those alterations occurring. All changes will be noted on the as-built or record drawings submitted to the Dam Safety Officer after the completion of construction.

H. DECLARATION OF CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION

Within 30 days following substantial completion of construction or modification of the dam, the supervising engineer or owner shall submit to the Dam Safety Officer, Water Manager or Comptroller of

Water Rights a letter declaring the project to be constructed in accordance with the accepted plans and specifications.

I. COMMENCING OR RESUMING RESERVOIR OPERATIONS

Following the substantial completion of construction the owner shall arrange a meeting with FLNRORD staff, the owner, operator, the project engineer and any other interested person agreed to by this group. The purpose of the meeting will be to review, discuss and resolve any problems or changes made during construction, the procedure and timing for commencing use of the works and reservoir and any other outstanding issues.

Filling of the reservoir must not commence until this meeting has been held and all outstanding issues addressed to the satisfaction of the Dam Safety Officer.

The Dam Safety Officer will grant Leave to Commence Diversion, in writing, when use of the dam and initial filling of the reservoir may begin.

J. ADDITIONAL PROJECT INFORMATION

Construction Records

For those dams with a dam failure consequence classification of Significant, High, Very High, and Extreme the project engineer shall submit a report within 120 days following completion of construction or modification of a dam. This report shall include:

- a summary of results from field testing of materials used in construction, identifying both representative values and the range of test values,
- a discussion of any notable items encountered during construction,
- one complete set of drawings depicting the as-built condition of the dam, and
- any other pertinent information.

Dam Safety Review

A Dam Safety Review (DSR) is a comprehensive formal evaluation performed at regular intervals to determine whether an existing dam is safe or contains some deficiencies and reviews the dam failure consequence classification. DSRs shall be carried out in accordance with the Dam Safety Regulations and submitted to the Dam Safety Officer. In addition, the section on DSRs in the Canadian Dam Association's *Dam Safety Guidelines* should be consulted.

Suspension, Closure or Abandonment of a dam

The owner must provide the Dam Safety Officer with 60 days notice before decommissioning, abandoning, or embarking on any significant partial or complete removal of the dam. Also, 60 day notice must be received prior to the suspension of normal operation where the suspension of operation will last for one year or more.

Notification should include:

- the dates of the proposed changes,
- details of the proposal,
- drawings of any changes to the works, and
- details of site restoration.

Additionally, the owner must notify the Dam Safety Officer 14 days before commencing any work under the approved plan

Notification of New Owners

Ownership of a dam involves a significant responsibility. When an owner sells or transfers their interest in a dam to another party, the owner should make that party aware of their responsibilities to operate, inspect, maintain and repair the dam. There should be a complete transfer of documentation, including licenses, permits, reports, manuals, plans, drawings, agreements, etc., about the dam to the new owners and a specified date that ownership changes.

Note: Carrying this out in a proper and timely manner could reduce your exposure to liability.

Canadian Dam Association (CDA)

The Canadian Dam Association is an organisation of groups or individuals with an interest in dam safety including dam owners, engineering consultants and government representatives. Through the combined effort of these members, the association has published *Dam Safety Guidelines*, the purpose of which is to:

- define requirements and outline guidelines so the safety of existing dams can be investigated and identified in a consistent and adequate manner across Canada,
- enable the consistent evaluation of dam safety deficiencies leading to the construction of improvements which contribute to dam safety, and
- provide a basis for dam safety legislation and regulation.



Appendix 1: DOWNSTREAM CONSEQUENCE CLASSIFICATION GUIDE

Dam Safety Regulation Schedule 1

How to use this table - Find the appropriate rating in the far left column by reading the other 4 columns for the five ratings and note the highest potential dam failure consequence classification that applies to your dam, for each column. The classification of your dam is the highest rating.

