

New regulations to keep dams safe – what dam owners need to know

In May 2022, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) announced new regulations on dam safety. The regulations provide a nationally consistent approach to ensuring dams are kept safe, and removes risks to your livelihood, property, livestock, and the community, should your dam fail.

Most farming and irrigation dams won't be impacted by the regulations, as they don't meet the height or volume thresholds. However, you will need to determine if your dam is impacted.

The regulations focus on keeping a dam safe once it is built, meaning they are separate to any requirements under the Building Consent and Resource Consent processes.

The regulations come into effect on 13 May 2024. This gives you time to prepare for your new dam safety responsibilities.

Actions you will need to take

Prior to 13 May 2024, there are two key things you will need to determine:

1. Does your water retention structure meet the definition of a dam as per the Building Act 2004?

See: <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2004/0072/latest/DLM306054.html>

If it doesn't, you will not be impacted by the dam safety regulations and there is no further action you need to take regarding these regulations.

If it does, go to step 2.

2. Is your dam big enough to be impacted by the regulations?

If your dam meets either of the height or volume thresholds below, then it is impacted by the regulations and there are further actions you will need to take:

- four or more metres, storing 20,000 or more cubic metres volume of water, or other fluid; or
- one or more metres, storing 40,000 or more cubic metres volume of water, or other fluid.

If your dam does not meet either of the thresholds above, then it is not impacted by the dam safety regulations and there is no further action you need to take regarding these regulations.

Where to go for further information and resources

MBIE has developed information and resources to help you understand whether your dam is impacted by the regulations and if so, what you need to do to comply with your new responsibilities.

These are available on MBIE's Building Performance website and include a resource to help dam owners calculate the volume of their dam, an online learning module which provides an overview of the regulations, and a detailed guidance document.

Information and resources: [Building Performance website](#).