



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING  
RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT  
DIRECTIVES SYSTEM

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Subject: DAM SAFETY PROGRAM

Approval:

Title: Director

1. Purpose. This directive establishes the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement's (OSM) policy on the responsibilities and procedures for implementing the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Dam Safety Program for dams permitted by OSM.

2. Summary. This directive establishes the responsibility of the various OSM offices to ensure that dams permitted by OSM are in conformance with DOI's Dam Safety Program. It utilizes Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS) hazard criteria and Mine Safety and Health Administration's (MSHA) size criteria for dams.

3. Definitions.

a. Dam. A dam is any impounding structure that impounds water, sediment, or slurry and meets Class B or C of NRCS's hazard criteria or satisfies the definition from section 30 CFR 77.216.

b. Emergency Action Plan. A plan to alleviate risk during or after construction of a dam, or to reduce the consequences if conditions develop in which a dam failure is likely or unpreventable. This plan must include size and location of the dam and reservoir, an evaluation of upstream and downstream inundation hazards, and alerting procedures in case of failure.

4. Policy/Procedures.

a. Background. Part 753 of the Departmental Manual requires each bureau which designs, constructs, operates, or permits dams to have a dam safety program which implements the Federal Guidelines for Dam Safety.

b. Policy. Dams permitted by OSM shall be designed, constructed, operated and maintained to the standards necessary to safeguard life and protect property.

c. Responsibilities.

(1) Assistant Director, Program Support is responsible for overall operation of the dam safety program as described in Departmental Manual (DM) Part 753 DM 1.3.B. These responsibilities include evaluating the policies and procedures for the conduct of the dam safety regulatory practices related to dam safety design and construction in accordance with 753 DM 1.3 B(1)(a).

(2) Regional Directors, Appalachian, Western and Mid-Continent Regional Coordinating Centers are responsible for:

(a) Providing technical support to permittees upon request concerning the safety and maintenance of dams as discussed in 4.d.(4)(b) of this directive.

(b) Maintaining a current inventory of dams permitted by their office as discussed in section 4.d.(2) of this directive.

(c) Providing assistance to permittees, upon request, concerning the preparation of emergency action plans.

(d) Providing information necessary to complete the appropriate sections of the biennial report on dam safety as requested by the OSM Dam Safety Officer.

(3) Dam Safety Officer (Office of Technology Development and Transfer) is responsible for:

(a) Coordinating OSM's Dam Safety Program and serving as OSM's Emergency Planning Officer as described in 753 DM 1.5.B.

(b) Ensuring that all OSM offices are aware of the need for actions to ensure that dams permitted by OSM are safe.

(c) Coordinating the OSM program with the Bureau of Reclamation, MSHA and other Federal and State agencies, industry, and private organizations.

(d) Coordinating the preparation and submission of the biennial report on dam safety to DOI.

d. Procedures.

(1) Design Review. All dams defined in Section 3. Definitions. of this directive on mining operations for which OSM is the permitting authority must receive a review of their design in accordance with 753 DM 1.3 B(3)(b) by either MSHA or the OSM permitting entity (Appalachian, Western or the Mid-Continent Regional Coordinating Center).

(2) Inventory. Each Regional office must maintain a current inventory of dams as defined in Section 3. Definitions. of this directive on mining operations for which it is a permitting authority. Maintaining a current inventory complies with 753 DM 1.3 B(1)(c). The inventory must include structural performance, hazard classification, and identified deficiency data. It is anticipated that in most cases this requirement will be met by the MSHA inventory of dams. The inventory must be submitted/updated to the OSM Dam Safety Officer, Headquarters, by July 1st of each year.

(3) Emergency Action Plans. All dams defined in Section 3. Definitions. of this directive must have emergency action plans required by 30 CFR 816/817.49(a)(13).

(4) Inspections and Inspection Reports.

(a) Inspection reports, required under 30 CFR 77.216 and 816.49(a)(11), form the basis to determine the need for any appropriate corrective action. These reports must include information on the structural integrity of the dam and any hazardous conditions about the structure.

(b) Safety related deficiencies and structural weaknesses identified at a dam must be immediately referred to the applicable Regional Director. This reporting requirement is in accordance with the 753 DM 1.3 B(1)(b).

5. Reporting Requirements. Permitting offices as described in section 4.c.(2) of this directive must forward copies of the inventories required in section 4.d.(2) of this directive to the Headquarters Dam Safety Officer by July 1 of each year.

6. Effect On Other Documents. None

7. References.

- a. Department of the Interior, Departmental Manual, Part 753 Dam Safety Program, April 14, 1982.
- b. Federal Guidelines For Dam Safety, Federal Coordinating Council for Science, Engineering and Technology, Washington, D.C. 20500.
- c. Emergency Action Planning Guidelines for Dams, Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA 64, February 1985.
- d. How to Develop and Implement an Emergency Action Plan, Training Aids for Dam Safety Module, Bureau of Reclamation, Denver, CO.

- e. Downstream Hazard Classification Guidelines, ACER Technical Memorandum No. 11, Bureau of Reclamation, Denver CO, 1985.
  
- 8. Effective Date. Upon Issuance.
  
- 9. Contact. Technology Development and Transfer, (202) 208-2971.
  
- 10. Keywords. Dams, Safety, Impoundments, Permitting, Dam Safety.
  
- 11. List of Appendices. None.