

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

Subject:	Dam Safety Issues in Title Transfers
Purpose:	The purpose of this Directive and Standard (D&S) is to establish Bureau of Reclamation-wide procedures for implementing transfer of a Reclamation-owned dam to another entity. The benefits of this D&S are establishment of procedures to promote continuity of dam safety activities and regulatory responsibilities.
Authority:	Reclamation Act of 1902 (32 Stat. 388) and Supplementary Acts; Reclamation Safety of Dams Act of 1978 (SOD Act) (Pub. L. 95-578, 92 Stat. 2471), as amended
Approving Official:	Director, Security, Safety, and Law Enforcement
Contact:	Dam Safety Office, 84-40000

1. **Introduction.** Reclamation established its Dam Safety Program to ensure that high and significant hazard dams do not present unreasonable risks to public safety/welfare and environmental/cultural resources. Reclamation accomplishes this objective by conducting periodic monitoring, examinations, and analyses of the design, construction, and performance of these dams. The results of these activities and the associated recommendations for additional actions are documented in various reports and memorandums. Reclamation Manual Policy on *Decisions Related to Dam Safety Issues* (FAC P02) requires timely, documented decisions on Reclamation actions to address each identified dam safety issue. Because dam safety issues can be identified at any time, the status of activities to resolve those issues can vary. At the time of title transfer, issue resolution may be in the early identification/decision phase or may be nearing completion. It is important that the status of the dam safety issue resolution process be conveyed to the new owners and associated regulators to ensure smooth transfer of ownership and regulatory responsibilities.
2. **Applicability.** This D&S applies to Reclamation personnel and offices having responsibility for title transfer of high and significant hazard dams that are either owned by Reclamation or, included as part of an authorized Reclamation project.
3. **Definitions.**
 - A. **Dam Safety Issue.** An issue that, if not resolved:
 - (1) could lead to a failure or malfunction resulting in an uncontrolled release of stored water that would place the public and/or resources at risk, or
 - (2) would compromise Reclamation's ability to detect developing adverse dam performance and prudently respond to that performance.

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

B. Hazard Potential.

- (1) **High Hazard Potential Dam.** A dam where failure or mis-operation will probably cause loss of human life.
- (2) **Significant Hazard Potential Dam.** A dam where failure or mis-operation results in no probable loss of human life but can cause economic loss, environmental damage, disruption of lifeline facilities, or can impact other concerns. Significant hazard potential classification dams are often located in predominantly rural or agricultural areas but could be located in areas with population and significant infrastructure.

C. **Transferee.** An entity seeking title/ownership of a dam from Reclamation.

4. Responsibilities.

- A. **Regional Director and Area Managers.** Regional directors and area office managers are responsible for ensuring that the requirements of this D&S are implemented for title transfers of high or significant hazard dams under their jurisdiction.
- B. **Chief, Dam Safety Office.** The Chief, Dam Safety Office is responsible for ensuring an updated decision document is prepared documenting the status of all dam safety issues preceding completion of title transfer.

5. **Dam Safety-Related Title Transfer Activities.** As soon as a formal request is received to initiate the dam title transfer process, Reclamation will seek frequent involvement of appropriate local, State, and Federal agencies who will be involved in operational aspects or regulatory oversight of the facilities being transferred. The entities involved may include local emergency management officials, State Dam Safety regulatory officials, National Weather Service, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Corps of Engineers, and others. Reclamation will inform all entities of the implications of title transfer and the potential impacts to their areas of responsibility. Reclamation will also notify the entities involved of the need to make appropriate changes to their operational plans, emergency response plans, communications directories, etc. The following activities will be addressed with the appropriate entities:

A. Dam Safety Decisions.

- (1) The pertinent dam safety decision documents, including the latest Comprehensive Review (CR) report, will be discussed with the transferee and the appropriate dam safety regulatory agencies early in the title transfer process. Discussions will include:

