Appendix C.
New Hampshire Reservoir and Dam Safety Standards: Defining a Dam
**New Hampshire’s Definition of a Dam**

RSA 482:2, II & Env-Wr 101.12

A **Dam** is any artificial barrier which impounds or diverts water which:

- has a height of 4 feet or more
- a storage capacity of 2 acre feet or more
- is located at the outlet of a great pond
- is an artificial barrier which impounds liquid Industrial or liquid commercial wastes, or septage or sewage, regardless of height or storage.

Some **Roadway Culverts** are considered dams. Certain **Storm Water Detention Ponds** are exempted. (See attached pages)

When is a Roadway Culvert NOT a Dam? (Env-Wr 101.12 & 301.03)

A roadway culvert is not a dam if:
- its invert is at the natural streambed and
- it has adequate discharge capacity and
- it does not impound water under normal circumstances

A roadway embankment whose culvert is set at the natural streambed shall be a dam if during the 25 year storm:
- the water surface elevation at the culvert inlet is 6 feet above the water surface elevation at the culvert outlet and
- it impounds 2 ac-ft or more of water over the crown of the culvert.

When is a Storm Water Detention Pond NOT a Dam?

An artificial barrier at a storm water detention which impounds 0.50 acre-feet or less of water during normal conditions, shall not be considered a dam unless its height is 10 feet or greater or its maximum storage is 6 acre-feet or greater.

The NH DES Home Page: http://www.des.nh.gov/dam
Dam; Certain Storm Water Detention Basins Exempted. Amend RSA 482:2, II to read as follows:

II. (a) “Dam” means any artificial barrier, including appurtenant works, which impounds or diverts water, and which has a height of 4 feet or more, or a storage capacity of 2 acre-feet or more, or is located at the outlet of a great pond. A roadway culvert shall not be considered a dam if its invert is at the natural bed of the water course, it has adequate discharge capacity, and it does not impound water under normal circumstances. Artificial barriers which create surface impoundments for liquid industrial or liquid commercial wastes, septage, or municipal sewage, regardless of height or storage capacity, shall be considered dams.

(b) An artificial barrier at a storm water detention basin, which impounds 0.5 acre-foot or less of water during normal conditions, shall not be considered a dam unless its height is 10 feet or greater or its maximum storage is 6 acre-feet or greater.

Attached is a flow chart to assist in determining if a dam application is required.

If you have any questions please call NH DES, Dam Bureau at 603-271-3406 or email us at damsafety@des.state.nh.us
Do you need a dam permit?

Is the structure on a great pond or does it store liquid industrial or liquid commercial waste, septage or sewage?

Yes → You need a dam permit

No →

Is the proposed structure intended for use as a roadway?

Yes → Go to page 4

No →

Is the proposed structure a Storm water detention Pond?

Yes → Go to page 3

No →

Is the structure 4 feet or greater?

Yes → You need a dam permit

No →

Does it store more than 2 acre feet?

Yes →

No → You do not need a dam permit

(standard dam definition)

Effective as of Friday, August 18, 2006
Is your Storm Water Detention Pond a dam?

1. Is the permanent storage 0.50 acre feet or less?
   - No
   - Yes

2. Is the height less than 10 feet?
   - No
   - Yes

3. Is the maximum storage less than 6 acre feet?
   - No
   - Yes

   You do not need a dam permit.

   You may need a dam permit. See standard dam definition on page 2.

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