| Item | Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 | Column 5 |
|------|---|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Dam failure consequences classification | Population at risk | Consequences of failure | | |
| | | | Loss of life | Environmental and cultural values | Infrastructure and Economics |
| 1 | low | none ¹ | no possibility of loss of life other than through unforeseeable misadventure | minimal short-term loss or deterioration and no long-term loss or deterioration of (a) fisheries habitat or wildlife habitat, (b) rare or endangered species, (c) unique landscapes, or (d) sites having significant cultural value | minimal economic losses mostly limited to the dam owner's property, with virtually no pre-existing potential for development within the dam inundation zone |
| 2 | significant | temporary only ² | low potential for multiple loss of life | no significant loss or deterioration of (a) important fisheries habitat or important wildlife habitat, (b) rare or endangered species, (c) unique landscapes, or (d) sites having significant cultural value, and restoration or compensation in kind is highly possible | low economic losses affecting limited infrastructure and residential buildings, public transportation or services or commercial facilities, or some destruction of or damage to locations used occasionally and irregularly for temporary purposes |
| 3 | high | permanent ³ | 10 or fewer | significant loss or deterioration of (a) important fisheries habitat or important wildlife habitat, (b) rare or endangered species, (c) unique landscapes, or (d) sites having significant cultural value, and restoration or compensation in kind is highly possible | high economic losses affecting infrastructure, public transportation or services or commercial facilities, or some destruction of or some severe damage to scattered residential buildings |
| 4 | very high | permanent ³ | 100 or fewer | significant loss or deterioration of (a) critical fisheries habitat or critical wildlife habitat, (b) rare or endangered species, (c) unique landscapes, or (d) sites having significant cultural value, and restoration or compensation in kind is possible but impractical | very high economic losses affecting important infrastructure, public transportation or services or commercial facilities, or some destruction of or some severe damage to residential areas |
| 5 | extreme | permanent ³ | more than 100 | major loss or deterioration of (a) critical fisheries habitat or critical wildlife habitat, (b) rare or endangered species, (c) unique landscapes, or (d) sites having significant cultural value, and restoration or compensation in kind is impossible. | extremely high economic losses affecting critical infrastructure, public transportation or services or commercial facilities, or some destruction of or some severe damage to residential areas |

1 There is no identifiable population at risk.

2 People are only occasionally and irregularly in the dam-breach inundation zone, for example stopping temporarily, passing through on transportation routes or participating in recreational activities.

3 The population at risk is ordinarily or regularly located in the dam-breach inundation zone, whether to live, work or recreate.

Appendix 2: MINIMUM DESIGN STANDARDS FOR DAMS

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A. PREAMBLE

These minimum design standards are intended for use by water license applicants, licensees, their agents or consultants for the submission of plans, information and the construction of dams. They provide proponents with an understanding and direction regarding the **minimum** acceptable design standards. They have been developed by the B.C. Dam Safety Program for dams which are *not* large dams under the ICOLD definition and for dams which have a potential dam failure consequence classification of *less than* Very High.

The design criteria applied to dams in B.C. is determined principally by the Canadian Dam Association and is based on their dam failure consequence classifications which are essentially the same as the Dam Safety Regulation dam failure consequence classifications. Therefore these Minimum Design Standards for Dams are to be used in conjunction with CDA's Dam Safety Guidelines.

B. INTRODUCTION

A variety of works are authorized under the *Water Sustainability Act*, including water storage dams and works considered to be hazardous. This appendix for the Minimum Design Standards for Dams applies to any works providing a potential threat to life, property and the environment, as determined by the Dam Safety Officer. Dams or berms that store liquid other than water from a stream (surface water), are regulated under other provincial statutes.

Deviations from these minimum standards for dams will only be considered under special circumstances (i.e. where it can be justified and safety issues are not compromised). A written request containing justification for all deviations must be submitted to the Dam Safety Officer with a complete list of works that would not meet the minimum standards, the reasons why, and how they would be addressed. A decision will be made and you will be informed in writing as soon as possible.

Some diversion structures, pipes, flumes, and ditches may be considered as Hazardous Works

C. PROJECT SPECIFIC WORKS

Each project is unique and presents challenges. This section includes some of the works that typically provide concerns for dams. The Comptroller of Water Rights, Water Manager or the Dam Safety Officer may require additional design, construction and maintenance requirements over and above that contained in this document. However, the following sections are provided to outline the *minimum* standards allowed by FLNRORD.

