



Do you own or manage a dam?

Options for dam safety are being reviewed. This has implications that owners of dams and those with an interest in dams or safety management should be aware of.

Legislation introduced with the Building Act 2004 (the Act) covers dam construction and safety management for large dams. This will ensure that dams are well built, that larger dams are regularly monitored, and that the risk to people and property is minimised. Details of the dam safety management scheme have not yet been decided. A public consultation document is available for you to comment on proposed regulations for the scheme.

WHAT IS A LARGE DAM?

If your dam is capable of holding fluid under constant pressure of 20,000 or more cubic metres (about the capacity of 5 to 6 Olympic-sized swimming pools) **and** is 3 or more metres deep, the dam safety management scheme will affect the dam. Smaller dams are not affected by the dam safety management scheme, although new smaller dams may require building consents.

More information on whether your dam may be affected is provided in the public consultation document.

CLASSIFYING LARGE DAMS

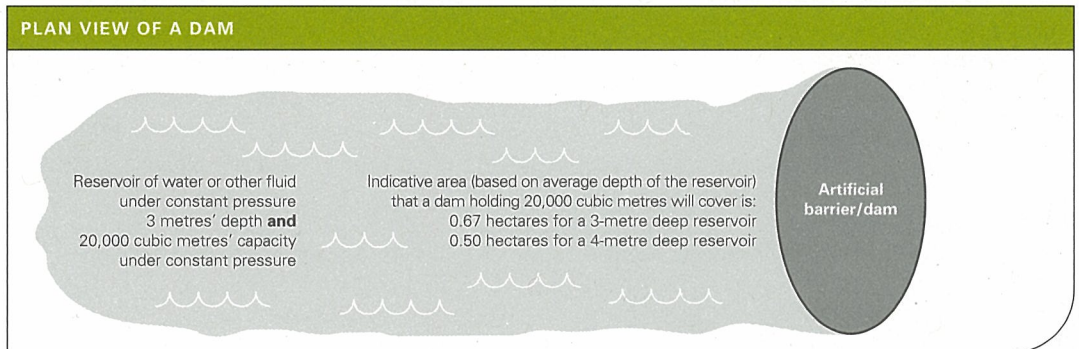
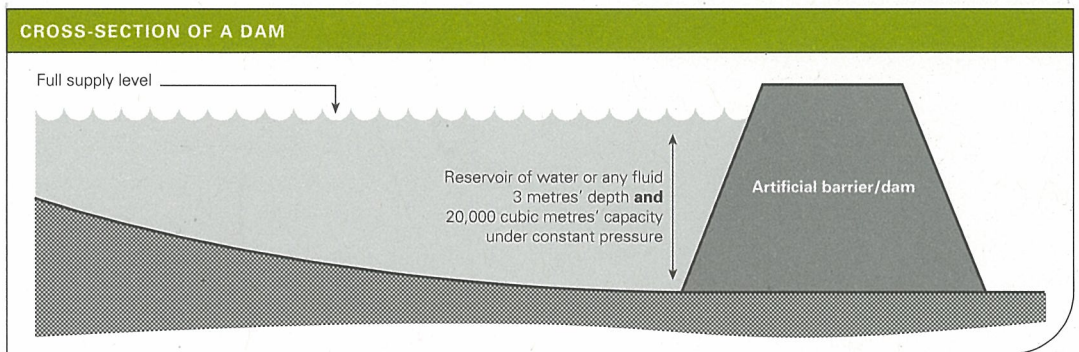
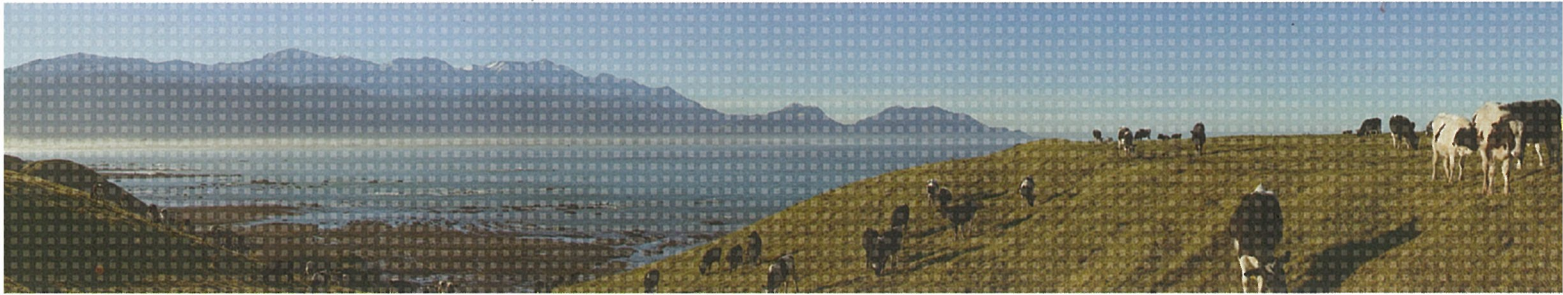
Many large dams already have safety management programmes, and these are still relevant. However, until now there has been no formal system of dam monitoring, inspection and maintenance. The proposals recognise that risk factors for a dam can change over time due to factors such as site conditions, hazards such as floods or earthquakes and effectiveness of maintenance.

Owners of large dams (which are defined in the Act) will be required to classify and register any large dam on their property within 3 months of regulations commencing (likely to be in 2007) or the dam being commissioned.

Classifications will be 'low', 'medium' or 'high'. The different levels of classification refer to the potential impact to the surrounding area and people in the area if the dam were to fail or break. The dam classification must be certified by a recognised engineer.

Dam safety assurance programmes will be required for dams classified as 'medium' or 'high'. Owners of these dams will likely need additional certification and engineering advice.





REGIONAL AUTHORITIES TO KEEP REGISTER

Once classification is confirmed, the dam is approved and registered with the regional authority. Regional authorities will administer dam safety regulations, taking over responsibilities previously held by territorial authorities (city and district councils).

Regional authorities will compile and maintain a register of dams and will have power to take action on any that are dangerous or unsafe, in a similar way that territorial authorities can act when encountering a dangerous building.

MORE INFORMATION

The Department of Building and Housing is encouraging comment on the proposed regulations. Public consultation closes on **31 August 2006**.

To view the public consultation document online visit: www.dbh.govt.nz

To receive a hard copy call: **0800 242 243** or email: info@dbh.govt.nz

(please write 'Dam Safety Consultation' in the subject line).