

DEVELOPMENT BULLETIN 02-2023

Subject: Updates to Dam Safety Protocols for Dam Breach Assessments
Resource: Urban Development and Conservation Program
Date: March xx, 2023

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

Pursuant to Environment Article § 5-503 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and Subtitle 26.17.04.05 of the Code of Maryland Regulations:

“A person shall obtain a permit from the Department [of the Environment] to construct, reconstruct, or repair any reservoir, dam, or waterway obstruction, to make, construct, or permit to be made or constructed any change or addition to any reservoir, dam, or waterway obstruction, to make or permit to be made any change in, addition to, or repair of any existing waterway obstruction, or in any manner to change in whole or part the course, current, or cross section of any stream or body of water within the State, except tidal waters.”

Certain dams and impoundments are exempt from the requirement of obtaining a permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) if approved by the appropriate soil conservation district - here the Prince George’s Soil Conservation District (District).

An appropriate dam breach hazard classification must be assessed for each dam and impoundment structure. This classification dictates the appropriate design and construction criteria to be used for a particular dam or impoundment facility.

Effective immediately, and restating existing District policy, all dam breach assessments shall employ the protocols and methodologies set forth in the “*Guidance for Completing a Dam Breach Analysis for Small Ponds and Dam in Maryland*” by MDE. A copy of this guidance document can be obtained from the MDE’s Dam Safety Program’s website.

Please be advised that the method for determining breach flowrates in the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Maryland Conservation Practice, Standard Pond Code 378 is thus superseded by the procedures outlined in the MDE guidance document.

If you have any questions, please contact the District’s Urban Development and Conservation Program at pgscd@co.pg.md.us or 301-574-5162 Ext. 3.