Low Level Outlets (Sluice Pipes)

It is a requirement that all dams constructed on or obstructing a stream channel or lake outlet shall have a *low level outlet*. Sediment Pond Dams that are licensed under the *Water Sustainability Act* may not require a low level outlet if emergency reservoir evacuation plans are outlined in the OMS manual or DEP.

The low level outlet shall be:

- (a) set to the same elevation as the natural stream channel and on firm foundation,
- (b) set with a slope that allows complete drainage of the pipe and prevents back flooding of the pipe from the downstream channel,
- (c) constructed in such a manner that it directs all water away from the dam without ponding,
- (d) constructed in such a manner that prevents erosion or undermining of any structure or channel at full discharge,
- (e) constructed in a manner that facilitates an adequate inspection as described in the OMS manual OR a minimum diameter of 0.6m, and
- (f) constructed of the following:
 - cast in place reinforced concrete (a galvanized pipe or other thin walled pipe may be used as an inside form),
 - pre-cast concrete pipe set in a bedding of cast in-place concrete with suitable waterstops, or
 - suitable thick walled pipe with welded or water tight flanged joints in a bedding of concrete.

Consideration should be given to making concrete pours into an unformed excavated trench where foundation materials are suitable.

Gate Works

The gates on all low-level outlets shall:

- (a) be placed on the upstream side of the dam,
- (b) operate easily over their full diameter,
- (c) provide a water tight seal,

- (d) be readily operable during all water level fluctuations and reservoir conditions, and
- (e) be made secure to prevent any vandalism or misuse.

In addition, all dams with gates placed in wells set into the embankment shall be designed for seepage resistance where water may enter the embankment or where works are subject to *hydrostatic pressure*.

Spillways

All dams must have one or more spillways exhibiting the following characteristics:

- capable of passing the Inflow Design Flood (IDF)⁴ with low level outlet gates closed and adequate freeboard (see section on Freeboard below),
- constructed a minimum 4.0 m wide to reduce the probability of debris blockage (or have redundancy designed into the freeboard; see section on Freeboard below),
- constructed on undisturbed ground, *not* on embankment fill,
- protected against erosion within the channel and at the outfall,
- protected against debris build-up or damage,
- protected against landslides, livestock damage, and trees,
- no provisions are to be made for the future installation of flashboards, temporary or otherwise, and
- no pipes are to be used as spillways.

In addition, the Canadian Dam Association's *Dam Safety Guideline's* Technical Bulletin, Section 5.0 - Hydrotechnical Considerations for Dam Safety, should be consulted.

Freeboard⁵

The objective of having freeboard is to ensure that a safety margin is maintained at all times in order to restrict overtopping of the dam from:

- flood water inflow,
- wind setup and wave run-up,
- landslide and seismic motion,
- settlement,
- malfunction of structures (i.e. spillway blockages), and

⁴ The IDF is defined in the CDA Dam Safety Guidelines 2007 and quantified for the appropriate consequence classification in Table 6-1.

⁵ Freeboard is defined in the CDA Dam Safety Guidelines 2007, and the 2007 CDA Technical Bulletin entitled Hydrotechnical Considerations for Dam Safety.

- other uncertainties in design, construction and operation.

Two types of freeboard are discussed below; normal and minimum. Regardless of which freeboard is used in the dam design, both require the spillway be able pass the IDF (see section on Spillway above).

- (a) **Normal Freeboard** (or Gross Freeboard) is the difference of elevation between the lowest elevation of the top of the dam (or top of impervious core) and the maximum reservoir operating level (full supply level, often the spillway sill elevation).
- (b) **Minimum Freeboard** (or Net Freeboard) is the difference of elevation between the lowest elevation of the top of the dam (or top of impervious core) and the maximum water level of the reservoir should the Inflow Design Flood (IDF) occur.

