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Dam Safety Overview

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Dams in Michigan are regulated by Part 307, Inland Lake Levels, and Part 315, Dam Safety, of The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended. There are 2,500 dams in the state, 813 of which are regulated by Part 315, and 235 are regulated by Part 307. Dams are regulated by Part 315 when they are over 6 feet in height and over 5 acres are impounded during the design flood. Dams are regulated by Part 307 when a circuit court issues an order establishing the level at which the lake is to be maintained. There are also 99 hydroelectric dams in Michigan that are regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) under the Federal Power Act.

Permits are required for the construction, enlargement, repair, alternation, removal, abandonment and reconstruction of state regulated dams. Inspection reports are required every three to five years for state regulated dams based on their hazard potential rating.

The Dam Safety Program is responsible for ensuring the safety of Michigan's state regulated dams. These dams, owned by both public and private entities, are located throughout the state. The program focuses on ensuring that dams are properly constructed, inspected and maintained, and that the owners have adequately prepared for potential emergencies.

Program staff performs a variety of duties, many of which are statutorily required, including:

- Inspection of state owned dams and dams owned by local units of government, upon their request.
- Review the adequacy of dam construction or reconstruction plans.
- Review various safety related reports, including inspection reports, prepared by professional engineers and submitted by private or municipal dam owners.
- Perform compliance activities as necessary to enforce the law.
- Respond to dam safety emergencies.

[Dam Safety Staff Map](#)



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