



Environmental Protection Division

A Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources

The Rules for Dam Safety were modified in August 2016 to address two main areas, Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) and inspections. The EAP is a planning document that aids the dam owner in understanding what might be critical issues at their dam and who should be notified if and when a serious issue develops. It is imperative that the dam owner coordinate with the local emergency management officials in developing their EAP since they will be the first responders when there is an issue at the dam.

The Rule requires that owners of Category I dams submit an EAP using a format approved by the Environmental Protection Division. The EAP was to be submitted by July 1, 2017 for review and approval by the Division. **Over 200 of the Category I dams have not submitted an EAP.** Approximately half of these dams are at least partially owned by a government entity.

The Environmental Protection Division developed a template with instructions to aid dam owners in developing an EAP. The template helps with developing the standard text of the EAP. Most EAPs will also need to have a dam failure inundation study done so that information can be incorporated into the EAP.

The template and instructions can be found at the EPD website at <https://epd.georgia.gov/watershed-protection-branch>.

The EPD continues to offer assistance to dam owners needing assistance with developing their EAP. Emergency Management officials should be aware of the requirement for EAPs and working with the dam owner. An inventory of the dams within the state can be found on the EPD website. We encourage the emergency management officials to reach out to dam owners and assist them with the development of the EAP if they are not already doing so.

The second Rule change addresses the inspection of the Category I dams. The Safe Dams Program has been requesting dam owners perform quarterly inspections of their dam (calendar quarter). The Rule modification now states that owners shall perform these quarterly inspections.

Inspection reports are to be submitted by April 30th of each year for the previous four quarters (April 1 of previous year through March 31 of the current year). The owner can also submit these reports per quarter if they desire. The Rule further requires the dam owner to retain the services of a professional engineer to conduct an inspection of the dam every two years. This inspection is to take place between October and March and will count towards the fourth quarter and first quarter inspections. These inspections are to commence on October 1, 2017. Dams less than 50 feet tall can request a waiver for one two-year cycle if certain criteria are met.

Local governments own many of the Category I dams, especially the NRCS watershed flood control dams so it is important they understand the requirement for performing these inspections.

Questions? Contact:

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