To prevent overtopping and provide redundancies in the dam design, the following freeboard standards shall be applied:

- The *normal* freeboard shall be at least 1.0 m in combination with a spillway width of at least 4.0 m.
- If the design engineer wants to present a case for a spillway width of less than 4.0 m wide, the *minimum* freeboard shall be at least 1.0 m. A spillway width of less than 4.0 m wide is not recommended for High and Very High dam failure consequence classification dams.

In addition, the Canadian Dam Association's *Dam Safety Guideline's* Technical Bulletin, Section 6.0 - Hydrotechnical Considerations for Dam Safety, should be consulted.

Earth Embankments

The following minimum standards shall be applied:

- embankments and other works shall be constructed on a sound foundation free of any loose or liquefiable soils and organic materials or soils,
- embankments shall be constructed with an adequate key trench such that seepage through the foundation will be eliminated or minimized,
- embankment crest shall be at minimum width as provided by the formula $W_m = 0.2H_m + 3$ where W_m is the crest width in metres and H_m is the embankment height in metres,
- embankments to be used for vehicle movement must have appropriate materials and facilities on the travel surface,
- embankment fill shall be suitably compacted and have adequate and stable side slopes capable of resisting erosive forces,
- slopes for an earth embankment shall be a minimum of 2.5:1 (Horizontal:Vertical) on the downstream slope and 3:1 on the

upstream slope unless it can be shown that the dam embankment and slope design is adequately stable and can withstand all foreseeable loading conditions, and

- all seepage drains shall be designed and constructed to allow ease of maintenance, observation and measurement of any discharge.

Log Booms

A well-constructed and secured spillway log boom may be required to control spillway debris for the following reasons:

- floating debris, especially large logs and floating peat islands, can be drawn into a spillway entrance by high flow or pushed in by wind blocking the spillway,
- high winds, large waves, large accumulations of debris or ice pressure can exert a very strong force on a log boom, breaking the boom at a number of locations including the chains, anchors, connections (shackles, bolts, etc.) or the logs,
- a broken log boom becomes a hazard if the boom logs are caught in the spillway, and
- the failure of the boom will usually take place just when it is needed (i.e. when the reservoir level is high and there is debris pushing against it).

For these reasons, the log boom shall be constructed to the following specifications or equivalent unless it can be justified otherwise (Low dam failure consequence classification dams are excluded):

a) Logs:

- shall be minimum 0.3 m in diameter, and
- shall be peeled and made of a species that floats such as pine, spruce and not hemlock;

b) Chain holes:

- bored at least 0.5 m from ends;

c) Boom chains:

- ring and toggle type, chain 20 mm, 2.8 m long standard, or
- 80,000 lb. ultimate test (standard strength);

d) Anchors:

- buried lock blocks are usually adequate for smaller reservoirs (lock block minimum specifications: 1.5 m x 0.75 m x 0.75 m, 2 tonnes), and
- can be used as shore or underwater anchors;

e) Anchor chains:

- generally the same as boom chains but longer, 3 m suggested;

f) Cables:

- identical breaking strength as approved chain,
- continuous from shore anchor to shore anchor, and
- ends connected using cable clamps - log staples should only be used to secure cable alongside logs.

Diversion Structures

Diversion structures are works used to remove water from a source but does not include the transport or storage of water. As they are constructed in the water, special care must be taken around these structures. The design, construction, operation and routine maintenance of diversion structures will include the capability to:

- control the diversion of water at appropriate rates for license and, if necessary, any competing uses including instream values (i.e. fish life), handling freshet flows and being operated without instream work being required annually or frequently,
- prevent unnecessary blockage or other obstruction of water flow or the passage of aquatic life,
- prevent entry by fish and debris,
- prevent destruction or deterioration of fish and fish habitat and
- minimize impact on the stream channel dynamics including natural flow regime, channel grade, accretion or erosion.



Appendix 3: PROCURING THE SERVICES OF A PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

A. DAM MAINTENANCE AND OWNER RESPONSIBILITY

Dam owners receive important benefits from the reservoir impounded by the dam. The responsibility owner's hold for understanding the laws and regulations associated with proper dam maintenance, and the technical procedures for keeping these structures safe, is significant. This understanding could determine whether an owner will reap the benefits associated with responsible dam ownership or pay the costs resulting from improper dam maintenance.

