

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Dam (402)

A dam is an artificial barrier that can impound water for one or more beneficial purposes.

Practice Information

One purpose of a dam is to temporarily store runoff from heavy storms, reducing flood damage downstream by controlling the release rate of flood flows. These structures may also permit the use of more economical channel modifications and other downstream works of improvement.

This practice requires a very thorough site investigation to assure the following:

- Topographic, geologic, and soil conditions are satisfactory for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the structure(s).
- Conservation treatment above the proposed structure is satisfactory so that sediments in the runoff will not be excessive.
- Environmental impacts are accounted for in the overall plan.

Dams constructed as floodwater-retarding structures are normally part of a watershed plan sponsored by an organized group of local people with a vested interest in the natural resources of a specific watershed.



The dam will require maintenance over the expected life of the practice.

Common Associated Practices

A Dam (402) is commonly applied with conservation practices such as Grade Stabilization Structure (410), Fence (382), Dike (324), Access Road (560), and Critical Area Planting (342).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.