What is a dam?

A dam is any artificial barrier, including appurtenant works, that impounds or diverts water and which has:

- A height of 6 feet or more, or
- Any height located at the outlet of a great pond, liquid industrial or liquid commercial waste or septage or sewage lagoon.

When is a roadway culvert a dam?
A roadway embankment that's culvert is set at the natural stream bed shall be considered a dam if during the 25-year storm if:

- The water surface elevation at the culvert inlet is 6 feet or more above the water surface elevation at the culvert outlet.
- it impounds 2 acre-feet or more of water over the crown, or top of the culvert.

When is a detention pond a dam?
An artificial barrier at a stormwater detention basin, which impounds more than 0.5 acre-foot of water during normal conditions, shall not be considered a dam unless its height is 10 feet or greater or its maximum storage capacity is 6 acre-feet or greater.

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S DAM SAFETY PROGRAM

DAMS: THE SECRETS TO OUR LAKES

NHDES Dam Bureau
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NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF Environmental Services

NHDES' Dam Safety Mission

To ensure that all dams in New Hampshire are constructed, maintained and operated in a safe manner, and that lake levels, stream flows and the state's surface and groundwater resources are used efficiently and managed to protect environmental quality, enhance public safety and flood protection, and support and balance a variety of social and ecological water needs.

Hazard Classifications of Dams
Hazard classification is based on the potential for downstream damage. It does not reflect the condition of the dam.

- High Hazard
- Significant Hazard
- Low Hazard
- Non Menace

Inspection Schedule for Dams

- High – Every 2 years
- Significant – Every 4 years
- Low – Every 6 years
- Non Menace that meet certain criteria – 6 years

Dam Bureau activities/outreach

Regulatory

- Permitting of Dam Construction and Reconstruction
- Inspection of Existing Dams
- Dam Removal/River Restoration
- Emergency Action Plans

Education

- Workshops
- Fact Sheets
- Newsletters

State Dam Ownership

- Repair & Reconstruction
- Emergency Action Plans
- Water Level Management
- Maintenance
- Property Management

Other Activities

- Snow Sampling
- Stream Gauging

NHDES' Dam Safety Staff includes the following specialties

- Biologist
- Construction Crew
- Dam Operators
- Engineers
- Engineering Technicians
- Land Agent
- Seasonal Staff
- Support Staff
- Surveyors

Fact Sheets

- Basic Nomenclature of a Dam
- Types of Dams Common in New Hampshire
- Dam Construction and Reconstruction
- Typical Failure Modes for Embankment Dams
- Typical Failure Modes of Stone Face Earth Dams
- Typical Failure Modes for Dam Spillways
- Typical Failure Modes for Gated Dam Outlets
- Tree Growth on and Adjacent to Dams
- The Effects of Beaver Activity on or Near Man Made Dams
- Liability and Responsibility of Dam Owners
- Emergency Action Plans
- Forming a Village District for the Purpose of Impounding Waters
- Best Management Practices for the Maintenance and Operation of Dams
- Dam Ownership in New Hampshire
- Classification of Dams in New Hampshire
- Why Lake Drawdowns are Conducted
- The Souhegan River Flood Control Sites in New Ipswich, NH
- The NH Initiative to Restore Rivers thorough Selective Dam Removal
- Frequently asked questions about Dam Removal
- Acquiring a dam
- What is the Annual Dam Registration Fee?
- Public Informational Meetings for the lowering of Water Bodies

Dam Bureau webpage: http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dam/index.htm
Dam Bureau fact sheets: http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/db/index.htm