As a dam owner, you are liable for the water stored behind your dam and any damage caused by it. Therefore, proper operation, maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of a dam are key elements in preventing a failure, limiting your liability, and maintaining your water resource.

One of the most important procedures for ensuring proper maintenance of the dam is procuring the services of a professional engineer. The following information is designed to answer the most commonly asked questions about hiring an engineer.

WHY DO I NEED AN ENGINEER?

All dams meeting government regulatory definitions - no matter what the size or level of engineering - will deteriorate with time. Periodic inspection, proper maintenance, and occasional repair and rehabilitation are inevitable. An owner needs the expertise of an engineer to perform detailed construction designs, inspections or evaluate and supervise corrective measures at a dam.

An engineer can investigate the problem and recommend a course of action, which may include the design of corrective measures and the preparation of construction plans and specifications. The engineer also can assist in selecting a contractor and will provide valuable construction inspection and supervision services.

WHAT TYPE OF ENGINEER SHOULD I HIRE?

It is essential to select someone with a professional engineer (P. Eng.) certification, with a background in civil engineering, who is competent in the field of dam safety. Important criteria to look for in a prospective engineer include the following:

- a licensed professional engineer that is a current member of the Professional Engineers and Geoscientist of British Columbia,
- experience in dam design and construction, relative to the scope of the project,

- a knowledge of the rules and regulations governing dam design, construction and environmental issues in British Columbia, and
- specific experience in the problem area (e.g., hydrology, hydraulics, structural or geotechnical engineering).

HOW DO I CHOOSE AN ENGINEER WHO IS BEST FOR MY NEEDS?

There are three basic strategies for selecting engineering consulting services. These selection strategies are:

- Qualification-Based
- Fee-Based
- Intermediate

QUALIFICATION-BASED

Qualification-Based selection means that the knowledge, experience, and ingenuity of the engineer are the determining factors in making the selection. This strategy is advantageous when the owner is uncertain about the exact problem or the best solution to the problem.

When Qualification-Based selection is used, several engineering firms submit their technical qualifications, experience with similar projects, reputation with existing clients, and any other factors pertaining to the specific project. The owner then selects the three most qualified firms to make brief presentations outlining a cost-effective and innovative approach to the problem. Based upon these presentations, the owner chooses the most qualified engineer to develop a scope of work.

When agreement on the scope of work is achieved, the engineer and the owner negotiate a price that is fair and reasonable to both parties. If an agreement cannot be reached, negotiations start with the second-ranked engineer. In this selection process, price is the main factor, but only after the most qualified engineer has been identified.

FEE-BASED

Fee-Based selection means that the engineer's fee is the only determining factor in making the selection. It is advantageous when the owner knows exactly what is needed and can clearly define the scope of work before meeting with an engineer. In this case, the engineer is requested to prepare the designs and bid documents or conduct investigations as the owner specifies. This usually means getting a job done using "cookbook" solutions-with little room for innovation.

A strict Fee-Based selection often means that the engineer selected may not be qualified to do the work, especially if the bidding is open to anyone and/or the scope of work is poorly defined.

INTERMEDIATE

The Intermediate option is a cross between the Qualification-Based selection and Fee-Based selection processes. The Intermediate option requires that the owner pre-qualify engineers that are asked to submit a fee-based proposal. This process ensures a higher certainty that the work will be of superior quality, but requires the owner to clearly define the scope of work. Without a clearly defined scope of work, the owner could receive a wide range of fee proposal, depending on the consulting engineer's interpretation of the project.

B. FOR CONSIDERATION

Request references from the engineer. Contact the reference to discuss the engineer's performance. Look at projects that have been completed under the engineer's leadership. Request to review government files of projects the engineer has undertaken to see if the process went smoothly. Carefully consider your selection of an engineer. A little work on your part in selecting the engineer may save you money in the future.