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

- (2) Reclamation will consider accelerating activities necessary to resolve outstanding dam safety issues to the extent agreed upon, if deemed appropriate and achievable by the participating entities.
 - (a) Reclamation's understanding of dam safety risks associated with the facility;
 - (b) identification of all unresolved dam safety issues and recommendations;
 - (c) identification of the appropriate schedules for resolving the issues; and
 - (d) identification of all significant operations and maintenance issues associated with the facility.
- B. **Emergency Action Plan (EAP).** Reclamation will formally transmit copies (hard copy and electronic copy) of the EAP, including applicable inundation studies and mapping, to the transferee. They will be advised to review and revise the EAP to reflect their emergency response plans following title transfer and to remove all references to Reclamation responsibilities, as appropriate. Reclamation will advise State, County, and local emergency management officials, and all holders of the EAP of the pending title transfer. The appropriate regulatory agencies will be responsible for advising the new title holder (transferee) of their requirements related to revising and exercising the EAP.
- C. **Standing Operating Procedures (SOP).** Reclamation will update the SOP, as needed, to reflect accurate operational procedures and conformance to current Reclamation policies for SOPs. Reclamation will formally transmit copies (hard copy and electronic copy) of the SOP to the transferee. They will be advised to review and revise the SOP to remove references to Reclamation responsibilities.
- D. **Records and Information Transfer.** Reclamation will advise the transferee of the availability of all relevant dam safety-related and security-related documents. Documents will be made available for review and copying by the transferee at their expense. Original documents will be retained by Reclamation and compiled and archived in accordance with existing records management policies after completion of title transfer. Appropriate records will be scanned into Reclamation's Dam Safety Data Management System before they are sent to archives.
- E. **Decision Document.** Reclamation will prepare an updated decision document to document the status of all dam safety issues immediately preceding completion of title transfer. The decision document will be written to acknowledge the pending dam title transfer and will include a discussion of recommended actions by the transferee considered necessary to resolve any outstanding dam safety issues. The decision document also will include a discussion of the relative urgency of resolving those issues. It will be signed by the regional director, area office manager, and the Chief, Dam Safety Office in accordance with FAC P02. The issues and associated

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

recommended actions and schedules will be discussed with the transferee and the appropriate dam safety regulatory agencies. The final decision document will be formally transmitted to the transferee and to the appropriate regulatory agencies by the area office responsible for the dam.

- F. **Pretransfer Review.** Reclamation will encourage an onsite pretransfer review of the facility. The primary purpose of this review will be to facilitate the discussion of dam safety issues (outstanding safety of dams and dam safety related operations and maintenance recommendations, SOP, EAP, performance-monitoring data, etc.) and other issues of importance. Reclamation personnel with significant knowledge of the operations and dam safety issues related to the facility will participate in the review. Generally, this will include personnel from the area office, regional office, and the Technical Service Center (TSC). The transferee of the dam, the appropriate dam safety regulatory agencies, and other entities, as determined appropriate, will also be encouraged to participate in the review. Reclamation will document the results of the review in a letter to appropriate entities. Reclamation's related costs for the review will be non-reimbursable, similar to other facility reviews conducted on the dam.
- G. **Internal Notification of Transfer of Title.** The Reclamation regional or area office responsible for the dam will transmit a memorandum notifying all appropriate Reclamation offices of the completion of title transfer and the discontinuation of services. These offices would include, at a minimum, the Commissioner's Office; Operations; Policy and Administration; Security, Safety, and Law Enforcement; TSC; and the area or office.
- H. **External Notification of Transfer of Title.** The Reclamation regional or area office responsible for the dam will transmit a letter to the appropriate dam safety regulatory agencies, notifying them of the official transfer of title and effective date. The letter will indicate that Reclamation no longer owns, nor is it responsible for any operations, maintenance, dam safety, security, public safety, or dam safety regulatory functions associated with the facility (or as stipulated in the title transfer authorizing legislation). Copies of the letter will be sent to appropriate local and State emergency management officials as well as Federal agencies (National Weather Service, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Corps of Engineers, etc.) and other applicable entities involved in the operations of the facility.

RECLAMATION MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Effective Date: _____

Release No. _____

Ensure all employees needing this information are provided a copy of this release.

Reclamation Manual Release Number and Subject

Summary of Changes

NOTE: This Reclamation Manual release applies to all Reclamation employees. When an exclusive bargaining unit exists, changes to this release may be subject to the provisions of collective bargaining agreements.

Filing instructions

Remove Sheets

Insert Sheets

All Reclamation Manual releases are available at <http://www.usbr.gov/recman/>

Filed by: _____

Date: _____