Maintain an open line of communication with regulatory agencies, particularly FLNRORD Staff. Discuss an engineer's recommended course of action to verify that regulatory requirements will be satisfied.

Educate yourself in the basics of dam safety and be knowledgeable regarding the laws and conditions you must meet.

C. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Brochure: [Procuring the Services of a Professional Engineer](#)



Appendix 4: DEFINITIONS

Note: these definitions relate to this document and the plan submission requirements

Dam

“Dam”

- (a) a barrier constructed for the purpose of enabling the storage or diversion of water diverted from a stream or an aquifer, or both, and
- (b) other works that are incidental to or necessary for the barrier described in paragraph (a);

Hazardous Works

“Hazardous Works”

Works that, whether constructed or proposed, pose a threat to life, property or the environment. It includes those works that pose a threat due to poor quality design, construction, maintenance and operation. (See definition of Works)

Inflow Design Flood

“Inflow Design Flood”

The most severe inflow flood (peak, volume, shape, duration, timing) for which a dam and its associated facilities are designed. The dam failure consequence classification will reflect the size of the selected IDF.

Hydrostatic Pressure

“Hydrostatic Pressure”

The pressure or force exerted by water.

For example, the pressure placed on a dam’s facilities (pipes etc.) or embankments increases as the height of the water body increases causing increased stresses which may result in increases in seepage, leakage, damage or failures.

Leave to commence construction

“Leave to Commence Construction”

A phrase used in clauses of many Water Licenses requiring written confirmation from the Comptroller of Water Rights or a Water Manager that the licensee has reviewed the proposal, addressed all of their concerns with you and do not object to the start of construction as proposed, subject to all conditions indicated.

Low Level outlet

“Low Level Outlet” or “Sluice Pipe”

A conduit through the dam to allow for controlled release of the reservoir contents.

Minor Repairs and Routine Maintenance

“Minor Repairs and Routine Maintenance”

Restoration work that is minor in scope and not a change from the authorized works. It does not cause a negative impact on the stream.

Professional Engineer

“Professional Engineer”

- (a) a professional engineer as defined in the *Engineers and Geoscientists Act*, or
- (b) a holder of a limited licence under the *Engineers and Geoscientists Act* that permits the person to practice professional engineering and who is acting within the scope of the limited licence;

Water Manager**“Water Manager”**

A person employed by the Crown and designated in writing by the minister as a Water Manager and includes a person designated in writing by the minister as Assistant Water Manager or acting in either position. Reference to the Water Manager means the designated person for the geographic location or Water District where the works are located.

Wave run-up**“Wave Run-up”**

The effect that occurs as waves, travelling toward the dam, approach and wash over the upstream face of the dam. Some factors affecting the amount of wave run-up are: wind speed and direction; length of fetch (approach affected by wind); depth of water; and, the slope and texture of the upstream face of the dam.

Works**“Works”**

- (a) anything capable of or used for
 - (i) diverting, storing, measuring, conserving, conveying, retarding, confining or using water,
 - (ii) producing, measuring, transmitting or using electricity, or
- (b) booms and piles placed in a stream,
- (c) obstructions placed in or removed from streams or the banks or beds of streams, and
- (d) changes in and about a stream, and includes access roads to any of them.

Appendix 5: MINISTRY OF FORESTS, LANDS, NATURAL OPERATIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT - CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information or comments on these **Plan Submission Requirements for the Construction and Rehabilitation of Dams** please contact your nearest Dam Safety Officer. A contact list of Dam Safety Officer can be found on the Dam Safety Program website at: www.gov.bc.ca/damsafety

Information can also be found through FrontCounterBC by calling toll free at 1-877-855-3222 (or if calling from outside North America, ++1-604-586-4400). For more information about FrontCounterBC including office locations and water licence application information, refer to the website:

<http://www.frontcounterbc.gov.bc.ca/contact/index.html>

For Dams over 9 m in height and/or to obtain additional information on the Dam Safety Program, contact:

Dam Safety Section

Water Management Branch

Resource Stewardship Division

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

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